

Expressing the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)

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For an Independent and Socialist Australia

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Reports make clear: U.S. imperialism still top dog in Australian economy



Danny O. (23 July 2020)

The level of Australia's economic integration and dependence on the United States has been made abundantly clear in two recently released reports.

The first, *Building Prosperity: The importance of the United States to the Australian economy*, was commissioned by the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia (AmCham) and funded directly by the US State Department.

The second, *Enduring Partners: The US-Australia investment relationship*, was written by right-wing former Australian economics journalist David Uren for the United States Study Centre (USSC) at the University of Sydney and funded by the American Australian Association, a leading privately funded organisation of the US lobby in Australia established by the Murdoch family patriarch, Keith Murdoch in 1948.

In other words, the two reports taken together represent nothing less

than US imperialism spelling out the size and scope of its hold on the Australian economy. Along with a similar report from the USSC and AmCham released in 2017, it's an ongoing attempt to counter the commonly held but mistaken belief that the Australia-China economic relationship is deeper and more significant than the US-Australia relationship.

In a recently conducted survey by the USSC, 71% of people mistakenly nominated China as the largest foreign investor in Australia, while only 17% correctly identified the United States as number one. It wouldn't be a hard mistake to make given the constant barrage of China-bashing and fear mongering coming from the mass media and politicians, but the statistics paint a starkly different picture.

USA #1

The *Enduring Partners* report states, "Australia has been resource-rich but capital-poor for most of its history, hungry for foreign capital to fuel its economic development. The

United States is Australia's largest foreign investor... Australia's most indispensable and resilient economic partner."

Investment from the United States makes up more than 25% of all foreign investment in Australia. At the end of 2019, that amounted to a total of \$984 billion. Not only is it the largest single investor by far, over recent decades its investment stock has been growing at a faster rate than overall foreign investment to the country. In the 15 years since the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement came into effect in 2005, the amount of US investment in Australia has almost tripled.

China on the other hand, ranks just 9th (5th including Hong Kong) with only 2% (5.7% incl. HK) of total foreign investment in Australia.

The *Building Prosperity* report calculates that "7% of Australia's GDP in 2019 was the direct result of US trade and investment", or \$131 billion. To put that in comparison, its approximately equivalent to the share of GDP attributed to the entire mining sector in Australia.

And what does the US invest in? In 2019, nearly 50% of US foreign direct investment was in mining and manufacturing alone, while the other half was spread out over a number of financial and services industries.

That large portion of investment in mining (which includes gas) is important to note. Australia's trade is heavily lopsided to the export of raw materials and energy resources, most notably to China and Japan. However, it is often US investors who stand to gain the most from that trade as US multinationals are heavily invested in the resources sector.

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The LNG industry is a prime example. "US investment in Australia's mining sector has helped drive the surge in liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports over the last five years," states the *Building Prosperity* report. As Australia competes for the world's largest LNG exporter spot, US giant Chevron is the single largest holder and producer of gas in Australia. That investment, far from benefitting ordinary Australians, sees the economy distorted so much that plans are underway to import LNG as there isn't enough to meet domestic demand because the multinationals are making a bigger killing selling it

overseas, rather than using it to meet the needs of the Australian people.

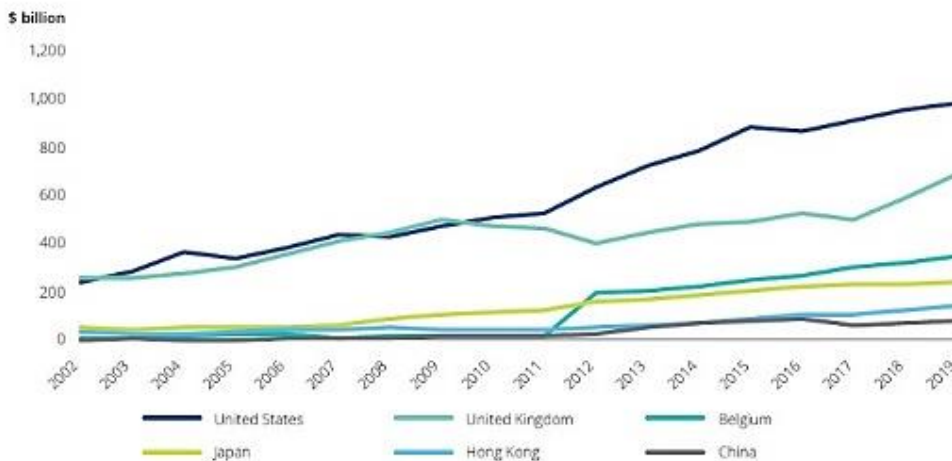
And then there's the pervasive tax dodging.

But you won't find facts like those in either of the reports.

Economic dependence underpins total subservience

At the launch of the *Building Prosperity* report, US ambassador to Australia Arthur B. Culvahouse Jr. said, "There's been this notion that you can have economic security on the one side and strategic security on the other. What this report shows is that they are one and the same."

Chart 2.6 Total foreign investment in Australia by source country, 2002 to 2019



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 5352.0

To put it another way, Australia's economic dependence on US imperialism is inseparable from our subservience to US interests politically and militarily also.

While China is far and away the largest market for Australian exports in trade and our largest trading partner, the US is head and shoulders above the rest of the field when it comes to holding it over Australia's economy. Therefore, it should not be hard to comprehend Australia's recent actions in loyally following the United States in souring our relationship with China, or ramping up military spending to prepare to go to war to defend US interests in the region.

They are the actions of a country that is enmeshed in the economic, political, social and military web of US imperialism. Although some cracks are starting to form, the loyalties of the Australian bourgeois ruling class remain overwhelmingly with US imperialism.

The working class struggle for socialism in Australia must inevitably come up against this reality of Australia's dependence on, and subservience to, US imperialism. Ours is a struggle for independence and socialism. ■

For whom are we "projecting military power in the region"?

Contributed (23 July 2020)

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) acquisition of an anti-ballistic missile defence system is further evidence of the Trump administration's escalation of Cold War hostilities toward China.

In early July the Morrison coalition government announced the deployment of a US anti-ballistic missile defence system in Australia. The facilities formed part of the massive ten-year \$270 billion defence budget. The official media release from the Defence Department specified the defence system would be used to 'project military power in the region and defend against adversaries seeking to launch attacks from targets such as the South China Seas'.

With a stated range of 550 kms, the defence system would appear hopelessly ineffective when dealing with range from the South China Sea. The location of the defence system, therefore, has not been disclosed; nor has the country which will host the facilities.

This is the same region in which five Australian warships were "confronted" by the Chinese navy last week. The Australian ships sailed teasingly close to the Nansha (Spratly) Islands, acting as a cat's paw for US imperialism. The Nansha Islands are within the so-called nine-dash line defining China's territorial claim to the South China Sea. The line predates the coming to power of the Communist Party of China and was not disputed at the time of the establishment of

diplomatic relations between China and Australia. No doubt the Australian Navy would feel justified in "confronting" Chinese warships sailing provocatively through Torres Strait, to our north, or Bass Strait to our south.

The defence system itself, forms part of a regional-wide system, where radar facilities identify a missile's trajectory and then destroy it in flight before it reaches a target. Similar defence systems exist in various locations across the Indo-Pacific region and have been used extensively for surveillance purposes. A major problem, however, with real-time intelligence has hampered US military positions. Computer systems operating with satellite transmission and reception tend to have a micro-second

time delay, enough to make the defence systems inaccurate with fast-moving missiles.

The US, however, has continued to deploy defence systems across the region on the stated basis they enable the US to 'focus and project our force in the Pacific'. Analysis of the wording of the media releases leaves little to the imagination. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find a recent statement from the Morrison government which specified the defence system was intended for 'greater focus on the immediate region and put adversaries on notice that Australia will respond with military force if needed'.

Behind the scenes of recent developments, the Trump administration has pursued an agenda clouded in intrigue.

Reliable information about the changing balance of forces across the Indo-Pacific, for example, has not been difficult to establish: in November 2018, a commission established by Congress concluded the US was no longer a superior regional power. The findings, however, were not accepted by the Trump administration.

The Pentagon subsequently established a special China Strategy Group, 'to focus the Pentagon's efforts on countering the growing threat'. The organisation has recently issued a new strategic threat assessment, which has included the reviewing of all war-plans with China.

And following suit closely has been the Morrison coalition government in Canberra which has tabled \$270 billion for defence spending over the next decade. Real-war scenarios are clearly a main part of the agenda. Whether the stated anti-ballistic missile defence system, as a major component part of the plan, is ever actually operational remains as yet, however, to be established. If it is anything like the similar facilities based in Japan, it should be noted they were quietly shelved due to their stated inefficiency and protests from local people.

With US-led military planning such as this taking place in Australia: **We need an independent foreign policy!** ■

When the Generals talk – who is listening?

Ned K. (18 July 2020)

One of rock band Midnight Oil's songs had the lyrics "when the Generals talk, you better listen to them". The "Generals" referred to US multinationals such as General Electric, and of course General Motors. The song was highlighting the power and influence of these multinationals, including their influence on politicians and government policy.

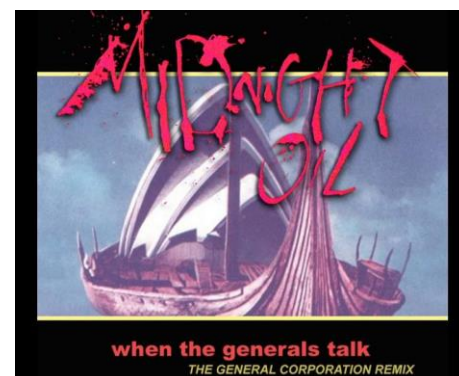
At the moment there is growing tension between US imperialism and the new power on the blocks, China. Listening to Trump one may get the impression that the decisive sections of the US ruling class are behind him regarding his anti-China position on almost everything.

However, "The General", in this case General Motors, has more to lose from an all-out war with China than Trump would have us believe.

General Motors are in big trouble in their struggle to maintain and increase market share of car sales in China.

"Global carmakers are looking to China where sales have rebounded more strongly than in the US and Europe...and few carmakers are as reliant on China as GM, which typically records almost half its global unit sales in the country" (*The Wall Street Journal* 16 July).

"GM's commitment to China has never wavered" said a GM spokesperson. Over the last quarter, GM sales dropped by 25% in China but rather than make a decision to withdraw from the market which



Trump would probably applaud, General Motors are responding by launching new models with a big focus on electric cars at its plant in Liuzhou.

European and Japanese multinational car companies are picking up what General Motors is losing in market share in China.

Adding to the contradictions between the US and China is that in China, the big car multinationals from the US, Japan and Europe rely on joint ventures with Chinese car manufacturers as well to keep afloat in the massive China car sales market, which of course they need to grow their global profits.

So, while there are sections of US imperialism who favour all-out attack on China, including war if it comes to that, there are headaches for them as so many US multinationals in particular have economic interests in China that they cannot afford to lose.

How this plays out in coming years is no certainty.

So maybe if Midnight Oil rewrote the lyrics to their song about the Generals today, it would go like this, "When the Generals talk, who is listening?" ■

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COVID-19 Pandemic and Capitalism

Alice M. (26 July 2020)

Whichever way we look at the COVID-19 pandemic and its dire consequences for the people, especially the working class, we inevitably come up against the brutal profit driven capitalist system.

As the pandemic unfolds every day, we also learn more about monopoly capitalism and the urgency to end the capitalist system. On all measures, capitalism is not only incapable of preventing, managing the pandemic and protecting the people, but is itself the root cause of the economic and health crises. This pandemic is shining a powerful light on capitalism's destructive forces against humanity and the environment.

The single driving force of capitalism is the need for constant expansion and increasing profit for its survival. It invents new means to accelerate and intensify production and exploitation of people and the environment. It constantly re-arranges old markets and creates new ones where capital can invest, expand and reinvent itself. In the process it creates devastating economic and health crises.

Like climate crisis, the root cause of COVID-19 pandemic is capitalism

Capitalism is the cause for the rise in zoonotic diseases. The origins of the deadly corona pathogens and the global outbreak of COVID-19 can be traced to monopoly capitalism's intensified production in agriculture and food production, deforestation on a massive scale, environmental degradation and climate change. In short, capital's sheer exploitation of the environment, humans, and animals is creating the unprecedented release of new deadly viral and other diseases in humans and animals. Monopoly agribusinesses, like Monsanto, dominate global food production and food supply. They develop and impose new intensified mono-culture farming



Aged care workers fighting for improved pay and conditions prior to the pandemic outbreak

methods to generate higher profits and create an expanding market for their highly concentrated chemical fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides and weed killers.

Capitalism cannot provide prevention

Prevention is not a tool in the capitalist kit, unless immediate profits can be realised. As far back as 2008, medical scientists and infectious diseases specialists and experts warned of the urgency for the nations of the world to collectively invest in research and development of vaccines against a wide range of newly emerging corona viruses. The global privatised and monopolised pharmaceutical industry that controls more than 90% of the world's research, production and distribution of medicines and vaccines refused to invest in the research because there was no immediately visible profit to be made.

In early April 2020, Professor Peter Doherty, Australia's leading immunologist and Nobel Laureate, was asked why there had been little, if any, research into Corona viruses. He replied, "There is just not enough profit margin in it for pharma companies. They live by profits and the rules of capitalism. And capitalism has no interest in human beings other than as consumers."

Capitalism is not designed to take care and protect people and the environment. Its survival depends on constant expansion and ruthless exploitation that puts profit above all else and is the root cause of hardships and suffering for millions of people around the world.

This is no better illustrated than in Melbourne where, in spite of the hard lock-down for a short period in early March-May, COVID-19 has come back with a vengeance as soon as the short-lived restrictions were lifted. And this is the situation repeated around the world in capitalist countries. The second outbreak in Melbourne further exposes the destructive and lethal forces of capitalism.

The imperialist neo-liberalism of the past 30-40 years has imposed privatisation and monopolisation on a massive global scale. Every stone has been upturned by monopoly capital's drive to expand, find new markets and new areas for its investments and commodities, and to intensify exploitation. In most countries, former publicly owned instrumentalities and services have been privatised and handed over to big multinational corporations. Many private small and medium businesses have been swallowed up or wiped out of existence by corporations and finance capital.

Hand in hand with the privatisation and monopolisation of industries, imperialist driven casualisation of labour and intensified exploitation of workers globally has sent millions of people into economic and social hardship and poverty.

The pandemic has amplified Australia's economic vulnerability and dependency on foreign capital. Imperialist globalisation has wiped out many local industries and production. From steel fabrication to the production of basics like medicines, personal protection equipment, masks and ventilators. The Australian people's livelihoods, health, and safety are completely dependent on imports from overseas countries.

In Melbourne, hot-spots of the second wave of the pandemic are concentrated mainly in working class suburbs and jobs; and in public housing towers tightly crammed by 3,000 residents living in neglected, unsafe and unhealthy physical conditions. Working from home is not an option for many workers.

It doesn't take a genius to work out that privatisation and mass casualisation of millions of jobs is the main source of the current spread of the COVID-19 outbreak in Melbourne, and in other parts of the world. 80% of infectious transmissions in Melbourne's present second wave are traced to mainly to working class people in casual part time, insecure work, with no sick leave entitlements, low wages, many working two or three

jobs struggling to make ends meet. Under the threat of losing their jobs they go to work sick, unable to take two or three days off from work to isolate whilst waiting for their test results. With no sick leave and job security many can't afford to take two weeks off to stay in quarantine.

The outbreak can be traced to health breaches by contracted private security companies in quarantined hotels, to unsafe working conditions in abattoirs and meatworks, and privatised aged care facilities. Casual workers are at the highest health risk of getting sick themselves and transmitting the virus to their families and in the wider community. Casualisation, outsourcing, insecure work, intensified exploitation of workers, cutting corners in health and safety, sham contracting and privatisation, are the common threads in the new transmissions in workplaces and in the community.

Between 2015-2016, under increasing public pressure, State and Federal governments held two inquiries into contracting, sub-contracting and the casualisation in industries with a high concentration of casual workers – private security, agriculture, cleaning, abattoirs and meat processing. The inquiries released hundreds of pages of recommendations. In 2018, the Victorian Andrews government established an \$8.5 million "independent" Labour Hire Authority and appointed a Commissioner. As

predicted by many, the Inquiry's recommendations haven't left Parliament House archives, while casualisation, unsafe working conditions, exploitation and abuse of workers by corporations is spreading and worsening.

Breaches in COVID-19 hotel quarantine

The Victorian State and Federal governments contracted out security at quarantined hotels to highly profitable private security companies, labour hire firms and sub-contractors, renowned for rampant casualisation, paying low wages, no health and safety training or protective equipment, no job security and frequent movements between different sites and industries.

The biggest is MSS, a big international security company owned by an Indian billionaire politician based in India. It has 43 subsidiary companies across South East Asia, including Australia and New Zealand. It's renowned for abusing workers, intense casualisation, underpayment of wages, sub-contracting, tax evasion and political influences. In 2018, the conglomerate boasted about their growing profits from efficiencies (cutting costs) in labour.

Security guards working in quarantined hotels were given safety training that amounted to between 0-15 minutes, were not provided with proper personal protective equipment, and no protection to ensure safety for themselves, their families and the community. Labour hire firms rotated security guards in and out of quarantined hotels into other jobs and sites between different workplaces with no health and safety training. Being casual workers with no sick leave or other entitlements they were turning up to work sick to protect their livelihoods.

Casual and underpaid workers in abattoirs and meat processing

This picture is repeated in the abattoirs and meat processing plants where big clusters of COVID-19 were located. Five or six major abattoirs and
(continued on pg.6)



Ambulances queue at Melbourne public housing towers hit hard by COVID-19

(continued from pg.5)

meat processing plants in Victoria have been shut down due to COVID-19 outbreaks. Many casual workers in Cedar Meats and JBS, the second largest food company in the world, are employed by Labour Solutions, a large multinational labour hire conglomerate based in South Africa and used extensively by multinational companies in Australia, including the notorious ExxonMobil and Alcoa.

Many casual abattoir and meat processing workers are migrants on low wages working in dire conditions.

Casual and underpaid workers in privatised Aged Care facilities

Workers in Aged Care facilities are mainly part-time casuals trying to hold

down two, and even three, jobs to make ends meet. They are some of the lowest paid and undervalued workers, and most are migrant women. The privately owned Aged Care facilities did not provide these workers with adequate personal protective equipment, sufficient training, and constantly move them around between different Aged Care sites, cutting corners in health and safety.

It's a universal class picture repeated in every country hit hard by COVID-19. It's the workers in low waged abattoirs, the meatworks, the aged care facilities, workers in cramped housing conditions with little, if any, health protection, the poor and the homeless where the transmissions and fatalities are highest.

Capitalist imperialism is a deadly criminal system of which the COVID-19 pandemic is not just an abnormality that can be mended. The brutality and cruelty of this profit driven system cannot be reversed or excised.

The people's only way out of capitalism and imperialism is to take matters into our own hands. To unite, to organise and mobilise a powerful people's movement to put an end to this horrid system.

Make big business pay for the health, safety and secure livelihoods of working people!

No bail outs for big business and multinationals!

Fight for an independent socialist Australia! ■

COVID-19 Impacts on Capitalist Growth – Even in Elevators and Toilets!

Ned K. (21 July 2020)

The COVID-19 virus is impacting on the capitalist economies in different ways. There is the near complete shutdown of some industries such as hospitality and restaurants in some parts of the country, especially Victoria at the moment. However, there are also examples of capitalism's continued revolutionising of the way things are made and the way that services are delivered.

For example, the spotlight has shone on the danger of the spread of COVID-19 in confined spaces used by people, such as elevators in office buildings and residential hotels, and also concern about air conditioning systems in these buildings. This is contributing to the reluctance of city office building tenants to bring their staff back to the office from working at home. It is also a contributing factor of the reason why office workers are reluctant to return to the office and also contributing to low residential hotel bookings in capital cities.

Large property owners like Charter Hall have city building occupancy

rates as low as 18% in Victoria and only 44% in Brisbane where COVID-19 is temporarily at least under control.

Capital city residential hotel revenue in June was down 60% on last year.

Seizing the opportunity to make more dollars, elevator companies Kone, Otis and Schindler are selling property owners destination-dispatch systems which require people using the lifts to get to their work floor or to their hotel room to select their floor from a touch point in the ground floor lobby or from an app on their phone. This restricts numbers in the lift and pools people going to the same floor reducing the time they are in the lift, and hence reducing the time spent in a confined space.

Some property owners are also taking up the option for elevators and air conditioning systems to be upgraded with a system which bombards recirculated air with ultra-violet light to destroy air borne viruses.

However, the changes to take place at airports regarding when and how you go to the toilet when nature calls beats the elevator story for innovation. The privatised airports of our capital cities plan to introduce an app which is



to be used by people to indicate they need to use the toilet, developing a virtual queue. The app tells you when it is your turn to enter the cubicle. Only you won't have to touch the door or latch it closed when inside. The doors will be automatic open and close to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and future viruses through people touching the same touch points.

The capitalist companies designing, producing and implementing these services will be making plenty.

These innovations are only occurring now because the big capitalists see COVID-19 not as a threat to human health, but a threat to their overall profit-making system.

Along the way, there are winners and losers among the diverse range of industries that capitalism gives rise to. ■

Capitalism devours all that stands in its way!

Jed J. (27 July 2020)

Across the world today we are seeing the effects that capitalism has left on the world with the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and here in Australia. Capitalism has without doubt played the major role in the racism that plagues post-colonial societies. It was the bourgeoisie's need for resources to support their rising capitalism that drove the ships to new lands. Be it gold, spices or cotton, they came to take the resources in order to make a profit. The lives of the Indigenous peoples weren't considered, nor the lives of the slaves taken to work. Profit and wealth were all that mattered.

The aftermath of this is evident in the struggles that face the victims of capitalism and colonialism such as the African-Americans, native peoples of the Americas and First Peoples of Australia. But capitalism hasn't stopped, it hasn't lost its appetite nor its heartless disregard for lives and culture. Today we see it in the quest for oil and natural resources across the globe.

In Australia, this is clear in the actions of the large mining and energy companies such as Rio Tinto, BHP and Shenhua. In May, news reached our ears that Rio Tinto had destroyed 46,000-year-old sacred sites in Western Australia.

Despite widespread anger and dismay over this cultural vandalism and destruction, it was reported that the

company was allegedly not sorry for this action.

BHP has announced due to the backlash over Rio Tinto's actions that it will put similar plans on hold for the time being. Seems like a matter of when, not if, they will take it off hold and commit similar vandalism.

In New South Wales, Shenhua Energy plans to build an open-cut mine near Gunnedah on the Liverpool Plains. This would put in danger cultural sites of the Gomeroi people such as scarred trees, sacred sites and grinding grooves.

For centuries, capitalism, through trade, colonialism, and imperialism has taken natural resources for its gain without any care for the environment, the slaves and indentured workers forced to work or the Indigenous peoples who owned the land along with their cultural connection to it.

This is clear in Australia with how mining and energy companies are willing to destroy sacred sites in order to further exploit natural resources for their gain and those of their shareholders.

Lenin wrote about "exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by 'clipping coupons'" and this is as clear today as it was in 1920. Nation states and large corporations have treated the world like this since the days of the Spanish Empire and British East India Company. Same story with similar characters today.

Nothing will change until socialism wins. The peoples of the world must unite to save their cultures. ■



Sacred site destroyed by Rio Tinto

EDITORIAL

Every Gain Must Be Fought For

Staring down the barrel of the largest capitalist crisis in nearly a century triggered by the COVID-19 health crisis, the Federal government and the capitalist ruling class they represent moved quickly to prop up their system.

The JobSeeker and JobKeeper programs were always stop gap measures designed to stimulate spending, stave off the sudden collapse of the economy, and placate the anger and struggle of the masses of people thrown further into precarity by yet another inevitable crisis of capitalism.

Any notion that the government had discovered "socialism", or cared about the wellbeing of the people was purely a coincidental alignment of short-term class interests.

Now with the health crisis only getting worse, and the economic crisis only showing signs of deepening, the government has announced the scaling back of its welfare packages and is pushing for the reopening of the economy, the people be damned! They chant their neoliberal mantra that "the best form of welfare is a job", but have no solution to the reality of a real unemployment rate nearing 20 percent, and 13 unemployed people for every job advertised.

We should have no illusions in the government or the bosses that they will willingly look after our wellbeing. Every gain, every benefit, every measure that serves the peoples' needs must be fought for and won from the hands of the ruling class. They will never give it up for free.

It is not class collaboration, but class struggle; not begging, but the strength of the people organised that will force the demands of the people to be met.

The first steps towards that crucial independent working class mass movement are being made. Work must be done to unite the vast sections of the people, employed and unemployed, in a common struggle for genuine change that serves the interests of our class.

We should have no doubt that such change is possible – if only we **dare to struggle and dare to win!**

South Australians respond to militarisation of police

Nick G. (7 July 2020)

More than 200 people gathered at Parliament House in Adelaide on Monday to protest the militarisation of the SA Police (SAPOL).

Last week, the Police Minister in the State Liberal government announced the creation of a new police unit, the Security Response Squad (SRS), comprising 48 specialist officers who will wear ballistic vests and carry semi-automatic assault rifles when on duty. They will also carry a pistol, a taser, some pepper spray, a baton, a helmet and a radio.

Unlike similar units interstate which do not display their weapons on routine patrol duty, the unit will be deployed, fully armed, to routine tasks in areas including Adelaide Central Market, Rundle Mall, Adelaide Oval and the city's main railway station.

As a sign of things to come, police refused to rule out deploying the SRS unit at Saturday's Black Lives Matter rally in the days leading up to the event. In a typical good cop-bad cop routine, they then let the rally proceed without the SRS, praising organisers for the peaceful and well-organised event.

The police are an essential component of the state machinery that

protects the day-to-day functioning of capitalist class rule.

Militarisation of police forces is a growing international phenomenon and has a distinctively American flavour. The scourge of terrorism serves to justify the increasingly coercive presence of police in civil life. SA Police Minister Corey Wingard exposed the "terrorist" rationale when he said that the highly visible new unit would be a constant "deterrent to anyone thinking of trying anything on".

While some people may find

comfort in the expansion of police powers, others were quick to express their concerns.

An online petition calling for the SRS to be disbanded was signed by more than 3,500 people in its first 24 hours and at the time of writing was close to 10,000 signatures. SAPOL had to take down their original Facebook post announcing the creation of the SRS as so many people posted angry comments on it. The parliament House rally was organised very quickly and with no publicity other than social media posts. ■



Bringing L.I.F.E. to life

Ben H. (28 July 2020)

The Federal government is reverting to its usual instincts to punish and impoverish unemployed and low-income Australians by tapering off the JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments over the next few months.

Remember that the JobSeeker supplement of \$550 a week and the introduction of JobKeeper were not about meeting needs, but about stimulating the economy in the face of full-blown recession (now likely to be a depression of 1930's scale).

But despite the resurgence of the COVID-19 virus, which is very likely

to grow in other states beyond Victoria, the government is not only cutting payments but bringing back punitive dealings with those on income support (so-called "mutual obligation"); allowing eviction moratoriums to end soon without any response; and proposing tax cuts (rich-skewed) and workplace "reform" as the way forward out of the recession/depression.

This is straight out of the playbook of the Institute of Public Affairs, Business Council of Australia, Australian Financial Review and the Murdoch press. But reaction meets counter-reaction, and Australian

workers are not taking this major attack lying down.

A new organisation called L.I.F.E. (Living Incomes for Everyone) has been building and is now launched, doing what has been rare (and impeded) in Australian politics and society for decades – bringing together those on all kinds of income support with low-income and part-time workers.

L.I.F.E. now has over 70 endorsing organisations, from unions like the United Workers Union and Trades and Labour Councils to groups representing the unemployed, pensioners, people on disability, students and young people, those opposing income management and the basics card, affordable housing, single



On Friday July 24, LIFE campaign participating group Anti-Poverty Network SA held a COVID-19 era, lively snap-action outside Human Services Minister Anne Ruston's office after the disgraceful announcement that her Government will cut the incomes of millions of people.

parents, migrants and solidarity organisations sharing the views and demands of L.I.F.E.

L.I.F.E. welcomes individuals from any or no political party, but refuses to accept endorsements from parties. This is to distance it from the toxic swamp of rorts, paid influence peddling and elite-pandering which is modern electoral politics.

Demands currently centre on the JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments, and raising other income support to the same level (no more divide and rule).

See the LIFE Facebook page here: facebook.com/LifeAustralia

LIFE can be contacted at lifaustralia@gmail.com ■

VALE Ka Fidel V. Agcaoili, Filipino People's Revolutionary Servant

Central Committee (24 July 2020)

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) has learned with deep sorrow of the death of Ka Fidel V. Agcaoili, Chairperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Peace Negotiating Panel.

Ka Fidel 75, died at 12:45 p.m. Thursday, July 23 in Utrecht, The Netherlands, where he was exiled. The cause of death was “pulmonary arterial rupture which caused massive internal bleeding. It was not COVID-19 related,” the NDFP said in a statement.

Ka Fidel shouldered the heavy responsibility of attempting to negotiate an end to the fighting between the Philippines Army and Government, on one hand, and the people’s revolutionary forces of the New Peoples’ Army under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines, on the other.

Ka Fidel was a man of great integrity and honour. Philippines Labour Secretary Silvestre Bello 3rd, the government’s chief negotiator, said that Agcaoili was a revolutionary whose passion for peace was as ardent as his love for structural change for the Philippines and the Filipino people. His remains will be flown to the Philippines in accordance with the wishes of his family.

On behalf of our members and supporters, the Central Committee of the CPA (M-L) expresses its heartfelt condolences to Ka Fidel’s comrades and family.

**Nick G.,
Chairperson, CPA (M-L) ■**



Study: no evidence of improvements under compulsory income management

Nick G. (14 July 2020)

A major survey of the social impact of compulsory income management (CIM) has found that the policy failed to achieve any systematic community level improvements in outcomes for the Indigenous population of the Northern Territory.

The study, released by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) of the Australian National University on July 10, is an evidence-based indictment of a racist and punitive policy imposed on NT First Peoples since 2007.

On 30 April 2007, the Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse (*Ampé Akelyememane Meke Mekarle: Little Children Are Sacred*) was released. Its policy recommendations were largely ignored and were replaced by the “emergency” action of direct Federal intervention in the affairs of remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

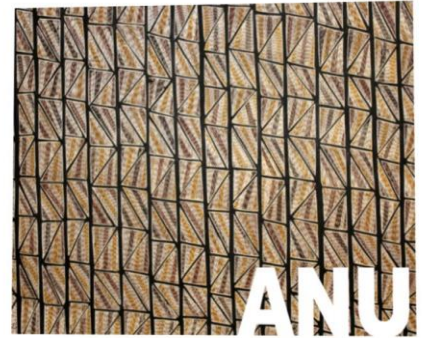
Among the Intervention actions was the system of compulsory income management for First Peoples in proscribed communities. This and other measures directed solely at First Peoples required the suspension of the Australian Racial Discrimination Act. Fifty percent of welfare payments to the 70 percent of First Peoples in the proscribed areas was quarantined onto a Basics Card which limited purchases to a range of products.

Outrage at the racism inherent in the Emergency Response, including

condemnation by the United Nations, saw a variation of CIM introduced in August 2010. Non-Indigenous people in the NT could now be included in CIM if their circumstances were seen to warrant it. Today, approximately 20 percent of people in the New Income Management (NIM) scheme are non-Indigenous. The scheme has also been extended to selected cities and communities outside the NT.

The findings of the CAEPR study are quoted in full below:

- Over the period since income management commenced, the rate of infant mortality amongst Indigenous people in the Northern Territory has increased. This contrasts with falls for Indigenous people nationally, and for non-Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. This group has also seen a rise in low birth weight births, and an increase in child deaths from injury. Child abuse and neglect substantiations have also increased, although it is noted this may be influenced by a willingness to report. Indigenous children in the Northern Territory have not seen the same declines in developmental vulnerability as Indigenous children elsewhere.
- The period since the introduction of income management has seen falling rates of school attendance by Indigenous children in the Northern Territory, and while some NAPLAN results have improved for these children, others have not. Where there have been gains these are smaller than those for Indigenous children nationally.



MEASURING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF
INCOME MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY: AN UPDATED ANALYSIS

J. R. BRAY

- There is strong evidence of a decline in alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory. This is a trend that pre-dates the introduction of income management. Research identifies a range of policies, including pricing and supply limitations, which appear to be significant. Notwithstanding this, Indigenous people did not report a lower rate of risky drinking in 2014–15 than they did in 2002, and alcohol-related emergency department presentations have increased.
- Rates of assaults appear to be largely flat, although there is a decline in assaults associated with alcohol. No consistent pattern of declining crime is identifiable in data from 2007 onwards, although there is evidence of particular alcohol restriction enforcement activities directly impacting some crimes. The rate of imprisonment of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory has continued to rise strongly across the period of income management.

The CAEPR findings strongly support demands for the cessation of CIM schemes in the NT and those other communities brought under its purview.

The bourgeoisie must stop treating people impoverished by neo-colonial land theft, and by the general operation of the capitalist system, as criminals who need to be subjected to coercive measures of punishment and control.

Stop compulsory income management!

Black control of black affairs!

Black and white – unite to fight for independence and socialism! ■



ICOR Call for Action on August 6 – Let us lift the level of struggle against imperialism and fascism



INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF
REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

August 6 is commemorated world-wide as Hiroshima Day. On that day, and again on August 9 at Nagasaki, atomic bombs were used for the first time. Their use against civilians was a war crime.

On August 15, Japan announced its surrender. That day (August 14 in the US and Europe) was long celebrated throughout Asia as Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day).

The defeat of Japanese imperialism, part of the fascist Axis bloc, was at the same time, the beginnings of US imperialism's violent assault on the peoples of the world in its quest for total domination.

Today, 75 years later, the world economic and financial crisis and the Corona pandemic are driving global imperialist rivalry and the rightward development and fascistisation occurring in many countries.

US imperialism emerged relatively unscathed from war against the fascist powers and embarked on a ruthless path towards superpower status. It faced a challenge from Soviet social-imperialism until the latter's implosion in the 1990s, and recently has been confronted by China, where a restoration of capitalism has seen that country take the road to imperialist ambition.

The rivalry between the US and China is particularly acute in our Asian region with each power playing a dangerous game of economic and military push and shove against the other. At the same time, the pandemic is being used to erode people's rights and to cushion the capitalists' economic crisis by placing greater economic burdens on the shoulders of the working people.

Under these circumstances, it is imperative that we find ways to lift the level of struggle against imperialism and fascism.

Hiroshima Day rallies and other commemorative events, even with social distancing restrictions, will provide opportunities for participation and correct messaging.

But we must also build organisation. That is, we must strengthen and broaden our own individual parties and organisations as well as building the membership, reach and influence of the ICOR-ILPS initiative of the International Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Fascist United Front.

On August 6, support the call to:

- Fight imperialism, and end military provocations and war exercises in our region
- Fight to defend democratic rights and freedoms and end state-driven trends to fascism
- Build the International Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Fascist United Front

This statement was drafted by the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) on behalf of the International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations (ICOR). At the time of publication in Vanguard, the statement was still being circulated among ICOR members. The final version may contain some changes.

Australian Communist

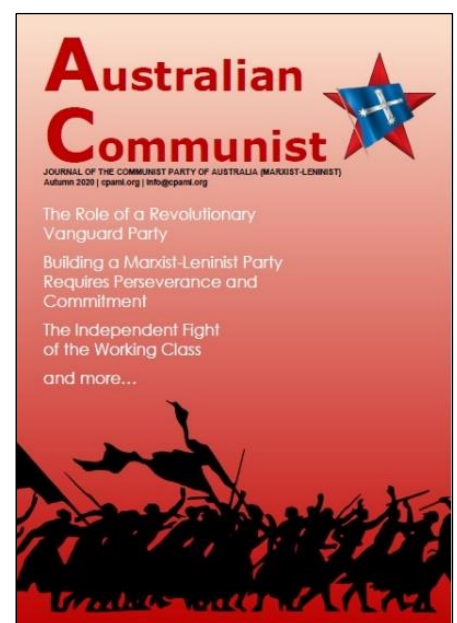
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SPRING EDITION RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2020



Increase in Military Expenditure Unjustified and Destabilising

IPAN Press Release on Defence Strategic Update 2020 – 3 July 2020

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) endorses the response by the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) to the Australian Government's 2020 Defence Strategic Update and Force Structure Plan. The IPAN website contains regular news items relating to the objective of an independent and peaceful Australia: ipan.org.au



- The Australian Government's increase in military expenditure is pure fear-mongering and compromises urgent social needs.
- The objective to project significant military power far from Australia's shores only contributes to regional instability while undermining our security and peaceful relations with our neighbours.

The Morrison Government's decision to spend \$575 billion on the Defence budget over the next ten years to 2029-30, including \$279 billion in defence capabilities, is of great concern to the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

"There are numerable pressing issues impacting on the wellbeing of Australians that are more deserving of such budgetary investments. That the Federal Government has committed to spending this eye-watering amount over the next decade in the midst of a massive health and economic crisis makes it all the more extraordinary", stated IPAN spokesperson Dr Vince Scappatura.

"Prime Minister Scott Morrison invoked the spectre of the 1930s and 1940s collapse of the global and regional order to justify the largesse bestowed on the Defence portfolio, but Australia's security environment in no way reflects such dire circumstances", stated Dr Scappatura.

IPAN does not support the Defence Department's decision to significantly expand the ADF's force-projection capabilities, including in expeditionary combat and the acquisition of long-range strike capabilities and ballistic missile defence systems that are clearly directed at China.

"The strategic priorities, threat assessment and capability investments detailed in 2020 Defence Strategic Update and Force Structure Plan indicate that the government's priority is not the defence of Australia, but the exercise of military power and influence in support of America's quest to maintain its regional dominance", explained Dr Scappatura.

The Defence Update reconceptualises Australia's "immediate region" and area of direct strategic interest to the mainland and maritime areas covering the north-eastern Indian Ocean, South East Asia and the South West Pacific. Defence's strategic objectives are to deploy its military power in this vast expanse and beyond in order to shape, deter and respond with credible military force.

"This is not a strategy to defend Australia. The acquisition of long-range strike weapons and ballistic missile defence systems can only be credibly employed in the defence of American military bases, assets and infrastructure hosted by Australia, as well as deployed Australian forces, involved in offensive action against China", stated Dr Scappatura.

IPAN urges the Australian government to respond to increasing great power competition and regional instability via increased efforts in diplomacy, aid and multilateralism. Australia's goal should be to de-escalate strategic rivalry, not contribute to the further militarisation of the region.

"This new defence strategy is being construed by the government as providing an independent and sovereign military capability to defend Australia's interests. It can be more readily understood as a response to pressure from Washington, and the pro-US lobby in Australia, to join in America's efforts to contain China's rise. Australia, as in the past, is acting as America's deputy sheriff", Dr Scappatura explained.

IPAN rejects the long-standing bi-partisan consensus to submit Australia to assuming the role of America's sub-imperial power. The Defence Department should be directed to pursue a strategy that asserts an independent and peaceful role for Australia.

"We should be investing heavily in our diplomatic resources to build mutual trust and security in the region, not mobilising for war with China on behalf of the United States. The depiction of China as an ominous threat to Australia, coupled with significant military preparations for force-projection and expeditionary combat, contribute to rising tensions, fear and mistrust, increasing the likelihood of a devastating military conflict in the region," stated Dr Scappatura. ■