

Racist attack leaves Chinese-New Zealand teenager badly injured

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Amid a surge of crimes being reported against Asian people in New Zealand, a Chinese-born school student was brutally attacked on an Auckland public bus on the morning of June 28.

The 16-year-old, Jason, was left with severe facial injuries after being beaten with a metal rod by a woman yelling racial slurs. The teenager had three teeth knocked out and another two damaged in the unprovoked attack, which has prompted an outpouring of anger and concern across social media.

Jason was taking the bus to Panmure in South Auckland when “a woman started verbally abusing me and then immediately started to physically abuse me,” he told the *New Zealand Herald*. “I was just listening to music, scrolling my phone, and then it happened. She just stood up and hit me.”

Jason said although there were more than 10 people on the bus, only one intervened. “A 75-year-old gentleman at the back helped me to control the woman and get in the middle,” he explained. The woman jumped off at the bus stop and ran away, leaving behind her metre-long rod.

Jason has lived in New Zealand for seven years and said this was the first time he had experienced a racially motivated attack. He described the woman as in her 40s, with a large build and dressed in all black. “I feel a bit fearful, this time it was a stick, next time who knows what’s going to happen, maybe a knife?” he said. Police have made an arrest.

Transport Minister Simeon Brown said he would seek advice on whether “proper procedures” were followed by Auckland Transport staff. “It seems to me listening to Jason, the bus driver’s priority was continuing his route ... We don’t want this happening again,” he declared. A First Union spokesman replied that drivers are not trained like police officers to intervene in violent confrontations and put themselves at risk.

The focus on the actions of the driver is an attempt to

divert attention from the issue of racist attacks on Chinese and other Asian people.

In February, NZ Police reported that the number of “hate” incidents formally reported to authorities increased by 12 percent between 2022 and 2023. Race-motivated abuse made up 83 percent of 9,351 reported incidents, and more than a third targeted people of Asian descent.

The Justice Ministry recently reported that the proportion of Asian adults experiencing crime, including cases of fraud, deception and violence, increased from 24 to 30 percent between 2018 and 2023. Within Asian adults, the proportion of Chinese crime victims increased from 19 to 29 percent, ahead of the Indian community.

According to the *Global Times*, the Chinese Embassy “expressed serious concern” to New Zealand officials about the attack on Jason, as well as another alleged incident in which “a Chinese tourist in New Zealand was handcuffed and ‘rudely searched’ by three New Zealand police officers who were apprehending a criminal suspect.” The tourist received no explanation or apology for their treatment.

The increase in attacks on Chinese people—who make up just 5 percent of New Zealand’s population—coincides with an escalating anti-China propaganda campaign promoted by the country’s media outlets and political establishment. The purpose is to bring public sentiment into line with the US-led preparations for war against China, in which New Zealand—a key ally of US imperialism in the Indo-Pacific region—is increasingly integrated.

During an official visit to New Zealand by Chinese Premier Li Qiang last month, *Stuff* released an online documentary, “The Long Game,” which alleged widespread “Chinese interference,” followed by numerous articles on the subject. *Stuff* spoke to Chinese dissidents who claimed they had been “assaulted and intimidated” by Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

members in New Zealand.

The series reprised the methods of a similar *Stuff* campaign in 2021, which repeated false allegations of “genocide” of Uyghurs in China, amid a clamour for a more aggressive posture toward Beijing.

Such “reporting” has never been motivated by genuine concern over the repressive actions of China’s police state which are directed, above all, against the working class. The corporate media has for years been building a “human rights” case for imperialist aggression, as was done to justify the criminal US wars against Iraq and Afghanistan in which New Zealand participated.

In a response to the latest *Stuff* “investigation,” China’s ambassador Wang Xiaolong issued a statement saying it featured “baseless slander and misinformation.”

Wang warned that commentators displaying “malicious intent” would “ultimately harm the interests of New Zealand, adding they will end up lifting a stone only to drop it on their own feet.” *Stuff*’s principal source, prominent NATO-funded, pro-US academic Anne-Marie Brady, retorted this was a “threat” designed to silence critics, officials and journalists.

Foreign Minister Winston Peters—leader of the anti-immigrant and anti-Chinese NZ First Party—endorsed the documentary, saying the investigation had been “unusually competent” and was “worth reading and listening to.” The opposition Labour Party foreign affairs spokesperson, David Parker, similarly praised the documentary.

A particularly odious role is played by the pro-Labour Party *Daily Blog*, which hailed Brady and *Stuff*’s documentary—including unsubstantiated claims that Chinese-born National Party MP Nancy Lu is a spy. The blog regularly accuses Beijing of being New Zealand’s “economic overlord” while demanding tougher restrictions on immigration. Editor Martyn Bradbury has endorsed the Wuhan “lab lie,” blaming China for the COVID-19 pandemic, and asserts that a pro-Beijing “fifth column” within New Zealand’s Chinese community is preparing for a period of social unrest.

Anti-immigrant chauvinism is also promoted by Māori nationalist politicians, such as former MP Hone Harawira, leader of the Mana Party, who declared in 2017 that “any Chinese that brings meth [methamphetamine] or precursors into this country” should be jailed for life, deported, or “executed.” He said this would not apply to other ethnicities, only Chinese people.

Labour carries particular responsibility for attacks on immigrants. Led by Jacinda Ardern, Labour contested the

2017 election promising a sharply reduced immigration intake. With its ally the Greens, Labour then formed government in coalition with the racist NZ First Party, whose leader Peters was made Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister by Ardern.

The last Labour government asserted that the country had to prepare for war against China. The Security Intelligence Service (SIS) last August published its first unclassified national threat assessment, alleging that the country is besieged by “foreign intelligence agencies who persistently and opportunistically conduct espionage operations,” naming China, Iran and Russia in particular.

The attempts to whip up xenophobia and racism—including the anti-Māori demagoguery from the current government—also have the aim of dividing the working class and preventing any unified movement from developing against war and the worsening social crisis.

With the full collaboration of the trade unions and the Labour-led opposition, the right-wing coalition government has in the last six months launched a brutal offensive on the social position of the working class. Over 6,000 public sector jobs have been slashed, with more to come. The ANZ Bank forecasts 40,000 more people will be out of a job by the end of the year as unemployment surges.

The working class must take up the defence of immigrants and oppose all efforts to stoke racial divisions. This is an indispensable part of the fight to build a socialist movement to unite workers of every background and nationality against capitalism, which is the root cause of war, poverty and inequality.



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