

Workers' Liberty



The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself

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Support Ark Tribe on 15 June!

Unions are calling on workers to demonstrate on 15 June, when construction worker Ark Tribe appears in Adelaide Magistrates' Court under the Building and Construction Industry Improvement (BCII) Act.

Ark Tribe could face six months' jail for trade-union activity. Dave Noonan, secretary of the Construction and General division of Ark Tribe's union, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) says: "If Ark is sent to jail we will begin immediate industrial action across this country".

Ark Tribe's "crime" is simply to have refused to give evidence to the ABCC, the special industrial police set up by the BCII Act. Under that law, construction workers have no "right to silence" when summoned to give evidence by the ABCC.

Kevin Rudd and the Labor Party promised to repeal the BCII Act and scrap the ABCC. But the promise was only to do that very slowly, and by replacing them with new, slightly softer, versions of the same thing. In fact, pleading inability to get legislation through the Senate, the Rudd government has done nothing on the issue.

Action on 15 June:

SA: Rally supporting Ark going to court. Starting at the 'Ark Tribe Embassy', Victoria Square, Adelaide at 8:15am.

NSW: March of Solidarity 12pm, corner of Goulburn St and Dixon Lane.

TAS: Parliament House 12pm.

Vic: Tent Embassy, ABCC Headquarters, 533 St. Kilda Rd, Melbourne.

Union office firebombed

At about 10.30pm on Thursday, 13 May, a stolen car, packed with drums of petrol, was rammed

through the front door of the offices of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) in Lidcombe, western Sydney, and the foyer was soaked in petrol before being set alight.

Union staff had received an explicit threat that the office would be "destroyed" 48 hours before the fire bombing, and two community groups, including children, had left the building less than an hour before.

The union's state secretary, Andrew Ferguson, has told the Sydney Morning Herald: "We think we've been targeted because we've been fighting specifically for the interests of some migrant workers subject to abuse and exploitation."

The union says it is "disappointed" by the lack of coverage of the attack in the mainstream press and the slowness of Labor politicians to condemn it. The police have still made no arrests, and yet there is no media outcry.

In 1893-4, after an individual anarchist, Auguste Vaillant, threw a bomb in the French parliament, injuring people only slightly, the anarchist was guillotined and the government introduced the infamous lois scélérates, similar to but harsher than current "anti-terrorist" legislation, which virtually outlawed the anarchist press.

There would be the same today if an attack similar to that on the union offices had been made on a corporate HQ.

Yes, tax the rich!

Since taking office as prime minister in December 2007, in fact since becoming Australian Labor Party leader in December 2006, Kevin Rudd has faithfully served the overall interests of Australian capital.

But the capitalists are not grateful. It might be thought that they would shy away from the mad-dog

policies of the Liberal Party's new right-wing leader, Tony Abbott. In fact they are gunning for Rudd because his administration plans a super-profits tax on Australia's mining industries, which have come through the global crisis well thanks to orders generated by the vast investment projects in China financed by the Chinese government.

The tax is not anti-capitalist. The International Monetary Fund says it is a prudent policy.

Yet the mining industry's peak body, the Minerals Council, has launched a huge campaign against what they call "the Rudd mining grab".

The right-wing press, of course, has helped the mining corporations. Labor premiers in the states with the largest mining industries, Queensland and West Australia, have sided with the corporations against the federal Labor government.

An outcry is being engineered against the Rudd government's decision to spend \$38 million advertising the case for its tax, a small fraction of the \$120 million which John Howard's Liberal-National government spent on advertising for its WorkChoices legislation against union rights which was already backed by much of the media.

Opinion polls show that the corporations' campaign is having an effect. Poll figures are heavily against the tax. Labor is still ahead of the Liberal-National coalition in the polls, but only marginally (two-party preferred, 52.5% to 47.5%; first preferences, 42% to 41%).

The Greens are doing well in the polls after Rudd's decision to abandon his Emissions Trading Scheme, blocked by the Liberals and Nationals in the Senate.

The ACTU has given tepid support to the mining super-profits tax, but mostly focuses on agitating about the danger of Abbott's anti-union policies and implicitly accrediting Rudd as the lesser evil.

The unions should instead be demanding from the Labor government a comprehensive programme of taxing the rich and restoring workers' rights.

Marxist reading group in Sydney

The reading group is studying "The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capital", a new book by David Harvey.

An optional companion reading is David Harvey's classic "The Limits to Capital" (1982).

More about Harvey and Marxist economics - <http://www.workersliberty.org/harvey>

We are meeting fortnightly on Tuesdays, including 8 and 22 June, upstairs at Better Read Than Dead, 265 King St, Newtown, NSW 2042.

More: call 0439 640 118.

Gramsci reading group in Brisbane

The group is studying Antonio Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks". <http://gramscinotebooks.wordpress.com>

Join AusIraq

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 anti-war activists have worked to promote Australia/Iraq trade union solidarity. AusIraq has raised funds to support unions in Iraq. AusIraq is currently forging direct links between Australian and Iraqi unions. Contact Lynn: 0439 640 118.



Read more!

PSA conference 2010, and the left's case for a democratic union
<http://bit.ly/ppsa2010>

The teachers' fight against school "league tables", and why they should not have backed down in face of Labor government and court threats.
www.workersliberty.org/naplan2

The IMF/EU package for Greece, and why it will help German and French banks rather than the people of Greece.
www.workersliberty.org/costas

The Israeli government's murderous attack on a ship attempting to break the blockade of Gaza, and why socialists should mobilise for the right of the Palestinians to have an independent state of their own, alongside Israel.
www.workersliberty.org/mavi

Assessments of the general election result of 6 May, and prospects under the new Liberal/Tory coalition government, from the different currents of the left in Britain.
www.workersliberty.org/6may

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