

Letters from our readers

29 August 2009

On “Australia: Court case against West Gate workers ends in plea bargain”

I have been following your accurate coverage of the West Gate Bridge dispute, and as a person who has worked as a building worker in the building and construction industry for most of my life, I am alarmed at the level of brutal intimidation being used against building workers.

The plea bargain deal imposed smacks of a frame-up, along with all of the charges against the workers. Workers have a right to take any measure necessary to defend their rights. This became very clear to me in 1972 when we started a struggle to defend Thompson and Skerry, two workers charged with “injury to a wall”, during a building industry dispute for higher wages in Canberra. The Builder’s Labourers Federation left them high and dry after they were sentenced to six months gaol. They got out on appeal, and when they appeared in court on two occasions we had the numbers against the union leadership to hold a stoppage in the industry. Terrified of the strength of the working class, the employers and courts put the case off until after the election of the Labour government in late 1972, when the charges were dropped.

Our campaign attracted many building workers, because central to it was a political struggle that demanded the incoming Labour government carry out a socialist program, including the demand for the nationalization of the building industry, without compensation and under workers’ control.

Today, scabby outfits like the AWU and the CFMEU are not working class organisations anymore. What is needed is a political struggle to mobilise the full strength of the working class. Today the toadies in the Labour government are leading the charge against the democratic rights of the working class. The retention of the ABCC indicates they will attempt to further drive down the rights and conditions of building workers. In

the past it was the scabby AWU that raided building sites to drive down wages and conditions on the spurious claim that they had a right to coverage on the basis that the building did not have a “roof on it”. Today, all the other unions are no better, as indicated by what has happened at the West Gate Building site.

Remember what Jack London said, “After god invented the rattlesnake, next came the scab.”

RR

Melbourne, Australia

26 August 2009

On “US fears mount over Afghan election travesty”

Today on the lunchtime BBC radio news, the British Ambassador in Kabul (Show some respect, now, there in the ranks!) said no matter how flawed or skewed, the result (my words, but that's what he was implying) would be accepted as a sort of “starter” result and would be admissible. He appears to forget how we stirred up all sorts of trouble in Iran recently when we didn't like the result. I shake my head and rub my eyes in disbelief.

This is 19th Century imperialism all over again.

Phil A

United Kingdom

26 August 2009

On “CIA probe shields architects of US torture regime”

Every day I spend a few minutes reading your articles and have been doing so since 9/11. I'm astounded that nothing this or the previous administration does surprises you in the least. You predicted that Mr. Obama would do nothing about rendition, illegal incarceration or domestic spying and, once again, you are batting 1.000.

Reading your site saves me from the outrage and surprise that is experienced by my colleagues each and every day, and my expectations of Mr. Obama have been brought back down to Earth.

“There is no America, there is no Democracy. There is only Exxon, Dow, Dupont...those are the nations of the world...the world is a business, Mr. Beale.”—Arthur Jensen, *Network*

PK

27 August 2009

On “US debt to hit \$20 trillion by 2020”

This is what you call a classic case of a “snake eating its tail...”

Steve N

New York, USA

28 August 2009



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