

# Statement of the Communist Workers Party of Australia

*11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2016*

Recent events around the world have proved that reforms, under the Capitalist system, will be rolled back by the Capitalist class at the earliest opportunity. In Australia the hard fought for working conditions of prior generations have been weakened to such an extent that many Australians no longer have sick pay, holiday pay, proper meal breaks, eight hour working days or even secure employment. Many previously employed Australians, have now joined the ranks of the unemployed. In recent years we have seen the casualization of the workforce, the subcontracting of previously secure full time positions and 457 visas, all of which are direct attacks on the wages and conditions of Australian workers. Workers from overseas, particularly those on 457 visas, are often discriminated against by being paid considerably less than Australian citizens which consequently paves the way for the lowering of wages and employment opportunities for Australian workers in general. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the ABS', biannual report on labour December 2014, 72% of all employees between 15-19 years old did not have paid leave entitlements. Regarding all employees in the Accommodation and food services, 63% did not have paid leave entitlements including 59% of males and 67% of females. 48% of Labourers and 45% of Sales workers also did not have paid leave entitlements. These figures are considered to be conservative figures however, it is clear that in Australia, the casualization of the workforce and the rolling back of conditions continues.

In Australia there has also been direct attacks on any instrument the working class has at their disposal to defend themselves against the rolling back of working conditions by the Capitalist class. These attacks include direct attacks on unions and other left organisations, the Australian government using its legislative powers to make it difficult for workers to fight for their rights. The Australian government recently legislated to make it illegal to go on strike, to withdraw ones labour. According to the Australian Fair Work legislation, in order to take industrial action, one must apply to the Fair Work Commission for 'protected' industrial action. This 'protected' industrial action can be refused by the Commission if it deems it will 'cause significant damage to the Australian economy or an important part of it'. Individuals can now be fined \$10,800 and organisations or unions \$54,000 for advocating or organising strike action that is deemed 'unprotected' industrial action thereby attempting to remove completely one of the most important tools that Australian workers have for fighting for their working conditions, the withdrawal of their labour.

The rolling back of reforms does not occur randomly because of the narcissistic nature of individual Capitalists' or because of particular world economic crises, although they do contribute. This phenomenon largely occurs due to the very nature of the Capitalist system itself. In their drive to continually increase profits the Capitalist class attempts to find new markets. However, more importantly Capitalists continually strive to find new ways to increase profits, by increasing production, whilst at the same time paying less in on-going costs. To illustrate this point one only needs to look at the enormous profits that multinational companies have made by moving their businesses to poorer communities like Bangladesh. Whilst the cost of materials may be lower in these countries, companies move to the third world because the one production cost they can dramatically alter is an employees' wage.

Capitalists make their enormous profits by paying workers very little and in the third world this wage decreases dramatically with wages being closer to the subsistence level. In 2013 in Bangladesh after a long campaign in the clothing industry, including strike action, wages increased from equivalent to \$38 pounds per month to just \$67 per month according to the International Business Times UK November 21<sup>st</sup>. It is because the Capitalist class continually strive to make a profit, and to increase their profits, that workers find themselves in constant struggles with their employers for better wages and conditions.

The Communist Workers Party of Australia, the CWPA, supports and has solidarity with the workers of all countries, particularly those that are exploited by Capitalism. We are determined to always place the needs of workers, including the disenfranchised workers, those workers who are unemployed, at the forefront of any campaign or political position and we are equally determined to show our solidarity with workers from overseas, many of whom are equally suffering or are even more sharply feeling the oppression by the Capitalist system.

Why do we need a Communist Party instead of a Social Democratic party?

It is clear that the only way to end this continual battle for a meagre existence for basic working and living conditions is to change the system entirely. Attempts to reform Capitalism in Australia, including by Social Democratic organisations, have been tried and have failed for more than a hundred years. Whenever attempts are made to make positive reforms, on behalf of the working class, these reforms are taken away again by the Capitalist class as soon as they are able. Our forebears fought for the eight hour working day and a 38 hour working week yet today many workers are expected to work many more hours including extra unpaid and even unacknowledged work. Real wages in Australia, what one may purchase based on ones' wage, are in serious decline. Young individuals and families are now moving back into their parents homes due to the lack of available and affordable housing. Where one individual's wage could pay for the basics of life, food, clothing and housing in between the 1960's to early 1980's, now families are struggling to pay for necessities, even if two or more family members are working. Our forebears fought for better pay and working conditions and as we have seen all have been pushed back again in Australia, often by the more right wing sections of the Social Democratic parties themselves.

In Australia worker's rights and working conditions were particularly eroded by means of an agreement in 1983 called 'The Accord'. This 'Accord' was initially organised between the unions and the Labor Party and subsequently Australian Council of Trade unions and the government. It was basically institutionalised wage restraint, the unions agreeing to restrict wages for a prolonged period between 1983 and 1991 and is an excellent example of class collaborationism by leading Social Democratic organisations. The Accord paved the way for other class collaborations including enterprise bargaining, by court led negotiations between employers and union leaderships, these negotiations have consistently whittled away workers' wages and conditions.

Tertiary education was made fee free by the Whitlam Government in 1974 however, at the first opportunity this was rolled back by the Hawke Labor Government when they introduced the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989. Tertiary education fees have risen so much recently, under the Liberal government, that they are a substantial impediment to any working class person acquiring a tertiary education.

In order to survive and to continually battle with the ultra-conservatives, in the petty politicking of the Capitalist system, the Social Democratic parties in Australia often look to the support of business, this in turn results in favouritism and corruption as those businesses demand certain concessions for their patronage. The current opposition leader, Bill Shorten, was recently questioned by a Royal Commission regarding being the National Secretary of the Australian Workers Union and accepting funds from a business 'Chiquita Mushrooms', for 'training' purposes whilst at the same time negotiating a workplace agreement with that company on behalf of the Union's members.

The reason for this continued struggle for better working and living conditions for the working class is that the Capitalist system is based on exploitation, exploitation is at its very core and therefore it can't be reformed. Any reform in favour of the workers, is in direct opposition to the profiteering of the Capitalist and any increase in wages, lowers the profit margin of the Capitalist involved. The only way to stop this continual battle is to change the system to a Socialist one, to change our socio-economic system to one no longer based on profiteering and the hoarding of wealth like under Capitalism. Instead we need a system based on cooperation and the sharing of wealth, a Socialist system. The only way to change the system to a Socialist one is via a strong working class Communist movement led by vanguard party, a Marxist-Leninist party based on scientific analysis of the socio-economic environment in which we live. Social democratic parties attempt to change the system from within, it can't be done as the objectives of workers and Capitalists are diametrically opposed.

Unlike Social Democratic Parties like the Labor party and the Greens, the Communist Workers Party of Australia intends to change the socio-economic system entirely, to change our Australian constitution and socio-economic structure to a Socialist society where the purpose of both industry and workers are no longer diametrically opposed but are one and the same, improving the conditions of life for workers, for the 99.9% of the population instead of the less than 1% who currently own the majority of wealth in Australia.

Why do we need a new Communist Party in Australia? Aren't there already Marxist parties in Australia?

Futile attempts to reform the Capitalist system continually resurface in Australian politics in different forms, particularly in regards to Social Democratic organisations but also in regards to past Communist organisations. Distortions of Marxist theory and practice are nothing new and arise as we are constantly bombarded with Capitalist propaganda in the media, at work or at school and those Capitalist theories and tendencies are brought into the Communist parties particularly as members of the middle classes join the working classes and may become members. In Australia distortions in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice have been such that in the end the prior Communist parties have behaved more like those of the Social Democratic parties, attempting to reform the Capitalist system rather than replacing it. It is for this reason that we have concluded that there is an imperative to form a new Communist organisation that has as its clear purpose to bring Socialism to Australia.

One example of these distortions is termed 'Parliamentarianism', this is where attempts to change the system are made via parliamentary means. Whilst some positive reforms or even legislation on behalf of the working class may initially be successful, these reforms may be rolled back as previously discussed. To really make a difference we must change the basis of our socio-economic system which can't be achieved whilst our Australian constitution is based on Capitalist exploitation nor whilst our socio-economic structure is based on

Capitalism, where the means of production are owned and controlled by the Capitalist class. Parliamentarianism has often led to the parliamentary elections becoming the major objective preparing the way towards opportunism. Members of past Communist Parties have found themselves either caught up in the petty politicking of local government decision making, like if a lift should be built, or where the park should be situated, or in attempts to form coalitions with the major parties in order to be elected, like in preference allocations thereby potentially collaborating on issues detrimental for the working class.

Parliamentarianism has also led to calls for the support of Social Democratic organisations instead of their own party, this is the case even when conditions allowed for their party to stand in elections for themselves. Some members of these parties stood for Social Democratic parties and therefore for reforms, whilst never mentioning Socialism at all, thereby subjugating our major purpose to change the system. If we focus our attention on reforms, like the Social Democratic parties do, instead of abolishing Capitalism altogether, we limit ourselves to the behest of the Capitalist class. If we focus on reforms alone we condemn the working class to continual struggles for their basic working conditions and we also liquidate our Parties into parties of social reformism, parliamentarianism and opportunism. Running for parliament or local government should largely be exercises in agitation or for tactical reasons by Communist organisations.

Another major error in past Communist Parties in Australia, includes continual attempts to unite so-called 'broad left coalitions' made up of differing groups with different political objectives, into one whole movement. These often include coalitions with the 'Distorters of Marxism', in coalitions with people that are largely from the upper classes and due to their position in society often have distorted views about what is important to the working class. Their inclusion can lead to idealistic and incorrect assessments regarding the readiness of the working class to take action thereby leading to other errors in judgement. Whilst you may have coalitions around certain particular objectives or particular issues, to attempt broad and nebulous coalitions with groups that have differing objectives and spurious connection to the working class is both naive and destructive. Broad left coalitions often lead to campaigns of purely Social Democratic reforms and often collapse very soon after they have begun as the differences between organisations are irreconcilable.

Communists do work towards any pro-worker changes in order to attempt to improve the immediate conditions for the working class. In order to do so Communists may form temporary coalitions with other groups or coalitions with many other groups around particular issues for specified objectives, in this way the irreconcilable differences need not hinder the progress of obtaining the objective as we will not be attempting to agree on every issue, and our movement for a change to a different social system will not be appropriated to one based solely on reforms. Communist organisations have in fact been at the forefront of many successful campaigns for improvements in the life and working conditions of Australian workers and we will continue to do so.

The Communist Workers Party of Australia is firmly based in the working class and firmly follows Marxist-Leninist theory and Practice. Whilst we are aware that other so-called Communist Organisations in Australia have made these claims we have already surpassed them by making our priority the working class and working class issues and by realising Democratic Centralism by making important structural decisions to ensure that Democratic Centralism is followed correctly.

Democratic centralism combines the maximum of democratic discussion and participation of the membership in Party life, with the obligation to carry out majority decisions and execution of these decisions. It includes full discussion, by the entire membership, of the policies necessary to advance the aims of the Party. In our Constitution we have included procedures to make certain the rights of members are respected, that the branch members vote directly on higher party decisions, they ratify the decisions of higher party bodies, among many other provisions in order to protect rights of members. In particular we have included processes that protect a members' right to express opinions, to review decisions, to discuss opinions and to be directly involved in the discussion and decision making process at all levels.

If you wish for a Socialist future in Australia, instead of continual battles to inch out a basic existence for yourself under Capitalism, don't delay, come and join us comrades!

The more Marxist-Leninists that are united towards a Socialist future, the more likely we are to succeed!