

Issue #3  
Oct. 24  
By donation

# PARTISAN!

The Monthly Partyist Magazine

## The streets belong to the people



What happened at Disrupt Land Forces?  
Jim Dawson's legacy appraised  
Communists & Eureka  
and more



# PARTISAN!

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## Submissions

Partisan accepts and encourages unsolicited submissions from left-wing radicals and militants of all backgrounds. Articles can range from 800-1,000 words, and essays are limited to 2,000 words. Word count is less restrictive for other submissions including letters and reports, but we would encourage you to keep them concise.

Please proof-read etc prior to submitting. Our staff will also sub-edit as necessary. We publish monthly, so aim to submit before the 25th of the month at the absolute latest (15th-20th is ideal). Simultaneous submissions accepted on a case-by-case basis.

We are primarily interested in topics such as Marxist political economy, political strategy and tactics, engagement with Communists pasts and futures, critiques of Liberalism and Capitalism, interviews, and features. When making a submission, please include your name (or pseudonym), a summary of the piece, and any other relevant information (such as photos and sourcing). All submissions are to be emailed to the publishing email (see left).

# Communists need to connect to the workers movement again

## Partisan Editors

Many sects among the Left all claim to have some kind of position of influence within the working class. From the Communist Party ('71) to Socialist Alternative, there is no shortage of those proclaiming themselves "prole-whisperers". All this hullabaloo confuses the working class and militants alike. A lack of clear industrial/union strategy by communists has continued to separate and distinguish them from the working class broadly. Something needs to change.

We could, like the mainline Communist Party, proclaim ourselves to already be The Party. After all, it's in the name. But is the Communist Party truly a 'Workers Party' in the Marxist sense? No, since it lacks a base of serious cadre dispersed amongst the working class, the unions, other workers organisations, etc. It is more accurate to describe the Communist Party as a 'Bureaucrats Party', a party of the calcified trade-union leadership in alliance with Stalinist (pseudo-) intellectuals.

In order for us to claim to be building towards a workers party, we need to put the serious work in to connect ourselves as militants to what's left of the workers movement. We need to become more confident in presenting our perspectives to workers, and more willing to fight the political fights necessary to win workers to our program and to turn them into militants.

It's all well and good to have propaganda and slogans - we communists have plenty of those - but what we lack is an ability to present this propaganda effectively and confidently. As Comrade Edith writes in a letter (see: Letters on Page 31), "the task is to show to the working class why they must care [about communism]".

This issue of Partisan covers not just the struggle of workers for a democratic union, but also features perspectives on 'direct action' strategies and on militant activism. We invite militants to send in letters giving their perspectives on party-building, militancy, unions, and the role of communists in the class struggle.



# In Indonesia - Para Buruh Seluruh Dunia, Bersatulah



## RCO Central Committee

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation extends its solidarity with the struggles of Indonesian workers and youth in their fight for democracy against the ruling nationalist coalition in Jakarta.

Despite legal challenges and massive demonstrations in the street, the Indonesian People's Representative Council (DPR) is seeking to tighten electoral laws in order to consolidate power around the ruling clique, which is currently passing the torch between the Widodo Presidency and the former general Prabowo Subianto. Workers and youth cannot and will not accept further limitations to the weak institutions of the Indonesian Republic. In response to widespread protests, the police have been deployed and many militants have been arrested. Freedom for all political prisoners!

In Indonesia, the democratic struggle must be carried all the way to the end, with the establishment of a democratic and social republic in Indonesia, as well as in Malaysia, Papua, Timor, and the Philippines. In Australia,

Protestors march in Indonesia (Photo: REUTERS)

workers should look to the democratic struggles of the Indonesian working class, and work to strengthen the relationship between Indonesian and Australian workers organisations. In addition, Australian communists must seek to establish connections to the limited Indonesian communist movement, in the hope to establish parties in both countries.

## Resolution

- Solidarity with the Workers and Youth of Indonesia! Smash the Election Laws! For a Democratic and Social Republic!
- Australian workers organisations must extend their solidarity to the workers movement in Indonesia, and repudiate the relationship between the Labor Albanese government and the Widodo government.

# Open letter on the Queensland state election

## RCO Central Committee

The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation notes that campaigning is underway for the Queensland state election due to take place on the 26th of October. The incumbent Labor government under Steven Miles is widely anticipated to be swept out of office by the arch-conservative Liberal National Party. This would be the first LNP government in Queensland since the one-term Newman government was voted out in 2015. This government is to this day renowned for the cuts it made to Queensland's public service, putting 14,000 public servants into retirement. This had a disastrous effect on public services that the state has yet to fully recover from.

Many members of the current LNP opposition, including party leader David Crisafulli, were members of this government. There has been no ideological shift within the LNP from the Newman period; it remains the same corrupt, decrepit institution as it ever was. This was most poignantly shown when they did not criticise the ALP state government's budget and voted to approve it mere months before the state election. Nor in the months following have they provided a positive program for their economic policies. It is clear that more drastic cuts are in store for Queensland under Crisafulli.

Both the ALP and the LNP have turned to a campaign against the "youth crime crisis" to capture the votes of the petit bourgeoisie dominated rural and outer suburban areas. There is no interest among this layer of the bourgeoisie to take on the costs of solving the social crises and abuse that ultimately cause violent crime. Instead, campaign promises to create harsher punitive measures that further criminalise Aboriginal youth abound.

There are, however, some reforms promised with regards to the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst the LNP has promised nothing of note in this regard, the ALP in contrast has. The ALP have already introduced uniform 50 cent public

transport fares and are promising to set up twelve state-owned petrol stations, with price rises limited to five cents a litre on any given day. Whether or not these moves are merely cynical attempts to beat a likely defeat, these are undoubtedly progressive measures that would help mitigate the cost of living on workers.

As the parliamentary representative of these sections of the capitalist class that want to keep working class social reproduction constant, the LNP has repeatedly voted against the liberalisation of abortion laws in Queensland that have been introduced over the life of the last Labor government. Whilst a Crisafulli government may not try to explicitly outlaw abortion, an informal restriction on access through reversing the recent expansion of abortion access through general funding cuts to health services is likely.

In the absence of our own party to back, the Central Committee supports an approach to this election of keeping the right out of power. Recognising the progressive reforms recently made by Labor, it is worthwhile to cast a vote for the incumbent government as opposed to protest voting. In this context, we call for preferencing the Greens and Labor ahead of all other candidates.

Regardless of the election's outcome, the workers struggle will continue. In the event of an LNP victory, there is a greater likelihood that some aspects of this struggle, including women's liberation and Indigenous liberation, will be brought to the fore. In the absence of a communist party, the ALP and the Greens will to some extent successfully recuperate these struggles into their own electoral projects. Both before and after this election, communists must strive to develop Marxist critiques of capital and power in Queensland. It is imperative that we participate in the various struggles playing out, particularly those that intensify in the coming years.

# On Israel and Lebanon

## RCO Central Committee

The colonial fascist Israeli regime has carried out a massacre of Lebanese civilians, carrying out a bombing attack which killed 492 on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>. This immediately follows the paper terror bombings that injured thousands as well as the strike on southern Beirut last week [as of writing, the 19<sup>th</sup> of September].

This violence is justified by the new Israeli war aim to bring settlers back into the northern towns depopulated by the ongoing conflict with Hezbollah that started on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Israel's propaganda, echoed by its sycophants in the bourgeois media is eerily similar to its lies justifying ongoing genocide in Gaza, claiming Hezbollah uses 'human shields', that they are only fighting against Hezbollah and only targeting their sites. They claim that pushing Hezbollah behind the Litani River is the only path to 'peace' despite the Israeli rejection of multiple ceasefires deals in Gaza that would have ended the fighting in the North. These tactics are further mirrored in the similar use of evacuation orders in southern Lebanon now being used to cause mass displacement.

Every standard bearer for western imperialism has pressed their concern that all sides should work to 'prevent any further escalation' while providing Israel with the material to continue forward with its 'de-escalation through escalation'. The piles of paper and hours of press conferences from the world imperialist powers [including Australia] affirming their commitment to a ceasefire and their desire to prevent regional war are not backed up by serious action, unless it is to increase the flow of weapons to the terrorist State of Israel.

This latest round of aggression is driven by the political interests of the Israeli government. It has been unable to achieve its war aims in Gaza aside from the total destruction of civilian life in the strip. Hamas and other resistance groups have not been wiped out, and remain operating after nearly a year of Israeli attacks. To commit to a ceasefire, as the only viable option for ending the war on Gaza would spell the collapse of the current Israeli coalition, and the continuing existence of militants in Gaza and the West Bank following the October 7th jail

break would be an intolerable scar on the Israeli national psyche. So, to continue the war, Israel must expand it and continue it indefinitely before it is forced to stop.

It is unlikely that Israel will be able to destroy Hezbollah, and it will be dragged into further military problems if it commits to a land invasion as it did in 2006. While the US has been reluctant to back the full Israeli invasion of Lebanon, it is also reluctant to restrain Israel.

We cannot rely on the imperialist powers to end this conflict!

The various nationalist forces in the region have stalled the liberation struggle of the region into a game of international brinkmanship. We support nationalist forces to the degree that they fight the imperialists, and we oppose them to the degree that they drag out the struggle against the imperialists.

The only way to end the imperialist occupation of the Middle East is through revolutionary war waged by a new Red Army of the whole region's working class. The road to Jerusalem runs through Cairo, Baghdad, and Amman!

- **Israel out of Lebanon!**
- **Free Palestine!**
- **Fight the imperialist world system!**
- **For a Socialist Republic of the Middle East!**



"Kill us under every stone and building.. We will not abandon Palestine." Banners raised in streets across Beirut, Lebanon.

# On the ground at Disrupt Land

## Telcontar

The brutal and unrelenting crackdown by Victoria Police has drawn much attention to Disrupt Land Forces (DLF) as the full force and viciousness of the Australian state was revealed in all its blood-soaked glory. Rubber bullets, tear gas, flash bang grenades and pepper spray were all unleashed against the daring protesters demonstrating against the Military-Industrial Complex's festival of genocide. Socialist Alternative's chants of "This is not a police state!" may appeal to the idealist students they hope to win over, but the working class knows better. The police are scabs, they are the blood-soaked 'velvet glove' of the capitalist state.

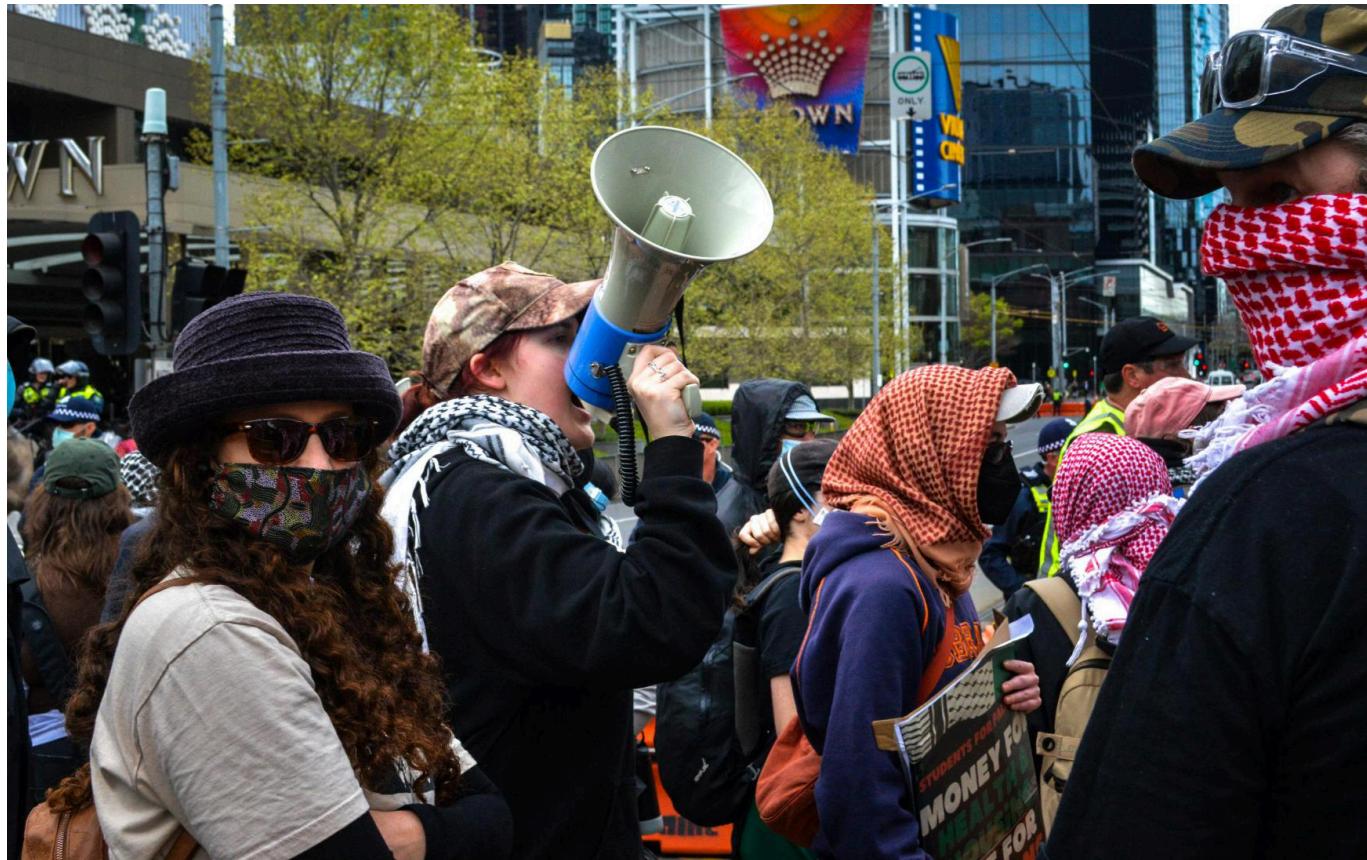
The iron fist of the military has not needed to be deployed for many years in Australia, but it is always an option that the state will fall back on if the need arises. Even as the price of these operations spiral (current estimates of the cost for the police to defend a bunch of warmongering capitalists is upwards of \$10M)

the state will continue to throw munitions at its problems.

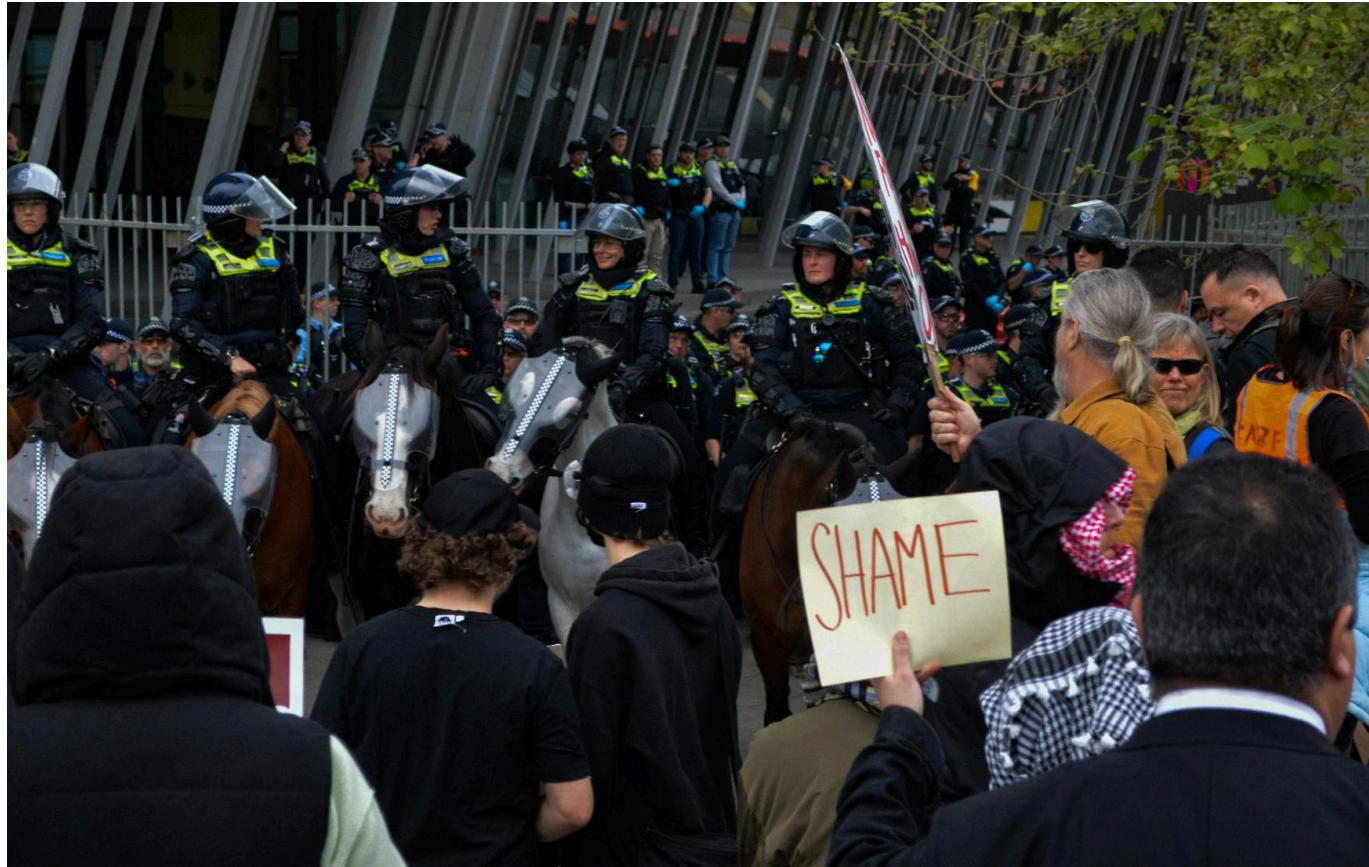
Whilst the most literal aim of disrupting the conference was a success, this is not to say that Disrupt Land Forces was a success for the working class, or something that the left should try and idealise as the model for future actions. The opening day's picket was full of blunders, strategic mistakes, and vain buffoons trying to carve out a name for themselves, or to ensure that they looked good on camera to the detriment of the actual aim of the picket. There were three broad tendencies at the picket itself, all of which will be criticised in turn.

The first, and the one that has drawn the most criticism from the left by far was Socialist Alternative under the banner of Students for Palestine. Throughout the morning Socialist Alternative's preferred tactic of stunts for the sake of stunts crippled the entire endeavour. Their move to the second entrance early in the morning led to a great amount of protesters

The crowd gathers at Disrupt Land Forces (Photo: Luca)



# Forces - What happened?



Protesters confront a line of mounted police (Photo: Luca)

being kettled by VicPol [Kettling is a crowd-control tactic wherein police officers surround and contain large groups of people and keep them in place for long periods of time].

Indeed, roughly half of the protesters were kettled and trapped from escaping by the main road, and protesters were fortunate that the police did not cut off small side exits (such as the concrete barrier). This allowed for protesters to break the kettle easily as they were able to circumvent the police line. The memory that will stick with me most is running through the hedge gathering with my comrades, and one of them slinging her backpack around and taking her morning estrogen.

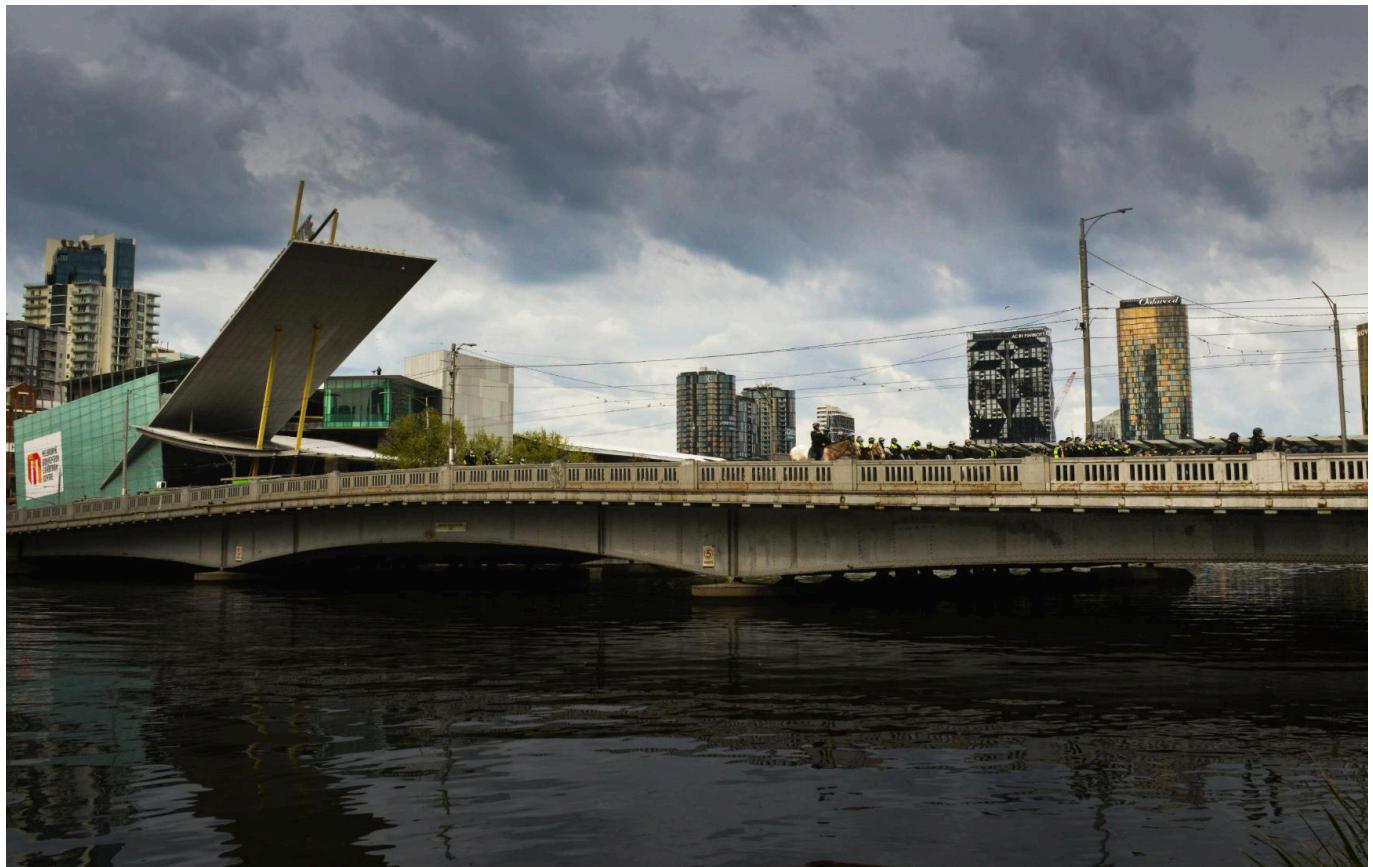
The vague milling that emerged after the breakout revealed the bankruptcy of the 'strategy'. Indeed, this saw the *de facto* split into two blocks that would dominate the rest of the picket. The well-established Melbourne black bloc scene, and the bloc around the people that had the microphones and some vague idea of a plan (Socialist Alternative). As

we marched back to the main entrance and the picket proper, the stunt-based approach to politics revealed its weakness. As protesters tore down the plastic coverings on the fences raised to surround 'Jeff's Shed', the lack of a clear defensive position or strategy began to be revealed.

After the temporary fence was pulled apart by the mass of protesters, there was nothing to respond to the first wave of pepper spray. The sheer violence of the initial crackdown was nothing surprising. But what was flat out negligent was the lack of a plan by the supposed organisers and leaders of the protest for this response. The admirable work done by the medical team was counted by the lack of serious work on building up any defences. While a copy of Red Flag may very well shield you from pepper spray, I'm sure you'd prefer an actual shield of some kind instead.

It is here that our criticism must turn to the black bloc, and the politics of the spectacle they revel in. Whilst the black bloc were at the

Cont'd from Page 6



Police block a major bridge. (Photo: Luca)

forefront of fighting the police, and for that we salute them, their tactics were bad. A brief attempt to create a barricade saw the dragging of a large bin out into the streets, which would be the scene of some of the bin fires that so dominated photo coverage as police took control over the main bridge across the river by Batman Park. But the disjointed nature of the black bloc, which is supporters so laud as good in of itself was its own failure here. There was no coordination on creating a barricade, or on how to respond to police aggression. This is how the situation emerged where the front of the protest was holding their hands in the air whilst at the same time the police were pelted with fruit and eggs.

The naked face of state oppression, and the clear failure of the current left to effectively respond to it draws a dark message for any revolutionary. For if one is looking for an example of what genuinely revolutionary action will look like in Melbourne, DLF revealed a brief snippet of what street fighting might look like. Securing the bridges that cross the Yarra, disarming the police, establishing some small level of nautical capabilities so as to disrupt the police boats used to rapidly move state forces around. All of these will be vital parts of any

militant sections of revolutionary action in Melbourne. Whilst some of these will no doubt be secured by the revolutionary masses themselves; it is vital that a mass militant workers militia exists in these situations. If we merely wished to grind Melbourne to a standstill, we need simply look towards Mai 68. Yet that is not our task. We are revolutionaries and as such we must look elsewhere.

The two greatest weapons of the Australian state are the monopoly on force it wields, and the coordination that it is able to utilise when working with and around said monopoly on force. If revolutionaries wish to smash the state, we must smash these two pillars, and for that we will need numerous tactics and strategies. Yet at their core must be the organised and militant power of the working class. This is not some Gonzaloist or Maoist call to wage Protracted People's War in Melbourne's fair streets, nor is it a call to go out and form the Melbourne (or Naarm) Red Guards. For whilst true democracy is a rifle on the shoulder of the working class, the vast majority of the working class have yet to be won over to a truly oppositional position. Whilst some will argue that the very nature of Australia's historical formation as genocidal settler colony means

that the majority of the working class are unable to be revolutionaries, they are wrong. Just as those who loudly claim that colonisation is over are. The working class has nothing to lose but their chains, yes, they are bought off, but they will wake up.

Finally, I wish to turn to the third tendency at the picket. The radical liberals, which in this particular case organised under the banner of 'Disrupt Wars'. Whilst many of their tactics may appear similar to the black bloc, they still rest under the fundamental assumption that the state is something that can be reformed, or at least made better. This is a strange position that they are in, as many will turn around and correctly rail against the Australian state as a racist, genocidal institution before calling for a Greens vote. This strange double-think is the natural endpoint of liberalism. For all that they see the bold-faced blood-soaked nature of the Australian state, they cannot conceptualise a world without it.

These are perhaps the greatest threat to any revolutionary movement in the Imperial core, because they are able to unleash the most radical rhetoric, yet they leave no revolutionary road forward. They give easy solutions, and when they betray the working class out comes the honeyed words of 'I sympathise with your aims I really do, but we need to be realistic about this' or 'look we just can't afford to support striking workers right now'. It is the same honeyed words that led to Marx proclaiming 'Instead of the Conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the Wage System!"'

Yet where once Lasselle and his State Socialism is what we fought against, now we stand against vulgar reformism. The meaning of socialism is lost, and instead a vague promise of reform within the system is used to poison the self-organisation of the proletariat. We must be unerringly against this in every manner. Elections are tool, but we must stay aware of the old adage 'if all you have is a hammer every problem looks like a nail'. The working class has far more than simply the allegorical hammer of electioneering. It has the literal hammer of revolutionary action. The road to revolution will require first the re-groupment of the Communist Party, and its elevation to a mass basis. The

primary task that the party must play is building a counter-pole to state power. To fully separate the proletariat cultural, social, and political sphere from the bourgeois one. This should include the entirety of the revolutionary movement, to unify on the single need. The need for revolution.

It is this understanding that fully separates us from the radical liberals, for no matter how radical they may think of themselves to be, they believe that they only need take state power and all power will fall to them. They fail to understand the simple fact, that the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat will take the pre-existing state apparatus and smash it. The road to workers' power rests upon the total obliteration of the bourgeois mechanisms of power. Be they the police, parliament, capitalist courts of law, or the army; communists must fight for their total destruction. Communism is the real movement to abolish the present state of things, and we must fight as such.

Thus, to tie this polemic back into the broader analysis of Disrupt Land Forces. The need for a true class party has never been higher and until such a time as one is formed all major protests will turn out like this. When the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police proclaims that he could not be prouder of his officers he does so know precisely what their historical and social role are. Let the liberals, and fools denounce the violence and brutality unleashed by the state. The Communists know better, we know that there is no way to stop this barbarism without the mass revolutionary action of the working class. History will absolve us, yet we must write it ourselves. The muck and detritus of the age's rests upon us, we will not be able to wash it all off, yet we must endeavour too. We need to fight back against the capitalist offensives, we must make it clear that true democracy and freedom will only come through the destruction of capitalist society and the planning of Labor's red banner on every corner of the world. For that is the flag of the working class, and it is dyed with the blood that will be shed by the tools that the capitalists chumming it up inside Land Forces were ohing and ahing at.

# CFMEU Members deserve better

## Cassie Barnes

The CFMEU membership turned out in force on Tuesday 17th September at Emma Miller Place in the Brisbane CBD. Crowds of workers in hi-vis could be seen filing in from kilometres away and a densely packed crowd numbering in the thousands filled the park. The attendees were not only furious about their union's treatment at the hands of the Albanese Government, but also organised, engaged, and responsive to speakers to a degree that is rarely seen at political events like these.

The crowd was an active participant in the event, and the dialogue between speeches given and the responses they received revealed a lot about the internal tensions of the union. To me, it told a story of mounting frustration and patience wearing thin with a leadership that had little to offer beyond excuses and buck-passing.

## The Leadership Whines

The speeches given by members of the CFMEU leadership and those cosy with them revealed a confused, desperate mindset. They lurched, seemingly at random, between reactionary appeals, denial of basic facts, and at one point outright declaring that the union was helpless without their leadership with the repeated line "we need them!". It all seemed to centre on a desire to return to the idyllic days of 10 weeks ago (without any notion of how that beloved past led to this hated present). If the wheels of history wouldn't turn back, they seemed happy to settle for vengeance on all they hold responsible.

Michael Ravbar, the recently ousted head of the Queensland and NT section of the union gave the last speech of the day, opening with a promise to speak carefully due to his involvement in the case being brought to the High Court. He had barely finished the sentence before he broke this commitment, giving a speech that can only be described as a bewildering, self-pitying, stream-of-consciousness rant about how unfairly he had been treated. Any wrongdoing involving corruption, treatment of women and connections to fascist groups was dismissed

with nothing more than a mocking tone and a cheap applause line. His critique of Albanese contradicted itself from moment to moment, that he was gutless and unable to act, but also a tyrannical bully who was trying to break the RBA to his will (!).

Ravbar celebrated the landslide victory of the Country Liberal Party in the recent Northern Territory elections, regarding Labor's loss as somehow being a vindication of the CFMEU. He urged the attendees to vote out the Labor government in Queensland without any suggestion of who to vote in or what this would achieve. Given that the only objection that he has to the Queensland Labor Party seems to be that they stopped taking contributions from the CFMEU, it is hard to read this as anything other than an attempt at a narcissistic Samson Option to bring down the house around him.

While it is easy for Marxists to hear a union condemning and declaring independence from the ALP and ACTU and read a class-conscious agenda into it, these speeches were not the monumental declarations of class independence we might wish them to be. They were just a bunch of complacent union bureaucrats and their allies whining because they thought the party would never end.

The crowd gave only muted cheers or polite claps to these declarations of the necessity of the leadership and their mistreatment. Where at other events a quiet or unresponsive crowd is indicative of low morale, inexperience or passivity, the majority in attendance on Tuesday consciously exercised silence and tepid responses to make their dissatisfaction known. Their commitment, discipline and readiness for conflict was evident, but their patience for time-wasting, disorganised politics and bureaucratic excuses was clearly wearing thin.

## The Rank-and-File Roars

The crowd's approval was most loudly expressed in response to two speeches which broke from the leader-worship. One was from Ashley Lynch, a worker who talked about her passion for the CFMEU earned through the union's support through difficult times and how it safeguards the lives and health of her and her

# Other leaders... and they know it

family. This clearly resonated with the crowd and hit to the heart of worker's fears: how many might be forced to work in inhumane conditions under contracts negotiated by a neutered CFMEU? How many might be permanently injured by relaxed safety procedures? How many might die?

The other was from the unexpected star of the show: Bec Barrigos, a Queensland Teachers' Union rank-and-file member and a member of Socialist Alternative. She spoke as a representative of "QTU Fightback", a militant informal subgrouping of the QTU membership which has challenged the leadership for its cosy relationship with the ALP and Education Queensland.

She gave a speech which emphasised the power of the rank-and-file union members and the unity of workers' struggle across industries and sectors, linking the struggles of blue-collar and white-collar workers. Her criticism of the CFMEU leadership was not explicit, but hard to miss as she connected this situation to teachers' experiences struggling against leadership to create substantive democracy. Her message was clear: the union doesn't belong to the deposed leaders or the state administrators, it exists only to serve the workers and anything which impedes that can and must be crushed.

This speech was delivered eloquently and with passion, and met with thunderous applause throughout and for a full minute afterwards. It was so clear that she stole the show that both the MC and Ravbar tried to get some reflected glory by referring back to her when they talked. It is clear that Bec tapped into a feeling in that crowd: "We have a lot to lose, but together we are strong." Unfortunately, no one had a good answer to the question which necessarily follows that thought...

## How to Break Free?

The only criticism that can be made of Bec's speech is that it failed to take the opportunity to break from the labourist consensus that all this was within. Surrounding all of this talk on the day was the foreshortened horizon of negotiating better prices and conditions of

provision of the labour-power commodity, which gave a claustrophobic feeling to the proceedings. If that is all that can be achieved, it is hard to fault those who simply want it back the way it was.

Under the likes of Setka and Ravbar, the CFMEU has done a lot to improve the pay and working conditions of most of its membership, and this kind of economism has an obvious appeal. The CFMEU as it stood in early 2024 was a textbook example of what success looks like for this model of unionism. It has nothing serious to say about exerting power over what is done with that labour in the style of the Green Bans, nothing to say about shaping a better society, nothing to say about anything beyond haggling, because it is nothing but labour's pimp, and so everything comes down to price.

The desire for something more was clearly present in that crowd, they rewarded those who reflected that passion and that experience back to them, but nothing provided a channel to direct this towards a liberatory vision. And so we come to the big open question: are there leaders in that crowd who will provide that vision? Have younger generations of representatives and organisers and delegates been properly trained for leadership with an understanding that the union belongs to the members?

The most important lesson that I have learned in my years on the left is that the worst thing an organiser can be is indispensable. Being indispensable means you have failed to educate others in your duties and skills, and it holds the cause hostage to your capacities. At best this can be due to negligence, at worst it is about putting your personal power above the goals you were supposedly striving for. The insistence on how much the union needs Setka and Ravbar and the rest of this ruling clique is more than a narcissistic tantrum: if they truly are as indispensable as they claim, this is an unforgivable act of betrayal against all the working class.

# The Eureka myth: How history

## Anthony Furia

There is a historical tendency, from both the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the 'revolutionary' left, to fetishise and glorify the Eureka rebellion as a shining light in their respective 'movement's' history. This tendency holds weight even today - behold the Australian Communist Party's (ACP) incorporation of the Eureka flag onto their various pieces of sect memorabilia, or the use of the flag by union officials wedded to the very state which the miners of Eureka rebelled against.

Unfortunately for both, the real history of the Eureka rebellion is far less glamorous, and far more nonconformist to the ideological goals of both the ALP and the varying revolutionary sects. On the 30th of November (1854), after the Ballarat Reform League Charter was rejected by Governor Charles Hotham, a coalition of proletarianising petty bourgeois miners - independent producers increasingly working for large mining firms - swore an oath to the Southern Cross "to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties," and entered open rebellion against the Victorian colony. Over the next three days, they built a stockade - which lasted for a grand total of fifteen minutes under the advance of the colonial military police force on the 3rd of December. The fighting produced perhaps 27 total casualties (it's difficult to know, due to the inaccuracy of death registries in this period), and the rebellion was swiftly dismantled completely. Not the most historically awe-inspiring sequence of events - yet, in fairness, it is the demands of the Ballarat Reform League that attract the most political attention.

The changes proposed by the League were as follows;

1. *A full and fair representation*
2. *Manhood suffrage*
3. *No property qualification of Members for the Legislative Council.(?)*
4. *Payment of Members*
5. *Short duration of Parliament*



December 1st 1854  
Swearing Allegiance to the Southern Cross by Charles A Doudiet

*Immediate objects of the Reform League: An immediate change in the management of the Gold Fields, by disbanding the Commissioners.*

*The total abolition of the Diggers' and Storekeepers licence tax, and a thorough and organised agitation of the Gold Fields and the Towns.*

*That to carry out the forgoing objects there should be a large tent erected in which to meet and conduct the business of the Reform League. Cards of membership will be issued in a few days and Ballarat divided into districts.*

What do these demands signify for those so neurotically attached to the Eureka movement? Well, for those of us vested so deeply into communist politics today, they're not particularly breathtakingly radical. However, their historical importance for any movement which proclaims itself loyal to the truly democratic (and thus to communism) is certainly clear. Yet even in acknowledging this particular historical legacy, the place of the

# Why becomes justification



Eureka stockade in the cobweb-ridden minds of many Australian communists remains utterly baffling. Does this resemble our minimum program? Certainly not! Was it an expression of proletarian political independence and uprising? Not unless you believe in the ultimate revolutionary potential of disgruntled small business owners.

Was it, by any metric, any measure or subjectivity, a success in revolutionary action? Absolutely not. Every communist worth their salt will repeat ad nauseam that the "traditions of dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living", yet when we are confronted with this in reality, we seem entirely incapable of overcoming this precise affliction. It is time for the movement, for us, to grow up; to seek knowledge from all events of revolutionary struggle in Australia, and imitation from none. We have a future to make, and barely any past to glorify - Eureka has no place in that slim past, and certainly possesses none in our struggle for the future.

To turn our eye briefly to the other political demographic that seeks to incorporate Eureka into their history - the ALP - we would unkindly suggest they stop kidding themselves. 2024 alone contains enough evidence for a lifetime to demonstrate the ALP's total noncommitment to democratic struggle. When pro-Palestinian protests happen today - nonviolent, peaceful protests at that - the first to condemn, deny, vilify, and send in the full-throated forces of the Australian state apparatus is that very same party.

Were the Eureka rebellion to occur today (with the remaining relevant demands, 1 and 5, and perhaps the demand for the abolition of some other specific tax) the ALP, as a party of Australian capital, managing the Australian colonial state, would crack down with unmitigated, unprecedented force. There is no history of democratic struggle within the ALP - and certainly not a continuation of that fictitious past to the present day. Perhaps slightly begrudgingly, however, we should admit there is a certain connection between the ALP and the Eureka rebellion, just not the precise one they would care to cultivate.

In incorporating the immediate economic interests of (previously) dissatisfied worker-settlers and proletarianising petty bourgeoisie into their political project, in harnessing layers of such classes for the creation and maintenance of their party, the ALP was able to achieve such miraculous policies as mass-restriction of non-white immigration immediately upon federation. Thus ensuring the relatively privileged positioning of certain strata of the white working class within the newly formed nation in an attempt to prevent any 'troubling' events such as those at Eureka 50 years before.

The problem with the Eureka rebellion is this; it is incorporated into every possible mythology pertaining to Australian political development and democracy, from the 'revolutionary' left to the Liberals under Menzies. It is heralded as an 'expression of democracy' in the mainstream - proclaimed as a divine pivot point which changed the course of the history of the

Cont'd from Page 14

Australian state and democracy. For (some) communists it is the 'great revolutionary moment' - the thing we should seek to imitate, to recreate, to become. For others, the mainstream of Australian Laborism, it is a positive expression of their own future - an omen predicting the creation of the ALP.

The truth of the matter is that the Eureka rebellion is neither. Perhaps Marx, in assessing the events of Eureka as an expression of the revolutionary movement of 1848, was right. The events, just like those of 1848 across Europe, are important to communists, surely - but they are not communist events. Nor, in the case of the Eureka stockade, were they even successful events. There is little to aspire to, and even less to support with the die-hard fanaticism of a historical reenactor.

Once again, this does not mean we should pay the rebellion no mind at all - communists should seek to learn from all historical struggles that express the potentiality of the democratic masses against the state apparatus. Rather, there is no reason to worship it as some do. We do not need a Eureka flag to communicate what is already assumed by a red one.

*British colonial soldiers are depicted charging the stockade in this 1886 engraving entitled "The Eureka Stockade, Ballarat" by artist William Smedley.*



We do not want to indulge in petty workerism - glorifying the Eureka because it's popular amongst a few bureaucratised unions and the worst type of teenage history fan is as pathetic as it is useless to the movement for a communist party.

We do not have any reason to uphold this rebellion as the standard - it is the standard for nothing but the extremely low bar we must overcome, as Marxists, as workers, as revolutionaries. Comrades should look towards expressions of working class power that capture our present moment, that capture to direct history of our movement - only through the forging of a new future, of a mass party, can we expect to achieve anything beyond a re-enactment of the tragedy of the 3rd of December, 1854.

# WRITERS WANTED!

Partisan is seeking to expand its coverage and is looking for contributors who can write about:



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# Direct Action & The Strategy of Pickets

## Riley M

This writing is intended to be a reflection on the tactics of mass mobilisation in opposition to insurrectionary-anarchism rather than be targeted solely towards Electromold. This piece is also not meant to be an attack on the Electromold campaign or any groups or individuals that have been involved in the campaign; rather, it is my view of the best way forward for the group to continue to do great things. Since writing this, the anti-weapons campaign against Electromold has shifted towards a more productive direction, opposing insurrectionist ideas and building towards mass mobilisation.

Since October 7th, the Australian left has engaged in many different campaigns against weapons manufacturing companies that support and profit off of the genocide in Palestine. Recently, this has included a campaign directed at the manufacturing company Electromold. This has mainly been made up of pickets intended to block workers from entering the company, delaying the shifts in order to delay the manufacturing of weapons, with the end goal of putting enough financial pressure on Electromold to cut its weapons manufacturing contracts. These pickets have seen a variety of tactics, including at first an entirely secretive picket, two public pickets, a hybrid picket in which a picket line was established by a secret group before the start of a public picket, and then another fully secret picket. Within this campaign, two strategies have pushed the direction of the pickets in somewhat opposing directions; this is between the idea of insurrectionism and that of mass movement building.

The first secret picket was considered a success, although a minor one, as it delayed shifts for a few hours until police arrived, at which point protesters left. However, in my opinion, this “success” was largely due to it being the first picket, with police and Electromold not knowing how to respond. Moreover, this cannot be considered a meaningful win against Electromold, as 4 hours of delays will ultimately have no impact. This tactic of secret pickets is also unsustainable and unable to aim any further than this picket

achieved, as their lack of accessibility by those not already in the movement (relying on vouched members) prevents mobilisation, cutting off growth and the potential for new participants. Due to this, the campaign suffered from a lack of members.

The public pickets (which looked more like rallies) were intended to address this by bringing new members into the movement through a publicly announced “picket” in order to give themselves a better chance against police, allowing them to delay for longer and more often. However, due to these pickets being announced publicly, the police would, at both pickets, establish a police line at the gate to Electromold, making them ineffective at stopping work in any meaningful way. As a result, these fully public pickets also fail to mobilise new people and bring them into the group, as they had arrived at a rally rather than a picket, which they did not intend on. This alienates attendants from the campaign due to a divide between the attendants of the secret pickets and the publicly attended pickets/rallies.

To combat this, the campaign moved towards a hybrid picket in which around 30 vouched members would establish the picket before the publicly announced time. This proved an effective strategy as the campaign was able to establish the picket before the official start time, which was backed up by more people at the start time. However, due to lower numbers than expected (as SAlt pulled out), it was not long after police arrived that they assaulted protesters with pepper spray and mounted police, breaking up the picket within around 15 minutes. While this picket was no more effective than any other in delaying work, it showed an effective method of growth for the movement as community members who heard of the picket through community engagement attended. This is the right direction for the campaign, as numbers are the key arena for delaying work. It will only be once a mass mobilisation against these arms manufacturers occurs, which has not been seen yet, that these contracts can be shut down.



Right: Protesters picket at Electromold. (Photo: Jacob Andrewartha)

However, the campaign generally viewed this picket as a failure, due to the lack of work delays on that day as well as picketers being assaulted by police officers. As a result, the campaign has scrapped the hybrid picket method, believing that to avoid the police oppression they witnessed, they must rely on entirely secret pickets. This is a mistake, as while avoiding police assault is worthwhile, the police assault at the hybrid picket was due to it being the first attempt (as it was the first picket capable) of forming a picket against PORT police. It is a mistake to view the police repression as a failure of the hybrid method, as that was caused by the stance it took against police, which if desired to avoid police could have been avoided entirely. The hybrid picket method also relies on continued public actions and community outreach to mobilise more people and grow the campaign.

As a result of the conclusion made by the campaign, the next and most recent picket was again fully secret and encouraged property damage, which was largely enacted by autonomous groups as the main invitees to the picket. This included taking pallets from the next-door factory and lighting two tires on fire on the road (and notably no damage to Electromold, only to our relations with the neighbouring workers). These insurrectionist actions are the direct result of the secret picket tactic. Relying on secret pickets, they are not able to mobilise the numbers to have sufficient and regular delays, making property damage the only apparent way to apply effective economic pressure. However this approach of property damage without a mass mobilisation is

one that will not effectively put pressure on Electromold as it is highly unsustainable. These are unsustainable as they increase the risk of the picketers to police arrests or assault while damaging our relations with local workers and community members who are affected by it. As a result, members will dwindle with this method, being burned out, arrested, or assaulted, and we will lose the public support of workers and community members, preventing any growth until the group collapses.

If the group wishes to put an end to the weapons manufacturing contracts at Electromold, it must aim its disruptions more ambitiously, which can only be done through mass mobilisation. To do this, the campaign must:

- Put an end to the secret pickets, which cause more harm than good by isolating vouched members, which alienates the public and potential members. At the same time they damage relations with local workers as they rely on a focus of insurrectionist property damage.
- Put an end to publicly announced 'pickets' in which no attempt to form a picket is made.
- Replace the above-mentioned pickets with hybrid pickets or other picket tactics that are able to form a genuine picket, along with publicly announced rallies.
- Work to mobilise workers and community members between each action through publicly facing engagement initiatives. This is now being taken up by the campaign through plans for community forums, moving the group in a really positive direction.

# Longest blockade of the world

## Monique Heatherington

Monique Hetherington, aka kittykittymeowmeow reports to Partisan on Blockade Australia's recent protest actions at the Newcastle coal port. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Partisan.

Blockade Australia, a network which organises targeted disruption of destructive systems, successfully blockaded the world's biggest coal port at Muloobinba (Newcastle) for well over 100 hours across 16 days. The mobilisation happened from the 24th of June to the 10th of July, and was made up of a series of actions by dedicated climate resistors. Nimbin activist kittykittymeowmeow recently had her first appearance at the Newcastle Court House for stopping a coal train dressed as a quoll on the 15th day of actions with Blockade Australia.

Actions stopped coal and freight activity into the world's largest coal port, as well as activity within the port. Police were unable to stop the sustained actions, even after re-instating a

The author, aka kittykittymeowmeow

Strike Force against Blockade Australia. Passenger trains were replaced with buses for weeks, as rail companies prioritized the movement of coal in the times they had control over the track. Transport websites said this was 'due to police operation' and the traditional media stayed unusually silent into the second week of the blockade, while the Facebook page experienced 'shadow-banning'.

While many are awaiting sentencing or have been given fines or other good behaviour agreements with the court, two people are appealing one and three month prison sentences respectively. Both were initially given prison sentences by a seemingly irrational right wing magistrate (Barko), but have been released on bail during the appeal. Although these kind of repressive sentences have not been successful against climate activists with no criminal history in recent years, they are an indication of a system which protects the corporate and political elite and is ultimately afraid of ordinary people participating in the political arena.



# d's largest coal port



Blockade Australia actionist 'Ian'. Photo: BA

## LIBERATION IS ACTION.

We are currently in a time of total climate collapse and emergency. In less than 250 years Australia has destroyed a continent which had been cared for and managed sustainably for tens of thousands of years. Our collective liberation and the liberation of life on earth rely on all of us to do everything we can to prevent further calamity and create new systems that value and protect life. The climate crisis is already hitting hard, and being felt by millions of people. Those in the Northern Rivers have experienced it first hand with floods and fires beyond anything ever preceded.

Blockade Australia is dedicated to maintaining sustained direct action against ecocide and tyranny. The Australian system set up on this continent has always had total disregard for life – from the attempted genocide of First Nations people or the land pillaged and poisoned for profit. The destruction is deliberate and there is no space under a capitalist system to change the power structures that allow this to happen. This mobilisation is not about coal specifically, it's about the economic and political pinch points that matter most to the destructive system imposed on this continent.

Kittykittymeowmeow climbed onto a coal train on its way to the Newcastle Port on Monday the 8th of July, on day 15 of the mobilisation. Kitty was responsible for all coal and freight activity

in the port being blocked for the early evening. Then, due to multiple people taking anonymous action to occupy the trains all night, the coal line was not reopened until the next day! Others climbed coal trains, locked onto the track and port machinery, climbed structures like monopoles and bipods and tree-sits to block the rail line.

## WHAT NOW?

Kitty cohosts 'Unexplained' with Louis Burdette on Thursday evening's NimbinFM 102.3, and is involved in a lot of local community groups and events. If you want to get involved in direct action within your communities or with Blockade Australia, come have a chat at SOAR [Socialise, Organise, Art, Resist], which is a weekly potluck and meeting happening in Lismore – details found on Northern Rivers Activist Network facebook page.

Visit [blockadeaustralia.com](http://blockadeaustralia.com), YouTube, or the usual array of socials for more. You can also help by giving to or sharing our support or legal fundraiser, and work generally. Some merch can be found at the Nimbin Environment Centre.

Anyone can make a difference, it's up to you to decide to step up and rise in the face of climate catastrophe. Collectively we have the ability to be the change we want to see in the world. Sustained, organised direct action resisting climate collapse is one of the many ways in which you can get involved.

# The Revolutionary Legacy of ...

herein is granted if acknowledgement is made.

**SOUTHERN ADVOCATE FOR**

**WORKERS' COUNCILS**

**AN INTERNATIONAL DIGEST**

Formerly the "Southern Socialist International Digest"

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THREEPENCE

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## Brunhilda Olding

James 'Jim' Dawson (aka J. A. Dawson) is often a vague footnote in the history of Australia's communist movement. As a small newspaper editor in the Melbourne socialist milieu in the 1940's, neither he nor his newspaper *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils* found mass appeal amongst the working class. In spite of his relative obscurity, his unrelenting campaign to promote the councilist perspective is tragically relatable amidst the current decline of the class struggle. Never content to simply endure the truth handed down from high; be it from the leadership of the Comintern, the Fourth International, or the Socialist Party of Australia [unrelated to the Socialist Party of Australia which split from the Communist Party in 1971], Dawson fought to find what he considered the true path towards socialism. His was a perspective rooted first and foremost in the self-emancipation of the working class. His ideological evolution cannot be discussed without first talking about the two tendencies that he drew closest to throughout his political life, both of which are on the left of the communist movement. The first is the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB), the mainstays of the 'Impossibilist' tendency [broadly, they believed that socialism was impossible without the vast majority of the working class understanding what it was, which required socialism to be a mass force, which they thought was impossible without a majority of the working class already knowing what socialism was. Jack Fitzgerald's Catch-22]. The second trend, which he moved to after breaking with the Socialist Party of Australia on elections

was the revolutionary tradition of council-communism.

The line of the SPGB, and the World Socialist Movement they spawned, reflects a fundamentally optimistic analysis of the role of capitalist parliament and superstructure, relying on the belief that the election of the party to majority in parliament would allow for the revolution to unfold. The SPGB was seen as perhaps the primary Marxist party in Britain, if a haughty one that alienated many. Then came October 1917, and the raising of the Red Flag over the Winter Palace. The SPGB's rejection of the new Soviet state as either socialist, a dictatorship of the proletariat or a worker's state, left them out in the cold whilst the new International was built.

While the SPGB's vital and well-developed critiques of the Soviet Union appealed to Jim Dawson, their obstinate refusal to push towards any genuinely revolutionary action alienated him. The tiny Australian groupuscule which took on the lofty name of the Socialist Party of Australia were unable to nominate any candidates to parliament. As such they advocated for their followers to simply write socialism across their ballots. This aura of lecturing to the working class from the lofty soapboxes that they dragged out to Melbourne's streets would doom the SPA to irrelevance. A party lecturing to the proletariat that all they needed to do was vote already existed, the Australian Labor Party. Dawson would fully split from the SPA in the 1945 Victorian state election, wherein he expressed

# J. A. Dawson

critical support for a comrade running under the banner of the CPA. The adamant refusal of the SPA to support this comrade served as a final break for Dawson from the relic of their party, and once more he looked for a road leading towards the self-emancipation of the working class.

This is what would point him towards the second major tradition of his life, and the reason that he is remembered today. Council Communism emerged in the fires of the German revolution as the legacy of the Spartakusaufstand loomed large in the new Weimar Republic. This new tradition emerged from the left of the newly formed KPD, and the Dutch SPD. This tradition, much like the SPGB's World Socialist Movement, foresaw the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and would unleash much criticism upon it. Unlike the SPGB, it rejected pacifism and the parliamentary road to socialism. The only way to save not only the German Revolution, but the Russian Revolution, and indeed European Revolution rested upon the establishment of a Council Republic in Germany. The KAPD (Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands or Communist Workers Party in/of Germany) would emerge as the vanguard of this tradition before falling to infighting, and to the NSDAP. Its legacy would loom large over a few key thinkers, most notably Anton Pannekoek and Paul Mattick. It is these two men who would prove crucial to Dawson's conversion to Council Communism.

Following Dawson leaving the SPA, his newspaper would return to supporting the IWW. This resulted to him publishing one of Paul Mattick's many pieces on political economy. This in turn would inspire a series of letters with Pannekoek which would win Dawson over to Council Communism. While the remaining history of the newly renamed Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils is beyond the remit of this essay, its brief history is vital as the last English language Council Communist publication until the 1960s.

The more important legacy of Jim Dawson is not in his paper, though it is a vital record for

tracing the evolution of the Communist Left. No, it is in his refusal to simply sit down and be lectured to. Dawson was the clearest example of that great spirit of the proletariat pushing forwards toward their own liberation. He did not simply listen to the decrees of Detroit, London, Moscow, or the rump Fourth International. He kept the burning flame of critical revolutionary Marxism alive in Australia because he refused to simply kneel to the diktats of those who proclaimed themselves to be the vanguard.

That is his greatest legacy, that is his truest revolutionary legacy. Communists cannot become stagnated clinging to the dead and withered shibboleths of theory. Communism is the real movement to abolish the present state of things, and the real movement lives and breathes. It evolves, yet that does not mean we should fall into the trap that the modernisers lay out for us. Communists must be schooled in class struggle, must be schooled in revolutionary necessity, and schooled in the historic duty that lies before us. They must be willing to question everything, as the old saying goes, the greatest strength of Marxism is that it is true.

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Are you a worker or student? We'd love to hear your perspective! Become a long-term contributor to Partisan, helping us publicize the voice of Australian workers and students. If you're politically engaged, and would like to give your perspective on current events, then contact the Partisan editing team at [partisanmagazine@proton.me](mailto:partisanmagazine@proton.me) for more info.

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# Communist Tactics in the Str



A National Front rally in Lewisham, London leads to a 'race riot' in 1977. (Peter Marlow | Magnum Photos)

## Edith Fischer

The racist street violence that rocked the United Kingdom in the last months serves as a warning to working people in all countries. The end of the epoch of relative social peace that was guaranteed by cheap commodity imports and financialisation has unleashed the most atavistic and antisocial impulses in capitalist society. We should expect more, not less, of these spasms of the social body, these violent emissions of social bile.

In the wake of this attempted pogrom, it is important to immediately make clear the class-political character of the racist gangs. Much hay has been made of "Working Class Britons" who feel "left behind" by decades of austerity and "mass immigration". And certainly, there are sections of the working class that do tail the racialist politics of the populist demagogues and the fascists that support them.

However, it is important to note that the core of these riotous explosions are not found amongst industrial workers in the great cities. Nor are they found in the vast council estates. Rather, they are found amongst lumpenised elements in the exurbs and lesser towns that dot the countryside of Britain. These layers, declassed by the crises of capitalism, moving between various "hustles" of small enterprise and criminality, are historically tied to counter-revolutionary forces. These layers combine at points with the petit bourgeois: the layers of

independent tradesmen and small capitalists, the petty landlords, the suburban tyrants - the entire rotting edifice of a downwardly mobile middling layer. It is in these layers that we find the historical base of reactionary politics. In the view of Marx and Engels:

*The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.*

*The "dangerous class", (lumpenproletariat) the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue. (The Communist Manifesto)*

These forces are ultimately conservative in their general political valence. While at times they can pass under the hegemony of the proletariat, in and of themselves the

# Struggle against Racism

spontaneous consciousness they possess is easily mobilised by reactionary forces. This rotting coalition is bound together not necessarily by a common class perspective, but by a racial-national identity and a common social network borne of football hooliganism and petty criminality. These layers feel that their historic privileges have been liquidated by the progressive development of capitalism, and turn this antagonism onto a racial Other conjured in their mind like a spectre by the ideologues of capital.

The political character of this movement is also worth commenting upon. It is tempting to simply label those who participate in these racist riots as being representative of a fascist movement burbling beneath the suburban enclaves of Barret Homes and Wetherspoons. However, this obscures important dynamics within the movement. The forces that took to the streets in the days of racial hatred are overwhelmingly passive and depoliticised, mobilised through social media and encrypted messaging apps. They do not have a coherent political identity, nor are they bound together in traditional fascist organisations.

Rather, they serve as the foot soldiers of an inner core of racist and fascist agitators and organisers. It is important to recognise this, because while these forces may enjoy having a punch on with the cops from time to time, they are ultimately not ultras ready to carry out a social war - they can be intimidated and peeled away from the movement.

## Fight Fascism with Class Struggle

In the struggle against reaction, communists hold firm to a steady line. The independent movement of the working class is the only force capable of being consistently revolutionary, and the only force capable of thoroughly and systematically opposing the racist capitalist system. As such, this force alone can deal the death blow to fascism.

The struggle of the working class against racism occurs on three fronts, three arrows aimed at the heart of the fascist-racialist beast. The first is the mobilisation of workers forces to confront the racist gangs and fascist squads. Mass

mobilisation is the most powerful weapon at hand for workers, but in itself is not enough. During the August Pogrom, the racist gangs mobilised quickly, well before mass demonstrations could be organised. Workers defence groups and red guard squads must be organised to rapidly respond to the provocations of the racist gangs. The tactical (or technical) question is relatively simple - the racist gangs must be broken up through superior numbers. Confrontation with the police should be avoided where possible, and effort should be directed to expose the leaders of the racist groups, publish their names, faces, and addresses. The prominent racist agitators should be acquainted with the pavement, and sent on their way. These groups should not be able to meet, drink, or march without being accosted.

The second front in the struggle against racism is the struggle against the racist policies of the government, and against the racist capitalists and landlords. Housing discrimination, exploitation of migrants and black/brown youth, racist deportation and anti-immigration policy - all the forms of "official" and unofficial racism perpetuated by the state and the ruling class have to be opposed by the worker-socialist movement. Caucuses for black/brown workers should be organised, with the support of the trade unions. Socialists should publish newspapers and bulletins aimed at migrant workers in a variety of languages. Anti-racist struggle must mobilise a multi-racial working class united front to attack the racist state.

The third front in the fight to oppose racism and fascism is the struggle to unify the working class for socialism. This third front may seem abstract, but without the other two fall into a reactive, identitarian liberalism. All workers, black and white, native and migrant, must see a common future in the realisation of a socialist revolution. In fighting for universal healthcare and education, to defend social services, for good housing and full employment, the socialist movement can articulate a set of common demands that can unify the entire working class with a positive program. This is vital for winning white workers away from the racist demagogues and agitators, and towards socialism.

# A new wave of attacks on abortion?

---

**Michael Ruhl**

Renewed attacks on the reproductive autonomy of women have begun in earnest in South Australia. On the 25th of September, Opposition Liberal MP Ben Hood put forward a private member's bill in the upper house of South Australia's Parliament that would amend existing abortion legislation to require women seeking abortion after 27 weeks and six days of pregnancy to undergo induced birth. Late-term abortions – those after 22 weeks and six days, are allowed in SA after being deemed "medically appropriate" by two health practitioners, under abortion decriminalisation reforms introduced in 2021. Hood has suggested that women who undergo induced birth consider putting their newborn baby up for adoption.

Hood has gone out of his way to unsoundly claim that he supports the right of women to choose. He said of his amendments that: "This importantly balances and does not impinge upon the rights of a mother to choose termination". This is obviously disingenuous on its face, as the proposal simply bans abortion after a period of 28 weeks. What further exposes shows this to be presumptuous, is the fact that the bill's introduction was publicly supported in the preceding weeks by Johanna Howe, a Catholic anti-abortion lobbyist. On the evening of the bill's introduction, two thousand rallied to support the bill. A much smaller counter-protest had been organised.

This follows the March 2024 introduction of a bill to Queensland Parliament by Katter's Australian Party MP Robbie Katter which facetiously claimed to bring in protections for foetuses born alive following abortions. The practical effect, as any legal requirements on abortion do, would be to increase barriers to access to abortion. The Queensland Parliament's Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee recommended against the bill moving to the next stage of passage. Momentarily, this means that it was defeated as this allowed said bill to expire when Parliament was dissolved in advance of the next election. The anti-abortion lobby including Howe were out

in full force campaigning in Queensland during the period this bill was under consideration.

Having failed to get a bill advocating for abortion restrictions before Queensland Parliament, the patriarchs in the anti-abortion movement have successfully gained attention through getting a bill voted on in South Australia's Parliament. This has had the dual effect of galvanising their support base and acting as a warning shot for a wave of legislative attacks on access to abortion.

We should expect more such proposals in the coming years, and possibly even ones that manage to successfully pass. Queensland is likely to be the first state where more serious steps to reduce access to abortion will be carried out, given the likely victory of the LNP at this month's state election.

This will result in a reaction by workers to struggle against such rollbacks, and in the absence of a communist worker's party will be co-opted by Labor and the Greens. Both parties have begun this co-option even before the LNP have retaken power. Of course, we should point out that Labor will not adequately defend reliable abortion access against sustained attacks, despite the image they may project.

They clearly do not discipline their own members for voting in favour of abortion restrictions; two ALP members in SA's upper house voted in favour of a similar bill proposed earlier this year and they have retained their party membership. Much has also been written elsewhere of the role played by Catholic-conservative factions in influencing Labor's approach to social policy. It is only through workers struggle on this front, and the consequent building of feminist consciousness of workers that abortion access can be meaningfully defended and extended beyond the whims of a new government.

# Write us a letter!

Writing us a letter is easy, and is a good alternative to writing a full article or essay. Letters are submitted like normal articles are, through our email, but aren't held to the same strict standards.

A letter could be any kind of statement or observation, in around 500 words or less. The shorter the better. In a letter, you should give your opinion or statement on something, then finish off with your name and city (any name works - many of our writers use pseudonyms).

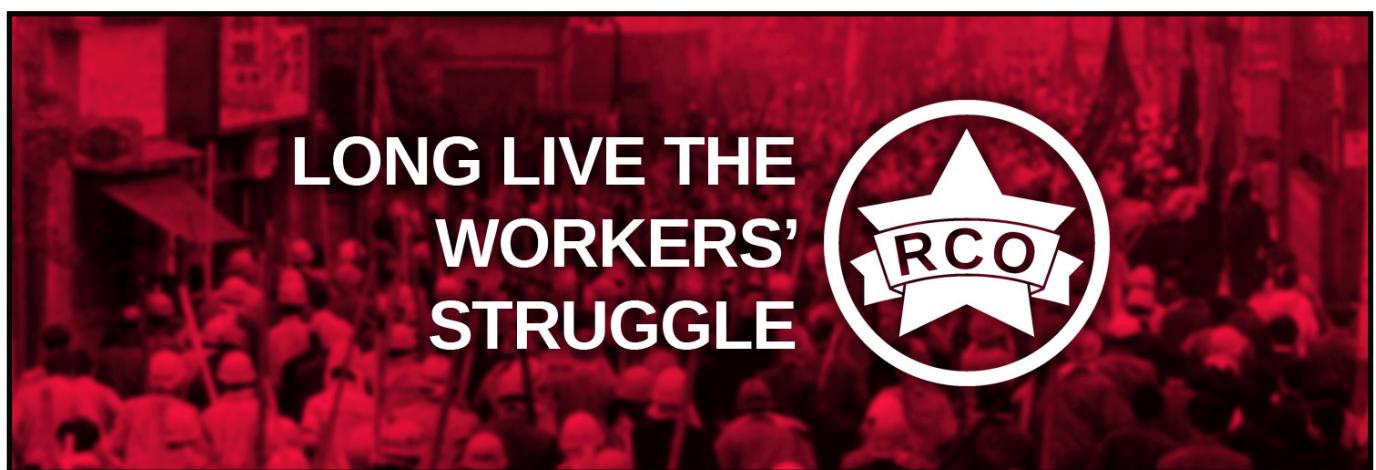
In particular, we encourage letters written as a reply to other articles. Of course, you are also free to write a full article in reply to another article, but sometimes it may be better to simply write a letter in. Letters may also be replies to

other letters, and of course, an article can also be a reply to a letter.

You could also write one directed to the editorial team at Partisan, and if you do, we will submit a reply in the following issue.

We aim to build a lively letters section as part of our overall goal to establish Partisan as a platform of open debate and polemic between and amongst the organised Left.

Letters should be sent to [partisanmagazine@proton.me](mailto:partisanmagazine@proton.me) and contain the subject "Letter: [heading]". The content of your letter can be sent within the body of the email as opposed to a document attached to the email.



## Demand the release of all political prisoners!

As Russia continues to wage an imperialist war against Ukraine, Communists of all stripes have fallen under the boot of state repression (both in Russia and Ukraine). Oppose the Moscow and Kyiv gangsters, demand the release of all political prisoners!

Russian Marxist Boris Kagarlitsky was imprisoned by the Russian state under phony "anti-terrorism" charges in 2023. As of February 2024, he has been sentenced to five years in a prison colony (Meduza).

Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk was arrested by the Ukrainian Security Service on April 25th 2024. As of writing, he is being held in Nikolaev in deplorable conditions. He is being falsely charged with being a Russian state operative and a propagandist for Moscow's imperialist invasion. If found guilty, he faces a life sentence (WSWS).

Many more communists, trade unionists, and anti-war protesters are being incarcerated arbitrarily by the Russian and Ukrainian governments. We must support them all, and demand their immediate release.

# A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work

**Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels**

This has now been the motto of the English working-class movement for the last fifty years. It did good service in the time of the rising Trades Unions after the repeal of the infamous Combination Laws in 1824 [1]; it did still better service in the time of the glorious Chartist movement, when the English workmen marched at the head of the European working class. But times are moving on, and a good many things which were desirable and necessary fifty, and even thirty years ago, are now antiquated and would be completely out of place. Does the old, time-honoured watchword too belong to them?

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work? But what is a fair day's wages, and what is a fair day's work? How are they determined by the laws under which modern society exists and develops itself? For an answer to this we must not apply to the science of morals or of law and equity, nor to any sentimental feeling of humanity, justice, or even charity. What is morally fair, what is even fair in law, may be far from being socially fair. Social fairness or unfairness is decided by one science alone — the science which deals with the material facts of production and exchange, the science of political economy.

Now what does political economy call a fair day's wages and a fair day's work? Simply the rate of wages and the length and intensity of a day's work which are determined by competition of employer and employed in the open market. And what are they, when thus determined?

A fair day's wages, under normal conditions, is the sum required to procure to the labourer the means of existence necessary, according to the standard of life of his station and country, to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race. The actual rate of wages, with the fluctuations of trade, may be sometimes above, sometimes below this rate; but, under fair conditions, that rate ought to be the average of all oscillations.

A fair day's work is that length of working day and that intensity of actual work which expends

one day's full working power of the workman without encroaching upon his capacity for the same amount of work for the next and following days.

The transaction, then, may be thus described — the workman gives to the Capitalist his full day's working power; that is, so much of it as he can give without rendering impossible the continuous repetition of the transaction. In exchange he receives just as much, and no more, of the necessities of life as is required to keep up the repetition of the same bargain every day. The workman gives as much, the Capitalist gives as little, as the nature of the bargain will admit. This is a very peculiar sort of fairness.

But let us look a little deeper into the matter. As, according to political economists, wages and working days are fixed by competition, fairness seems to require that both sides should have the same fair start on equal terms. But that is not the case. The Capitalist, if he cannot agree with the Labourer, can afford to wait, and live upon his capital. The workman cannot. He has but wages to live upon, and must therefore take work when, where, and at what terms he can get it. The workman has no fair start. He is fearfully handicapped by hunger. Yet, according to the political economy of the Capitalist class, that is the very pink of fairness.

But this is a mere trifle. The application of mechanical power and machinery to new trades, and the extension and improvements of machinery in trades already subjected to it, keep turning out of work more and more "hands"; and they do so at a far quicker rate than that at which these superseded "hands" can be absorbed by, and find employment in, the manufactures of the country. These superseded "hands" form a real industrial army of reserve for the use of Capital. If trade is bad they may starve, beg, steal, or go to the workhouse [2]; if trade is good they are ready at hand to expand production; and until the very last man, woman, or child of this army of reserve shall have found work — which happens

# Day's Work (1881)

in times of frantic over-production alone — until then will its competition keep down wages, and by its existence alone strengthen the power of Capital in its struggle with Labour. In the race with Capital, Labour is not only handicapped, it has to drag a cannon-ball riveted to its foot. Yet that is fair according to Capitalist political economy.

But let us inquire out of what fund does Capital pay these very fair wages? Out of capital, of course. But capital produces no value. Labour is, besides the earth, the only source of wealth; capital itself is nothing but the stored-up produce of labour. So that the wages of Labour are paid out of labour, and the working man is paid out of his own produce. According to what we may call common fairness, the wages of the labourer ought to consist in the produce of his labour. But that would not be fair according to political economy. On the contrary, the produce of the workman's labour goes to the Capitalist, and the workman gets out of it no more than the bare necessities of life. And thus the end of this uncommonly "fair" race of competition is that the produce of the labour of those who do work, gets unavoidably accumulated in the hands of those that do not work, and becomes in their hands the most powerful means to enslave the very men who produced it.

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work! A good deal might be said about the fair day's work too, the fairness of which is perfectly on a par with that of the wages. But that we must leave for another occasion. From what has been stated it is pretty clear that the old watchword has lived its day, and will hardly hold water nowadays. The fairness of political economy, such as it truly lays down the laws which rule actual society, that fairness is all on one side — on that of Capital. Let, then, the old motto be buried for ever and replaced by another:

*Possession of the means of work —  
raw material, factories, machinery —  
by the working people themselves.*

[1] On June 21, 1824, under mass pressure, Parliament repealed the ban on the trade unions by adopting "An Act to repeal the Laws relative to the Combination of Workmen, and for other Purposes therein mentioned" (the reference is to the repeal of "An Act to prevent unlawful Combinations of Workmen 12th July 1799"). However, in 1825 it passed a Bill on workers' combinations ("An Act to repeal the Laws relating to the Combination of Workmen, and to make other Provisions in lieu thereof 6th July 1825") which, while confirming the repeal of the ban on the trade unions, at the same time greatly restricted their activity. In particular, mere agitation for workers to join unions and take part in strikes was regarded as "compulsion" and "violence" and punished as a crime. — MECW

[2] The Poor Law adopted in England in 1834 provided for only one form of relief for the able-bodied poor workhouses with a prison-like regime in which the workers were engaged in unproductive, monotonous and exhausting labour. The people called the workhouses "Bastilles for the poor." — MECW

***Republished from Red Sails, originally printed in The Labour Standard.***

# Letters

Get in touch! Letters should be sent to [partisanmagazine@proton.me](mailto:partisanmagazine@proton.me) and contain the subject "Letter: [heading]."

## **Social media is injurious to minors, but more surveillance isn't the solution.**

**Eliza M, Brisbane**

The federal government is planning to implement a law on limiting young people's access to the internet by the end of the year. The policy would ban young people from accessing social media and pornography with stringent age verification. The age limit is under discussion but Anthony Albanese and Peter Dutton both favour 16.

Is social media in its current form harmful for young people? Unequivocally yes, especially for young women. Instagram has been proven to promote poor body image through bombarding users with images and videos of models and influencers representing an unrealistic beauty standard. As feminists we must tirelessly oppose this tendency which results in misery, oppression and a high frequency of eating disorders. We must be realistic in that mainstream pornography represents a fundamentally violent and misogynistic presentation of heterosexual sex, especially when involving transexual women and women of colour. Mainstream porn acts as a form of sexual miseducation for young people normalising violent and sexist behaviour by young men and passivity by young women. Online spaces are also used by child abusers causing immense harm to young people. We must also consider the decline in attention spans of young Marxists that has been facilitated by social media and general poorer mental health. This impacts the ability of young people to read books, engage deeply in theory and maintain a consistent pattern of political activity.

Is the ban on young people accessing large parts of the internet progressive? As feminists, we understand the primary patriarchal structure is the family. Young people lack power and autonomy leads to them often being subjected to physical, sexual and coercive violence by parents, older siblings and other relatives. Taking away the autonomy of young people to use the internet to gain information and connect with others places power in the hands of the patriarchs and their ability to monopolise information. Young people

can currently use social media to talk among their peers and engage in feminist discussions to raise their consciousness around these issues. The family dynamics form gendered expectations in young people cementing past backwardness into the future – the ability of young people to engage in social relations not policed by these same adults is a vital learning experience. Young women from religiously conservative families are especially dependent on social media if they wish to break away and avoid early marriage and motherhood. Queer young people, especially transsexual youth, are further oppressed and controlled by their parents. The suicide rate of young queer people is sobering proof of this. Online queer communities are often a lifeline providing helpful educational resources, social support and assistance in transitioning.

As Communists, we should engage in how damaging social media and online pornography can be to young people. A ban on social media however is a reactionary means of further empowering older family members to wield patriarchal power over young people. Communists should both defend the rights and autonomy of young people while finding progressive ways of challenging harms caused online.

## **Let's do away with compulsory voting**

**Max J, Newcastle**

Having voted in the 2024 local NSW elections today (as of writing, 14th September 2024), I can say with some certainty that the compulsory voting system in this country is an antique. It has done little to improve political engagement, in fact, it has produced generations of politically unengaged, if not fundamentally a-political/anti-political people. So much so that government itself has become non-political, and the notion that government is political is treated as scandalous.

Communists should oppose compulsory voting on the basis that non-compulsory voting forces political parties to mobilise their members, increasing political engagement and putting the politics back into politics. That, and I'd rather not have to waste three hours out of my day voting for same-ish Laboristas.

## **Reject the 'dumbness of dumbing down'**

**Edith Fischer, Brisbane**

In her letter in the last edition of the Partisan (Partisan #2, September '24), Comrade Olding of the RCO's Melbourne section argued that the

material produced by the organisation is too verbose and theoretically abstract, and that our output must be refined in order to appeal to working trade unionists and the broader potential base for a mass communist party. I think this approach is not only wrong: it reflects a dangerous economicistic tendency that needs to be repudiated.

I will say two things on the matter. Firstly, the problem of RCO members being unable to communicate the ideas of the organisation in text or in person is not a problem of the organisation's politics being too theoretically high minded or our output being too sophisticated. It is a problem in the confidence and political experience of the comrades involved. In Brisbane, RCO members have produced simple, easy to read flyers that clearly communicate our political line, and have communicated these views with ease. Militants and workers in the struggle are not idiots, they are perfectly capable of understanding our perspective. Comrade Olding's orientation would see us treat the working class as uneducated children in need of carefully manufactured messaging. This populism masks a deep elitism - the workers do not understand our orientation, we must dumb it down.

The economicistic orientation is unmasked by Olding herself within her own letter. Workers do not need expositions on the nature of value, she says, they want to hear about how to democratise their trade unions. But we do not fight to democratise the trade unions for its own sake. We are not syndicalists (perhaps Comrade Olding is!), nor are we vulgar trade unionists. We fight to bring the working class to power as a ruling class. In order to accomplish this task, the working class must educate itself in its historical task and class program. The task is to show to the working class why they must care about the debates within the social and natural sciences, about uneven exchange and the patriarchy of the wage, about constitutions and republics and monarchies. The fetish for economicistic class struggle reflects a lowest common denominator politics, not communism!

Comrades should reject the dumbness of dumbing down. It enlightens no one, and clarifies nothing. Of course materials, where it's necessary, should be short and to the point. This does not mean liquidating our politics, nor treating the working class like they are children.

## SA Abortion laws a sexist attack on women

**Olga Konstantinovna, Melbourne**

For much of the liberal western world, the overturning of Roe v Wade was a sensational shock to the system. It was an inconceivable notion that rights could be simply... taken away after centuries of American liberal legitimacy being based upon constitutional defence, and by extension the perceived superiority due to such tightly-protected rights. However, for us it simply confirmed the knowledge that there are no guaranteed rights for the proletariat under bourgeois rule. As Trotsky once put it after October 1905, within bourgeois democracy "everything has been given, and nothing has been given". There is the perception of protection and yet it is a mirage, a falsehood that tricks the worker into supporting a system that ultimately turns its back upon them.

We are beginning to see this seductive dream of liberal democracy disappear before our very eyes in South Australia. Liberal MP Ben Hood is hoping to amend newly granted abortion laws to ban women after 27 weeks and 7 days from seeking an abortion, for any reason. Such invasive legislature can be seen as nothing more than a sick trick in order to normalise further cuts to the rights of the worker.

Further, it is a gross reduction of women to nothing more than a womb. Such a law intrinsically implies that a woman's ability to conceive life is something to be lauded above any matter of mental or physical health, or simply autonomy. Not to mention the ignorance towards the trauma of giving birth. I have often noted in the media a lack of acknowledgement of the genuine mental and physical toll that containing a uterus has upon someone. The dismissal of extreme pain connected to menstruation cycles, and perhaps worse the focus upon the 'beauty' of birth rather than the horrors of the extreme toll that it takes upon a person. This legislation perpetuates the idea that birth is simply something experienced for a day, and does not dare to genuinely understand the grief that many women experience as their body is forever changed after pregnancy, the post-partum depression that quietly plagues millions and the inability to ever return to 'normal' after one experiences such physical and mental trauma. Hence, we must see this law as a symptom of a society in which we truly have nothing guaranteed.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY TALKING REDS...

## COST OF LIVING: CRISIS AND CLASS STRUGGLE



**TALKS BY EDITH FISCHER AND  
DAVE EDEN  
WITH DISCUSSION**

The Burrow, West End  
Brisbane  
Saturday, 2pm  
05/10/24

## TALKING REDS A SOCIALIST DISCUSSION GROUP

FIRST  
SATURDAY  
OF THE  
MONTH  
2 PM

THE BURROW  
WEST END

HOSTED BY THE  
REVOLUTIONARY  
COMMUNISTS

*A public panel discussion  
hosted by the  
Platypus Affiliated Society*

## What is a Political Party for the Left?

*featuring:*  
**Daniel López** (Victorian Socialists, *Jacobin* Mag.)  
**Edith Fischer** (Revolutionary Communist Org.)  
**Alison Thorne** (Freedom Socialist Party)  
**+ TBA (...)**

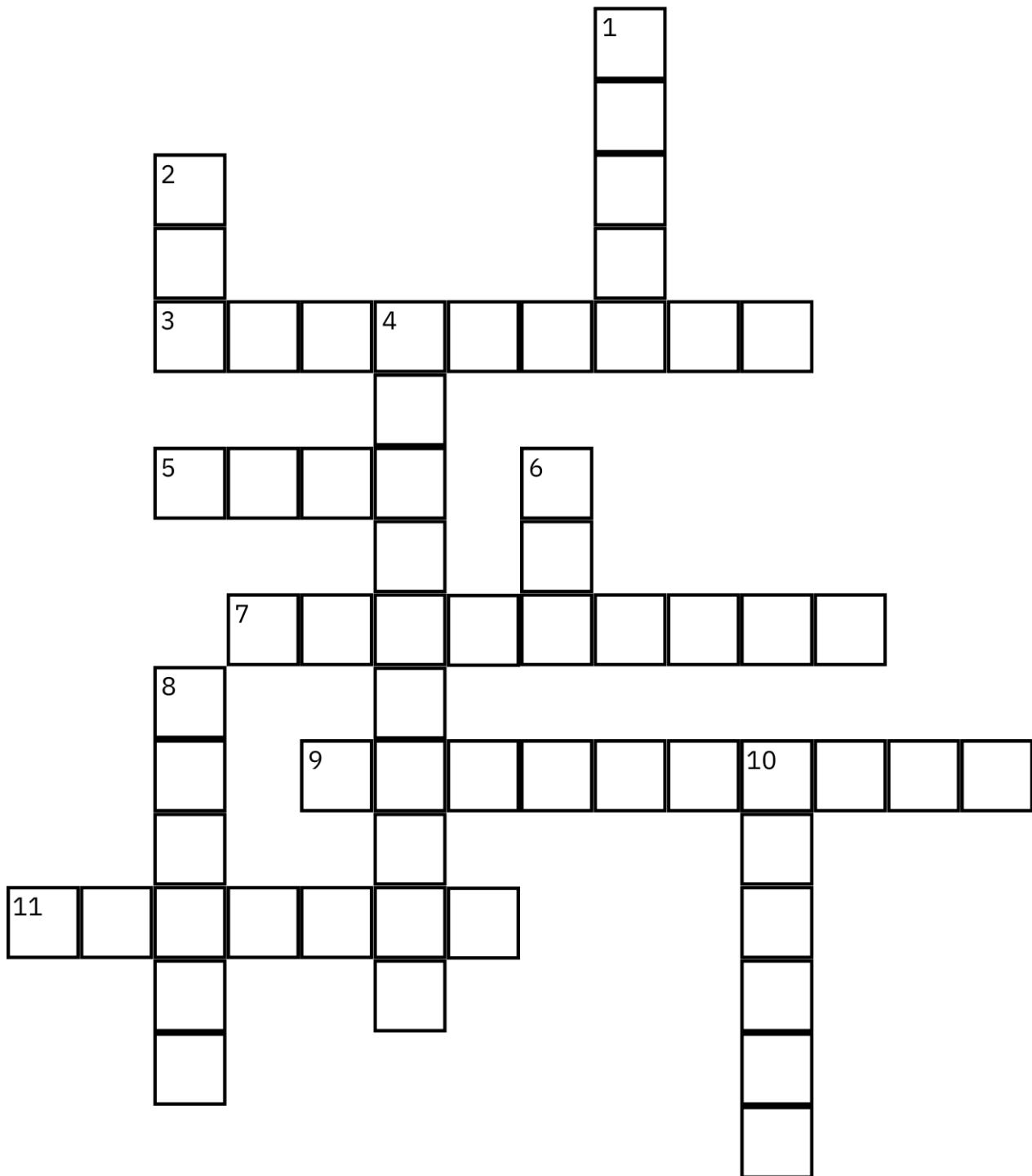
Wednesday  
October 16th, 2024  
4:30-7:00pm  
Location in Parkville  
TBA



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want advertised in Partisan?  
Send us an email and we'll  
feature it in the next issue!**

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# Unions and the people who love/hate them.



Answers in the next issue.

**Across**

3 Communists who reject unions as bourgeois institutions.

5 Strike breakers.

7 Corrupt BLF bureaucrat and CPA-ML member.

9 How leftists say "I'll pray for you!"

11 He sent the army in to break the 1949 miners' strike.

**Down**

1 Former ACTU secretary turned PM in the 1980s.

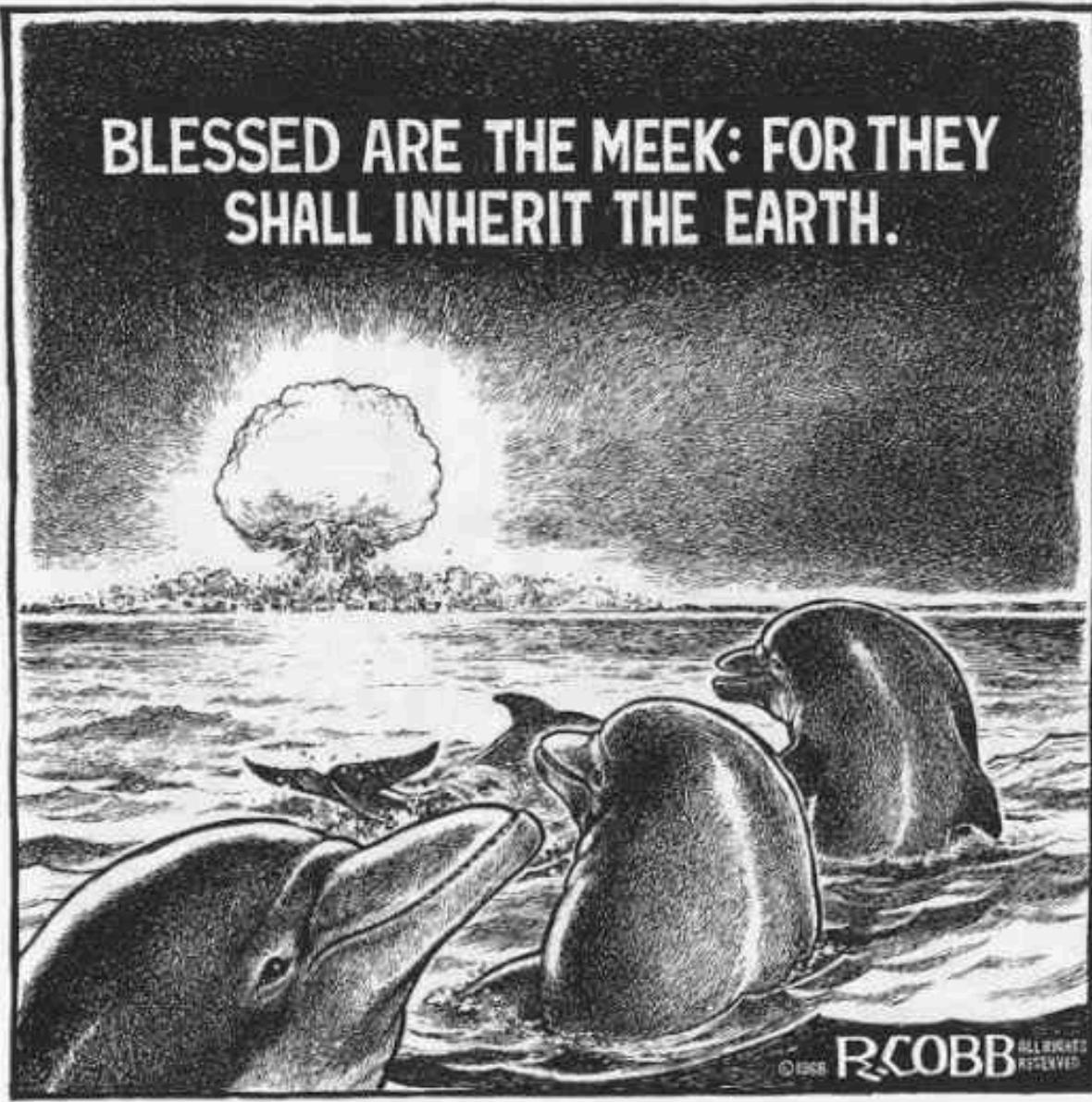
2 One of Australia's biggest and oldest unions.

4 These guys desperately need \$750,000.

6 Employment agreements made between bosses and unions at the enterprise level.

8 This corporation faced nation-wide industrial action on the waterfronts in the 1990s.

10 Mainstream press calls them a 'renegade union'.



**US-ISRAEL  
HANDS  
OFF  
LEBANON**

