



Lahore, 2001: 'No to Imperialist War in Afghanistan'

Workers Change the World

Six months after the re-election of the Liberal Federal government, workers in Australia continue to see their conditions being attacked. Amid an election fought on strident nationalist propaganda, targeting asylum seekers and 'terrorists', workers interests were ignored.

Nevertheless, we are constantly facing calls for more sacrifices in the shape of greater flexibility, more productivity and wage restraint. The Australian situation is similar to that faced by workers in other countries in the rest of Asia.

Whether using the slogans of national security, war on terrorism, or the protection of borders, national governments are reducing democratic space by the introduction of additional security legislation. As always, these new laws will be used against us and against our organisations.

Nevertheless, workers have not been silenced and continue to organise to defend their interests:

In China, the months of March and April have seen mobilisations of tens of thousands of workers. The north eastern industrial cities of Liaoyang and Daqing were paralysed by workers taking action over unpaid entitlements, corruption and privatisations.

In Pakistan, late last year, thousands of workers staged political strikes against both the imperialist war in Afghanistan and religious fundamentalism. They demanded the right for workers to peace and jobs.

In Indonesia, the workers of the Shangri La Hotel in Jakarta have been out of work for more than a year over pay and conditions. They have gained extensive international solidarity, including from workers in Melbourne.

Disputes such as these reflect the fact that we face constant pressures to be more productive and competitive. They use nationalism to divide us and pit us against each other in a never ending race to the bottom.

It is us, the working class, who produce the wealth of this society but see very little of it. We see every day where it goes and who enjoys it.

Our organisations need to fight not just for money and conditions. We must stand united to develop our confidence and strength as a class. On this day of the international working class, we want to end this capitalist system that represses indigenous people, migrant workers, the sick and the unemployed.

We want a life free from poverty, prisons and war.

May Day 2002

- **land rights for indigenous people**
- **for the right to organise and the right to strike**
- **refugees are workers, free the refugees**
- **job security not casualisation**
- **solidarity, not profits and war**

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