

TROTSKYIST PLATFORM

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Let's Build Towards More Staunch Actions to Demand That Vacant Public Housing Goes to People on the Waiting List or the Homeless & Not to Ultra-Rich Developers & Speculators

TRADE UNIONISTS & OTHER SUPPORTERS OF PUBLIC HOUSING OCCUPY MILLERS POINT HOUSES SLATED FOR PRIVATISATION

8 March 2018 – On August 6, scores of trade unionists, current and former public housing tenants and other supporters of public housing carried out a powerful occupation of vacant public housing dwellings at 78 to 80 High St, Millers Point. These houses in Sydney city are slated for sell-off to wealthy speculators, landlords and capitalist developers. The NSW Liberal/National government had driven off the public housing tenants who lived in the houses. Notably, 78 High St was the home from where housing authorities had, weeks before, forcibly relocated a highly respected female Aboriginal activist and elder. Indeed, a large proportion of the public housing tenants that the right-wing NSW government and high-handed bureaucrats squeezed out of their homes in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area are elderly, single women.

Fittingly, the houses that were occupied have a development notice from a state government authority announcing a plan to build a four car, carpark under them. The project would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Yet, the state government had previously said that it did not have money to maintain the homes and gave this as a primary reason for needing to sell them! But now that public housing tenants have been kicked out they are prepared to spend large sums of money to make the homes more valuable for their rich developer mates and other wealthy property investors expected to buy them.

The occupation demanded that the occupied houses and all unoccupied public housing dwellings in the area be given to the homeless or those on public housing waiting lists. Activists adorned the occupied homes with banners emphasising the struggle against the sell-off of public housing as well as the always colourful array of union flags. The action caught the housing authorities and their security guards by surprise. The NSW government went into a panic that the action would resonate.

The August 6 mobilisation was backed by the Sydney Branch of the MUA as well as by the CFMEU. The occupation was a rear-guard action to stop the sell-off of public housing in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area. Sadly, all but a handful of public housing tenants who once lived in the area have now been squeezed out as part of the state government's plan to sell off nearly all the public housing in the area. However, this struggle was more than about the crucial fight to save the working class community in Millers Point. It was also about the

broader struggle to stop the sell-off of public housing right across the country. This struggle is urgent. In just 12 years, the former ALP and current Liberal state governments have slashed NSW's public housing stock by 12%. The proportion of people with access to public housing in the whole country is nearly 30% less than what it was 23 years ago.

Later in the evening of the August 6 occupation, after numbers had dwindled somewhat, a heavy contingent of riot cops raided the occupation site. They arrested four activists participating in the struggle who had linked arms to protect the public property from theft by the ultra-rich. The last of those arrested was evicted Millers Point public housing tenant, Peter Muller, who has been at the forefront of resisting the state government's atrocious sell-off of public housing in the area over the last three and a half years. The others arrested were a staunch anti-fascist activist who has been involved in the struggle to defend public housing in the area from the very start, a young university student and a Trotskyist Platform supporter.

The four arrested have been charged with "Hinder/Resist police officer in execution of duty" and are currently going through court proceedings. Police used heavy-handed force during the arrests. In two of the cases, the arrested were subjected to undue pain by the police. In one case, police caused permanent damage to the person's wrist. In another case, police, after they took one of the arrested around the corner and out of sight of most other protesters, bent his wrist back to cause sharp pain and then maintained a painful hold for a few minutes. This was even



Millers Point, Sydney: Houses in High St occupied by trade unionists, current and former public housing tenants and other supporters of public housing. The powerful August 6 occupation demanded that these vacant public housing dwellings be made available to those on the public housing waiting list or the homeless.



though he was in no way resisting arrest at the time. This was witnessed by another of the arrested who was already in the paddy wagon at the time (but with the back door open). In addition to the four arrested and facing criminal charges, in the hours leading up to the action, three other supporters of public housing were given trespass fines for allegedly being in the occupied houses.

However, far from this repression deterring people, the occupation has inspired many supporters of public housing to be more determined than ever. In the days following the August 6 occupation, many who participated in or heard of the struggle were eager to know when the next action would be! What is driving the movement is the extreme lack of affordable rental housing caused by the privatisation of public housing by successive governments. This is pushing large numbers of people into poverty — and many even into homelessness. The campaign for public housing concerns all working class people and all the poor since the dire shortage of public housing is allowing landlords to jack up rents to exorbitant levels in the private rental market. Therefore, it is inevitable that those standing for the interests of working class people will launch other staunch actions in support of public housing. That could be in the inner-city or in the many other areas where public housing is being sold off.

Furthermore, the morale of the public housing campaign was given a boost when solidarity donations covered

the entire fines of the three activists who were hit with civil fines in the period leading up to the occupation. Most of this was collected in a September 1 fundraiser organised to help cover the fines and review the lessons of the occupation struggle. The successful fundraiser was chaired by secretary of the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point tenants committee, Barney Gardner, and included speeches by the then sole remaining High St public housing tenant, Wendy, by Peter Muller, by a Campbelltown-based public housing activist and by two young activists heavily involved in the occupation struggle including Trotskyist Platform comrade, Samuel Kim. Speaking of the August 6 occupation, Peter Muller made a crucial point at the fundraiser: “we may not have been able to achieve our aims but we sure did scare the be-jesus out of the government.” He pointed to announcements from the government about increasing social housing in the days following the occupation as a possible concession to the struggle and to the threat of more similar, militant actions. Moreover, it seems that in the days following the occupation, the housing bureaucrats have been less pig-headed about forcing remaining Millers Point tenants into areas and properties that they do not want to move into. Indeed, the 24 hour-a-day security guards that they have posted, ever since the occupation, specifically outside the houses occupied on August 6 shows their fear of further militant struggle.

VALUABLE LESSONS FOR FUTURE STRUGGLES

The on the streets struggle to defend and extend public housing in the contemporary period began with an important November 2009 protest outside the office of the then Housing minister in the former ALP federal government, Tanya Plibersek. At the time, federal and state governments were orchestrating the sell off of public housing and building much less than they sold off. Now things have gotten even worse.

This sell-off of public housing is not only bad for all working class people, it is often particularly hurting the most discriminated against and disadvantaged sections of the masses including women, Aboriginal people, the elderly, those from people of coloured backgrounds, youth and people with disabilities. The slashing of public housing is especially hurting low-income single mothers. They and their families are already reeling from measures taken by the Howard conservative government and then the Gillard social-democratic government that combined to cruelly throw all sole parents with children over eight off the parenting payment. As if having to deal with socially conservative people that look condescendingly upon them or being insultingly portrayed by talkback shock jocks and “investigative” reporters as undeserving, “welfare mums” is not enough for low income single mothers to have to face! Now the dire shortage of public housing means that many already squeezed, single mothers have to suffer anywhere from ten to twenty years on the waiting list to get public housing ... by which time their children are already adults and the money saved on rent from having public housing will no longer allow them to pay for the school excursions, computer fees, music lessons and sports expenses that they excruciatingly couldn't afford to provide for their children or for all

the clothing, medication, travel and entertainment that they weren't able to purchase while still being, in what should have been, the prime of their and their family's life. Meanwhile, one of the combined effects of the gutting of the sole parenting payment and the slashing of public housing is to increase domestic violence against women. For these measures mean that low-income women relying financially on a male partner who is abusive are confronted with the unbearable choice of either going out on their own and living an impoverished life without a guaranteed roof over their heads (and over those of their children if they are mothers) or staying with their partner and trying to endure the attacks.

Yet as government sell-offs of public housing deepen and cause more and more misery, our struggle is notably also getting stronger. The Millers Point public housing tenants by their determined struggle have added so much vigour to the overall fight to defend public housing in NSW. The blockade which attempted to stop Peter Muller's eviction in May and now the August 6 occupation have taken the movement up to a new, higher level of militancy.

This is what we need because the situation is getting more desperate. We need audacious struggles like the August 6



December 9, Sydney: Current and evicted public housing tenants, trade unionists, unemployed rights activists and other supporters of public housing marched through the Millers Point and Rocks Area demanding “Stop the Sell-Off of Public Housing.” Standing by the 6th August protest occupation of public housing dwellings at 78-80 High St, the march sought to build support for future staunch actions in defence of public housing.

occupation because this is the only sort of method that works. Lobbying ruling class politicians does not work. For they all, in the end, serve the capitalist, big end of town. The Liberals are the most in your face and arrogant about it. But the ALP and ALP/Greens state and federal governments have also sold off public housing left, right and centre. They did this in Minto, in Bonnyrigg, in Claymore and in Glebe.

To strengthen our struggles for the future, activists for public housing need to learn some crucial lessons from the August 6 occupation and from the blockade in May. The most important of them concerns the police and other state enforcement organs. Illusions in these institutions did affect our struggles. During the May blockade against Peter Muller's eviction, we had less forces overnight than we could have had when the sheriffs and police raided because many people expected that these bodies would follow their own stated procedures and wait for a new warrant to be issued before charging in. At the August 6 occupation, police promised that they would not raid until at least midday the next day. Expectations that they would keep their promise meant that some people who may have been able to stay longer left to come back the next day and others who heard about the struggle thought it would be OK if they waited for the following day to join the action. That weakened our forces. So the most crucial lesson that must be drawn from these struggles is to understand that the cops, sheriffs, courts and other state organs are not impartial bodies but part of a state created, quite specifically, to impose the interests of the filthy rich, capitalist exploiting class on the rest of us. With this understanding, next time we must work harder to ensure that as many people as possible in the movement are not fooled by any promises from the state enforcement bodies and, certainly, do not trust them to follow their own so-called rules.

Secondly, the recent actions also expose many of the mainstream politicians who say they are our allies. They often make nice speeches trying to get our votes. But when we launch the kind of action that can actually scare the enemy, most of them are nowhere to be seen. That is why we must rely only on our own power, united with all the downtrodden. As Trotskyist Platform activist, Samuel Kim, explained while giving his speech at the September 1 fundraiser:

“The enemy have their immense wealth, their cops, sheriffs, courts, politicians and media. But we have the power that comes from the fact that their gigantic profits actually come from our labour; we have our potentially huge numbers, our potential unity, our unions and our determination that was seen in the August 6 occupation.”

Everyone who took part in the August 6 occupation and in preparing it should be proud of themselves. As intermediate steps to the next staunch action, we need to broaden support for the struggle to defend public housing through a series of standard rallies that bring new forces into the movement. We can win such broader support! There are hundreds of thousands of people on public housing waiting lists. There are millions more workers on the minimum wage or other low incomes who need public housing but can't even get on the waiting list because the criteria is so strict. Also the struggle against the sell-off of public housing is part of the overall struggle of working class people and the poor against the greedy capitalists who want to get even richer at our expense.

Let us trust only in our own power and build our unity across racial and national lines! Let us reject any expectations in the institutions of the capitalist big end of town that are only there to enforce their interests! Let us prepare for new militant actions by broadening the campaign for a massive increase in public housing!



Millers Point, Sydney: Some activists wait outside ready to defend the August 6 occupation of vacant public housing on High St by dozens of supporters of public housing.

Justice for David Dungay! Justice for Elijah! Justice for Tane!

OUTRAGE AS THE **KILLER** OF AN ABORIGINAL CHILD GETS AWAY WITH MURDER!



Kalgoorlie, 21 July 2017: Anguish and grief from friends, family and supporters of fourteen year-old Aboriginal youth Elijah Doughty after his killer was gifted a very light sentence.

10 October 2017 – Aboriginal people and other anti-racists have staged angry protests throughout the country after the killer of 14 year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty, was given an extremely light sentence. The child killer is a 56 year-old white man who the courts have suppressed the identity of. He committed the crime on 29 August last year while driving in his 4WD ute in the WA town of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The killer chased Elijah, who was riding a small motorbike, down a dirt track. The murderer then ran over Elijah. He rammed into Elijah's motorbike after having revved up to a speed so much faster than the motorbike that he smashed it into three main pieces and countless smaller fragments while Elijah's skull was split in two and his spinal cord severed at the base of his brain.

For this heinous crime, the killer was given just a three years sentence. If he is granted parole, which media have reported seems likely (https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jul/27/sentence-for-elijah-doughtys-killer-sparks-anger-was-justice-served?CMP=share_btn_fb), he will be released as soon as next January. This sentence handed down on July 21 by chief judge of the WA supreme court, Wayne Martin, was barely a slap on the wrist for a matter involving the killing of a child. The very light sentence provoked angry protests by Aboriginal people and other anti-racists throughout the country. In Kalgoorlie, where people had gathered

to watch a video link to the Perth court proceedings, the verdict and sentence caused terrible grief to Elijah's family and friends. Hundreds of people then defied the threatening presence of dozens of heavily armed police to march through the streets of Kalgoorlie chanting "Justice for Elijah!" In Sydney, a spirited rally three days later culminated in protesters smearing red ochre on the windows of the NSW Supreme Court building to symbolise the blood on the hands of Australia's "justice system". Aboriginal activists throughout the country pointedly asked, "What if the murdered child had been a white-skinned boy and the killer an Aboriginal man?"

AUSTRALIA'S RACIST, RICH PEOPLE'S LEGAL SYSTEM ONCE AGAIN DENIES JUSTICE TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The killer claimed that Elijah had been riding one of two motorbikes stolen from his shed. As if that excused him murdering a 14 year-old child! Furthermore, even if one believes that Elijah was riding one of the stolen bikes – which is unproven – there is no evidence at all that Elijah knew the bike was stolen and still less that he had stolen the bike himself. Many of these small bikes, including stolen ones, are dumped in the bush area where Elijah had been riding them. Moreover, the only reason that Elijah needed to ride a bike other than his own is because racist police had wrongly confiscated his own two bikes weeks earlier. With their typical racist stereotyping, police had wrongly assumed that Elijah's bikes, which had been bought off his grandfather, were also stolen (see: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jul/21/the-killing-of-elijah-doughty-oil-patch-at-scene-fades-but-stain-remains>). Police finally returned Elijah's bikes to his family after his death!



Sydney, July 2017: Protesters over the verdict devaluing Elijah Doughty's life smear red ochre over the windows of the NSW Supreme Court – one of the institutions of Australia's blood-stained and racist, rich people's legal system.

In other words, if police had not racially-profiled Elijah, i.e. if they had not been so racist, he would still be alive today. That was the first of several major injustices from the “justice” system that Elijah, his family and friends copped. Secondly, even though evidence pointed to the killer having deliberately rammed his ute into Elijah's small bike – with forensics showing the killer travelling over 20 km/h faster than Elijah – the police only charged him with manslaughter rather than murder. Then when hundreds of Aboriginal people responded to this blatant state racism by courageously marching on the Kalgoorlie courthouse and carrying out staunch acts of defiance against symbols of the racist authorities – including police cars, the courthouse entrance and the heavily armed police

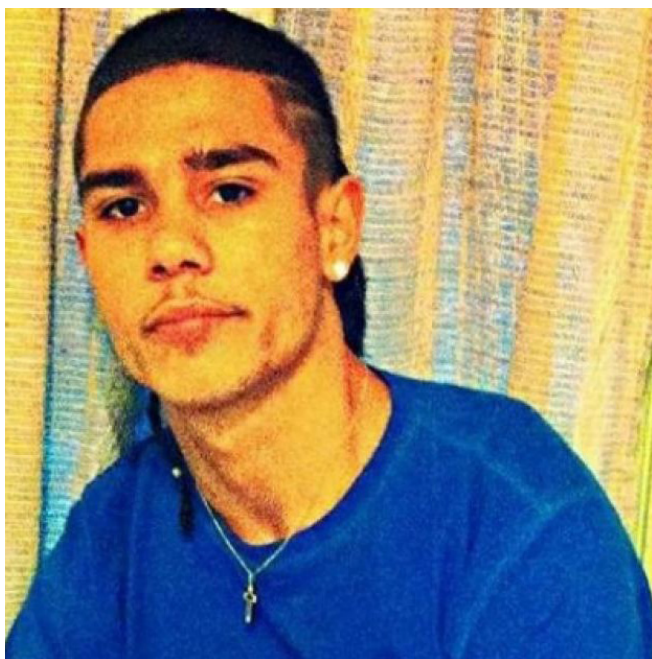
who were confronting them - police brutally unleashed their batons against the Aboriginal marchers and arrested several protesters. Outrageously, one of the Aboriginal people arrested in this anti-racist resistance has copped a sentence that could see him end up remaining in jail after the killer gets released!

Then there was the verdict in the killers' trial in Perth. The killer was acquitted of even the reduced charge of manslaughter. Instead, he was convicted of the lesser charge of dangerous driving causing death. Even within the spectrum of the lesser conviction, the sentence that the judge handed out to the killer was light given the circumstances. Here is what the judge, Wayne Martin, argued:

“Martin said while the consequences of the driver’s conduct were severe, his culpability was ‘in the lower half of what I might call the range of seriousness in the scale applicable to these things’”.

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jul/27/sentence-for-elijah-doughtys-killer-sparks-anger-was-justice-served?CMP=share_btn_fb

So according to Australia’s legal system, running over a child when chasing him with a 4WD ute accelerated to travel over 20 km/h faster than the child’s motorbike is “in the lower half of seriousness” ... provided that the child is Aboriginal! The outcome of the trial has left most Aboriginal people, as well as any other decent, anti-racist person who followed the case, completely sickened. However, this injustice did not come out of the blue. It was par for the course for a thoroughly racist injustice system that has very often devalued the lives of Aboriginal children and Aboriginal people more broadly. Let us recall a similar case: the murder of 15-year-old Aboriginal youth, Errol Wyles, in Townsville in 2003. The child was killed after the white male, Scott Hasenkamp, revved up his car and reversed over the Aboriginal child who was riding a bicycle **on two separate occasions** before speeding off (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/soc.culture.african/ZMABgLDOHaY>). Hasenkamp was a known white supremacist skinhead who once shouted from his car at Errol Wyles, “We’re going to kill all you nig__rs, Errol.” Outrageously, police did not charge Hasenkamp with murder. Instead, they granted him the charge of dangerous driving causing death – the very same charge that Elijah’s killer was slapped on the wrist with. The courts sentenced Errol’s white supremacist murderer to



Twenty two year-old Tane Chatfield appears from all indications to be the latest Aboriginal person murdered by state authorities in Australia.



Kempsey: Family members of David Dugay at a rally to protest against the twenty six year-old’s killing at the hands of prison authorities at Sydney’s Long Bay jail.

just a 15 month sentence, of which he actually only served two months in prison (the rest on a farm)! Now, chillingly, this filthy, racist murderer could well be wandering the streets somewhere free!

The most frequent perpetrators of the killing of Aboriginal people are the actual state authorities. In a killing similar to that of Elijah’s, in February 2004 police driving in vans chased a 17 year-old Aboriginal youth riding his bicycle, TJ Hickey, through the streets of the Sydney inner-city suburb of Redfern. Police then rammed the boy’s bicycle causing him to fly onto a fence where he was impaled. Police then violated standard emergency procedure by ripping the child from the fence causing him to bleed to death. However, the coroner completely exonerated the police, even claiming that the police were not even chasing TJ! Instead, he recommended that one of the cops involved in the murder be given a bravery award! This outrage is part of a long line of Aboriginal people being killed by police or prison guards. And in not one instance has a state official ever been convicted over one of these killings. In many cases like those of the deaths of TJ, Eddie Murray, John Pat, Daniel Yock and Mulrunji the police or prison guards outright murdered their Aboriginal victims. In other cases, like that of 22 year-old Ms Dhu and 28 year-old Kwementyaye (Terrance) Briscoe, police killed their victims through a combination of criminal neglect and violence.

Two recent cases where state enforcement authorities have killed young Aboriginal people include the deaths of 26 year-old David Dugay and 22 year-old Tane Chatfield. David Dugay was killed by guards at Sydney’s Long Bay jail on 28 December 2015. The guards violently wrestled him to the ground and held him face down on a mattress on the pretext that Dugay – a diabetic – was eating a biscuit! Dugay repeatedly yelled out that he couldn’t breathe but guards continued to brutalise him and then prison staff injected Dugay with a strong

sedative without even assessing his vital signs or checking his airwaves. Shortly afterwards, Dungay turned purple and stopped breathing completely. As David Dungay's mother, Leetona, described it: "Straight out murder. They murdered my son..." (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-08/report-shows-indigenous-inmate-died-after-being-restrained/7827450>).

Gumbaynggirr and Gamilaraay man, Tane Chatfield was found hanging in his cell at Tamworth Correctional Centre two weeks ago and died two days later. His case is more than suspicious. Indeed, the fact that NSW Corrective Services had declared the death a suicide with "no suspicious circumstances" just hours after Tane died makes the case all the more suspicious (<https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/the-suspicious-death-in-custody-of-tane-chatfield/>). What is most telling about Tane's death is that he was photographed in hospital with extensive injuries that have little to do with hanging but a lot to do with being bashed (<http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2017/10/04/exclusive-tane-chatfield-allegedly-found-cuts-his-face-and-bruises-his-body>). These injuries include a gash in his lips, lumps in his head and under his ears, bruising on his nose and lips and bruising on his shoulders and legs. Furthermore, another inmate heard him scream out as he was being attacked shortly before he was found unresponsive in his cell. Highly suspiciously, that morning every other inmate was let out into the yard except Tane, who was kept alone in his cell. Moreover, as his family have pointed out, Tane was in good spirits and showed no indication of wanting to kill himself. After spending two years locked up in remand, Tane was confident of being released in two weeks when his trial on an armed robbery charge concluded and in which he was expected to be acquitted. All indications are that Tane was murdered by state enforcement authorities

and that this was then passed off as suicide by hanging – as in the infamous killing of 21 year-old Gamilaraay man, Eddie Murray, who was murdered in a police cell in the Northern NSW town of Wee Waa in 1981. Tane was just a year older than Eddie was when he was murdered. Twenty six years after Eddie Murray's killing nothing has changed. Indeed as the redneck murder of Elijah and the recent state killings of Tane Chatfield, David Dungay, Rebecca Maher, Ms Dhu and so many other people show, racist terror against Aboriginal people is actually intensifying.

Australia's post-1788 state machinery – from the police, to the prisons, to the courts, commissions and military – was, indeed, founded not only to enforce the exploitation of the labouring classes by the rich propertied, capitalist class. The brutal Australian state machine was, of course, also set up for the express purpose of dispossessing Aboriginal people from the land that they belonged to, to turn them into a super-exploited labour force (initially toiling in the agricultural industry and as domestic servants and later, today, often in unpaid *work for the dole* or other *mutual obligation* slave labour-like schemes) as well as to repress the resistance of Aboriginal people to their many-sided subjugation. Since the Australian capitalist state's inception, this targeting of this country's first peoples and all the foul "traditions" and "culture" associated with their continuing oppression have been passed down to every succeeding generation of state officials. This is further reinforced by every act of racist and anti-working class repression that the state machinery unleashes. And every time that Australia's racist, rich people's "justice system" allows someone to get away with killing a black person it gives ultra-racists – both state personnel and rednecks like the murderers of Elijah and Errol Wyles – a green light for yet more terror.



29 September 2017: Sydney march demands justice for Tane, David Dungay and the many other Aboriginal people killed by racist police and prison guards while in custody.

A RACIST, LYNCH MOB-INCITED MURDER



The murder of Elijah was not simply the question of an individual heartless man who in a fit of rage over his stolen little motorbikes makes a sudden decision to run over a child riding a small motorbike. Rather, it was a killing that directed all the racist ferment happening in the town into a particular despicable crime. Kalgoorlie-Boulder has long been an especially racist town, in the particularly racist state of WA in the especially racist country that is called Australia. In the whole of WA, Aboriginal children are 53 times more likely to be imprisoned than their non-Aboriginal counterparts!

As with racist hostility to other mainly non-white communities in Australia – like Muslims, East Asians, Africans and South Asians – the main “justifications” given for redneck hatred for Aboriginal people change with time almost like the whims of fashion. The latest fashion in white supremacist hostility to Aboriginal people in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area is anger at petty thefts – including of motorbikes - allegedly committed by Aboriginal youth. This is despite statistics over the 18 months leading up to Elijah’s killing showing no increase in the rate of such crimes (*WA Today*, 31 August 2016). In the lead up to the murder of Elijah, two local community Facebook groups, “Kalgoorlie Crimes Whinge and Whine” and “Name Shame Crimes Kalgoorlie” were not only infused with extreme racist bigotry towards Aboriginal people but included calls for violence. The month before Elijah was killed, a contributor to one of the community pages wrote, referring to the gunning down of black people on the streets of America by racist cops: “What about we get some white cops from America lol Not really funny but might work.” He also wrote: “Things will never change

unless there is annual cull.” There was no way that the killer was not influenced by - or perhaps a contributor to - this violent racist agitation. He was certainly aware of it. Indeed, the very day before he killed Elijah, his wife actually posted about their missing bikes on one of these two racist-infested Kalgoorlie crime Facebook pages (<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/elijah-doughty-kalgoorlie-killer-not-guilty/8731754>).

Calls from extreme racists within Kalgoorlie for the outright murder of Aboriginal people intensified in the days leading up to Elijah’s killing. A week before his murder, after a woman posted a claim that two Aboriginal youths had broken into a ute, a man replied, “Feel free to run the oxygen thieves off the road if you see them”, while another man wrote, “Everyone talks about hunting down these sub human mutts, but no one ever does.” Then, as racists on the social media pages continued to use derogatory terms to refer to Aboriginal people – such as “darkies” and “non-reflectives” – one user wrote: “How many human bodies would it take to fill the mineshafts around Kalgoorlie? A: We’re one theft closer to finding out! (<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/the-facebook-posts-dividing-kalgoorlie/7805346>)” This threat of, practically, a genocidal assault upon the local Aboriginal population was made just two days before Elijah was murdered! It is absolutely undoubted that all this extreme racist bigotry fuelled the actions of the killer. Just as a laser concentrates seemingly harmless light of different phases into a single sharp output that can then cut like a knife, the violent outpouring of hatred from racist rednecks was channelled into the ghastly act of the killer when he rammed his 4WD ute into the child.

FOR ACTION BY THE WORKERS MOVEMENT, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE & ALL ANTI-RACISTS TO RESIST RACIST TERROR!

The murder of Elijah and his killer's escape from justice cannot be separated from the increasingly racist political climate that is lurking over all capitalist countries. This is signalled by the growth of violent, far-right groups in Australia and the rise of hard right, extreme racist Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency. Just three weeks after Elijah's killer got away with a very light sentence, large numbers of neo-Nazis and other white supremacists held a terrifying march through Charlottesville, United States, which culminated in one of the fascists murdering Heather Heyer by ramming his car into her and other anti-racist counter-protesters. Yet as terrible as the situation is in the U.S. we should point out that there is a difference in what happened to the murderer of Heather Heyer and what happened to the murderer of Elijah Doughty. In the U.S., the neo-Nazi who murdered Heather Heyer was at least charged with murder whereas the redneck who killed Elijah was only charged with manslaughter and ended up being acquitted on that charge as well. As racist as things are in the U.S. they are even worse here!

Although Aboriginal people cop by far the worst of racist terror in this country – especially from state authorities – all people of colour can be targets of racist violence. A recent study found 243 reported and confirmed violent or threatening attacks on Muslim people in Australia in just a 15 month period - and this is just the tip of the iceberg. The majority of attacks were on women <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/women-bear-the-brunt-of-islamophobia-charles-sturt-university-report-20170709-gx7nsg.html>). Meanwhile, just two months after Elijah was murdered,

Indian-born Brisbane bus driver Manmeet Alisher was murdered by a white terrorist who boarded the bus and heinously set the driver alight in what was manifestly a racist attack. The murderer, Anthony O'Donohue, was known to hold fascist views – including conspiracy theories against trade unions. And then a month after Elijah's killer was acquitted with manslaughter, a white student at Canberra's ANU university pulled out a baseball bat during his lecture and started attacking other students. Indications are that he specifically targeted Asian students and indeed *all* the people he hospitalised with injuries were Chinese students. The attack was only stopped when brave international students from China tackled the attacker to the ground. Mainstream Australian media are notorious for covering up the racist nature of racially motivated crimes. However, even they have admitted that ANU student newspaper *Woroni* had reported that the man “appeared to attack students of Asian appearance” and that other students had reported that word around campus was that “it was Asian girls that were targeted” (*The Daily Telegraph*, 25 August 2017). The previous month, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group called Antipodean Resistance had posted up, fake-official, “No Chinese Allowed” posters (written in poor Chinese) at Melbourne universities at the start of the new semester.

The bitter reality is that capitalist rule in Australia has created a very racist society. As in all capitalist countries, the ruling big business-owning class - and the state that serves them - consciously promotes racism and nationalism in order to divide the working class people



Left, Charlottesville, USA, August 2017: KKK, Nazis and other far-right filth hold a large hate rally that culminated in one of the white supremacists ramming his car into a crowd of anti-racist counter-protesters (top). One of the brave anti-fascists, Heather Heyer, was killed as a result. From the U.S. to Australia, decaying capitalism has spawned a multiplying swarm of extreme racists. However, it should be noted that while Heyer's killer was at least charged with murder, Elijah's killer who also rammed his vehicle into him was only charged with manslaughter and then acquitted of that charge. As terrible as things are in the U.S., they are even worse here!

that they exploit and to divert the downtrodden masses from rebelling against them. Furthermore, in the particular case of Australia, the mining and big agricultural bosses who make up a significant part of the ruling class know that their tremendous wealth comes from the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land. Thus, they do everything to both perpetuate this injustice and to spread the racist stereotypes that “justify” it. Moreover, the white supremacist sentiments that permeate Australian society are also the ideological reflection of Australian-owned multinational corporations superexploiting labour, plundering natural resources and seizing control of markets in neighbouring



Brisbane, 2 May 2014: Trade unionists form the backbone of an anti-fascist mobilisation – also involving anarchists, Trotskyist Platform supporters and other leftists – that swept the fascist Australia First Party and Golden Dawn off the streets when they tried to rally. We must strive for similar actions that can shut down every event that these and other fascists and racists seek to organise – no matter what the pretext for the event.

predominantly non-white countries like PNG, East Timor, Indonesia, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines. Meanwhile, the fact that these darker-skinned peoples subjugated by Australian imperialism have a lower standard of living than Australian workers makes narrow-minded, bought-off elements within the Australian working class spread the false view that Australian masses should be protected from having their relatively privileged position being diluted into that of the neighbouring peoples by xenophobic policies.

As a result, racism creeps so deeply into every pore of this society that there are hundreds of thousands of garden-variety rednecks in this country - if not more – who on a bad day, given the right excuse to feel aggrieved, could commit the kind of crime that Elijah’s killer did. That, certainly, makes such violence hard but, nevertheless, far from impossible to curb! One thing that needs to be done is that every time that far-right racists hold a public event, mass united action of trade unionists, Aboriginal people, other people of colour and all anti-racists must stop them. A taste of the type of action needed was seen in Brisbane on 2 May 2014 when a large contingent of unionised construction workers joined together with anarchists, Trotskyist Platform supporters and other leftists to shut down an attempted march by the fascist Australia First Party and the Australian chapter of the Greek neo-Nazi, Golden Dawn group. Such mobilisations can intimidate racists into realising that turning their bigoted views into action can bring them negative consequences. If there had been powerful actions to drive white supremacists off the

streets it may have given the racist skinhead who murdered Errol Wyles some pause. And while the murderer of Elijah may have not himself been a member of a far right racist group, if he had seen and heard reports of extreme racists being trounced throughout the country it may have made him doubt that he could get away with running over an Aboriginal child. It could also have made some of the hardcore racists egging on such crimes on Facebook pull their heads in.

Secondly, every time that an Aboriginal person is killed by violent rednecks, cops or prison guards there needs to be determined protest action to demand justice. It is the fact that cops and prison guards have, on every occasion, gotten away with killing an Aboriginal person that gives encouragement to the violent racist proclivities of the likes of Elijah’s killer. This makes the movement against black deaths in custody – or rather against murder in custody – all the more important. To give this movement the strength that it deserves, the trade union movement must mobilise its power behind it. It was a good thing that there were some members of the Maritime Union of Australia, carrying union flags, at the Sydney protest over the sentence of Elijah’s killer. This union support must be broadened and deepened so that it can be turned into protest industrial action against murders in custody of Aboriginal people. When the corporate bosses who run this country have their fabulous profits threatened by workers’ strike action they – and their servants in parliament – will finally start to rein in their thugs in blue.

Such action by the workers movement in defence of Aboriginal people is possible because although most people in this country have a relatively privileged position with respect to most Aboriginal people, this capitalist social order and the state that enforces it is bad for all working class people. It brings unemployment, insecure jobs, a dire shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, a growing gap between rich and poor and education and health care that is becoming increasingly user pays. Today, the same state that murderously oppresses Aboriginal people also attacks the picket lines of striking workers, hounds trade union activists in the construction industry and represses campaigners in support of public housing and other progressive causes. Moreover, the system threatens to, in the future, again plunge humanity into a catastrophic world war. It is, thus, in the very interests of the workers movement to stand shoulder to shoulder with Aboriginal people against the injustices of the racist, rich people's state. Moreover, when the workers movement takes a strong stand against racist atrocities it will help to expel racist sentiments from within its own ranks, which is absolutely essential to building the unity needed to mobilise powerful struggles against the capitalist exploiters.

Thirdly, the racist policies by Australian federal and state governments must be opposed. This means we must oppose the right-wing Turnbull government's expansion of the patronising "Cashless Welfare" schemes. These measures, whose spread is being driven by greedy billionaire Andrew Forrest, not only attacks all the poor but disproportionately targets areas with high proportions of Aboriginal people and other economically disadvantaged people of colour. We must also fight against other forced "income management" schemes and against the

anti-Aboriginal NT intervention. Both of these were started by the Howard Liberal government and then continued and even extended under the rule of the former ALP – and ALP/Greens de-facto coalition – governments. Like the bipartisan policy of imprisoning and deporting refugees, these racist policies incite the sentiments that fuel acts of racist terror – like the murder of Elijah.

That yet more black people are being murdered in custody and that the killer of a 14 year-old Aboriginal child could get away with a sentence so light shows that the situation in this country is indeed desperate for those on the receiving end of racial oppression. Furthermore, the growing racist violence against oppressed first peoples and ethnic and religious minorities in all capitalist countries from Australia, to the U.S., to Germany, Hungary, Russia and Ukraine – and including in ex-colonial capitalist countries like India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Myanmar – points to a future even grimmer than today's. It points to a future where capitalism descends into its most twisted, cruel and violent form: Nazi-style fascism. That is why we must resist now before humanity is plunged into unspeakable calamities. If the working class and all downtrodden mobilise in mass actions to stop white supremacist groups, oppose racist state murders in custody and stand against discriminatory laws, we will be building up our muscles for a decisive onslaught against the racist capitalist order itself. When we do smash this *dog eat dog* system and replace it with a socialist system based on shared ownership of the means of production we will be able to bring out the best in humanity and finally consign the horrific products of capitalist rule, like racism, poverty and sexism to the dustbin of history where they belong.



Aboriginal protestors bravely face off armed police in Kalgoorlie in August 2016 in the wake of the racist killing of 14-year-old Elijah Doughty.

Greedy Aussie Bosses Like to Blame Overseas Producers for Their Job Slashing. Don't Buy Their Lies! Force Them to Retain Their Workforces & Accept Lower Profits!



17 October 2017, Gold Coast: Unionised council workers march on the local council chambers in protest at low pay, unfriendly work rosters and the council's refusal to give job guarantees. United working class action against the Australian bosses is the way to fight for workers' jobs.

1 May 2017 - Over the last five years, Australia's biggest steel corporation, Bluescope Steel, has retrenched 2,000 workers. They said that they had no choice because of competition from overseas steel producers. They cried poor. What a load of horse manure! Three months ago, Bluescope Steel announced a profit, for just half a year, of over 600 million dollars! Meanwhile, the company share's price is six times what it was just five years ago. That means, without doing any work for it, the company's rich owners have increased their wealth held in it by six times while cruelly throwing out of work 2,000 of the workers who made them this fortune.

So who owns this corporate giant? Mainly, very rich local Australians who own shares in it through secretive bank nominee arrangements and through wealth management firms. Among the big shareholders are its executives. Filthy rich, Aussie CEO, Paul O'Malley owns nearly nine million dollars of shares. Another director is Daniel Grollo with an approaching half a million dollar holding. He is also the owner of developer Grocon - notorious for its obsession with suing the CFMEU union in the bosses' courts and for its callous disregard for the safety of workers and bystanders. These Bluescope Steel executives sure do make sure that they are lavishly looked after ... to put it mildly! In the previous financial year, when they threw out of work 500 workers, CEO O'Malley was given a \$7.5 million pay package! That was actually \$3 million more than the previous year. It's almost like they get a bonus for sacking workers!

So Bluescope did **not** lay off thousands of workers ultimately because of competition from overseas. It's simply that the owners and executives of this company wanted to make even more of a killing than they were already making. It's the same reason why sly billionaire

Andrew Forrest, a couple of years ago, cried poor that his Fortescue Metals Group "only" made a 400 million dollar profit and used that as a pretext to throw onto the scrapheap hundreds of the workers that made him his fortune. It is the same reason why the bosses of the big banks, IBM and Toll Group have been slashing jobs in the recent period left, right and centre. For these capitalist bigwigs, having three luxury holiday homes and two spare Porsches are not enough. They want more and are prepared to crush the lives of workers to get it.

A year and a half ago, Bluescope bosses held a gun to workers' heads saying that if they did not accept job cuts and a pay freeze, they would stop steelmaking and 4,500 jobs in the Illawara would be lost. The pro-ALP leaders of the AWU trade union buckled and recommended that workers bow to these demands. They should have, instead, insisted that any attempt to shut down production would result in workers occupying the plants and the big shareholders would, thus, lose all their investments. Bluescope's mates in the NSW Liberal government, meanwhile, granted them \$60 million. Now, three million dollars of that had to go straight away to cover the CEO's

pay rise (no wage freeze for him!) and the rest has gone into boosting the owners' huge profits. Yet, while handing over sacks of money to job-slashing millionaires, the government cries it is short of funds and must slash public housing in the Illawara and Millers Point!

Bluescope's argument that it needed to cut jobs and freeze wages was a bunch of lies! In the year before they were still making over \$136 million in profit and in the year of the big sackings they made over \$353 million. In other words, if we assume that Bluescope's average annual wages bill per worker is around \$90,000, we will find that if Bluescope had not slashed those 500 jobs and even if those workers contributed zero to total revenue (which would, of course, not be the case), the company would still only have lost some 13% of its current profit.

So next time a capitalist boss tells you that they need to cut jobs because of overseas competition you know what to do! **Workers interests lie not in trying to make big business owners more profits but in actually forcing them to accept lower profits by compelling them to retain and, in fact, increase their workforces.** The way we can force them to do this is through the methods that have won working class people all the rights that we have: industrial action and mass struggle. Of course, the capitalists will scream that forcing them to hire more workers at the expense of their profits will "kill investment" and make their operations "unfeasible". To this we will respond: if it is unfeasible for you capitalists to run the economy in a way that provides for and utilises the labour and skills of all workers then we working class people will rip the ownership of the economy out of your hands and put it into our able collective hands.

EVERY DAY SHOULD BE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY!

The dominance of Laborite politics within our unions means that, currently, the struggle for jobs is not focussed on forcing bosses to increase hiring. Instead, our union leaders are pushing for measures to help local bosses do better against overseas rivals. However, such protectionism never works. Just as the workers movement here can call on the government to take measures to favour local firms, workers movements abroad can do the same. The only net result is that the workers of different countries are left divided leaving the bosses everywhere laughing all the way to their respective banks. Note that when Bluescope sacked hundreds of workers and froze wages, it screamed about "unfair" competition and "dumping" from overseas as an excuse. As we have shown that was just a diversion! Protectionist demands to favour local bosses simply plays into the hands of the capitalist exploiters. Of course, sometimes capitalists sing the tune of "free trade" too so that they can use the existence of competition to justify cutting wages and jobs. That is why we should be neither advocating protectionist measures nor free trade, just uniting workers to fight against the capitalists. What we must do, however, is to oppose protectionist appeals – as they serve to divert workers from fighting against their exploiters.

The capitalists and the various political parties that serve them are always blaming someone else for the, job slashing. Most recently, Liberal prime minister Turnbull, aping Donald Trump and extreme racist bigot Pauline Hanson, sought to blame guest workers. Ranting "Australians first," he put additional restrictions on the entry of guest workers. The ALP and many union leaders have responded by saying the changes do not go far enough. Meanwhile, even while calling out the government and ALP for dog whistling to racism, the Greens propose their own additional "local workers first" measures which will, even when presented in a "nice", liberal way, feed into poisonous nationalism too. The truth, however, is that guest workers can hardly be blamed for unemployment when they make up an absolutely tiny 0.7% of the workforce! Like all immigrants, a guest worker employed here not only works but spends money and pays taxes: both of which create jobs. It is true that bosses can especially exploit vulnerable guest workers and use that added level of exploitation to drive down the conditions for all workers. However, we should respond to this not with divisive slogans to "keep out guest workers"

but by demanding equal wages and extra protections for guest workers and, most importantly, by demanding that our guest worker comrades have the rights of citizens so that bosses cannot threaten them with deportation if they resist.

To be as powerful a force as possible, local workers must unite **as one** with our guest worker and overseas worker comrades; and must unite as one across racial and ethnic lines. However, we can only build such a genuine unity if we positively mobilise against every method used by the exploiting class to divide and divert the masses with racism and nationalism. The workers movement must oppose Turnbull's insulting scheme to force new citizenship applicants to accept "Australian values" (as if migrants have a much greater propensity to commit violence against women than existing citizens), must demand freedom for refugees and full citizenship rights for everyone who lives here and must stand by Aboriginal people in their struggle against their ongoing brutal racist oppression.

AFTER 100 YEARS NEVER FORGET THE LESSONS OF THE WORLD'S FIRST SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

If we can orient our unions onto the path of forcing capitalists to retain more workers than is most profitable for them, we can make headway in the struggle for jobs for all. However, we would eventually come up against the very essence of the capitalist system whose existence depends on big business owners being able to maximise profits. That is why our struggle must culminate in the working class seizure of the means of production from the capitalist class. Nearly 100 years ago, the working class and allied toiling peoples proved for all time that this is possible when they made the October 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia. That revolution brought great gains for the masses – not least guaranteed jobs for all and a significantly improved social position for women. If the resulting workers state later became deformed and eventually in 1991-92 destroyed, it was because our side was not strong enough to defeat the revolution's external and internal threats. However, the world's most populous country remains under socialistic rule - despite being weakened by capitalist inroads and bureaucratic deformation. The continued dominance of socialistic state-owned enterprises in the Chinese economy has allowed that country to spectacularly bring hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Even in North Korea where socialistic rule has been quite deformed under immense hostile capitalist pressure, the masses continue to endure the hardships caused by sanctions to defend their workers state against incessant U.S./Australian imperialist threats in the same way that striking workers on a picket line will accept the hardships of struggle in order to fight for a better future. The North Korean masses have indeed been on the picket line in this way for over 70 years! They and those Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese and Laotian people standing by socialistic rule in their countries need our support. This is part of our fight to complete the work that the October 1917 Revolution began – to bring the working class to power throughout the world.

Let's never forget what made the October Revolution possible. One key factor was that the working class was led by a party that fought tooth and nail to defeat every attempt of the capitalist enemy to divide its ranks with racism and national-chauvinism. We, too, here need to build a workers party that will in Lenin's words "declare war to the death on dominant

nation chauvinism." A key part of the fight to ensure that such a program guides the workers movement today – especially in this time of rising protectionism worldwide – is to oppose "Aussie First" economic nationalism and to ensure that the fight to defend jobs is a fight against the capitalist bosses and their relentless drive to minimise labour "costs."



Photo: Bernadette Smith

8 September 2017, Sydney: The Australian Unemployed Workers Union protests outside the offices of Channel 7 who are vilifying unemployed people with "reports" in its Sunrise breakfast show such as "Australia's Worst Dole Bludging Areas Named and Shamed." Speakers at the rally pointed out that with an average of 18 jobseekers for every job vacancy Channel Seven's claim that Newstart recipients are shirkers was completely unfounded. "More and more people are living far below the poverty line under circumstances of hardship and humiliation through no fault of their own and Seven's televised hate speech against jobseekers only makes life harder," said AUWU Inner West branch member, Ms Josie Evans (see: <http://australiandocumentaryphotos.blogspot.com.au/2017/09/stop-war-on-jobseekers-auwu-rally.html>). The placard on the right refers to the fact that in December 2013 the company that owns Channel 7, Seven Group, which is in turned owned by high-living billionaire Kerry Stokes, threw 630 workers out of their jobs at one of its subsidiaries, heavy machinery supplier WesTrac. The cruel job slashing was done in order to boost profits - even though the Channel Seven owner's corporation already made a \$486 million profit the previous financial year!

Male Chauvinism Creeps into Every Corner of Capitalist Australian Society

HOW MISOGYNY *CRUSHED* THE CAREER OF A TALENTED WOMAN

Those serious about opposing the oppression of women are aware of the overall picture in Australia. How women are paid on average 23% less than men. How women's right to abortion is at best tenuous, curtailed and under attack. How domestic violence, bullying and abuse of women is rife. Yet, the reality of women's oppression in capitalist Australia is made up of millions of personal stories. Stories of subjugation, humiliations, abuse, received threats and dashed hopes.

Some women's experiences are worse than others. A working class or other low-income woman tends to cop the worst of male chauvinism because her subordinated and vulnerable socio-economic position leaves her open to misogynist attacks from male bosses, landlords, welfare/public housing bureaucrats, debt collectors and cops. If a low-income, working class woman is of a coloured "ethnic" background and even more so if she is Aboriginal, the racist oppression she can suffer only magnifies her subjugation as a woman *and* as a working class person. In contrast, women from rich ruling class and upper-middle class backgrounds, generally, have greater means to evade the full force of misogyny within society. This can sometimes apply, too, to others lucky enough to get a good education and have promising career prospects. Yet, even some of these women can be unfortunate enough to suffer cruel oppression. We present here the story of one highly educated, once theoretically "upwardly mobile," professional woman whose career was crushed under the weight of Australia's misogynist society. Her work life was turned from great hopes to torment and finally exclusion. This woman, "Rozita H" (not her real name), wants us to tell her story. We here oblige her wishes not only because she fully deserves to be able to air her sufferings but because her experiences help shine a light on the inner workings of this misogynist, capitalist society and the types of people who occupy the echelons of its "respected" classes.

Rozita was born in Iran and migrated to Australia in the 1980s in her late teens. She had wanted to get a high quality education and that time in Iran universities were closed. From watching movies during the era of the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran's rule (which ended in 1979), she had thought that Western countries were places of "advanced

science", "freedom" and "democracy." In time this would all prove to be a cruel illusion.

Rozita put herself through university in Australia, often working ten hour shifts in coffee shops and in aged care to gain the income needed to get by. She eventually graduated with an architecture degree from one of Sydney's most prestigious universities. Rozita wanted to live the life of a skilled professional. Don't get her wrong, she did not have ambitions of being a high-flying capitalist exploiter. Even from that age she was a leftist and, for instance, participated in protests against the first U.S./Australian war on the Iraqi people in 1990/91. However, what Rozita hoped for was an interesting, fulfilling and well-paying job as a professional woman. When you meet her you realise that she really has a lot going for her in addition to the potential benefits that a prestigious degree could be expected to bring her. Rozita is both technically and artistically talented, beautiful, bi-lingual and with an all-round razor sharp mind. Theoretically, according to the *if you are capable and work hard...* principle that capitalist societies supposedly operate according to – the mythical "meritocracy" which even if it were real is still a flawed and anti-egalitarian principle – she was more than on her way to realising her dreams. Indeed, for a while it seemed to Rozita that she was on a pleasant path to success. After qualifying with her Architecture degree she found work in her field. Meanwhile, as she puts it, she enjoyed living the Bohemian inner city life of art and culture, following intellectual pursuits and socialising. However, before long, the reality of being a non-white woman in a racist and male chauvinist society started to come crashing down around her.



The fact that a misogynist who openly bragged about groping women could be elected U.S. president shows how much male chauvinist attitudes dominate capitalist societies. Trump's election in turn serves to reinforce anti-women bigotry.

A WOMAN WHO DARED TO DEFY THE BOYS CLUB

Rozita's first job was in the public sector. However, she soon found that her abilities were not recognised. It was a boys club running the show. Indeed, Rozita points out that, in her experience, having worked in several jobs in the architecture sector, only around 10% of architects are women and the directors and senior architects are always men.

Frustrated at the doors being shut in her face in her public sector role, Rozita moved to the private sector. This proved to be a case of jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire. She was simply not accepted into the workforce. Instead, at some workplaces, her bosses sent the message – slimily packaged in “coded” language to enable them to evade responsibility – that she needed to have sex with them if she was to get a foot up into real projects. Indeed, one male architect she once worked with explained the deal to her with brutally “honest” bigotry:

“Men have designed, built and managed buildings and construction for over 5,000 years. What, do you think we are going to let girls in? We only let girls in to fu_k them!”

Due to this misogynist pressure, Rozita moved jobs several times. She jumped from one “reputable” architecture firm to another but could not escape from a noxious male chauvinist environment. In one of the last firms that she worked at, the misogynist climate was especially severe. One of the directors of the firm was a big bully who she asked us to refer to as “Roy.” Roy's stock in trade was screaming his head off at female employees. He and several other male architects in the firm also made unwanted, overbearing sexual advances at Rozita while being sly enough to cover themselves by thinly veiling their forays. From soon after she joined this firm, Roy made clear to Rozita – as he did to other female employees – that he owned her. His “justification” being, “I bring in millions of dollars to this firm so ...” On one occasion after word had got back to Roy that Rozita was seen at a nightclub dancing with a guy, Roy called in Rozita to tell her that he had heard this and then made clear that if she danced with another guy ... she ought to submit to him!

Because she refused to succumb to the demands of her male bosses, Rozita was excluded from opportunities to use her architectural skills. Instead, she was given tedious draughting tasks that required her to work from 8am to 11pm, five days a week. Exhausted, Rozita told her “superiors” that she needed a break from that work and wanted the opportunity to get involved in an actual architecture project where she could utilise her training. The response from a male director was a series of clearly coded messages such as: “How about mixing business and pleasure?”

Rozita turned to the Human Resources Department hoping for some respite. She explained that she was

being treated arrogantly and denied the opportunity to be involved in actual architectural projects and asked whether there was any problem with the quality of her work. The answer from the Human Resources Manager went something like this:

“No, it has nothing to do with the work you are doing. Roy is very ambitious and if he does not get what he wants he will start screaming.”

As Rozita puts it, the Human Resources Department acted as pimps for the firm's directors. The Human Resources Manager was basically telling Rozita that she ought to submit to Roy saying that “Roy brings in millions of dollars to the firm and Roy always gets what he wants.”

Eventually, Rozita ended up in a situation where she was not only discriminated against and harassed but felt physically threatened. Roy put her on practically meaningless tasks that required her to repeatedly stay back working late. He then, himself, hung around after work doing almost nothing except to invade Rozita's personal space and slouch around in sexually suggestive postures. Knowing how aggressively and abusively Roy had behaved towards her and other female employees, Rozita feared that Roy would one day rape her. *She had to get out!* And she did.

Rozita is rightly proud that she always maintained her dignity and refused to submit to the pressure of her despicable male chauvinist “superiors”. She points out that several other female employees at various firms that she worked at did succumb to the wishes of their male bosses – although Rozita does not judge them. She, herself, has had to pay a heavy price for maintaining her integrity and standing by her principles. The architecture world is dominated by an elite clique of male *mates*. If word gets out that you are a woman who refuses to play the game and what's more has the audacity to defy the big boys then doors are literally shut in your face. As a result, Rozita has been excluded from work in her field. It has been thirteen years since she has had a secure job in the architecture sector. This has been wholly demoralising. It also means that she does it really hard financially. The whole experience has taken a huge financial and emotional toll on Rozita. Fortunately, because of her considerable artistic talents she is able to fall back on art as a pursuit. Others not so lucky to have been endowed with her talents would have found it much harder to cope.

THE INTERSECTION OF RACISM, SEXISM AND CLASS OPPRESSION

So why did all this happen to Rozita? One factor is that most recognisable of “values” of current Australian society – racism. As a person of non-Anglo, non-European heritage, Rozita was immediately pigeon-holed by the arrogant *boys* who ran the architecture world as someone who would be subservient to their demands. She was thought of as someone who could be made to do the most laborious, tedious tasks without expecting any reward. As far as establishment, white supremacist thinking was concerned, that is what coloured people are good for ... and “why we let them into the country anyway.”

Then there is that most obvious aspect of what Rozita endured – male chauvinism. Discrimination against women and misogyny are fundamental features of all capitalist societies. Marxists understand that the particular form of social organisation that we call the state – with its standing army and police forces, prisons, legal system and bureaucracy – first made its appearance on Earth only once human societies began to divide into mutually exclusive and opposing classes of exploiters and exploited, rich and poor, powerful rulers and oppressed subjects who are ruled over. The ruling class has always, necessarily, been made up of a smaller number of privileged people than the masses whom they exploit and so, in order to maintain their wealth, status and power this ruling class requires the use of all the various mechanisms of state from the big stick that their bully boys wield to the propaganda penned by their faithful scribes in the media. This has been true all through the ever evolving history of the state from its origins in ancient slave-owning societies such as in Greece and Rome, through to the medieval, feudal period with its “divine right” of kings and robber barons to rule over peasants and serfs and then on to our “modern” period where it is the capitalists, the merchants, bankers and traders who have gained ascendancy over the mass of workers and who extract their wealth, primarily, through the wage labour system.

But before the advent of these various systems of mass exploitation and the state which maintains such patently unfair social organisations in place, human societies – such as was in the case in Australia before British invasion, for instance – were, generally, organised into a federation of clan groups. And such societies, based on systems of kinship and kindness, knew nothing of exploitation,

the discrimination against women or misogyny. The oppression of women was given birth to when society was first divided into classes of exploiters and exploited – and capitalism, we Marxists know, will be the last form of class society.

Part of the essence of class-divided societies like capitalism is that land and means of production, rather than being the common property of all, are owned by some private individuals while many others own no such productive property at all. For those lucky enough to own productive property – no matter how small – a key part of their existence is driven by a preoccupation with passing on their property to male heirs. However, so as to be sure that their wealth isn’t claimed by the patriarch of another family, these males want their property to be passed on to heirs who are **indisputably** theirs. This obsession with handing down their property to their own heirs and, thus, with ensuring that their wives do not bear children to other men drive these propertied males’ compulsion to socially – and, thus, economically – isolate their wives. Meanwhile, the greedy ruling class under capitalism does not want to actually pay people to conduct the essential tasks of housework and child rearing. And so it is held incumbent upon women to, without any pay, conduct these important social functions; work that in original human civilisations – including those of most of Australia’s Aboriginal nations – had humanely and quite rightly been carried out as the collective responsibility of whole communities. The combined result of women being almost exclusively burdened with doing unpaid housework and the partial – or in worst cases almost complete – straightjacketing of women by their husbands results in women’s (on average) greatly reduced opportunity to participate equally in economic life. Herein lies the material basis for women’s subjugation under capitalism. When a woman, because of her burdens and restrictions, is financially reliant on a male partner, she is almost inevitably going to have an unequal relationship with him. In the worst cases it means that if that partner is violent or otherwise abusive, she is presented with the agonising “choice” between leaving that partner and living an impoverished life (along with her children if she is a mother) or suffering under the tyrant at home. [See “The Struggles of a Single Mother Living in Sydney’s West: Kushi Demands Justice and a Better Life” in *Trotskyist Platform* Issue 12 which can be found at <http://trotskyistplatform.com/Kushi.html>.]



Cadet journalist, Amy Taeuber, was cruelly sacked by Channel 7 after she made a sexual harassment complaint against an older male reporter over a series of incidents where he allegedly made disparaging remarks about her marital status and appearance and mockingly labelled her sexual preference. Sexist bullying of women workers is rife in Australian workplaces.



Union nurses and midwives march in Melbourne. Women employed in working class jobs are able to unite in unions with each other and with their male co-workers to stand up against both exploitation and sexist bullying and harrassment by bosses.

The reality of economic and social subjugation of women breeds a foul male chauvinist ideology that reflects this oppressive reality. This ideology, expressed in mainstream attitudes, media, government, religion and all sorts of social taboos, customs and “social norms” in turn “rationalises”, perpetuates and reinforces women’s second class status. Even compared to other capitalist societies, misogyny is especially vile in Australia. The brutal nature of capitalist White Australia’s foundation as a convict colony and the ongoing violent dispossession of and horrific acts of genocide against Australia’s First Peoples has, necessarily, brutalised all aspects of this society ever since – including gender relations. Women who are doing it hard financially and who are dependent on male partners or family are most vulnerable in such a violently misogynist society. Yet, just like relatively wealthy, dark-skinned people are not immune to the horror of White Australia racism, even financially independent women with good economic prospects can be bowled over in this capitalist society by powerful blasts of misogyny.

Rozita was not financially dependent on a male partner or other male family members. However, she was in economic terms at the mercy of other men – her male bosses at the architecture firms she worked at. They had the “right” under this system to determine what work she got and didn’t get and the power to sack her. That’s why it took such strong principles on her part to defy them. In a formal sense these bosses were not called “bosses.” In the architecture world, as in many other lofty professions, they were known as “partners” and “directors.” However, the reality is that in big architectural firms, the labour of junior and other non-partner architects like Rozita – in this case

their intellectual labour – was exploited by the partners in order to generate profit for themselves. The junior and other non-partner architects are, thus, denied part of the fruit of their own labour. In **that** sense, those in Rozita’s position are no different to process workers at a factory, construction workers at a building site or mine workers at a mine. Increasingly in today’s economy there are many workers whose main form of labour is intellectual – like many IT help desk and support staff, laboratory workers and CAD draughties – who are exploited just like other workers in the so-called blue collar workplace.

However, there is an important difference between the position of junior and other non-partner architects in big architectural consulting firms and that of, say, factory workers. And that is that many of the non-partner architects have hopes of, one day, becoming a “partner” themselves: that is, a small-scale, capitalist boss. What’s more, they not only have the education to one day become a “boss” too but have, moreover, even some probability of one day “rising” to such a position. It is this – and not their pay levels – which makes junior architects and others in similar positions in other professions more middle class in their reality and outlook. Working class people have a much lower probability – and, hence, less hope – of one day becoming a capitalist profiteer. What working class people do have, however, that most of those in middle class professions often don’t even realise that they are missing, is the very real chance to solidarize *shoulder to shoulder* in a powerful and organized collective unity alongside their working class comrades. And it is this factor that is the very key to the future of society.

THE UNITED WORKING CLASS – WITH WOMEN WORKERS AS THE SPEARHEAD – WILL LEAD THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN’S EMANCIPATION

Ironically, the very same reason that even junior architects are considered privileged and middle class with respect to proletarian workers also makes them, at the same time, more vulnerable to being bullied by their bosses. The hopes of one day becoming a partner in the firm gnaw away at bonds of solidarity between mistreated and exploited junior professionals. Many seek to nudge each other out of the way in their rival bids to reach the top. That is why non-partner architects are not, at this time, in droves forming themselves into unions to collectively fight for their rights. It would not be until a mass working class upsurge emerges for union consciousness to widely seep into these layers of society.

The ambitious, middle class outlook of even exploited non-partner architects in the current period meant that Rozita never had anyone to really stand up for her – or even offer meaningful moral support – in all the times she suffered at various architectural firms. This is quite different to what could happen if she was one of a group of proletarian workers at a workplace. Especially if there is a workplace with a strong union presence, workers may well stand together to try and challenge sexual or other harassment of a co-worker by a boss. A genuine class struggle union leadership would be prepared to unleash union industrial action to punish the bosses for any sort of bullying of any worker. If the harassment came from a co-worker they would organise for all the other workers to drag this worker aside and resolutely reprimand and, if necessary, even severely punish him.

That is why it is the working class – with women workers at the forefront – that will lead the struggle for women’s liberation. We saw glimpses of this in the hundreds of proud women trade unionists who formed the backbone of the 2017 and 2018 International Women’s Day marches in Sydney. The organised working class will be the spearhead of the struggle for women’s emancipation and not only because workers’ solidarity, expressed through workers’ unions, can stand up to sexist bullying at work and demand equal pay for women workers. The working class’ interests lie in seeing the overthrow of the capitalist system – the system under which workers’ labour is exploited by business owners and under which many workers are condemned to economic insecurity and unemployment – and its replacement with the system that embodies workers’ interests, socialism. In fighting for such a revolutionary change, the working class is simultaneously struggling *against* the system upon which women’s oppression is based and *for* a system that will lay the basis for women’s emancipation. Socialism will enable women to win full economic independence by providing jobs for all workers for as many hours as each worker needs and by making the society and community responsible for the crucial tasks of housework and child rearing that are today, still, largely performed by women as unpaid labour. Thus, a socialist society would provide free pre-school education, free 24-hour childcare, free school lunches at all schools as well after-school sports, music and cultural activities provided for free by the state alongside free transport from school to and from these activities. It is simply natural for a socialist society to take these measures needed to enable women’s full participation in social and economic life since that participation maximises production and enriches society culturally. To not utilise women’s full potential is not only unfair and oppressive – it is also a terrible waste! However, the capitalist system does not operate on such

rational considerations as the maximisation of total society-wide economic and artistic output. It operates solely on the basis of what is most profitable for the individual private bosses who run society.

The social and industrial power of women workers to fight for both women’s equality and workers’ rights comes as part of a united class that also, of course, includes male workers. However, male workers are shaped by a society whose media, customs, organised religion and social norms are flooded with male chauvinist attitudes. Furthermore, in this class society, where hierarchical relations between people are normalised and even celebrated, many a male worker who is exploited and bullied by his boss at work finds “solace” in being a tyrant to his female partner at home. Needless to say, such male chauvinism within the workers movement is not only poisonous to a working class fight for women’s rights but to the unity needed for workers to fight for their jobs, wages and conditions. There needs to be a determined struggle by the most conscious, enlightened workers to drive out such male chauvinism from the workers movement. This struggle is part of a broader fight to turn the working class from what it currently is – a class shaped by all the backwardness imparted into it by capitalist society – into a class that becomes aware of what it needs to do to liberate itself and all the oppressed and look with clear, unfettered eyes toward a brighter future. It is a struggle to not only purge the workers movement of male chauvinism but also of racism, nationalism and the corrosive illusions in capitalist “democracy.” It is a struggle to build a revolutionary workers party that will unite the working class, make it champion the cause of all the downtrodden and lead it in struggles that will culminate in the overturn of capitalism and the commencement of the construction of a new socialist society. When a future socialist society enables women to have complete economic independence then this will, over time, drastically change society’s attitudes, customs and behaviour.

The revolutionary party of the masses indispensable to this triumph of socialism and women’s liberation will oblige those who take the responsibility of putting themselves in the vanguard of the struggle to stand with the greatest courage, never sell out their principles under pressure and not fear making enormous sacrifices for the cause. We should be confident that many will flock to this task – especially from amongst the most oppressed sections of the masses including women, Aboriginal people, persecuted migrant-derived “ethnic” groups, LGBTI people and the lowest paid workers. As Rozita has shown, there are indeed strong people out there who are prepared to stand their ground in the face of the oppressors and refuse to compromise on their principles.

Send Packer's Barangaroo Project Packing & Stop the Sell-off of Public Housing in Millers Point!

BILLIONAIRE JAMES PACKER'S HIGH FLYING EXECUTIVES JAILED BY CHINA FOR CORRUPTION

10 July 2017 - *This really isn't happening, is it?* Is James Packer, one of Australia's richest people, really having his interests severely curtailed by state authorities? The same James Packer who is used to having troublesome laws magically disappear for his benefit? The same James Packer before whom Australian mainstream politicians and state officials, alike, prostrate themselves like so many minions? Did sixteen high flying executives of his Crown Group really get sentenced to up to ten months jail for corruption related charged? Seriously? Why, yes, it did happen! Except not in Australia. The executives were jailed in the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Red China, that is! In Australia, Packer and the other most powerful of the tycoons who run this country are effectively above the law. But in the PRC it is a different story. Under the PRC's system it is public ownership (albeit in a deformed and fragile manner) that dominates and not the interests of rich private sector bigwigs. And now, in what must have been quite a rude shock for them, the greedy James Packer and all of his executives have found that out for themselves.

Two weeks ago on June 26, all the Crown Group staff that were arrested last October in China pleaded guilty to charges of illegally luring high rollers to Packer's casinos abroad – especially ones in Australia. This is illegal in China. The PRC, understandably, wants to stop casinos being used to subvert its strict control on money movements by the rich. It also does not want casino accounts to be used by corrupt wealthy individuals to hide or move tainted money.

Among the bosses who have been jailed in China are three high flying Australian executives including one of Crown's most senior executives – head of VIP operations, Jason O'Connor. However, three of the Crown staff arrested last year were not executives. Unlike the other sixteen they were given bail shortly after arrest. Although they also pleaded guilty during the trial they did not receive any jail sentences or fines. That seems fair that non-executives are spared punishment. However, the sixteen jailed really were high fliers paid huge salaries. Court documents reveal that Crown paid O'Connor an annual bonus alone of three quarters of a million Australian dollars! (<https://calvinayre.com/2017/07/10/casino/court-chinese-vips-lost-600m-crown-resorts-casinos/>). One of the family members of the executives even turned up to the court hearing in a

Rolls Royce! (see: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-26/crown-casino-staff-jailed-in-china-over-gambling-crimes/8652430>). Many of the other relatives of the accused and duly convicted executives left the court in a convoy of black Audis.

Packer and his Crown Group knew that what they were doing in China was illegal. Chinese authorities had specifically warned them and given them a whole year to comply. However, they are so used to getting their way in Australia that they thought the same would apply in China. As one Murdoch journalist put it, from his capitalist point of view, when addressing the lessons for the Western corporate elite to be drawn from the Crown bosses' trial:

The wider lessons include the danger of believing one understands China and can compute the risks of operating there, when one doesn't. James Packer has had much less to say on China since so many of his employees were jailed. Four years ago he told the Asia Society how "it often amazes me that so many senior corporate leaders, public servants and MPs have not made the trip to China and still view it as a communist state.

"Lesson No. 1: China is a communist state." *The Australian*, 27 June 2017



Billionaire James Packer and his Crown Group executives are largely above the law in this country. However, in China, three high-flying Australian Crown bosses who were engaged in devious activities that undermined China's ability to crack down on corrupt rich people were jailed at a Shanghai detention centre (Left). That was a far cry from the lavish lifestyle of Crown-owned luxury hotels and private jets (Right) that these greedy executives – and the high rollers they court – normally cruise in.

BARANGAROO FOR EVERYONE – NOT JUST THE RICH

One effect of China's jailing of Packer executives is that it has dented his project in Sydney's harbourside Barangaroo area. In this project, Crown Group will run an exclusive, members only, high rollers casino and a six-star hotel that only the very rich will be able to afford to stay in. Although we do not support calls for banning gambling in Australia, it is an atrocity that public land in an iconic spot should be reserved for a resort that only the rich could afford to utilise and all that so that a greedy billionaire can get even richer. Furthermore, the way that Packer got approval for this project was a shocker. Laws and regulations simply melted away as ruling class politicians and state institutions fell over themselves to allow his Crown Group to grab public land at Barangaroo for their luxury resort complex.

Worst of all, the needs of Packer's luxury resort project is a significant part of what is driving the NSW government's obsessive push to kick out public housing tenants from the very nearby Millers Point and the Rocks. This is something that the public housing tenants in the area have long understood. In an article published in the 2017 edition of the *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, University of Technology Sydney academic Professor Alan Morris, highlights a "remarkable statement in October 2012 by the then NSW Finance Minister when he announced that the government was considering selling off public housing in Millers Point as the homes were perceived to be not compatible with the Barangaroo development." The headline points of that high profile government press release were reported at the time in the 26 October 2012 issue of *The Sydney Morning Herald* (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/residents-stick-to-their-point-of-community-20121025-288bh.html>). This statement, made in the period leading up to the government's announcement that it was selling off nearly 300 public housing units in the area and claiming that, "much of the Land and Housing Corporation's portfolio at Millers Point is poorly suited for social housing," revealingly asserted that: "Inevitably, when considering the future of Millers Point, the government needs to consider it in the context of all of the surrounding areas, including the Barangaroo redevelopment area." In other words, having working class people in the area is an "eyesore" for the wealthy clientele who will frequent the resort that Packer expects to make billions from. Meanwhile, the NSW government is determined to clear out working class tenants in order to also help its rich developer mates make a fortune from turning Millers Point into luxury accommodation for resort executives and patrons.

Just consider what all this means from a historical point of view. Before 1788 a warm, welcoming and friendly society existed in the area now called Barangaroo. It was the society of the Gadigal nation of the Eora Aboriginal people. However, the invading forces committed terrible massacres against the Gadigal. After heroic resistance, 90% of the Gadigal nation was then wiped out by smallpox deliberately introduced by officers in the first fleet. Later this area became the Darling Harbour dockyards. The bosses brutally exploited workers. But workers formed unions and fought for their rights. They were still exploited but won improved conditions through union struggle. And 110 years ago, unions fought for and won public housing in this area and working class people subsequently built a close-knit community. However, now after the docks have been moved, the ruling class is clearing out the public housing. And they are making a key part of Barangaroo a preserve only for those rich enough to get entry into a luxury resort. In other words, in 230 years that area has gone from the warm, inclusive society of the Gadigal to its diametric opposite: an exclusive area for the rich, serving the interests of a greedy billionaire and where the masses are not able to live anywhere in its vicinity.

However, China's crackdown on Crown could derail Packer's Barangaroo plans. If Crown is not able to get away with luring high rollers from China it makes the planned high rollers casino much less profitable. For, although the proportion of high rollers in China is much smaller than in Australia, the country is so huge, with a population sixty times that of Australia, that numerically there is still a big market from there. And especially given that gambling is banned in mainland China, Packer had been hoping for a sizeable part of his Barangaroo income to come from there.

June 24, Barangaroo, Sydney: Public housing tenants, a group of proudly unionised dock workers and other leftist supporters of public housing rally to welcome China's prosecution of Crown executives, to stand against the handover of public land at Barangaroo to James Packer and to oppose the Packer casino project-driven sell-off of public housing at Millers Point.

Photo: Trotskyist Platform



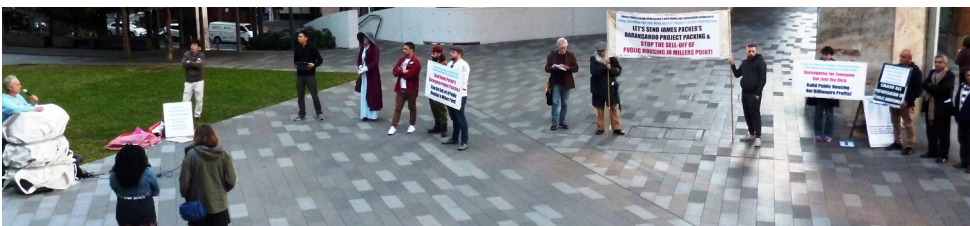
THE POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S CRACKDOWN

The jail sentences that the PRC authorities handed out to the Crown bosses could have been tougher. However, given that the executives were not charged with bribery or erosion of state-owned assets (in China the latter is considered an especially big crime), they were always going to get lighter sentences than the Rio Tinto executives - including Australian Stern Hu - who were also convicted on corruption charges in China seven years ago. Furthermore, the jail terms, while moderate, still act as a deterrent to Crown luring Chinese high rollers to gamble at overseas casinos. This has been shown by Packer abandoning his stake in the Macau Casino. Indeed, Packer has become so desperate to prove to Chinese authorities that he is no longer trying to lure high rollers from China that his Crown Group has, since the arrests of its executives, closed almost all their offices in the whole of Asia! He doesn't want to be seen to be using offices in other parts of Asia to lure customers from China. As a result, seven Crown offices from Macau to Thailand to Singapore and Indonesia have suddenly vanished. Moreover, in negotiations with Chinese authorities in the leadup to the trial of their high flying executives, Crown would have had to give assurances that it would pull back from seeking Chinese customers.

So the deterrence effect of China's imprisonment of Crown high fliers may still be sufficient enough to reduce Packer's expected revenue from Chinese clients and this may make his Barangaroo project unviable. Indeed, in the wake of the PRC's initial arrests of Crown bosses, Crown's income from its high rollers program at its existing Australian casinos has plunged by some 40% to 50% (see: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/retail/crown-resorts-profit-slumps-on-fall-in-vip-revenue-jobs-set-to-go-20170222-guj42b.html>). We will have to wait and see over the coming months whether the subsequent jailings will kill his Sydney luxury resort project. If it does then it would open up the possibility that this Barangaroo area in a picturesque part of Sydney could, as it should, become available for public use - like public recreation space or public housing. Furthermore, it would remove one of the drivers pushing the government's privatisation of public housing in Millers Point - thus making it more likely that the government would make concessions if faced with powerful enough resistance actions by Millers Point activists and their supporters. Although the government has already driven out most of the members of the public housing community from their homes, it is still possible to save and reoccupy many of the homes for public housing before they are all sold off to

wealthy developers and speculators.

Even if the Barangaroo luxury resort is not killed off, the jailing of the executives is still a rare blow against a billionaire Australian capitalist. It is notable that one of the news headlines in Australia announcing the sentences refer to "James Packer all at sea as Crown staff jailed and fined in Chinese court." Moreover, the PRC's crackdown on Packer's henchmen can give confidence to working class people that the tycoons who lord it over everyone in Australia are not invincible and we should, especially, stress that point. Furthermore, because the executives pleaded guilty they have basically proven that Packer and his Crown corporation are, indeed, thoroughly corrupt. No matter how the media spins the guilty pleas, this can only discredit Packer and his corporation in the eyes the masses. All this should give renewed vigour to those opposed to the handover of public land at Barangaroo to a greedy billionaire, to those fighting the sell off of public housing in Millers Point and to all working class people engaged in other struggles against exploitation and against the tyranny of the tycoons of Australia.



June 24 protest at Barangaroo, Sydney.

Photo: Trotskyist Platform



WHY THE CRACKDOWN ON PACKER'S CORPORATION COULD TAKE PLACE IN CHINA

Two days before the Shanghai court trial of the Crown executives, public housing tenants, a group of proudly unionised dock workers and other leftist supporters of public housing rallied in Sydney against James Packer and the Crown bosses. We welcomed China's prosecution of the Crown executives, opposed the handover of public land at Barangaroo to James Packer and opposed the Packer casino project-driven sell off of public housing at Millers Point. Demonstrators chanted: "Defend public housing - Give Packer the boot." Also knowing that the Peoples Republic of China has so spectacularly increased its provision of public housing by providing over 40 million additional places in the last seven years, while Australian governments have slashed the amount of public housing places here by over 13 thousand, we chanted: "Public housing for you and me - Just like in the PRC!"

Speaking at this rally at the entrance to Barangaroo from Wynyard Station, a key Millers Point public housing activist, Peter Muller, denounced Packer's Barangaroo project and received enthusiastic applause when he declared that the struggle to save public housing in the area is far from over. Wayne Sonter, the then secretary of the Sydney district committee of the Communist Party of Australia, stressed in his speech how, "the politicians and bureaucrats and the shadowy corporate players behind them" hold the people in contempt:

"This rally poses a simple question – *The People or Packer?*

"Is development on this key city site to be for the public good or for the profit takers?

"...So here, at Barangaroo, the choice confronts us clearly – are we to let government of the sort that supports ratbags like Packer and his goons, caught in criminal activity and facing trial in China, to continue? Or is it time for us to draw a line and say, 'No more! We the people, we the workers assert our sovereignty and our power.'"

Sara Fitzenmeyer, chairwoman of Trotskyist Platform, the group that called the demonstration, highlighted the "eerie resonances" between what James Packer and the NSW government have been doing to public housing tenants in nearby Millers Point and "the avoidable tragedy that caused the death of up to hundred people in the Grenfell Tower fire in the UK's capital city of London":

"Firstly, the authorities here have shown the same contempt for public housing tenants as they do in capitalist England - nobody listened to tenants' concerns and the capitalist governments don't work with the interests of the working class ever in mind.

"... Just as Packer and the government want to get rid of Millers Points tenants because having working class people in the area in modest housing is considered to be an eyesore for the wealthy clientele expected at Packer's luxury resort, the housing authorities in London used cheap panelling over the Grenfell Tower in an attempt to stop the tower being an eyesore to nearby rich residents. It was this very cheap panelling that was the reason why that fire spread with such deadly speed. All part of an overall gentrification program in the Kensington area of central London which has been described as 'regeneration work' that 'amounted to ethnic and class cleansing.' And class cleansing - social cleansing - is what the ruling class is doing in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area.

"Except actually it is they who need to be cleansed. This greedy capitalist ruling class not only exploits working class people like crazy but they are dishonest and corrupt as hell. Here in capitalist Australia, these bourgeoisie are celebrated. They get away with whatever they please. They sit right up at the very peak of the capitalist pyramid. But it is a different story in socialistic China."

Rally speakers from Trotskyist Platform, pointed out that it was possible to bring the Crown Group to justice in China because in the PRC tycoons have far less influence than they do in capitalist Australia. This is because in socialistic China, despite the ruling bureaucracy implementing a degree of harmful privatisation in the 1980s and 1990s, the commanding heights of the economy remain under the socialistic umbrella public ownership. So all the biggest banks, biggest energy companies, biggest mines, biggest telcos, all the major ports, car, rail and aircraft manufacturers and around 90% of the biggest 100 companies in mainland China are state-owned. That means that the billionaires there, while they have some influence, have much less than they do, here, in capitalist Australia. They cannot threaten to withdraw their production and assets from a project to get their way because the main productive assets are still publicly owned in the PRC. The dominance of an economy based on socialistic, public ownership of the key sectors is possible there because – albeit in a deformed way – the working class still retains state power in China flowing from the 1949 anti-capitalist revolution. That the PRC is some sort of workers state means that those billionaire exploiters that do exist in China often face crackdowns. As the rally mc explained:

"Fittingly, twelve days ago when it was first announced that Packer's executives would go to trial, it also emerged that one of China's most prominent billionaires, Wu Xiaohui, head of Anbang insurance, has also been detained over corruption. Indeed even though China has a much lower overall rate of imprisonment than Australia, in China one out of every six people who have appeared on rich lists have either been investigated, jailed or indeed executed. That is why the nickname they have in China for the rich lists is 'pig killing lists.' I love that: 'pig killing list.' This curbing of the capitalists is a great thing for the Chinese masses and as we are seeing with the Crown Group arrests a good thing for working class people here too."



Photo: Millers Point Action Group

Left: Another one bites the dust! Former Chinese capitalist Liu Han during his 2014 trial. He had been one of China's richest people and one of its few mining billionaires (since most of China's major mines and energy sector are under public ownership). However, the Ferrari-loving tycoon was executed for corruption and gangsterism. While the Peoples Republic of China's legal system targets the big end of town, capitalist Australia's "justice" system targets, most severely, working class people and Aboriginal people.

Above Right: In the dead of night, a worker recently evicted from Millers Point public housing is arrested and roughed up by NSW riot police during the August 6 occupation by trade unionists and other supporters of public housing of Millers Point houses slated for privatisation.

When capitalists and their henchmen, people like Wu Xiaohui or the Crown bosses, are curtailed in China then that has crucial significance for the direction of that country. This is because the working class rule that exists in China is, unfortunately, fragile. The capitalists that have been allowed to emerge in the PRC are able to buy some degree of influence. Through this influence and through the pressure of a layer of right wing economists, lawyers, academics, journalists, so-called dissidents and pro-capitalist elements within the wavering bureaucracy itself, the PRC's socialistic system is under threat. However, whenever there's a crackdown on capitalists there this gives encouragement to those genuinely pro-socialist elements seeking to resist capitalist restorationist forces. Seizing on such anti-capitalist crackdowns, determined workers and genuine servants of the masses must fight to smash all political influence of the capitalists and restrict the private sector in China to the level that is actually needed for its transition to socialism.

That the socialistic system that has kept the billionaires from power in China is under real threat makes it all the more important that supporters of working class interests around the world stand by the PRC against the forces pushing for capitalist counterrevolution. That means we must defend the Chinese workers state against Western imperialist military threats, for example, by U.S. and Australian warships sailing provocatively through the South China Sea. We also need to expose and deconstruct all the various propaganda campaigns against socialistic China that are constantly foisted upon the masses in the West.

That it was the workers state in China, as deformed as it is, that was able to strike a blow against a billionaire so powerful and well connected as James Packer, highlights the necessity to fight for a workers state here in Australia. As Trotskyist Platform activist, Samuel Kim, emphasised when addressing the June 24 rally:

"In Australia, the rich are getting richer and the poor and the workers are creeping towards more and more poverty. Billionaires like James Packer together with the Gina Rineharts, Andrew Forrests, the Pratt family and the Lowys and the other capitalist billionaires have incredible power and influence... and, likewise, the entire bureaucracy, this establishment with its police, commissions, courts are acting in the interests of the likes of these billionaires against the interests of the poor and working people. However, despite this, it is the working class that creates the wealth of the billionaires, the masses of poor and workers outnumber these elite and corrupt few.

"... Workers need permanent secure jobs, we need to cut billionaire profits, we need to stop billionaires slashing jobs. We say let's make the greedy billionaires and the ruling class increase hiring at the cost of their profits. If they complain that this will ruin the economy then we working class people need to take the economy out of their hands. We need to put the means of production into our collective hands and run a socialist economy. Sisters and brothers – we have had enough of the tyranny of the tycoons. Let us fight towards a state where we, the working class people, run society. A future workers state will ensure that abominations like the Crown Barangaroo resort and the sell off of public housing will be things of the past."

“AUSTRALIANS FIRST” ECONOMIC NATIONALISM FUELS RACIST HOSTILITY TO REFUGEES AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR

10 July 2017: It was a video so openly racist that even right-wing senator Derryn Hinch said it “could be an ad for the Ku Klux Klan.” This ALP video saying that it would “Employ Australians First” had visuals where nearly all the Australians shown were white Anglos. The ad which was released two months ago had an unmistakable racist message: white people had to be supposedly protected from having their jobs taken away by non-white people. Like the Turnbull government’s moves to make citizenship harder to get based on the racist premise that a migrant’s allegiance to values such as respect for women is more doubtful than an existing citizen’s – even though the horrific level of violence against women here is actually much higher than that of many countries like China where migrants are coming from – Bill Shorten’s video can only engender antagonism to refugees and people of colour. Meanwhile, that the ALP chose not to even include Aboriginal people in its image of “Australians” highlights not only the despicable nature of the ad but also the deep oppression that this country’s first peoples suffer under.



The ALP’s advertisement that shamelessly dog whistled to racism. Even when made less blatantly than in this ad, any demands that call for putting the interests of (mainly white) Australian workers over (overwhelmingly coloured) lower paid workers from “Third World” countries will inevitably appeal to and reinforce White Australia xenophobic attitudes as well as “First World” arrogance.

No doubt aware that the Labor Party retains support from working class people from various “ethnic” backgrounds, ALP frontbencher Anthony Albanese called the ad a “shocker.” However, even if the ALP’s “Australians First” video had several people of colour in it, the ad would still be a shocker. For one, given that this country is still majority white in composition and that the majority of visa workers are people of colour, any counterposing of local peoples’ interests against those of foreign workers necessarily incites racist hostility to non-white people from Asian, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, African and Latin American backgrounds – whether those people are foreigners or Australians. Moreover, setting up local citizens as job market rivals of foreigners inevitably creates resentment towards guest workers, refugees and international students. Such xenophobic hostility then flows on towards Australians from coloured “ethnic” backgrounds. Economic-based prejudice is, indeed, the main stem of the noxious weed of racism that is currently overrunning Australia. It is the completely unfounded fear that refugees, migrants and guest

workers will take up scarce jobs and affordable housing and use up dwindling public services which is at the root of the racist problem. Such resentment is consciously promoted by the capitalist bigwigs, the media that they own and the mainstream political parties that do their bidding. This exploiting class seeks to divert the masses from identifying them, the filthy rich big business owners, as the real cause of the people’s economic difficulties.

After his video was attacked, it was easy for Shorten to shrug it off by saying “the lack of diversity” in it was “a bad oversight.” However, for many coloured people, such nationalist ravings translate into being vilified and physically attacked on the streets. A report released today by Charles Sturt University detailed 243 verified cases of racist attacks on Muslims in just a 14 month period. Those reported incidents form just a tiny fraction of actual cases. Showing the link between racism and misogyny, the study found that more than two-thirds of those attacked were women.

Although Australia is especially racist, hostility towards minorities and refugees is growing in all capitalist countries. The more their economies falter, the more the rulers promote racist and protectionist “solutions.” Meanwhile, increasing rivalries between the capitalist powers – seen, for example, in heightened trade tensions between the U.S. and the German-led European imperialists – further stoke reactionary nationalism. Yet, even in “Third World” capitalist countries like India racist incidents are on the rise – in the case of India involving Hindu-chauvinist attacks. Indeed, our planet’s one large country not plagued by rampant racist attacks is a socialistic one: China.



Asylum seekers caged up by the Australian regime in its Manus Island detention centre. Economic nationalism helps fuel the popular prejudices that provide support for this savage treatment of refugees.

DOWN WITH ECONOMIC NATIONALISM! FIGHT FOR JOBS FOR ALL BY STANDING UP TO THE JOB-SLASHING CAPITALISTS!

The notions behind “Australians First” agendas simply don’t stack up. Refugees and guest workers all spend money here and pay taxes. They, hence, create as many jobs as they occupy. As long as the current social order prevails, no matter how few people there are in the country there will always be a significant rate of unemployment. This is because the rich business owners will – if they are allowed to – only hire as few people as maximises their profits. Whenever unemployment falls these bosses are less able to keep wages down and less able to threaten workers with the sack, making them reluctant to hire any more which in turn pushes unemployment back up. Moreover, the notion that guest workers are the cause of joblessness is ludicrous given that they make up much less than 1% of the workforce! It is true that bosses seek to use severe exploitation of foreign visa workers – as they do with vulnerable local workers like apprentices and casual workers – to undercut overall working conditions. However, that only underscores the need for the union movement to fight to ensure the highest wages, union coverage and, crucially, full rights of citizenship for all guest workers, refugees and overseas students.

As well as calling to “Employ Australians First,” the Donald Trump-like ALP ad also promised to “Build Australian First and Buy Australian First.” Such measures won’t save local jobs! For just as politicians can push such schemes here, their counterparts abroad can respond with similar measures which would then hurt Australia’s exports. Indeed, all agendas that counterpose the interests of Australian workers to guest workers or to goods produced by workers abroad actually harm the fight for workers’ jobs. For by dividing workers and by diverting them from struggle against the capitalist bosses they undercut the one fight that can immediately win more jobs – a trade union struggle to force bosses to increase hiring. Yet, such a struggle that impinges on the fundamental “rights” of the capitalists is alien to the ALP and most of our current, pro-ALP union leaders. The ALP seeks to satisfy its working class base by merely extracting modest concessions from the capitalists while seeking acceptance from the latter. That is why it is left with little to offer on jobs except divisive

protectionism. When the Turnbull government, with much fanfare, announced a slashing of the guest worker program, sadly many of our union leaders demanded the measures go further rather than mobilising actions to win equal rights for these workers.

Nationalism from the Labor Party and pro-ALP union leaders is especially harmful since it is they who currently lead the working class – the one class which has a consistent interest in opposing both racism and nationalism since both undermine the unity so crucial to any successful struggle for workers rights. Yet, national chauvinism is far from the preserve of the social democracy. The right-wing Turnbull regime – pushed ever further by Tony Abbott’s hardliners – fiercely oppresses refugees. Then there is the extreme racism of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation, the anti-Muslim tirades of Jacqui Lambie and the fervent protectionism of the Nick Xenophon team.



Workers with origins from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific are at the forefront of many union struggles within Australia. However, economic nationalism against overseas workers, with its implicit White Australia xenophobic content, inevitably rebounds as hostility against non-white workers within Australia too. This intimidates these workers and, thus, weakens the overall workers movement.

Photo: <https://www.megaphone.org.au/petitions/australia-wants-fair-food>

Now the Greens have at least correctly called out some of Labor's economic nationalist appeals as dog whistling to racism. However, the Greens push their own fervent protectionist schemes including calling for crackdowns on the guest worker program and restrictions on overseas-made steel. Even much of the Far Left acquiesces to economic nationalism. Both the Socialist Alliance group and Socialist Alternative – who have both been active in the refugee rights campaign – and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) backed Australia's largest demonstration to keep out foreign workers: the July 2012 "Local Workers First" rally in Perth. The CPA also parrots the "local content" demands of pro-ALP union leaders. Of course, these socialist groups and the Greens advocate a "clean" protectionism which rejects conscious dog whistling to racism. However, there is no "clean" protectionism! Any policy that calls for putting the interests of (mainly white) Australian workers over (overwhelmingly coloured) lower paid workers from "Third World" countries will inevitably appeal to and reinforce White Australia xenophobic attitudes as well as "First World" arrogance. And all protectionist demands divert workers away from the struggle that is actually needed – the one against the job-slashing capitalist exploiters – while pitting local workers against their natural allies: the working class people of the world.

That is why Trotskyist Platform is on a campaign to oppose all forms of economic nationalism. We are seeking to win those involved in the refugee rights movement and the anti-fascist movement to also take up this struggle. Until

economic nationalist ideas are purged from the union movement and the Left, anti-racist movements will face serious obstacles. And so will the struggle for workers rights.

We fight to replace the ALP's nationalist, *co-operate-with-the-capitalist* program currently ascendant in our unions with a militant class struggle perspective that relies on and values workers' unity. That means a union movement that would fight for freedom and asylum for imprisoned asylum seekers, full rights of citizenship for all refugees and guest workers and liberation for brutally oppressed Aboriginal people. Rejecting bogus protectionist "solutions," the union movement that we fight for would mobilise its industrial muscle to stop job slashing by bosses and force profitable companies to increase hiring at the expense of their fat profits. When the greedy capitalist bosses scream that this will cause their economy to collapse, the revolutionary, internationalist party of the working class that we need will respond: *if you big business owners cannot run the economy in a way that guarantees secure jobs for all workers then we working class people will rip the economy out of your hands and place it into our own able collective hands.* Such a socialist economy based on working class rule is what we need! In such a system, the material basis for racism will wither away as there will be no more exploiting class trying to divide exploited masses and no more scarcity and unemployment fueling rivalries between workers of different colours and ethnic backgrounds. *Workers of all countries unite!*



Positive! National Union of Workers (NUW) organisers speak at a Fair Go For Migrants rally in Melbourne on 27 August 2017. They opposed immigration laws that prevent many NUW members from gaining access to permanent residency or citizenship rights. The interests of the workers movement demands that it both strongly opposes all racist laws against migrants AND stands against economic nationalism.

Bottom of next page, Libya, 2011: People inspect the aftermath of yet another NATO airstrike that killed many civilians in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Especially after having seen the terrible death and destruction perpetrated by the imperialists in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria, it is rational for North Korea to develop a nuclear deterrent.

STAND WITH SOCIALISTIC NORTH KOREA

AGAINST U.S./AUSTRALIAN CAPITALISM'S WAR THREATS

15 August 2017 – Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, has vowed to join with the U.S. should it wage war on North Korea. U.S. president Donald Trump threatened North Korea with “fire and fury like the world has never seen.” The people of North Korea – the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) - have responded with brave defiance. Yet they have reason to be worried. Trump really is the cruel madman that he sounds like. He has slandered Mexicans as “rapists”, implemented despicable laws restricting entry of people from Muslim majority countries and created such a racist climate that race-hate attacks in the U.S. have skyrocketed. But Trump is not just your typical, hard-right wing nut job – he also happens to have his finger on the fire button of the most terrifying nuclear arsenal in the world! But the Australian regime backing him all the way is hardly any better. The regime here has overseen racist killings of black people in custody and the torture of imprisoned Aboriginal youth. New revelations last month have detailed the extent to which Australian SAS forces in Afghanistan are killing children and murdering other innocent civilians and then planting guns on them to make them look like enemy combatants (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-11/killings-of-unarmed-afghans-by-australian-special-forces/8466642>). It is these shock troops of the Australian ruling class who would spearhead Australian military involvement in any war on the DPRK.

A glimpse of the horror that the people of the DPRK are threatened with can be seen in Mosul. There, to further their predatory goals, the U.S. and Australian imperialists and other allied powers conducted air strikes in such an indiscriminate manner that in just a four month period between February and June they killed 5,805 civilians according to the respected liberal, monitoring group Airwars. They killed thousands more through excessive artillery barrages and in airstrikes in other parts of Iraq as well as in Syria.

Part of the reason for the U.S. and Australian rulers' crazed obsession with crushing the DPRK is the fear that other countries currently targeted by imperialism – like Syria, Iran and Venezuela – will be inspired by North Korea's defiant building of a nuclear deterrent and themselves seek to stand up more to the Western powers. However, the factors behind Washington and Canberra's war drive against the DPRK are somewhat different to what's behind their proxy war against Syria and their repeated invasions of Iraq. Those adventures are mainly about gaining dominance over the Middle East in order to seize control of the world's oil supplies. However, the source of the U.S., Australian, British, Japanese and South Korean rulers' enmity to the DPRK runs even deeper than oil: it is a product of the hostility of capitalist rulers to socialism. The fact that the North Korean people have courageously dared to reject capitalism and to, instead, build a system based upon collective ownership of the

factories, banks, mines and land provokes fanatical hatred from the capitalist ruling classes. To be sure, the socialistic system in the DPRK is bureaucratically deformed. The intense military pressure that capitalist powers assert against her plus the economic strangulation of sanctions is an immense deforming force upon her. Nevertheless, the imperialist ruling classes cannot stand having any part of the world where they do not have the “freedom” to control markets and exploit labour at will. Moreover, the capitalists are denied this “right” not only in the DPRK but in her neighbour and ally, the world's most populous country, the Peoples Republic of China. Although the ruling bureaucracy in China has strengthened pro-capitalist forces by ushering in pro-market reforms from the 1980s onwards, the PRC economy continues to be dominated by socialistic state-owned enterprises. That is why, from provocatively sailing warships through her waters to financing anti-communist “dissidents” and NGOs to targeting next-door neighbour, North Korea,, the U.S. and Australian ruling classes are so determined to undermine the state power in China. Although the national-centred leaders of the PRC and DPRK do little to encourage revolutionary class struggle in the capitalist countries, the mere existence of these socialistic states where the working class, in however a deformed way, rules provokes horror among capitalists. The horror that one day the toiling masses in their own countries will overthrow them and take power. That is why the enmity of capitalist powers to North Korea and China is more enduring and more deep-going than their current hostility to those capitalist-run, ex-colonial countries like Syria that refuse to kowtow enough to them. During their 1950-53 war on the DPRK, the U.S., Australian and other allied capitalist powers completely burnt to the ground the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, several times with bombs and napalm. Later, U.S. war criminals boasted of their deeds:

‘Over a period of three years or so, we killed off — what — 20 percent of the population,’ Air Force Gen. Curtis LeMay, head of the Strategic Air Command during the Korean War, told the Office of Air Force History in 1984. Dean Rusk, a supporter of the war and later secretary of state, said the United States bombed ‘everything that moved in North Korea, every brick standing on top of another.’

The Washington Post, 24 March 2015



LIES, DISTORTIONS, DISTRACTIONS AND MORE LIES

In order to mobilise support for the war drive against North Korea, the mainstream Western media have been painting her as, on the one hand, an economic basket case and, simultaneously, as the “most dangerous threat to the world.” Yet it is not North Korea but the U.S. rulers, backed by Australia, who are the ones who have actually dropped atomic bombs on human beings. Meanwhile, the Australian big business or government-owned media have been deviously claiming that the DPRK has threatened to hit Guam with missiles. However, what the DPRK actually said was that if the U.S. and its allies continued to threaten North Korea, the DPRK would respond by launching missiles that would land in waters short of Guam. That’s very different to saying that they would land nuclear missiles on the people of Guam. Having the U.S. provocatively fly nuclear capable bombers from Guam past North Korea and having the U.S., Australian, South Korean and other capitalist militaries stage massive war games within kilometres of her border is an unbearable situation for the DPRK. By raising the possibility of landing missiles in waters just short of Guam, the North Korean people are giving the U.S. a taste of facing a threat within kilometres of their own territory. Moreover, the DPRK’s refusal to abandon its nuclear weapons program makes a great deal of sense. Gaddafi’s Libya gave up its nuclear weapons under a promise to be “rehabilitated” by the Western powers – and look what happened to them! Iraq never had any weapons of mass destruction which made it easier for the U.S. and Australia to invade and kill over a million of her people.

That North Korea – when strangled by such severe sanctions and military encirclement – has been able to advance its nuclear deterrence so quickly has stunned the imperialist rulers. It is a testament to the superiority of the socialist system. As a Trotskyist Platform comrade of Chinese origin put it:

“To master great weaponry is not an advantage of capitalist countries. Our socialist DPRK can master such powerful means in such difficult domestic conditions, which is really inspiring, encouraging and empowering our working classes around the world.”

Indeed, contrary to the media’s portrayal of North Korea’s economy, the DPRK’s socialistic system allowed it to recover from the devastation of the Korean War and, within a couple of decades, build up the second most advanced industrial economy in Asia (after imperialist Japan). However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union which had been the DPRK’s military protector, the embattled North Korea was hit hard as it then had no choice but to greatly increase the proportion of its income spent on defence. A period of serious privation in the country followed in the mid-1990s. However, since then, partly helped by trade with Red China, the DPRK economy has steadily advanced. Media claims that North Korea is still impoverished (although made less frequently now since it is so ridiculous) are simply lies. This is proven by estimates of the proportion of children who are underweight due to malnourishment given by a noted imperialist agency, the CIA (hardly an organisation

sympathetic to North Korea!). The CIA’s figures do not put North Korea within even the forty most impoverished countries in the world (see: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2224rank.html>). Indeed, strong Western allies like India, PNG, Indonesia and the Philippines have much higher rates of child malnourishment than does North Korea.

Socialistic North Korea, despite the threats she is facing, has produced a warm and friendly society with a relaxed work environment and a rich musical, artistic, cultural, entertainment and sporting life. In contrast, capitalist rule in South Korea has not only led to a large amount of homelessness and poverty amongst the elderly there but also to one of the highest suicide rates in the world. This does not stop the Australian media from making much of the higher per capita income in South Korea. That is a product of, on the one hand, the sanctions and draining military encirclement of the North and, on the other, the fact that from the late 1960s onwards the U.S. provided massive aid to the South when they realised that dissatisfaction with capitalist rule and sympathy for the North amongst the South Korean masses was “threatening” the country with socialist revolution. Yet, today, most South Korean workers lack permanency in their jobs and many are forced to work terribly long hours. This and the cut-throat, dog eat dog nature of the society there has meant that hundreds of North Koreans who defected to the South in search of higher incomes have ended up defecting back to the North!



Above: North Koreans watch a ride at one of the country’s many amusement parks. Right: Children sing and dance at a North Korean pre-school.

Photos: Trotskyist Platform

NOT OPPOSITION TO BOTH SIDES BUT SOLIDARITY WITH THE SOCIALISTIC DPRK

Turnbull has claimed that he would send Australia to war with North Korea because of the ANZUS treaty with the U.S. However, what is really driving the Australian capitalist regime is that they share the same reasons for wanting to destroy socialistic rule in North Korea – and ultimately China – as their U.S. allies. Indeed, as a capitalist ruling class located in Asia, the Australian rulers' obsession with crushing Asian socialistic states is if anything more intense than their U.S. counterparts'. It was the Australian Menzies regime that pushed for the U.S. to escalate its anti-communist war in Vietnam in 1965. Indeed, the Australian government even pressured the then U.S.-puppet South Vietnamese government “to request” Australian troops to support it! (<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/05/10/1021002385759.html>).

Just as it is not only the right-wing Republican Party in the U.S. but also the liberal American capitalists who are charging towards war on North Korea – and ultimately China – it is not only the right-wing Liberal Party that is beating the war drums here. ALP Opposition leader Bill Shorten ranted that it was the “bellicose and provocative actions” of North Korea, and not Trump's rhetoric, which was of “big concern” adding that:

“I and the government share the same concerns and the same views, and Australians should be reassured that on this matter of North Korea and our national security, the politics of Labor and Liberal are working absolutely together.”

The Australian, 11 August 2017

The Greens leader, Richard Di Natale, has for his part at least criticised the war drive of the Australian government. However, he has very wrongly put socialistic North Korea in the same category as the Western imperialist rulers:

“Malcolm Turnbull by backing Donald Trump has just put a target on our back.”

“What we've got is two dangerous, paranoid and unhinged world leaders goading each other into a conflict which puts the very survival of each and every person on the planet at risk.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-11/australia-would-enter-conflict-with-north-korea/8796586>

Such equating of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un with Donald Trump or Turnbull on the part of supposed opponents of war is very harmful. For, regardless of personalities, these leaders are not the same at all because the systems that they preside over are not at all the same. Today, Trump covered for his fascist backers when he made excuses for these white supremacists after they unleashed racist “fire and fury” in Charlottesville culminating in a murderous terror attack that killed an antiracist protester, Heather Heyer. Meanwhile, like the previous ALP government, the Turnbull regime locks up asylum seekers in hell-hole offshore camps. Turnbull has also re-instituted the union-busting ABCC system against construction workers and attacked the rights of unemployed workers while giving tax cuts to millionaires. Trump, for his part, wants to deny millions more poor people in America access to medical care while giving huge tax cuts to the rich. Both he and Turnbull administer a system that has left large numbers of people homeless. In contrast, while Kim Jong Un may be a “dictator” who rides on a personality cult that is almost as gross as the establishment's glorification of the British Royal Family, he administers a system that not only ensures zero homelessness in North Korea but also guarantees employment and virtually free housing for all of its people. Furthermore, North Korea's leaders



Left: An Australian special forces soldier in action in Afghanistan. The Australian military which committed brutal atrocities against civilians in Afghanistan was part of the massive Ulchi Freedom Guardian military drills in South Korea held in late August. These joint U.S.-South Korean-Australian exercises held near the North Korean border were unmistakably a military threat aimed against the socialistic DPRK.



7 September 2017, Seongju, South Korea: Capitalist South Korea's notoriously brutal police disperse a demonstration of local residents and activists opposed to the installation of America's THAAD missile defence weaponry.

have never made a predatory intervention into another country. In contrast, the capitalist regimes in the U.S. and Australia have, between themselves over the last thirty years, invaded or otherwise intervened in – and often largely destroyed – Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Serbia, East Timor, Bougainville, Yemen, Somalia, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Panama, Haiti and more! Therefore, **what the working class and all opponents of imperialism and capitalism in Australia and the U.S. must do is to stand in solidarity with the DPRK against all the war threats from the imperialist powers.**

Unfortunately, much of the Left in Australia is instead tailing the Greens' line of "neutrality" in the current crisis. Thus, the Hiroshima Day Sydney Committee and the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition, with the support of the Sydney Stop the War Coalition (coalitions which include among them prominent activists within the Communist Party of Australia as well as the Socialist Alliance, Solidarity and Socialist Alternative groups) have announced a rally for this Saturday in Sydney "to call for negotiations to resolve the crisis on the Korean peninsula." Such a call steers anti-imperialists and anti-capitalists away from strongly politically opposing the U.S. and Australian military forces arrayed against the DPRK and also pushes them into supporting demands on the DPRK to wind back its nuclear deterrence development and acquiesce to

imperialist diktats. It is acting like those small-l liberals who call for "reconciliation" between the Australian rulers and Aboriginal people – as if Aboriginal people should have to compromise with the racist, genocidal ruling class. It is of a piece with a nominal supporter of workers' rights who, during a conflict between unions and a capitalist boss, argues that "both sides should negotiate not escalate."

In contrast, Trotskyist Platform is fighting to convince other leftists and supporters of working class interests to **not be neutral in the current crisis but to stand resolutely with the socialistic state against the capitalist powers!** That means we must stand unconditionally with the socialistic DPRK - and ultimately socialistic China – against the capitalist war threats. We should also welcome the DPRK's development of a nuclear deterrence capability. What sincere anti-capitalists and anti-imperialists must do is to build actions that demand: **End all U.S.-Australian-South Korean war games threatening the DPRK! U.S. troops out of South Korea, Japan and Guam! Close the joint U.S.-Australian military facilities and bases in Pine Gap, Darwin and elsewhere - Down with ANZUS! End all sanctions against the DPRK! Get rid of the U.S.'s THAAD missile defence system in South Korea that targets not only the DPRK but also the PRC!**

AUSTRALIAN WORKING CLASS:

LET US DEFEND THE DPRK JUST LIKE WE SHOULD DEFEND OUR UNIONS!

The fate of the DPRK will be affected much by its much larger and powerful socialistic neighbour, the PRC. The PRC is the DPRK's only significant ally and over 90% of North Korea's trade is with China. To a significant degree, the PRC provides protection for the DPRK and certainly its presence has acted as a major deterrent against imperialist attack on the DPRK. However, at the same time the vacillating rulers of Red China, who pursue a futile policy of seeking "co-existence" with capitalist powers, bend to imperialist diktats by publicly condemning DPRK missile and nuclear tests. Nine days ago, China's leaders treacherously joined the Western imperialists and capitalist Russia in voting for a new round of even more crippling economic sanctions against North Korea. Although it is true that the PRC does try to somewhat limit the damage done by these sanctions and does more to stand by the DPRK militarily than it admits publicly, its public position does matter as it serves to increase diplomatic and political pressure on the DPRK. Any acquiescence to imperialist demands against the DPRK is suicidal for the PRC as it is the PRC itself which is the ultimate target of capitalist moves against its socialistic little sister, North Korea.

The question of what attitude to take towards the DPRK is the subject of intense debate within China. Those pushing for China to move away from solidarity with its socialistic neighbour tend to be the most right-wing elements within China who are simultaneously pushing for greater "rights" for the capitalist private sector and more political "freedom" for pro-capitalist forces. In contrast, those advocating greater PRC solidarity with the socialistic DPRK are also those fighting to preserve and strengthen China's own socialist foundations. The debate within China over its position on North Korea is a fight over the

very soul and direction of China itself. That makes it triply important that politically aware workers and leftists the world over must call for the PRC to stand resolutely behind her socialistic sister, the DPRK. China: Abandon all participation in sanctions against North Korea! Support the DPRK's nuclear deterrence development instead! Strengthen solidarity between workers states to strengthen China's own commitment toward socialism! Recall the spirit of the PRC's heroic support for the DPRK during the 1950-53 Korean War!



Sydney, 7 November 2017: The first action in Australia in solidarity with socialistic North Korea since the Trump and Turnbull regimes escalated their war threats. As well as opposing the war drive of the U.S. and Australian capitalist rulers, the speakout demanded an end to all sanctions on North Korea. Those participating in the demonstration included supporters of Trotskyist Platform and Young Communists Sydney as well as a representative of the Auburn Branch of the Communist Party of Australia. The speakout was held on the very day of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. What better way to honour the revolution's anniversary than to rally to defend a state founded by its own anti-capitalist revolution: the DPRK. The sign in Chinese, which garnered much attention from the many Chinese immigrants passing by, says, "Peoples Republic of China: Stand More Vigorously By Your Socialistic North Korean Sisters and Brothers."





Daily life in North Korea.

Trotskyist Platform is proud that we have been at the forefront of organising every single action in Sydney defending the DPRK workers state over the last seven years. We want to help cohere a layer of activists both inside and outside our group who are both firmly committed to defending the DPRK workers state and who are striving to become very knowledgeable about the question. These activists would then be the core of building actions in solidarity with the DPRK – and also the PRC – in the near future.

We understand that durable solidarity with socialistic states can only be built by appealing to the interests that the working class and its allies have in supporting workers states. To those workers in Australia who currently buy the anti-North Korea propaganda we say: Do you believe the media and politicians when they say that the CFMEU

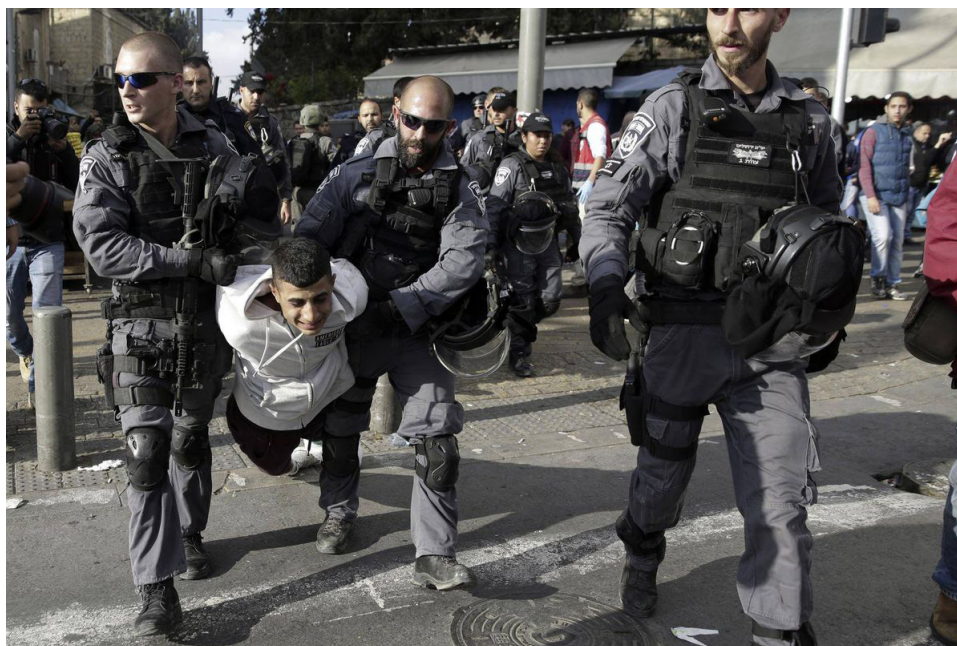
construction workers union are a bunch of thugs who threaten “innocent” people for no reason? Of course not! So why do you then believe these same people when they say that the DPRK is the biggest threat to world peace? Indeed, the attacks on the DPRK and China have much in parallel with the bosses’ attacks on our unions. Except that the capitalist hostility to socialistic states is a lot more fanatical because in those countries the masses have not just organised workers to resist how much the bosses can exploit them... they have actually taken over the whole country. **Let us trade unionists and all opponents of capitalist exploitation mobilise in action to oppose both the bosses’ attacks on our unions at home and their attacks on workers states abroad. For unconditional solidarity with the socialistic DPRK!**



Kalgoorlie, Western Australia: Australian police pepper spray Aboriginal people protesting against the soft treatment that authorities gave to the racist, white man who killed 14 year-old Aboriginal boy, Elijah Doughty, in August 2016. The Australian racist rich people's state that so brutally oppresses Aboriginal people, cruelly imprisons refugees and which enforces the looting of the South Pacific by Australian business owners can never be friends of the Palestinian people – or any other oppressed people!
See article next page.

Israeli Terror Machine Supercharged by Trump's Jerusalem Statement

OPPOSE THE U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN REGIMES THAT SUPPORT THE SUBJUGATION OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE



Israeli forces arrest a Palestinian youth during protests against Trump's Jerusalem decision.

9 December 2017 – Israeli Air Force jets pounded Gaza overnight. They killed two Palestinian people and injured dozens of others. Several children were among those hurt. Hours earlier, Israeli troops shot dead two other people as they unleashed live fire ammunition on Palestinian protesters. The Israeli terror machine has been supercharged by Donald Trump's announcement that the U.S. will recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Trump's statement openly legitimized Israel's seizure of East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank (and Gaza) in 1967. Within America, Trump has been busy inciting a wave of violent fascist and redneck attacks against Muslims, blacks, Asians, Native Americans, gays, Jews and Hispanics. That's what his racist, ultra-right wing rants against Muslims, Mexicans and other oppressed minorities have served to do. Now this capitalist billionaire has charged up the Israeli

terror machine to churn out yet more savage crimes against the oppressed Palestinian people.

Palestinian people have responded with typically brave resistance. There have also been large protests across the Arab world as well as in Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. Meanwhile, opponents of racist oppression have joined Palestinian and other Arab migrants in protests in Western cities too.

FAKE CRITICISM OF TRUMP'S DECISION BY ENEMIES OF PALESTINIAN LIBERATION

U.S.-allied governments in Australia, Britain, France and elsewhere have, rather cynically, made some criticisms of Trump's decision. But what the ruling class of Australia and co. really only object to is that Trump has so openly shown the Western imperial powers' contempt for Palestinian people. Successive Australian governments – whether Liberal or ALP – have joined their Washington senior partner in steadfastly supporting Israel no matter how ghastly that regime's crimes. They have proven their true stance on the Jerusalem issue by giving Israel the nod and the wink to implant hundreds of thousands of right-wing "settlers" in East Jerusalem and to divide up the West Bank with heavily fortified highways that Palestinians are not allowed to use. Six weeks ago, prime minister Turnbull went to Israel to sign an agreement for still greater Australia-Israel defence co-operation. Today, all that he and other Western rulers have to worry about in Trump's statement is that by being so brazen he will stir up Palestinian resistance, reduce Western influence in the region and trigger rebellions against Western-subordinated Arab governments.

Similarly, most capitalist governments in Arab countries have criticized Trump's decision only in order to avoid ending up being targets of the anger of "their own" people. However, much of the masses of those countries can see right through this. They know that these governments have no intention of taking any real action in solidarity with Palestinian people. These governments are firmly tied to the imperialist bullies who they depend on not only for access to markets and technology but in order to help protect them from their own

restive masses. The main, U.S.-backed Arab power, Saudi Arabia has been secretly co-operating on intelligence matters with Israel for years. Last month its aggressive, young leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman dropped a bombshell. Acting for the Trump regime, he secretly sought to pressure Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas to accept an insulting "deal" which would see Palestinians get a "state" with only limited sovereignty, which would be geographically divided by the Israeli settlements in the

West Bank - nearly all of which would remain - and where there would be no right of return for Palestinian refugees (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/world/middleeast/palestinian-saudi-peace-plan.html>).

Yet, the PA leadership itself is under the grip of the Western imperialist powers. When Abbas met Trump in May, long after Trump had declared support to Israeli PM Netanyahu's moves to further subjugate Palestinians, Abbas gushed to

Trump that: "I believe we are capable under your leadership, courageous stewardship, and wisdom ... to be true partners to bring about a historic peace treaty"! Today, Abbas is doing his best to hold back Palestinian resistance and restrict protest to formal statements of condemnation. However, the overwhelming calls from the Palestinian masses for a new Intifada may be too much for PA leaders to resist.

CUTTING OFF SUPPLY TO THE ISRAELI KILLING MACHINE AND JAMMING IT UP FROM WITHIN

The bitter reality is that despite the courage of their resistance, the Palestinian people are heavily outgunned. They face an Israeli military that has been armed to the hilt by its imperialist backers. And they have been repeatedly stabbed in the back by the Arab capitalist governments that claim to support them. The force that can potentially decisively tip the balance in favour of the Palestinian people is the international workers movement – including the working class movements in the Arab countries. As a force that stands against its own exploitation, the working class naturally has an interest in supporting all those – like the Palestinian people – who are downtrodden by the same capitalist world order that oppresses them. The working class around the world must demand: No moving of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem! No theft of Jerusalem by the Zionist occupiers! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all of the West Bank and Gaza! Working class protest action must ramp up to industrial action targeting the imperialist ruling classes in the U.S., Britain, Australia and elsewhere that are fueling the Israeli terrorist machine.

The working class within Israel itself could act to undermine the fanatical Zionist agenda. Although the Zionist ruling class claims to stand for all Jewish people, it like every other capitalist class exploits its own workers. To be sure, the massive subsidies that the U.S. and other Western governments have provided to Israel have allowed the Israeli working class to obtain a significantly higher standard of living than their neighbors. This is of course a conservatizing force and makes it harder to win significant sections of the Israeli working class to take the side of the Palestinian resistance. Yet the Jewish masses in Israel still suffer most of the hardships of capitalism. Israel has one of the highest levels of inequality. Even excluding the subjugated Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories, Israel has more than 1.7 million people officially living in poverty (see: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/More-than-1-in-5-Israelis-live-in-poverty-highest-in-developed-world-475444>). Three in every ten Israeli children live in poverty as do nearly half of all Ultra-Orthodox Jews – almost the same rate of poverty as Palestinian Arabs living in Israel's pre-1967 borders. Meanwhile, dark-skinned Jewish people suffer terrible racism. Resentment at all these forms of oppression can potentially be harnessed to break a section of the Jewish working class from loyalty to the Zionist capitalist order.

There is another reason why Israeli working class people's interests lie with junking their current allegiance to the racist order. The Zionist rulers' selling card has always been that they would provide security to the Jewish people. Israel was sold as a sanctuary where Jewish people would be free from ever again having to suffer the daily discrimination that they had endured in Western Europe, the pogroms that they faced in Tsarist Russia and the genocide meted out to their people by the Nazis. Yet the history of Israel has proven that building a state based on driving another people out of their land with Nazi-like terror – no matter how much religious quackery it is justified by – does not bring security at all. Instead the racial-supremacist Zionist project has brought great hostility towards the Jewish people of Israel from their neighbors.

The rise of the fascist-supported Trump has highlighted

an additional aspect of this question. Trump is a fervent supporter of Israel but his hard right-wing agenda has simultaneously emboldened anti-Semitic, fascist forces within America and around the world. This was evident in the far right rallies in Charlottesville four months ago, which Trump legitimized. There, Nazi and KKK filth not only marched with slogans against blacks, Muslims and other people of color but also had anti-Semitic slogans like, "Jews will not replace us" and "Jews are Satan's children." In Australia too, decaying capitalism is spawning the growth of violent far-right outfits. A few of these fascist groups like the Party For Freedom are actually avowedly pro-Israel. Mind you, some of these fascists are pro-Israel only because they want to "purify" White Australia of Jews by having them go off to Israel – in the same way that Hitler's Nazis collaborated with some Zionist leaders. Most Australian fascist groups, however, basing themselves on the vile tradition of Nazism, are openly and fanatically anti-Semitic. And although their main targets have been Muslims, Aboriginal people and Chinese people and other Asians, Jewish people and synagogues have been among the secondary targets of their violence. The American imperialist-dominated order that props up Israel, far from keeping the Jewish people secure, is actually creating the conditions for far-right terror attacks on Jewish people.

The fact that a small number of Israeli citizens have bravely refused to serve in the military as a matter of conscience shows that some Israelis can see past the false promises of Zionism and the extreme racial supremacist propaganda that they are fed. When the Middle East region is radicalized by a revolutionary working class upsurge, it will be possible to break a section of the Jewish working class from Zionism and unite them with the brave Palestinian masses in a movement that can smash the genocidal, Israeli capitalist order from within. Together, they will establish a multi-ethnic workers state that will necessarily be secular and anti-racist and which will provide all Palestinian refugees the right of return to the pre-1948 lands that they resided on. A socialist Palestine will finally both free the Palestinian people from barbaric Zionist oppression and provide the Jewish people with the real security that they have longed for.



Palestinian people bravely protest against Trump's Jerusalem decision in the face of brutal Israeli repression.

INTERNATIONAL BALANCE OF FORCES SHAPES THE FATE OF PALESTINE

Trump's kick in the guts of the Palestinian people has been made possible by prior aggressive imperialist intervention in the Middle East. The savage U.S., British and Australian war against the much hated ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria has given these imperialist powers a renewed military presence in the region, greater political influence and the allegiance of key local military forces. Further south, with the backing of these Western powers, the Saudi military - and its allies in the UAE, Egyptian and Sudanese regimes - have unleashed a brutal war against Houthi rebels in Yemen. This intervention has enhanced the power of the U.S.-Saudi-Israeli axis in the region. Meanwhile, Trump's directing of this Axis towards war with Iran has drawn the two most reactionary local powers in the region - Saudi Arabia and Israel - closer together.

This Axis, alongside Britain, France, Australia, Turkey and Qatar have been waging a years-long war - via FSA and openly religious fundamentalist "Rebel" proxies - to impose regime change on Syria. As well as causing the death of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people, this proxy war has greatly weakened Syria. That has, in turn, hurt the Palestinian resistance. For, although the capitalist Syrian government's support to the Palestinian cause has been inconsistent and limited, they did provide sanctuary and bases for key Palestinian resistance groups. Today, through the heroism of the Syrian masses and soldiers - and with the support of their external allies - the original crop of imperialist proxies have been close to defeated in Syria. Yet the U.S., Australian and other allied imperialists now have a new proxy force in the form of the Kurdish YPG. Allied with the PKK in Turkey, the YPG had been waging a just struggle for the national rights of the oppressed Kurdish people of Syria. However, they have now subordinated themselves to the most powerful force for social oppression in the world - the Western imperialists. They are set to be used as a force or bargaining chip to increase imperialist influence in Syria - and, thus, in the whole region. **It is an urgent task for all genuine supporters of Palestinian liberation to oppose all the Middle East interventions that boost the power of the Western imperialist and Israeli enemies of Palestinian liberation! Let's fight for: All U.S./Australian/British/French forces to get out of all of the Middle East! Defend Syria against all the imperialist-allied "Rebels" - from the FSA to the religious fundamentalists to the YPG! Saudi, UAE, Egyptian and Sudanese forces get out of Yemen! U.S./Australia, Israel and Saudi Arabia: Hands Off Iran!**

Although driven by its own capitalist agenda, Russia's military might in Syria has been crucial to holding back the imperialist regime change drive there. Today, president Putin is using the increased stature this has brought Russia and the loss of

U.S. prestige following Trump's Jerusalem announcement to engage in energetic diplomatic interventions. Given the horror that the American-dominated order has brought to the people of the Middle East it is tempting to think that any other power trying to nudge them aside can hardly be any worse. However, it would be very naive for supporters of Palestinian liberation to put their faith in yet another capitalist power. The fact that Putin has called Netanyahu one of his favorite world leaders and is rapidly improving ties with crucial Israel ally, Saudi Arabia, should be reason enough to make us wary (see: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/strange-love-affair-putin-and-netanyahu-1736252238>).

In addition to the brave resistance of Palestinian activists and the Syrian people, there are, however, **other genuine forces that are opposing - or can potentially oppose - the imperialist world order that has brought such suffering to the Palestinian people.** Most crucial is the working class within the imperialist centers like the U.S. and Australia, whose interests lie with opposing the rulers that oversee their exploitation. Then there are the people of North Korea. Today, they are defending their socialistic system and desperately trying to avoid meeting the same fate as the people of Iraq and Libya by defiantly building a nuclear deterrence in the face of U.S. and Australian war threats. All opponents of this brutal imperialist world order must stand by the people of North Korea.

Similarly, we must defend the rise of socialistic China that is challenging the capitalist-imperialist dominated world order. To be sure, the compromising Chinese leadership pursues a selfish foreign policy of "non-interference" in the affairs of other countries. It also accommodates a degree of capitalism within China. Nevertheless, the workers state created by China's 1949 anti-capitalist revolution remains in place and the backbone of China's economy remains the

public sector of socialistic state-owned enterprises. This has laid the basis for China's stunning economic development and poverty alleviation successes. This strengthening of socialistic China is already providing a support point for ex-colonial countries to start to lift themselves up from under Western neo-colonial subjugation. Meanwhile, regardless of the intentions of China's leaders, the emergence of a large, successful socialistic society provides inspiration to rebel to those masses of the world still suffering under the capitalist order. The imperialist powers know this all too well. That is why, from sending menacing naval forces to the South China Sea, to threatening China's socialistic neighbour and ally North Korea to backing pro-capitalist, "dissidents" within China, the imperialists are doing everything in their power to undermine socialistic rule in China. The Turnbull government's scare-mongering about "Chinese interference" in Australian politics is meant to justify to the population this anti-China, anti-communist drive. So, too, the right wing's successful Cold War style witch-hunt of, now former, ALP Senator Sam Dastyari for merely stating the patently obvious fact that the South China Sea is China's internal matter (for more on this issue see: <https://www.facebook.com/TrotskyistPlatform/posts/1515409871846563>). However, if these efforts to destroy socialistic rule in China are beaten back, if capitalist forces within China are decisively defeated and if China more proudly advocates on the world stage its socialist course then the U.S.-dominated world order would really be threatened. And that can only be good news for the Palestinian people and all the downtrodden of the planet.

Unfortunately, many of the Australian left wing groups that state solidarity with the Palestinian cause (including the Socialist Alternative, Solidarity and Socialist Alliance groups), simultaneously join the imperialist crusade against China by supporting the various Western-backed "pro-democracy activists" seeking to overthrow socialistic rule there. Similarly bowing to imperialist propaganda campaigns, these groups also support the pro-imperialist "Rebels" in Syria. A small number of leftists, of which we in Trotskyist Platform are amongst, did have the fortitude to oppose the imperialist drive to impose regime change on Syria. However, many of those involved in the Hands Off Syria groups then became badly disoriented and lapsed into becoming apologists for Trump or worse.

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MOBILISE WORKING CLASS OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITALIST REGIMES THAT SUPPORT ISRAEL

The Trump regime and the U.S. ruling class it serves is more rabidly supporting its deputy sheriffs in the Middle East – primarily, Israel and Saudi Arabia – because it needs them to be more aggressive. It needs more from its regional enforcers because the more that the capitalist economic system is mired in crisis, the more that it must make up for it by more ruthlessly plundering the resource-rich Middle East and seizing control of markets and sources of labour to exploit everywhere.

Similarly, Australian governments – whether Liberal or ALP or ALP/Greens – have always, ultimately, supported Israel's subjugation of Palestinian people because that conforms to the interests of the Australian capitalist class whom these governments all serve. It is a mistake to think that you can lobby the Australian government to change its position on Palestine by appealing to it to take a more independent policy from the U.S.A. For the Australian government supports U.S. power only because that is what is in the interests of Australia's capitalist rulers. In particular, the Australian rulers need U.S. power to guarantee Australian imperialist plunder of South Pacific countries from PNG to East Timor to Fiji; and to have the back of Australian corporations participating in the neo-colonial exploitation of workers in Indonesia, the Philippines and beyond. These imperialist looters of the

South Pacific, genocidal oppressors of Aboriginal people and brutal prisoners of refugees can never be friends of the Palestinian people - or any other oppressed people!

However, while supporting the subjugation of Palestinian people is in the interests of Australia's rich capitalist class, opposing U.S. and Israeli tyranny against the Palestinian people is very much in the interests of the working class and all oppressed of this country. For one, it is in the interests of movements fighting for the downtrodden to stand by others facing oppression. Moreover, it is in our interests to weaken the ruling class that attacks our trade unions, consigns us to perpetual job insecurity, drives up our rents by selling off public housing, punishes us when we get retrenched from work, murders Aboriginal people in state custody and vilifies Muslim, Chinese and other non-white ethnic communities. So, while we cannot appeal to the Australian rulers to change their position on the Palestine issue we can through powerful action force it to back off from its support for Israel. To do this we must build actions that are strong enough to harm the interests of the Australian ruling class – in particular its economic interests. That means workers industrial action against the Australian capitalist rulers. Let's build up towards such action! **Let's shake the imperialist branches that are holding up the Zionist's nest!**



Israel, 2011: Over 300,000 people protested against social inequality and the high cost of living. Resentment at rampant poverty and inequality within Israel can potentially be harnessed to break a section of the Jewish working class from loyalty to the Zionist capitalist order and win them to the side of the Palestinian people's struggle against the Israeli rulers.

The following leaflet advocating a militant, class struggle strategy to stop the sell-off of public housing has been distributed at actions for public housing, trade union rallies and in working class suburbs. As we go to press, nearly all the remaining public housing tenants in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area have now been driven out of their homes. However, through determined action it can still be possible to save many of the homes in the area for public housing before they are all sold off to wealthy developers and speculators and re-occupied.

NSW Government resorts to Gestapo-like Tactics, Smashing Windows to Evict a Public Housing Tenant but the Powerful Union-led Struggle against Social “Cleansing” in Sydney City is Far from Over Continue the Fight to Prevent the Sell-Off of Public Housing in Millers Point & Sirius

STOP THE PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA



9 May 2017: Trade unionists and other supporters of public housing carried out a powerful blockade that initially thwarted the eviction of proud trade unionist and then Millers Point public housing tenant, Peter Muller.

27 July 2017: On 10 May 2017 around ten to fifteen sheriffs, police and high-level bureaucrats raided a terrace house at 32 High Street, Millers Point. They invaded the inner Sydney home through the back entrance and then crashed their way into the dwelling after smashing through a window. So, what was the target that required such huge “enforcement” resources? Was it a raid on one of the many filthy, rich business owners who illegally dodge tax, bribe government officials or otherwise break their own system’s rules? Not a chance! This raid was perpetrated in order to evict a hard-working, working-class, public housing tenant from his residence so that the dwelling could be sold off to some, clearly, *very rich* person.

At the time of the 6:20am raid, the tenant, electrician Peter Muller, had already left for his 5am shift at work. However, the Gestapo-style raid saw authorities threaten with arrest several of his supporters who had courageously stayed in the dwelling to protect him. The invading authorities threw out Peter’s supporters, ransacked the place and impounded Peter’s property. They changed the locks and bolted up windows so zealously that, to this date, they have been able to enforce this eviction.

For over three years, the NSW Liberal state government has been putting massive pressure on public housing tenants in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area to leave their community so that their homes could be sold off to wealthy buyers – often developers or property speculators. Among those recently forced to move is an Aboriginal sovereign woman who had waited decades to get public housing in the area and is now being booted off the land that her people belong to. Meanwhile, a large number of those people forced

to leave are now distraught – and even suicidal – at having to split up from a close knit, working class community. As Peter Muller aptly put it to his supporters when speaking of the NSW government: “I feel that there’s something going wrong that you can actually socially cleanse an entire class of working people just to sell it for cash to their developer mates.” And so that no one gets diverted by the false bogey about foreign investors being to blame, it is important to stress that all the buyers of sold-off public housing are rich local Australians as foreigners are banned from purchasing existing homes in Australia.

Public housing in the area originally housed maritime workers who worked in the nearby docks. Many of the tenants who are being forced out are descendants of these workers. Over 110 years ago, public housing in the area was fought for and won in a determined struggle by unions for decent, affordable housing close to their work opportunities. Although, since the 1960s, state authorities have tried to drive out working class tenants from the area, action by the Builders Labourers Federation trade union and other unions in the 1970s thwarted their plans. However, the big end of town have continued to be relentless in their drive to socially “cleanse” the city of working class people.

Nevertheless, when Peter Muller was given a notice to be evicted, the hard core of remaining tenants in the area said: *enough is enough*. They said they will tolerate no more evictions. These remaining public housing tenants in the area – as well as ex-tenants who have already been forced out – and their many supporters drew a line in the sand by resisting the eviction at 32 High Street. With their enthusiastic backing, Peter Muller, a proud Electrical Trades Union (ETU) member and activist in support of public housing, refused to leave his Millers Point residence after being ordered to leave his home. On May 9, on the day the sheriff was to evict him, a powerful action by up to 100 trade unionists, current and former Millers Point tenants and other supporters of public housing blocked the sheriff from evicting Peter. Trade union contingents from the Maritime Union of Australia, CFMEU construction workers union and ETU provided crucial social power and collectivist working class organisation to the action. Participants in the mobilisation openly performed arms-linked, picket line drills to practice resisting the expected incursion by the sheriff. In the face of this mass action, the sheriff first postponed his eviction “appointment” and then cancelled it.

By resisting his own eviction, Peter Muller with the remaining public housing tenants in the area and their many supporters were landing a blow for the struggle to reverse the social “cleansing” of working class people from the city. Together, we were also advancing the wider fight to stop the privatisation of public housing that is taking place throughout Australia. That is why among those participating in that day’s mobilisation were public housing tenants from several other areas including a contingent from Waterloo and individuals from Surry Hills to as far away as Villawood. In response to the May 9 mobilisation, the ruling class authorities and their media attempted to discredit and isolate the struggle by, disgustingly, attacking Peter Muller personally. Both a statement released by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and a government spokesman claimed that Peter was not eligible for public housing because he was working and had some land in country NSW. The sole purpose of this deliberately misleading government spin is to mask the issue at stake: that public housing meant for working class people was being sold off to wealthy developers, speculators and landlords. Furthermore, as

Barney Gardner, the leader of the area’s public housing group pointed out, the part share in a property that Peter has is “just a block of dirt in the bush” with no electricity or running water. Peter could not live there because it is hundreds of kilometres from his work in Sydney. The only dwelling there is a tin shed. ***They want Peter to live in a rough shed hundreds and hundreds of kilometres from his workplace!*** As for the fact that Peter is now working, when public housing tenants find work that pushes them above the threshold for initial entry into the waiting list, they are normally allowed to remain in their dwelling but then pay a higher rent. Indeed, a significant proportion of public housing tenants relocated into other public housing dwellings are people in this category. After all, a major part of the stated aim of public housing is precisely to give low-income people the stability and security of affordable housing that would make it easier for them to obtain a job that could lift their incomes – not to punish those low-wealth people lucky enough to find work. In this case, however, because the state authorities are so determined to drive out public housing tenants from Millers Point, they have used Peter’s employment as a pretext to kick him out of public housing ... and into homelessness! What makes this all the more despicable is that Peter’s job working as an electrician through a labour hire firm does not give him a steady or regular flow of work at all. He is, thus, a low-income worker whose livelihood is precarious and uncertain. And now he has been made homeless as well!

For the state government and top bureaucrats to question Peter Muller’s eligibility for public housing is the very height of cynicism. After all, **they are not booting him out of his home to give it to another public housing tenant. They are doing it so they can sell the house to a rich developer or speculator or landlord!** Yet, by masking their true agenda and by portraying the struggle against the 32 High St eviction as one counterposed to the interests of those on public housing waiting lists, the NSW authorities felt they could get away with the following morning’s Gestapo-style raid.

The deceit and aggression that the NSW government and state authorities unleashed against Peter Muller and his supporters is what they have also used, in different forms, to drive out many other public housing tenants in the area. However, with the remaining ten to fifteen dwellings where public housing tenants remain, NSW authorities will not be able to muddy the waters by deviously claiming a technicality to justify evicting tenants as they did with Peter. The remaining tenants are pensioners – mostly single women in their 60s, 70s, 80s and in one case 90s. The authorities have accepted that they are all fully eligible public housing tenants and have “offered” them “alternate” public housing accommodation outside the area. However, these tenants are reluctant to move because they don’t want to see the end of the friendly, working class community that they have been part of building and don’t want to be forced out of the area – which many of them have lived in for decades – just for the sake of the rich. Furthermore, several of the people have serious illnesses and used to rely on support networks in the area to provide them with care and companionship. Most of all, they are reluctant to move into public housing dwellings that could have been given to people on the waiting list when they could, instead, remain in their own public housing residences rather than seeing these houses sold off to rich developers and speculators.

Yet the remaining public housing tenants have been put under intense pressure. In some cases, bullying bureaucrats have been

deliberately rude and overbearing towards elderly tenants. In the Sirius Building, where two brave elderly single women remain, the authorities have placed security guards in the building to ramp up the pressure on them. Although the stated rationale for this measure is to protect the tenants, the guards are really there to restrict solidarity visits and actions in support of the tenants and to further isolate them. Thus, the guards have stopped and questioned friends of the tenants when they walked into the building with the tenant. In at least one case, they even demanded to inspect what one tenant brought home from a shopping trip! As one of the tenants put it, she feels like she is being imprisoned. Meanwhile, the housing bureaucrats continue to use their favourite trick: refusing or delaying repairs in order to make life so miserable for the tenants that they acquiesce to leaving. Recently after a fault caused hot water to be cut off in the Sirius Building, the authorities waited 13 days to fix the simple problem. In fact, the authorities here have shown the same contempt for public housing tenants and the same reluctance to listen to their concerns as the governments, councils and Grenfell Tower management did leading up to the unspeakable tragedy of London's horrific Grenfell Tower fire.

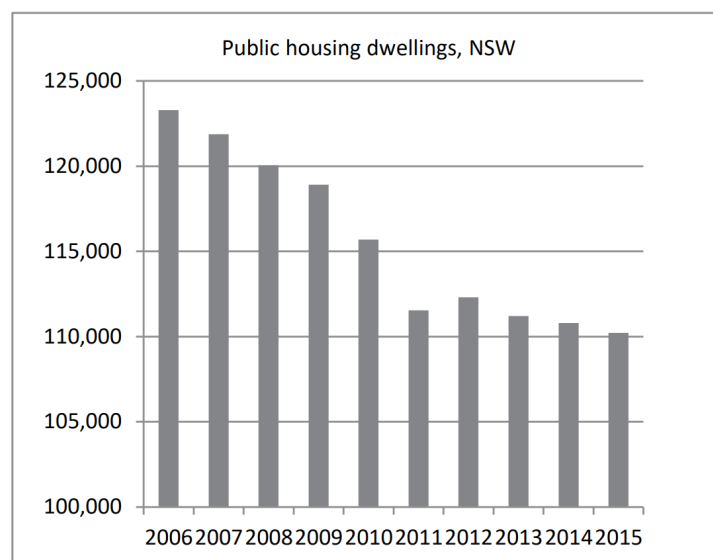
Under immense pressure, some of the remaining elderly tenants in the area, aware of their own age and physical illnesses – and facing severe loneliness with most of their neighbours having already been pushed out - have very reluctantly accepted being relocated. The bureaucrats are putting pressure upon many of these tenants to wear being “relocated” to places quite far from their current locations. The government has never honoured the promise that they made, when they first announced that

they were considering the complete sell-off of public housing in the area in late 2012, that “residents would be moved within the city.” (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/residents-stick-to-their-point-of-community-20121025-288bh.html>) Many of these tenants are also battling to ensure that the new places that they are relocated to are suitable. But even here the cruelty of the authorities does not stop. They have in several cases dismissed the health needs of often physically fragile tenants – like the need for dwellings without many stairs in their entrances – when pushing them to accept particular relocations. Meanwhile, the tribunals hearing disputes between the tenants and the authorities have, like the rest of the courts in Australia, proven themselves to be rich people's courts that are hostile to the needs of working class tenants.

Even as the number of remaining public housing tenants in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area dwindles, **the struggle to stop the sell off of public housing there is far, far from over.** For many of the vacated dwellings have still not been sold off and still less been occupied. This means there is still time – albeit not very much – to intensify the struggle and, thereby, stop and, indeed, reverse the sell-offs. Crucially, more and more trade unionists, leftists and other supporters of public housing are becoming energised around the campaign. They have seen, too, how powerful the blockade was that kept the sheriff at bay on the first day of the struggle at 32 High St. The core group of people that were involved in that struggle are now more determined than ever. If key lessons from the defeat of that battle are drawn, the coming struggles can be much more effective.

SELL-OFF OF MILLERS POINT AND SIRIUS IS PART OF THE RULING CLASS AGENDA TO PRIVATISE PUBLIC HOUSING

The NSW state government is lying through their teeth when they say that they are selling off public housing in the inner city to fund public housing elsewhere. We know this because they are actually selling off public housing across the state – *left, right and centre!* Even if the government's claims were actually true, which they are definitely not, the whole rationale behind their sell-off agenda is anti-working class. Why should public housing have to be self-financed? Why should any new provision of public housing have to come from the sell-off of public housing elsewhere? Like public hospitals, public schools, childcare, TAFE and universities, public housing is a necessity for working class people and for all of society that ought to be provided as a right. Consider how bogus a government would sound if it claimed that in order to build badly needed new public hospitals in Western Sydney it said it had to sell off to private operators the crucial public hospitals in inner city Sydney – like RPA and St Vincents!



According to the NSW government's own official figures, in just a 12 year period, first the ALP and then the Liberal state governments sold off 12% of the public housing in NSW. This is even at a time when the population has grown.

The moves towards “self-financing” of public housing are, indeed, part of the ruling class drive to make basic services – including healthcare and education – increasingly “user pays.” Jacking up TAFE and university fees is part of this agenda. **According to the “values” of the capitalist rulers, all the services that working class people need ought to be “user pays” but all the budget items that they, the capitalists, need to keep themselves in power should come out of general revenue from taxes.** Thus, none of the pro-capitalist political parties call for the massive government outlays for the organs of anti-working class repression – the police, courts, prisons and military – to be self-financed. Meanwhile, the huge and ever-increasing budget which the ruling class gives to ASIO to spy on us is certainly not “self-financed” by the spies themselves. And neither is their ABCC body which was created to attack our unions in the construction industry.

The spin that the Liberal state government is weaving for Millers Point and Sirius Building tenants – that the government needs to forcibly relocate them from their homes to finance public housing elsewhere – they are also spinning to public housing tenants elsewhere when they sell-off their homes too! For example, this is what they have been telling public housing residents in the Bulli-Woonona-Bellambi area north of Wollongong. Yet no one has seen the additional public housing dwellings because they simply don't exist! **The fact is that from Minto to Claymore to Bonyrigg to Glebe to the Illawara, Millers Point and Waterloo, state and federal governments of all stripes have overseen the slashing of public housing stock.** Even a Senate inquiry admitted that from 2006 to 2013, even as the population grew, governments cut the number of public housing dwellings in Australia by 13,000. It is notable that this erosion in public housing has occurred during a period that spans the Howard Liberal government, two Rudd ALP governments, a Gillard-led ALP/Greens de-facto coalition government and the present conservative government. All the current parliamentary parties have been guilty of undermining public housing.

NSW governments have been among the worst in terms of selling off public housing. Official government figures show that in the twelve years up until June 2015 (the latest period that figures have been published for), state governments in NSW have slashed the amount of public housing by 12% (Shelter NSW, *NSW housing: a factsheet*, updated November 2016, https://shelternsw.org.au/sites/shelternsw.org.au/files/public/documents/fly1610factsheet-nsw_shelternsw5a.pdf). This is even as the state's population has grown by 15% in the same period. **In other words, in a 12 year period, NSW governments – both the previous ALP government up to March 2011 and the Liberal-National coalition since then – have slashed the number of public housing dwellings per resident by almost a quarter. No wonder homelessness is on the rise!**

It is important to note that this government slashing of the amount of public housing in NSW has continued even after the conservative regime first mooted the complete privatisation of public housing in Millers Point in 2012 and even after they began the forced relocations and sell-offs in 2014. In other words, their claim that this is all about financing additional public housing construction elsewhere is just **one big fat lie**. Indeed, if anything, the reduction in public housing across Sydney seems to be accelerating. A report in the *The Sydney Morning Herald* (24 April 2016), titled, “The great public housing fire sale continues despite worsening affordability crisis” reveals

that in the first three and a half months of last year alone, over \$54 million in public housing was sold off to private buyers – even if one excludes the sell-offs in Millers Point and Glebe! And this sell-off is not just in the inner city. The main areas that they are selling off public housing in – in addition, of course, to the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area – include Parramatta, Hurstville, Greenacre, Panania, Campsie, Fairfield, Wentworthville, Lalor Park and Canley Vale.

Recently, especially with study after study showing that not only is housing too expensive for the masses but that rents in Australia are thoroughly unaffordable, governments have been under pressure to show that they are addressing this housing crisis. Thus, they have started to claim that they are committed to “social housing.” However, here they play a neat trick with words. Social housing refers not only to public housing but also to privately-run, “community housing.” In the latter, both nominally not-for-profit as well as profit-seeking groups administer low-rent housing. However, because these private outfits running “community housing” are meant to either break even or make a profit, they discriminate against the most hard-up tenants (since such tenants would pay the lowest rents or would be most in danger of defaulting on payments). For the same reason “community housing” operators are even stingier on repairing premises than public housing bureaucrats and even more ruthlessly evict tenants. Thus, while “community housing” may offer a better deal for tenants than renting in the rest of the private market, it is still a big step backwards for tenants compared to public housing. **What governments have been doing, while claiming that they are committed to maintaining a level of “social housing”, is to convert public housing into “community housing.” This is a large stride towards the full privatisation of public housing and is a big step backwards for tenants and all working class people.** It is worth noting that the Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation that managed London's destroyed Grenfell Tower and which so callously ignored tenants' pleas to fix manifest fire and other safety hazards is also a private organisation managing social housing – complete with highly paid managers and consultants. Although, in that case, the housing remained publicly owned, the use of this private “non-profit”, “arms-length management organisation” was designed to both shield the government from criticism for under-funding maintenance and to be a step towards turning the housing into so-called “community housing.” There is little doubt that the move towards turning public housing into “community housing” in London contributed to the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire that killed over 80 tenants.

In January 2016, the NSW Liberal government announced that it would transfer 35% of public housing stock to privately-run “community housing” operators over 10 years. The previous year, in their reply to the NSW government's budget, the ALP state opposition went even further and called for **all** public housing to be transferred into privately-run, “community housing”! Running the same agenda, the small amount of extra money that the Turnbull federal government has provided for “affordable housing” in its recent budget will not go into increasing public housing supply. Instead, it will be a handout to “community housing” operators in the form of lower interest loans. What is more, the housing thus provided will largely be out of reach of people on the public housing waiting list. For these “community housing” operators will be able to charge up to 80% of the average rent in the area that a house is in. That means that the workers – including rail, tram and bus drivers,

ambulance workers, nurses, cleaners, maintenance workers, electricians, water and sewerage workers, taxi drivers, delivery drivers, office assistants and IT support staff – workers who all keep the Sydney CBD going will be largely priced out of living anywhere near their place of work if they want to access such so-called, “community housing”. **Even a family living in working class Auburn and relying on a single full-time worker on the minimum wage would have to pay over half of their after tax income on rent to live in a two bedroom unit if they were able to access one of these new, supposedly “affordable”, “community housing” dwellings.**

The sell-off of public housing is part of the broader privatisation of basic services that has been pursued by Liberal, ALP and Greens federal and state governments alike. The result of these privatisations is that resources that could be used to maintain and expand public services are being transferred into the pockets of rich, private businessmen. Take the case of Sydney’s Desalination Plant. Just two years after it first went into service in 2010, the state government sold off the plant through a 50 year lease to a consortium half-owned by Hastings Funds Management. Hastings is 100% owned by Westpac Bank and manages funds for wealthy big-time local investors. It has been involved in many privatisations throughout this country from airports to electricity to the Port of Newcastle. The government’s privatisation deal is so generous to Hastings and their consortium partner that the government pays them

well over half a million dollars per day even when the plant is, actually, shutdown! And it so happens that from a few weeks after the rich private investors took over the plant, the desalination plant has, indeed, been shut (because Sydney’s dam levels were high enough to make the plant unnecessary to operate). By the time the 50 year lease is over, the Westpac-owned Fund and their partner will be handed over \$10 billion from out of public coffers even if the plant does not see another single day of operation! (see [http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-27/nsw-desalination-plant-deal-costing-customers-\\$10-billion/4985168](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-27/nsw-desalination-plant-deal-costing-customers-$10-billion/4985168)). That’s well over four times what the private buyers paid for the lease! After giving away such “charity” to filthy rich private businessmen, the government then has the hide to say that it has no money left for new public housing – unless, of course, they sell off existing public housing stock.

Now, in the latest chapter in its privatisation binge, the NSW Liberal government is seeking to privatise bus services in Sydney’s Inner West and inner South-West. This will result in the cutting of bus drivers’ jobs and conditions, the axing of unprofitable bus routes and the bypassing of maintenance and safety checks. However, bus drivers are fighting back. On May 18, bus drivers unleashed a powerful, 24 hour snap strike in defiance of a ruling by the Industrial Relations Commission. The drivers, members of the Rail, Tram and Bus union, have followed this up with fare free days. **No to privatisation of Sydney buses – No to privatisation of public housing!**

AS THE HUGE BANNER THAT HUNG OVER THE 32 HIGH ST ACTION STATED: MASSIVELY INCREASE PUBLIC HOUSING NOW

The struggle to stop the privatisation of public housing in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area is an important part of the fight against the privatisation of public assets and against the sell-off of public housing throughout this country. We actually need a massive increase in public housing. We need it to end homelessness and to house the hundreds of thousands of people on Australian public housing waiting lists. We also need it to house the many more low-paid workers who need low-rent housing but either cannot meet the ridiculously strict waiting list entry criteria or don’t bother to get on the list because waiting times are so outlandishly long. Furthermore, we also need public housing to help the many working class people who rent privately and face unaffordable rents because the shortage of affordable accommodation caused by the dearth of public housing means that private landlords are able to get away with jacking up rents. A substantial increase in public housing will finally pressure landlords in the private market to reduce rents since they will then know that their tenants will have somewhere else to go.

However, the propagandists for the capitalist ruling class say that public housing is outdated. They claim that it is not relevant in today’s world. Yet that argument has a fatal flaw. For in the world’s most populous country, China, the government is actually massively increasing the amount of public housing. This is not only through constructing new public housing. They have also been nationalising existing private housing – the very opposite of what has been happening here. Indeed, so committed has the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) been to public housing that they have provided over 45 million additional public housing dwellings in just the last eight years! As a result, an urban Chinese resident is now some six times more likely to have access to public housing than an urban Australian resident!

One obvious reason why the PRC has been able to so spectacularly increase the provision of public housing for its people is that there is a government commitment there to provide affordable housing to working class people. However, that is not the only reason. The other major factor is that although the ruling bureaucrats in China have since the 1980s allowed a harmful level of private sector capitalists to intrude into their economy, it is still socialistic state-owned enterprises

that dominate the economy in the PRC. Thus, a large part of the PRC’s public housing is built by state-owned developers – like the giant China State Construction Engineering Corporation – and is financed by the state-owned banks that thoroughly dominate the PRC’s finance sector. In contrast, here in Australia, many of the resources for public housing ends up in the pockets of private contractors who are hired to perform various stages of the construction and most of the maintenance of public housing. Public funds designated for public housing in Australia produce relatively modest outcomes since so much of every dollar nominally assigned for its construction and maintenance ends up going down the drain into the profitable pockets of wealthy private businessmen.

Just as the expansion of public housing in the PRC is part of the continued dominance of public ownership in China’s economy and part of a concerted state-led drive to lift everyone there out of poverty by 2020, the sell-off of public housing in Australia is part of the ruling class’ ongoing privatisation push and part of their drive to reduce access to services for low-income people. Thus, when we stand up for public housing here, we will also be contributing to a broader struggle to defend the public services that working class people need the most.

LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP 32 HIGH STREET OPEN FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

In order to strengthen the upcoming struggles we must learn the hard earned lessons of the fight to stop the forced eviction at 32 High St, Millers Point. Chief among these is to understand the role of the state enforcement organs. After the first day's success in deterring the sheriff's planned eviction of the tenant, the Millers Point community received legal advice that the original eviction notice had been cancelled and that it would take some time before a new eviction order could be processed. Thus, many tenants and supporters felt confident that there would not be a new attempt at eviction for at least a couple of days. This confidence was, in part, generated by our strong victory on the first day but also by an expectation that the state authorities would follow their own bureaucratic procedures and rules. Of course, no one totally ruled out a surprise raid overnight which is why some people stayed in the dwelling and were given the necessary phone tree contacts. However, the belief that a raid was unlikely meant that considerably less forces were mobilised to defend the house overnight than was possible.

Next time, the movement must ensure that there are enough forces to protect the public housing dwelling being targeted for eviction 24/7 regardless of any legal procedures which the authorities may formally be required to follow. **The state enforcement institutions often do not follow their own laws and procedures because they are not here to defend the law. They are here to protect the interests of the rich ruling class.** This has been the case since the colonial conquest of Australia when the armed personnel of the invading power brutally suppressed Aboriginal peoples' resistance to the conquest of their lands occupied by the wealthy amongst the colonialists. Since then, these enforcement organs have attacked the picket lines of striking workers, broken strikes, attacked pro-worker and leftist demonstrations, evicted tenants, harassed the homeless, enforced the racist oppression of Aboriginal people and unleashed attacks on scapegoated "ethnic" communities. It is true that police do sometimes catch a rapist or murderer. However, their *political* function is to enforce the rule of the capitalist, big business owners over the masses. Every time there is a clash between the propertied, exploiting class and the working class masses, the state machine becomes perfected and more entrenched in this purpose and the armed personnel themselves become more conscious of their role. That is why the police and sheriffs are not at all workers in the way that electricians, nurses, construction workers, wharfies and IT workers, for example, are. They are, instead, the hired enforcers of the big end of town. Enforcers who, every time they do a job on the masses, become more and more hardened in their commitment to serve those at the top of this unequal society. With every dirty deed done they become more apt at "justifying" this role to themselves with patronising notions that those doing it the hardest are lazy or otherwise "deserve" their plight and that those resisting the dominance of the ruling class are people causing trouble just for the sake of it. Thus the likes of police, sheriffs, prison guards and prosecutors should have no place in our union movement. Even when they are polite to us that is only so long as we do not resist the unfair status quo in society. It is also, often, just to give us a false sense of security. Many a striking worker has experienced police coming to a picket and joining workers at the BBQ or even kicking a footy around with picketers but the very next day coming back in force with batons unleashed to try and smash the picket and get scabs through.

The laws and regulations that the authorities impose are there to suppress *us*. Even when there are certain regulations which we have fought for and won to somewhat constrain their powers, they will violate these rules – to the extent we let them get away with it – if that helps them carry out their role of enforcing the interests of the big end of town. We must plan our strategies based on this core understanding.

Another lesson from the 32 High St struggle concerns the role of the media. Over the last several years, the mainstream Australian media has vilified and mocked public housing

tenants. However, given the widespread support for public housing in inner-city Sydney, the media occasionally had to give more sympathetic coverage to the plight of Millers Point tenants. Yet, when the struggle against the sell-off of public housing in Millers Point, the Rocks and Dawes Point was taken to a higher, more powerful level through the blockade at 32 High St, the mainstream media again turned more hostile. Channel 7, owned by high-living billionaire Kerry Stokes as well as the government-owned ABC were, in particular, the most shameless in promoting the NSW government and state bureaucrat slanders against the evicted tenant. The mainstream media are happy to occasionally run a sympathetic piece when working class people are simply victims but once we fight back we see the media's true colours. Their coverage will reflect the class interests of those that own or control them – that is, ultra-wealthy businessmen in the case of Channel 7 or, in the case of the ABC, the rich people's state that serves the capitalists. We should not expect any support from the mainstream media and, most importantly, **we must not tailor our struggles just to try and win support from this media.** If, as an exception, the media do happen to give non-hostile coverage to one of our struggles then well and good. But we should do what is best to make our struggles as powerful as possible rather than what will be most acceptable to these hired mouthpieces of billionaire tycoons and capitalist governments.

Even more importantly, what the struggle to stop the eviction at 32 High Street confirmed yet again is that no reliance should be placed on pro-capitalist politicians – even when they claim to be on working class people's side on a particular issue. Over the last few years, several of these politicians have stated support for the Millers Point and Sirius public housing communities. A few of these politicians have spoken out loudly and passionately against the NSW Coalition government's sell-off plan for the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area. Some have even spoken at rallies protesting against the sell-off of public housing in the area including Labor federal deputy opposition leader, Tanya Plibersek, Labor NSW shadow minister for social housing, Tania Mihailuk, state MP for Sydney, Alex Greenwich (an independent), several Greens politicians, "independent" Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore and even arch-right wing reactionary Christian Democrat, Fred Nile. However, when Peter Muller was facing eviction and protesters blockaded 32 High Street to try and stop it, most of these politicians refused to take any public stand in support of the action – either verbally or in action. A partial exception was Greens state upper house member, David Shoebridge, who, to his credit, showed up to support the blockade on the first morning. Although some Greens leaders had privately promised that they would bring big numbers to support the blockade, Shoebridge was the lone Greens representative that participated. However, after saying at the blockade "we're not going anywhere," Shoebridge then failed to follow through: after the media slandered the tenant and then after the sheriffs and cops were able to enforce the



Left, Millers Point, May 2017: A huge banner calling for a massive increase in public housing flies proudly above the 32 High St blockade by trade unionists and other supporters of public housing. This banner was initially made for the 5 November 2009 protest outside the office of then federal housing minister, Tanya Plibersek. That rally was the first on-the-streets action for public housing in contemporary times.

eviction, he did not make any public stand or statement in support of the tenant or the struggle to stop the eviction.

The problem is that the various ALP, Greens and “progressive independent” politicians are as committed to upholding the existing economic-political system as the Liberals. Granted that, unlike the openly anti-working class conservatives, these “progressive” politicians would prefer it if there were some reforms to make life easier for the masses. However, because they acquiesce to the current social “order” and, hence, are committed to accepting its power structures, they are so fixated on not scaring away, or even annoying, the big capitalists that every time working class people engage in an intransigent struggle that can actually make a difference – like a blockade to prevent the eviction of a public housing tenant – their first instinct is to run a mile. Furthermore, with the partial exception of the Greens, these “progressive” politicians do not have any broader commitment to public housing themselves. To be sure, they are against the complete sell-off of public housing in the inner-city because they accept that working class people should be allowed to make up a proportion of city residents. Furthermore, they know that the campaign to save public housing in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area is popular and, thus, there are votes in it for them! However, overall they have no commitment to decisively increasing the amount of public housing. Far from it! As we have noted above, the ALP while in government federally by itself – and when in government in a de-facto coalition with the Greens – oversaw the slashing of the amount of public housing. Today, they join the Liberals in hiding behind rhetoric about a commitment to “social housing,” while calling for public housing to be converted into “community” housing which, as we have described above, is a big and sorry step towards full privatisation.

It is worth noting that the large banner that hung over the 32 High St blockade, stating “Massively Increase Public Housing Now,” was actually first used in a protest *against* Tanya Plibersek when she was the federal housing minister in the first Rudd government. One of our comrades made that banner for that November 2009 protest that Trotskyist Platform called outside Tanya Plibersek’s office because of the then ALP federal government’s woefully inadequate outlay of resources for public housing. That rally turned out to be the first *on the streets* action for public housing in NSW in the resurgence of activism around defence of public housing that has taken place over the last seven and a half years and which must be, now, desperately intensified. As a representative of the CFMEU construction

workers union, delivering a message of solidarity to that 2009 rally from the union’s then NSW president, stated: “since the mid-1970s, successive Governments have failed to adequately deliver sufficient public housing for those in our society who need such shelter.” Indeed, then housing minister Tanya Plibersek later joined with the then ALP NSW government to orchestrate the sell-off of large amounts of public housing in Claymore near Campbelltown and in Glebe. This added to similar schemes already being implemented by the then ALP state government to reduce the proportion of public housing in Minto and Bonyrigg. In Claymore, the Plibersek-NSW ALP government joint plan involved the privatisation of a quarter of the public housing in what had been the biggest public housing estate in NSW (see Plibersek’s own press release here: http://www.formerministers.dss.gov.au/2181/tp_m_nswhousingprojects_7june2010/) – a disastrous outcome for working class people that was deepened even further by subsequent conservative NSW governments.

The fact is that when it was in government in NSW, the ALP actually sold off more public housing than the arrogant Liberals later have. Thus, in the last eight years of the former ALP government up to 2011, they slashed the public housing stock in NSW by 11%. When population growth is taken into account, this represents a cut in the amount of public housing coverage by close to one in five. Indeed, it was that previous ALP state government that actually began the sale of public housing in Millers Point. In two lots, they sold off 36 vacant homes (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/residents-stick-to-their-point-of-community-20121025-288bh.html>) in the late noughties while holding back on the repair and maintenance of the existing homes. This paved the way for the conservatives to come in with their sledge hammer approach and sell off the houses from under the very feet of public housing tenants.

In the case of Tanya Plibersek there is also a particular conflict of interest that, additionally, holds her back from following through on her claimed support for public housing in the area. Her husband, Michael Coutts-Trotter is one of the chief bureaucrats overseeing the sell-off of public housing in the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area. He is the head of the Department of Family and Community Services. When the government announced its decision to sell off the public housing in the area, Coutts-Trotter stood right alongside Community Services minister, Pru Goward, in pushing the lies and spin justifying the sale, stating that:



Left: Deputy opposition leader, the ALP's Tanya Pibersek, at a protest in support of public housing in Millers Point. Pibersek and other mainstream politicians often spoke at such events to gain votes and in the case of ALP leaders to maintain the party's support amongst its working class base. However, when supporters of public housing took the kind of action that could actually make a difference – like the 9th May blockade at 32 High St and the 6th August Millers Point occupation – most of these politicians were nowhere to be seen. Moreover, when those pro-capitalist politicians were themselves in office, they also oversaw the sell-off of public housing. Below: a June 2010 press release by Tanya Pibersek when she was housing minister boasts of a plan for the southwestern Sydney suburb of Claymore that featured a massive privatisation or even demolition of a large chunk of its public housing.

Listen

Media Release by The Hon Tanya Pibersek MP
Housing Affordability Fund to deliver 10 urban renewal projects in NSW
 7 June 2010

Joint Media Release with:

- Frank Terenzini MP, NSW Minister for Housing

Media Release by The Hon Tanya Pibersek MP

Federal Minister for Housing Tanya Pibersek and NSW Minister for Housing Frank Terenzini today announced a new partnership that will invest \$43 million in urban renewal and affordable housing projects across Sydney and Lake Macquarie.

During a visit to Claymore, Mr Pibersek said the funding from the Rudd Government's Housing Affordability Fund would be provided to Housing NSW to undertake urban renewal work and deliver new affordable housing at top sites.

At Claymore, the redevelopment will provide 1281 homes, 384 to be retained as social housing, 123 former public housing homes will be available for private sale, and 774 will be sold as vacant residential lots,

The funding at Claymore will be used to develop a master plan, which will explore options to redevelop the site and future work such as new town and master plan strategies.

NSW Minister for Housing Frank Terenzini welcomed the Rudd Government's \$43 million partnership with Housing NSW to renew public housing estates and deliver new affordable housing for home buyers.

At Claymore the redevelopment will provide 1281 homes, 384 to be retained as social housing, 123 former public housing homes will be available for private sale, and 774 will be sold as vacant residential lots, Terenzini said.

"This is a great outcome for eligible home buyers in the growing region of Sydney's south west with 380 eligible homebuyers saving up to \$30,789 each."

The overall \$43.2 million investment will also be used to assist in future housing developments. Project descriptions of the ten Housing NSW projects are:

- \$12.96 million at Claymore to develop vacant land, provide necessary infrastructure and connect roads. Preliminary investigations indicate the Master Plan will yield more than 1,000 dwellings, over 700 vacant residential lots, over 100 former public housing dwellings for private sale and more than 350 public housing units retained as social housing.

"There is massive demand for residential housing in this area; it [the sell-off] is going to free up a very large amount of money for reinvestment in social housing."

The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 March 2014, (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-waterfront-public-housing-properties-to-be-sold-off-20140319-351fs.html>)

Even more significant here than any personal conflict of interest for Pibersek is the more fundamental conflict between the ALP's stated purpose to improve the lives of working class people and the reality that its strategy to achieve this, through administering the capitalist state, necessarily – whether the particular individual involved is taking part in administering this state as a high-level bureaucrat or as a government minister – means enforcing the interests of the capitalist exploiters against the interests of working class people.

That is why the struggle for public housing – just like all campaigns for the rights of working class people – must not rely at all on pro-capitalist politicians but, instead, rely entirely on the power and unity of working class people, our trade unions and other downtrodden sections of the community. Most crucially, we must ensure that the direction of the movement is not in the least modified to ensure acceptance by any mainstream politicians that state support for the campaign. Given that those pro-establishment politicians claiming to support the Millers Point struggle are not more broadly for public housing, they have been pulling the campaign towards narrowly focusing on the particularities of the Millers Point/Rocks/Dawes Point area rather than emphasising that the campaign is part of the overall fight to defend public housing everywhere. Any step in this direction weakens the ability of the campaign to inspire broader support from public housing tenants elsewhere, from those on the public housing waiting list and from other opponents of

privatisation. Furthermore, any narrowing of the focus to just the Millers Point/Rocks/Dawes Point area can end up being manipulated by the NSW Liberal government to spin its devious narrative about the issue. As we saw all too clearly with the struggle to stop the eviction at 32 High St, the state government is trying to sell people the utterly despicable and cynical lie that they are selling off public housing in Millers Point for the good of public housing elsewhere and that those tenants resisting are selfish people protecting their own interests at the expense of tenants elsewhere. This underscores why it is vital that the movement disregards the sensibilities of any pro-capitalist politicians pledging support and ever more forthrightly make front and centre of the campaign the idea that its struggle to stop the sell-off of public housing in the CBD area is part of a broader fight to oppose the slashing of public housing everywhere and is, in fact, part and parcel of the struggle to win a massive increase in public housing in Australia. It is a struggle on the side of all public housing tenants, a struggle on the side of all those on the public housing waiting lists, a struggle for the many more working class people who need public housing but aren't on the waiting list and a fight that stands by the interests of the many working class people who rent privately and face unaffordable rents. More broadly, we must ever more directly locate this campaign as part of the struggle against the ruling class' attacks on all public services and a struggle against their attacks on our trade unions. Any undermining of public housing is an attack on our unions because like other measures which target the poor and unemployed they make the prospect of life after losing one's job so unbearably miserable that it can intimidate some workers – fearful of being sacked by the boss or being identified as one of the staunch unionists who are invariably at the top of the bosses' list to be axed in the event of retrenchments - from participating in the union fight for rights at work.

THERE'S STILL TIME LEFT TO STOP AND REVERSE THE PUBLIC HOUSING SELL-OFF

It is true that the government has managed to drive out most of the public housing tenants from the Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point area. However, a few tenants remain. Most significantly, many of the public housing dwellings have still not been sold off and still less have been occupied. While vacated houses remain unoccupied there remains the chance to build mass action – buttressed by the power of our trade unions – to reclaim these dwellings for public use. These unoccupied houses should be used to shelter the homeless and those on the public housing waiting list and not sold off to greedy developers and wealthy speculators!

Furthermore, there has been an event internationally that should give this struggle new hope. This is connected to the fact that part of what is driving the NSW government's obsessive campaign against Millers Point public housing is not only its overall push to slash public housing but, additionally, its subservience to the interests of billionaire James Packer whose Crown Group is building a high rollers casino and six-star hotel in the very nearby Barangaroo. For Packer and his government servants, having working class people in the area is an "eyesore" for the wealthy clientele who they hope will frequent the luxury resort that Packer expects to make billions from. Meanwhile, the NSW government is determined to clear out working class tenants in order to help its rich developer mates make a fortune from turning Millers Point into luxury accommodation for resort executives and patrons. However, although Packer can get whatever he wants in capitalist Australia he found that things are not the same in China. On June 26, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) jailed 16 of his wealthy executives after they all pleaded guilty to charges of illegally luring Chinese high rollers to use Packer's casinos in Australia and elsewhere. One of Crown corporation's highest flying executives, Melbourne-based boss of VIP operations Jason O'Connor received a 10 month sentence. The PRC, understandably, wants to stop money flows to casino accounts being used to subvert its strict control on money movements by the rich. Under the PRC's socialistic system it is public ownership that dominates, not the interests of rich private sector bigwigs. The effect of the PRC's crackdown is that it has shown Packer and his henchmen that they will not be able to get away with illegally luring casino clients from China. Without customers from the world's most populous country, Packer's Barangaroo casino may now be unviable and media are reporting that Crown is reconsidering the entire project. If the resort project is indeed killed off then that would not only potentially allow the scenic Barangaroo area to be used for what it should be – for public recreational space or badly needed public housing – but would also remove part of the fuel powering the government's turbo-charged drive to kick out public housing tenants from Millers Point. Furthermore, even if the China arrests do not in themselves kill

Crown's casino project, we should use the blow that the Peoples Republic of China has landed against Packer and his henchmen to encourage our own struggle here. For these blows have shown that Packer and his fellow billionaires are not invincible. What we must do is unite working class people to fight back against the tyranny of the tycoons and stand up to the governments and state institutions that serve the marauding tycoons' interests.

The struggle for public housing is a key battleground in the overall struggle of working class people against the all-sided offensive that the capitalist rulers are waging against their rights. For three and a half decades, Australia's filthy rich corporate bosses and the governments that serve them have waged a war on working class people's rights: they have sold off public housing, cut off payments to low-income single mothers, made TAFE and university more expensive, underfunded public schools and public hospitals, attacked our unions, casualised the workforce, sacked workers whenever that helps them make even more profits and made life for those not fortunate enough to have a job even more miserable. It is time for us and our unions to fight back! The Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point tenants resisting the sell-off of public housing have opened up a new front in our fightback. Let's mobilise behind this struggle with ever greater vigour. The way we trade unionists, public housing tenants and other supporters of working class interests were able to repulse the sheriff who was set to evict the 32 High St tenant on the first day of that battle shows the power that we have. By learning the lessons of the subsequent defeat of that 32 High St battle – most importantly that the state institutions were created to serve the exclusive interests of the big end of town which means we cannot trust them to abide by their own rules and procedures – by learning important lessons like this we can win future victories. The way that the public housing tenants and ex-tenants of Millers Point, the Rocks and Dawes Point have so resiliently resisted in the face of incessant pressure should inspire us to give it our best shot.

The future rests in our strong, working class hands.



James Packer with Liberal Party prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull. When the NSW Liberal Party sells off public housing in Millers Point it is acting in the interests of James Packer and its other big end of town mates.