

Paul Howes: a tale of class betrayal

Listening to the ABC local radio recently, my ears were pricked by a news report announcing the appointment of Paul Howes to the Morrison Government's economic panel supposedly dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian economy, the [National COVID-19 Coordination Commission](#). Once again, everything I knew about this man allowed me to understand in greater detail the relationship between unions in Australia, corporations, government and US imperialism.

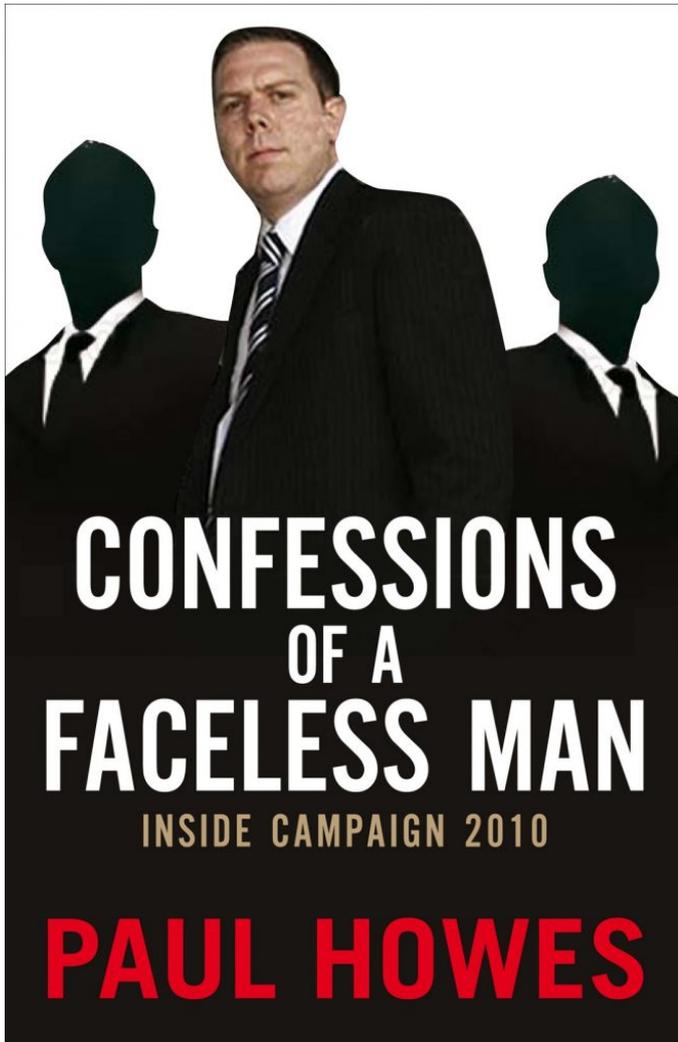
Howes first made headlines in Australia in 2010. His name came up, in files published by WikiLeaks (which has an unimpeachable record when it comes to reporting the truth) as having been a participant in the removal of the Labor Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. Howes, at the time, was the leader of the Australian Workers Union, which covered millions of workers in many industries around the country. Howes was revealed in the WikiLeaks files as having been informing the American embassy in Canberra of affairs internal to the Australian Labor Party. Specifically, he was informing America of the removal of an elected Prime Minister and his replacement by Julia Gillard.

responsibility. When we reminded Paul Howes (protect), head of the right-wing Australian Workers Union, that ALP Qof the right-wing Australian Workers Union, that ALP politicians from the Left, no matter how capable, do not become party leader, he said immediately: "but she votes with the Right." In 2002, when she was Shadow Immigration

Excerpt from [US Embassy cable from June 13th 2008](#) published by Wikileaks in 2010 where Howes discusses Julia Gillard . Note: (Protect) means Howes identity as source was to be kept secret.

In other words, Howes was an American spy that was operating inside the trade union movement and conspiring with a foreign imperialist power to remove the PM and override the political will of the Australian people. His conspiratorial collaborators in this act were Mark Arbib and David Feeney, both Labor Party functionaries and members of Parliament.

Around the same time as the removal of Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister, Howes was involved as Australian Workers Union secretary, with the scandal surrounding the Cleanevent workers. He represented these workers whose job was mainly to perform cleaning services at major events and festivals. The scandal involved the AWU organising through the company employer the payment of union fees by the employer to incorporate the workers as union members in return for the slashing of working conditions for those very workers. The company would pay the union and the union would negotiate an employment contract that covered the cleaners that removed penalty rates and other lawful conditions of employment. The company was able to save millions of dollars for the small cost of paying union dues. Howes oversaw this.



Paul Howes book published in 2010

Sometime in the middle of this decade, Howes left the leadership of the union movement and politics and was given a contract as a partner at the Australian arm of multinational accounting firm KPMG. He went from union leader to corporate executive. If anything I have said has not altered your perspective of both man and organisation, then this may or if not, you are lost to the working class. Howes has never as an adult worked in a factory or workplace for which the union was supposed to represent. Which raises the question of how is it that union representatives are appointed in the first place.

One might ask, what did Howes' betrayal of the working class do to promote his candidacy at KPMG? What would have been his

role? Remember that KPMG is a firm that plays a role in the superannuation industry also known as the pension fund sector. His protection of corporate interests overriding working class conditions, made his qualification for administering part of the trillions of dollars of workers' wages invested in superannuation, a strong point of endorsement. Unions in Australia are participants in the management of pension funds for profit.



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Paul Howes

National Managing Partner, Enterprise



Which makes Howes' appointment by right wing Prime Minister Scott Morrison all the clearer. In this promotion, several threads come into unison. Hostility to the working class, support for capital and firm alignment with US imperialism. This development has a long history and Howes is only one of the latest expressions of it. Back in the 1970s, Bob Hawke, ACTU leader was also hostile to the working class, a major supporter of US imperialism and great friend of the capitalist

class of Australia. The union movement and its Labor Party support are thoroughly embedded to the capitalist system and moreover to the drive to war lead by American imperialism. Do you want to be part of that train? Never!

Finally, an anecdote. As I was preparing to write this story, I was digging around for information. I first heard this story on the local ABC (government broadcaster) radio. When I typed into the Google search engine, "Howes, Morrison appointment, ABC" nothing came up. Literally NOTHING. The story did appear on Murdoch's "The Australian" webpage but you had to pay for it to read it in its entirety. The ABC did not present it on its webpages. You can interpret this in any way you like but I thought that the budget pressures on the ABC by the Federal government have not only altered the quality of the work undertaken by the national "broadcaster" but also the quantity of its work. The expression, Australian Bullshit Corporation is rather apt.

Serious conclusions can be made by examining the why and how Paul Howes was picked for his recent appointment by the far-right Morrison Government's covid19 economic commission demonstrates that trade unions are thoroughly corrupt and work for capital, government and as tools of US Imperialism. The lack of coverage of this appointment by ABC demonstrates the ABC is truly a state broadcaster acting as another propaganda arm of the government and not at all independent as some want you to believe. As the capitalist crisis continues to deepen, the greater will these facts be brought into relief. The World Socialist Revolution cannot wait.

It is only through and open and robust discussion scientific socialism, ie Marxism has developed. Classconscious.org would

like to play its role in developing such a culture again. We are attempting to foster debate by publishing articles that may not fully align with the position of our editorial collective.