



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**

Workers Change the World

Support jailed Malaysian labour activist Tian Chua

Tian Chua was jailed under Malaysia's Internal Security Act (ISA) on 10 April 2001. Tian was the organiser of the Labour Resource Centre in Malaysia and a main activist in the democracy movement. He is in jail because he fights for the rights of all workers.

He led many protests and demonstrations, was arrested and suffered serious police brutality on a number of occasions. In August 2000, he was arrested prior to a demonstration and was brutalised by the police so badly that one of the lumbar of his

vertebrae fractured.

The Inspector-General of Police issued a statement after their arrest that Tian Chua and 9 other men were involved in an armed and violent plot to 'overthrow' the government. However, no evidence has ever been presented.

The ISA provides for 'preventative detention' without trial for an indefinite period.

The Act violates fundamental rights and is used against working class activists.



Send messages of solidarity to:
 Tian Chua (ATP:2505)
 Kamunting Detention Camp,
 34009 Taiping,
 Perak, Malaysia
For more information visit the SUARAM website:
<http://www.suaram.org>
Victorian Trades Hall Website:
<http://www.vthc.org.au/campaigns>

International solidarity wins freedom for Korean union leader

Dan Byong-ho, President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), was about to be released last year when he was sentenced to a further four years in jail. Dan's crime was to call for strike action against lay-offs.

Mun Sung-hyun, President of the Korean Metal Workers Federation, was jailed in November 2001 for one and a half years. Mun's crime was taking action for the protection of worker's rights and conditions.

An international solidarity campaign has been organised. In January 22nd protests were held around the world – including Russia, Poland,

South Africa, Italy, Canada and Japan. In Australia, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, held a protest outside the Korean Consul General calling for the immediate release of union leaders Dan and Mun, and an end to the repressive anti-union national security laws in Korea.

On March 26, Mun was released from jail.

Julius Roe, national President of the AMWU, said '... Mun's release was a win for international solidarity and workers across the globe. Through showing solidarity with workers across the world we can make a difference for all workers.'

Dan Byong-ho, and over 50 other trade unionists, remain in jail. The AMWU calls on workers to continue to keep up the pressure until all trade unionists are released.



Still jailed: Dan Byong-ho

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For more information visit the KCTU website:
<http://www.kctu.org>

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Australia Asia Worker Links was founded to build links between unions and labour organization in the Asia Pacific region. AAWL develops these links by organising union training programmes, solidarity exchange visits and by building campaigns to support worker's disputes and political prisoners in the region.

Listen to AAWL's radio show *Asia Pacific Currents* on 3CR (855AM), every Saturday at 9am.

AAWL meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm at Trades Hall.