

Chinese billionaire stripped of Australian residency as “foreign interference” campaign ramps up

By James Cogan
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The Home Affairs ministry has rejected Chinese billionaire Huang Xiangmo’s application for citizenship and stripped him of his ability to reside in Australia, where he has lived since 2011. The justification for the rejection of citizenship is that Huang failed the “character test.” The decision was reportedly made on the “recommendation” of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), which interviewed the businessman.

In a carefully-staged operation, Huang was informed of the decision while he is out the country and he has been refused re-entry. He owns some \$1 billion in corporate investments in Australia, as well substantial private assets, such as his \$13 million mansion overlooking Sydney Harbour, where his wife and children are currently living.

The billionaire can challenge the citizenship and residency decision, but an unnamed official rather gloatingly told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that any legal appeal would “take a very long time.” Another official said to the *Herald* that there “was no chance” that Home Affairs minister Peter Dutton “would intervene on Mr Huang’s behalf.”

The banishment of Huang from Australia represents a major escalation in the steadily developing frenzy over purported Chinese interference and alleged “Chinese agents of influence” within the country’s political, business and academic establishment. The propaganda campaign is a component of Australia’s unconditional alignment with the aggressive US-led military confrontation with China over global dominance, which threatens to trigger all-out war between the nuclear-armed states.

It is not accidental that the move against the Chinese billionaire has taken place on the eve of the 2019

Australian election and amid the bitter trade conflicts between the US and China.

Since the anti-China campaign began in August 2016, the media has repeatedly implied that Huang, along with his company, Yuhu Australia Group, are among the chief representatives of the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese government in Australia.

Lurid details have been published about the extent of his donations to both major Australian parties, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, as well as the \$1.8 million he contributed to the establishment of the Australia-China Relations Institute (ACRI) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). ACRI is headed by former Labor state premier and federal foreign minister Bob Carr.

Between 2012 and 2016, Huang reportedly donated \$1.09 million to Labor and \$1.2 million to Liberal, including \$800,000 ahead of the 2013 federal election. He allegedly organised for other business people of Chinese background to also make substantial donations.

ASIO began raising “concerns” about Huang’s relations with leading political figures in 2015. Ultimately, the media served as the conduit for the accusations of the intelligence agency with a barrage of highly-coloured reports on “Chinese influence” in August and September 2016.

A joint “investigation” in June 2017 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the then Fairfax Media—now owned by Channel 9—singled out Huang for attempting to influence Australian foreign policy via his relations with Labor senator Sam Dastyari. Amid a mounting “scandal,” the Labor leadership pressured Dastyari to resign from parliament in December that year.

As well as Dastyari and Bob Carr, other prominent political figures who have been named in the media as

having associations with Huang include NSW politician Ernest Wong, former Liberal trade minister Andrew Robb and former Liberal Prime Minister Tony Abbott. An array of senior figures from both major parties have appeared alongside the Chinese billionaire at fund-raisers and other events, including current Labor leader Bill Shorten, Labor shadow treasurer Chris Bowen and former Liberal foreign minister and powerbroker Julie Bishop.

Sam Dastyari, in an apparent bid to revive his fortunes, agreed to be interviewed by Rupert Murdoch's Sydney tabloid, the *Daily Telegraph*, and effectively accused Huang Xiangmo of attempting to recruit him as an "agent." He is featured in a "reflective" pose on its front page today, with the lurid banner headline "Me and China Inc: How Sam's dash for Beijing cash led to ruin."

Dastyari told the *Telegraph* that "he believes now that Mr Huang was trying to court both him and the party [Labor], but going through that realisation was brutal and painful." The newspaper devotes an editorial to 35-year-old Dastyari, stating: "His recognition of his mistakes suggests a subsequent career outside of politics may be far more successful."

Dastyari's "confession" could facilitate a wholesale McCarthyite witch hunt of Australian citizens accused of being "agents of Chinese influence."

Clive Hamilton, the Green Party member, pro-US ideologue and author of the hysterical 2018 book, *Silent Invasion: China's influence in Australia*, was interviewed by the *Telegraph* and given his own column in today's edition.

Hamilton does not hide the fact that he wants a purge of political figures he accuses of being "agents." He told the *Telegraph*: "[I]f on the basis of ASIO advice Huang Xiangmo has been deemed unfit to be a citizen of Australia, where does that leave the host of current and former politicians who have enjoyed his patronage and cosied up to him."

In his column, Hamilton names former NSW Treasurer Eric Roozendaal and former NSW National Party leader Andrew Stoner, as well as Dastyari, Carr, Robb, Shorten, Bishop and Abbott. "Now that Huang has been banned from Australia, those politicians will want to sweep it all under the carpet. But we should hold the blowtorch to their bellies and make them explain themselves," he declares.

As well as a political witch hunt, Huang's banishment may well be the prelude to the first criminal charges laid against Australian citizens under the "foreign interference" laws that were rammed through parliament

by Liberal and Labor in just three days between June 26 and June 28, 2018.

A chilling accompanying article to Dastyari's confession in today's *Telegraph* states: "In Australia, security agencies estimate there could be anything up to 1,000 agents of influence, ranging from actual spies seeking to gain political insight and details of military and energy projects and infrastructure, through to local Chinese community leaders, university students and associations pushing Beijing's lines."

The working class needs to be prepared. A torrent of xenophobia against the Chinese community, allegations of "Chinese interference" and pro-US militarist propaganda is about to be unleashed.

The Socialist Equality Party has consistently warned about the immense threat posed to democratic rights by the anti-China hysteria. At the SEP public meeting held to discuss the foreign interference legislation in July 2018, we explained: "These laws are intended to create the legal means for the mass repression of opposition in Australia to the country's involvement in a military conflict with China, and to serve as a model for similar legislation in the US and other countries, such as New Zealand, Canada and Japan."

At the conclusion of the meeting, we stated: "A determined campaign must be undertaken by every opponent of imperialism and war; by every defender of democratic rights; to alert and educate the working class as to the immense dangers that these laws pose to its most fundamental interests."

All those who wish to understand the implications of the hysteria over "Chinese influence" should watch the reports delivered to the July 15, 2018 meeting: "The New Foreign Interference Laws: Moving Towards Dictatorship and War."

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