

# Vanguard

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## Imperialism creates wars

by Alice M.

This year marks 100 year anniversary of the outbreak and carnage of the 1914-1918 imperialist World War 1.

WW1 was a fierce battle between the major European imperialist powers (and the Ottoman empire) and their ruling class masters, the corporate conglomerates and big banks at that time, in a grab for more resources, markets and the economic and territorial spoils of Europe, the Middle East and their colonies.

Hundreds of thousands of working class soldiers were slaughtered on the battlefields, with many more suffering horrific injuries, fighting in their ruling class masters' wars.

In 1914 Australia was a semi-colony of the British Empire. Thousands of Australian soldiers were sent to the slaughter on the other side of the world to fight for British colonialism and imperialism.

One hundred years on and imperialist wars are more sophisticated, but no less brutal. The world is in a constant state, or threat, of imperialist wars, in many regions of the world.

The imperialist drive for economic and political domination has not changed, but intensified.

US imperialism is the main instigator of wars either through direct military invasions and occupations, or through their local proxy puppets.

The hand of US imperialism can be found behind most wars today; Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Ukraine/Crimea.

### Australia - a pawn of imperialism

Australian workers have always been used as dispensable pawns of Australia's economic, political and imperial masters – fighting first for the British empire, and now for US imperialism.

The US-Australia alliance has deeply integrated Australia into US imperialist plans. Australia's foreign policies, military forces, defence facilities and industries are an inter-operable part of the US imperialist war machine.

Like ventriloquists and hand puppets, successive Australian politicians mimic



1914 - 2014

centenary of imperialist war

every US imperialist threat, intimidation and pronouncement on international affairs. Australian governments enthusiastically click their heels and salute the US masters.

The US imperialist Pivot into Asia is building up the US military in the region to expand its economic interests and ambitions.

US troops and bases are reinforced or being built up in the Philippines, Japan, Singapore, Guam, South Korea and Australia.

Pine Gap in central Australia has expanded to become the most important intelligence gathering and surveillance centre for the US military, and a base for launching its drones into Asia.

For the first time in our history Australia will be a permanent military base for thousands of US marines, warships and planes.

The Trans Pacific Partnership is the economic side of US imperialism's Pivot into Asia. It goes hand in glove with the military expansion of the US and the threat of war in the region.

But many in the community are not accepting US imperialist plans for Australia as a military base and a

launching pad for imperialist wars.

A new people's movement is emerging calling for a foreign policy that is independent of US and big powers, builds peace not wars, and demands the closing down of US bases and an end to the US-Australia military alliance.

On the eve of the ANZAC anniversary, people from across Australia are gathering in Canberra from 21-25 April, in a week of protests and activities calling for an end to wars, for an independent and peaceful

Australia. A national peace conference on 22 April in Canberra will bring together peace groups, religious organisations, indigenous communities, young activists, unions and many others seeking an end to the devastation of imperialist wars.

For the working class and all ordinary people striving for peace, the legacy of WW1 is the inspirational struggle against conscription and today's struggle to end the inhumane and predatory system of capitalism that spawns imperialism and its wars.

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## ACTU Organising Conference

### stories of workers fighting back

by Ned K.

**The ACTU held an Organising Conference in Melbourne in February attended by hundreds of Union Organisers from many different unions, including unions from New Zealand and the USA.**

ACTU leaders, Ged Kearney, Dave Oliver and Tim Lyons all addressed the conference with an air of optimism about the official trade union movement's capacity to defeat the intense attacks on the working class by big business and their current government of choice, the Abbott led Liberal-National Party Coalition.

Ged Kearney said that despite declining numbers of members, workers combined together in their unions were still a collective force of about 2 million people.

Dave Oliver said that despite the enormity of the threat to workers by the reactionary Abbott Government and their big business backers, the single biggest threat to the union movement is internal, and it is within our own hands to overcome through better organising and strategies.

#### Workers winning through action

A recurring theme throughout the workshops held at the conference was that unions were trying new ways to organise workers.

Combining online communication between workers with traditional face to face meetings, holding meetings off site where workers could actually meet collectively, at the same time to plan how to organise internally on the job, taking action both inside and outside the workplace, building community organisations aligned with union organisation inside workplaces: these were some of the experiences shared.

#### New Zealand experience

In New Zealand for example, where the attack on the working class and traditional union organisation has been more severe than in Australia, workers were rebuilding their collective power by forming community based unions where workers, their family members and other community members could join for a small financial contribution.

Forestry workers started up the Forestry First Union and are building an alliance of forestry workers, the contractors who employ them, and community members, to create a fighting force strong enough to force the big forestry owners to fund a contractor price sufficient to enable the workers to

be paid a living wage.

Since privatisation of the forestry industry in New Zealand, union membership had shrunk to less than 20% of the 6,500 workforce and workers were being paid a flat \$16 per hour for up to 14 hour days starting at 4am.

#### Australian stories

Organisers told inspiring stories of workers fighting back in Australia,

For example, nurses in NSW won better staffing to patient ratios by holding a picket line at the Bathurst Hospital to play off the local National Party state MP against the NSW Liberal leader Barry O'Farrell.

They also set up a "Nurse Power Fund", voted on by members to increase their own campaigning resources.

Warehouse workers employed by labour companies won equal conditions with directly employed workers.

Finance sector workers ran a "Save Mulgrave" campaign to force the ANZ Bank to reverse a decision to off-shore 5,000 jobs.

Framing the campaign as a community campaign to save the town rather than framing the campaign as a fight against off-shoring succeeded in broadening the support base across the community.

The finance workers even ran a stall about their campaign in the local farmers' market.

#### Workers will find a way to organise

The many experiences shared at the workshops of workers' struggles across the country demonstrated that workers will and do find ways to organise.

There was some discussion in the workshops and plenary sessions of how best to combine online communication and messaging with traditional ways of communicating.

There were also some differing views on whether there is too much emphasis by some union leaders given to organising outside workplaces and not enough focus on building organisation on the job to enable collective industrial action.

Can workers build sustainable power without building strength inside the workplaces?

If there was any weakness in the Conference it was that while the main speakers spoke about the need to think outside the square and do things differently, none of the main speakers talked about building a union movement with a vision beyond imperialism.

This is the gap in ideological

## Editorial

### 'March in March' a step forward

**After less than five months of the Abbott Liberal-National Coalition government, large numbers of the Australian people have flooded onto the streets to express angry opposition to the policies of neo-liberalism and subservience to big business.**

What can we learn from the 'March in March' rallies held across Australia (see page 8) and the coming together of wide sections of the people with many different concerns and issues?

Firstly, we learned that many people are no longer prepared to meekly cop whatever the government dishes out and are not content to sit back and wait for the next election to change things.

They see the value of organised collective action to express their discontent and their rejection of the government's reactionary social policies, their big business agenda of cutting services and attacking workers' jobs, wages and conditions, their destruction of the environment and vicious persecution of asylum seekers.

The enthusiasm and passion of ordinary people was in stark contrast to the hesitant and defensive attitude of the Labor Party leaders and quite a few Labor-aligned union leaders as well. They were conspicuous by their absence, out of touch and out of step with the masses.

But those union leaders, officials, organisers and activists who did attend strengthened the unity and solidarity and can hold their heads up.

We also learned that people felt comfortable taking part in an activity that was bigger than a single issue, that they could see a common thread across the many government policies that were harming the Australian people and were happy to unite around many different concerns.

We learned that the fact that 'March in March' was initiated by unaffiliated people mainly through social media meant that there was little formal 'organisation' and this allayed some people's fears of being manipulated or used by this group or that and contributed to the large turn-out.

To take this movement to the next level, from protest to positive demands that can assist in building a powerful people's movement for fundamental change – that is the challenge.

Positive demands arise from the growing day to day struggles of the people, independent of parliamentary parties and their efforts to co-opt and divert. To be effective and empowering, they should be practical and yet provide some vision of a better future.

leadership that needs to be filled.

Imperialism is 'closing the space' for social democrat/liberal illusions of a fair go for workers within the system.

Workers can see this and that's why many have not joined a union.

However there was a clear message

from all speakers that workers need to build a movement with a strong voice and agenda independent of any parliamentary party.

That is a big step forward, given the historical connection between official trade unions and the ALP.

## Profiteers from human misery

by Duncan B.

**"Where there is misery there is money" could be the motto for the companies providing services to the Department of Immigration connected with running detention centres for asylum seekers.**

The four biggest companies involved are G4S, Serco, Transfield and Toll. Between them they have reaped contracts worth more than \$5.6 billion from the Department of Immigration.

Serco, which runs the Department's network of detention centres in Australia, is the big winner with \$3.22 billion since 2009. Transfield is in second place with \$1.57 billion

since 2010. Transfield, which runs the detention centre on Nauru recently won a \$1.22 billion contract to run the detention centre on Manus Island.

This was at the expense of G4S which has made \$828 million since 2003. Toll comes in way behind with only \$68.8 million since 2008.

The Government's new contract with Transfield means that it will cost about \$61 million per month to run the two detention centres. This is about \$900 per day for each inmate.

This money could be better spent in helping asylum seekers, once processed, to settle into the community and give them the necessary housing and support services they need.

# Reclaiming our history from the ANZAC legend

by *Dennis M.*

## 'History wars' are about how to control the future.

They are not disputes over the past. Rather, stories about the past are pressed into service to buttress the needs of each class and imperium.

Nowhere is this practice more blatant than in the reinvention of ANZAC since the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Turkey on 25 April 1915.

The propaganda sought to weaken opposition to Iraq and Afghanistan. The Legend is being promoted to oil us into whichever conflict the US war-machine turns to next.

The ALP grabbed the opportunity of the 1990 anniversary to paper over the wounds that Indigenous Australians and their supporters had inflicted on Hawkie's 'consensus' by raining on his 1988 bi-centennial parade.

From then on, all governments have thrown money at the War Memorial and into marketing ANZAC-ery. Every other cultural institution has suffered annual 2% cuts, misnamed 'efficiency dividends'.

Keating promoted Kokoda to get away from the Brits and to put us more firmly into the US orbit. The 30-second roll-over of film clips of Australian forces fighting from 1914 to 2014 leaves people wondering whether the ANZACs fought at Kokoda.

Surveys have shown that even the backpackers who hoof it to Gallipoli know little more about ANZAC Day than that it is when Essendon plays Collingwood.

Despite all the money that has been poured into celebrating slaughter, the low level of information can never be under-estimated.

In countering the propaganda, activists cannot afford to take anything for granted. However, people are likely to be turned off if we hit them over the head with a barrage of facts.

Posing innocent questions casts doubt over larger false assumptions. For instance, how many members of parliament know:

- that the 'I' in AIF stands for Imperial, not Infantry?
- that an Imperial Japanese cruiser escorted the ANZACs to the Middle-East?
- that Russia was 'our side' in both world wars?

By raising what seem like trivial pursuits, we set people thinking about what else we need to ask. Such questioning opens the window to the suspicion that there is a lot that we are not being told.



Central to the ANZAC invasion of Canakkale was a scheme by Churchill to supply the Czarist regime through warm-water ports. The aim was to make sure that reverses on the Eastern front did not provoke another revolution against Czarism.

That had happened in 1905 after its defeat by Japan. Thus, the Dardanelles campaign was aimed against the Russian people. Churchill's fear was well grounded, as 1917 proved.

To reverse the Bolshevik revolution, the Allies demonstrated their commitment to 'self-determination' by sending armies of intervention into the Baltic and Siberia from 1919 to 1924. As at the Dardanelles, the imperialists were driven into the sea.

To win the history wars for the workers, we need to promote positive stories from the war years.

## We won the conscription debate

The most potent line of advance is through the two conscription plebiscites. Majorities of our people twice voted NO against conscription for overseas service. Those choices blocked a more overt dictatorship by the compradors.

Our liberties were won at home, not on the Western Front.

Along with the defeat of the Ban-the-Reds bill in 1951, the anti-conscription victories are the most important achievements for us all to absorb.

Each of the three referenda is many times more significant for Australia's polity than was the 1688 counter-revolution in Britain that Pyne rabbits on about for the national curriculum.

## Simpson is our hero, not theirs

Lacking the tens of millions of dollars to combat the government's distortions, we have to take advantage of the yarns that the war-mongers are peddling.

There are free kicks for us in regard to Jack Simpson-Kirkpatrick and his donkey. Jack wrote to his mum in England asking when the workers there

were going to have a revolution and get rid of the millionaire and dukes.

The Department of Veterans Affairs funds a school essay competition to perpetuate lies by omission and suppression about Simpson's proletarian politics.

The truth is in Peter Cochrane's just reissued book, *Simpson and the donkey: the making of a legend* (Melbourne University Press 2014)

## Lest we forget – left-wing diggers

Each region has its own left-wing diggers.

VC winner Hugo Throssell who came home a socialist and anti-war activist. So did fellow West Australian Bert Facey, as he retold in *A Fortunate Life*. And so did the last Anzac, Tasmanian Alec Campbell, who acted as bodyguard for railways union militant Bill Morrow in the 1930s.

What we need is not a set of counter-assertions. Students are turned off by being shouted at. Instead, we can the enfilade the official stance by posing questions.

Hence, instead of telling students to write essays about Simpson as an industrial militant, we can kill two lies with one question: had Simpson survived Gallipoli, how would he have voted on conscription in October 1916?

That question becomes a reminder that the closer the troops were to the front, the more they voted NO.

Grizzling about the lavish funding of pro-war propaganda won't cut through to the attitudes of the 99%.

One practical step from the ACT Branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History is an essay competition to bring attention to the war on the home front.

Other groups and activists should approach their local schools to see what is possible. (Teachers will find lots of useful material on the honesthistory website.)

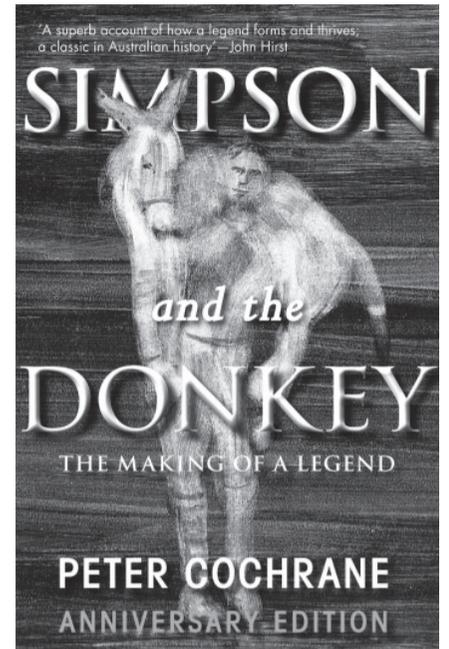
## Honouring the Black resistance

Since 2012, a band of Aborigines from the Tent Embassy has led settler supporters behind the official 11am march up Canberra's ANZAC Parade. The marchers carry placards documenting the 'Frontier Wars'. The crowd applauds the contingent.

The War Memorial is now anxious to bring the indigenous inside the official marquee. So, it stage-manages a ceremony to honour the indigenous who served – after decades of neglect.

RSL clubs had long refused to admit them.

One matter on which consensus is



unlikely to be reached before the war celebrations wind-down in 2020 is how to deal with the 'Frontier Wars'.

We must support the erection of a memorial to the warriors. But that installation can have no place among memorials celebrating the invaders' side of the frontier.

How many indigenes want to be tied to the settler troops sent against their Maori brothers and sisters in the New Zealand Wars of 1860-64?

## War and peace are class questions

Every war memorial is a monument to how working people from every country were used to advance the needs of monopolising capitals. We have to reclaim those statues and lists of names for our class as sites of conflict.

## Respect the views of workers

We also need to appreciate why some workers could embrace ANZAC Day as 'the one day of the year'.

Alan Seymour's 1962 play of that name ends with the father cornered into admitting that ANZAC Day is the only time when anything he has done is given any public acknowledgment.

His work receives no recognition. This explanation for his chest-beating is an indictment against the destructiveness of capitalism, second to the slaughter itself.

We can extend his insight. ANZAC-ery is reducing the notion of serving the people to war service. The hour-by-hour service to the well-being of communities from nurses and teachers is marginalised.

The choice of yet another general as governor-general reinforces the lie that men with guns embody what it means to be Australian – never forgetting the mining magnates and stock-exchange jobbers whose interests those guns protect.

# World War One centenary - empires slaughter their working class

by Max O.

The Australian government, like most other Western nations, will commemorate the First World War slaughter, reasoning as the Australian War Memorial states: "The First World War touched the lives of nearly every Australian and the impacts are still prevalent today. For these reasons it is essential to commemorate, remember, and learn from those who sacrificed their lives during those four years, 1914 – 1918."

The unremitting message of this and past Anzac Day commemorations is the propaganda about our soldiers' sacrificial and selfless behaviour, their contempt for danger and "no risk is too great" attitude.

Australians learning about Australia's escapades in war are conditioned into believing that whilst war is hell, it is an inspirational undertaking; there is the ugly romanticisation of Australian soldiers in battle who willingly become cannon-fodder heroes.

But why did they go to war? Little is said about this from official sources, other than our soldiers fought 'to defend our way of life' and 'democracy'.

The federal government will spend \$325 million to mark the World War One (WW1) commemoration. Christopher Pyne, federal education minister, wants the new national history curriculum to focus students' attention on our nation's adventure at Gallipoli!

The real reasons why Australia got involved with the 1914-18 war will be deliberately overlooked.

## Imperial carve-up of the world

WW1 was the product of competing empires constructed across the globe that came out of the development of capitalism in Europe.

This empire building saw the carve-up of Africa and Asia into colonies, led particularly by Britain and France.

For example, in 1882 British military rule was established in Egypt to protect the Suez Canal Company's profits from its European imperialist adversaries. The Suez Canal provided a short route to Britain's jewel colony, India.

European powers, who had conducted colonial protectionism to prevent other rivals from entering their markets and resources, needed to reduce the contestability of their empires by reaching agreements amongst themselves.

By 1884 the Berlin Conference was held to sanction the carve-up of Africa.

The scramble for Africa saw European control of the continent grow from 11% in the 1870's to 90% by 1900.



*Australian wounded at Passchendaele in Belgium where 38,000 Australians died for the British Empire.*

The rivalry between European powers saw them laying claims on territories all over the globe.

From the partitioning of China by all the European powers, the seizure of Africa by mainly Britain and France, Britain taking India, France Indochina, Holland the East Indies (Indonesia), the US took the Philippines and Cuba, to Japan occupying Taiwan and Korea.

Australia itself was the creation of empire rivalry, evolving from a British colony to a client state of Britain and eventually of the US.

Similarly Papua New Guinea was colonised by Germany and Britain in 1884, Germany taking the northern half and Britain the southern half.

British New Guinea was transferred to Australia in 1905 to conduct the exploitation of this territory on behalf of the British Empire.

The Dutch lay claim to West Papua as part of the Dutch East Indies around 1825.

When Australia attacked the Germans near Rabaul in September 1914, the Australian military suffered their first casualties of WW1.

## Imperialism is the outcome of monopolising capitals

As capitalist economies regularly underwent crises, small enterprises either collapsed or were swallowed up by larger firms which coalesced into monopolising cartels, thus creating a concentration of industry.

This concentration expanded even further where banks integrated with industrial (manufacture, mining, transport etc.) capital to form what is called finance capital.

The creation of monopolies in different industries leads to their dominating influence within national economies.

Their influence became so overwhelming they placed demands on their respective nation states to protect

and expand their investments.

Economic competition that occurred between enterprises, which led to the development of monopolising capitals within the nation state, progressed to competition between nations for territorial advantage and the capture of valuable resources and markets.

The major capitalist powers through, "...a calculation of strength of the participants, their general economic, financial, military and other strength", as explained by Lenin and Bukharin, divided the world up amongst themselves.

This stage of capitalism, which Marxists call imperialism, saw European powers expand their control to over 80% of the world.

## Re-division of the world

Now that the planet was virtually divided up, the only way for imperialist countries to capture more territory (to gain access to markets and resources) was through re-division.

This forced emerging imperialist powers to acquire new territory by military force. Germany in particular, came late to the empire race and there was very little territory left over for them to colonise and exploit.

These powers backed up their empires by military strength and Germany, to catch-up, rapidly industrialised and militarised its economy.

Prior to WW1 alliances had formed around two major blocs.

Britain, France and Russia had formed the Triple Entente and opposing them was Germany, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires which created the Central Powers bloc.

## Empire and profit, not democracy

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 were an expression of this bloc rivalry and saw the Ottoman Empire lose its hold in Europe and Austria-Hungary, much

weakened by an expanded Serbia.

This raised tensions between the Big Powers, with Germany lining up behind the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, and Russia and France behind Serbia. The Balkans crisis was the precursor to WW1.

The 1914-18 war saw the working classes of the various warring nations sent off to die in battles for the purpose of empire and profit.

Today the euphemism, 'In the national interest' is used to mask the imperialist and commercial interests of the ruling class when war is declared.

So it was in 1914, and democracy had nothing to do with the reasons for going to war.

In fact, Germany had more universal suffrage than Britain, where only men who owned, leased or rented property had the vote and women had no voting rights.

The Labour and Social Democratic parties of both blocs fell in line with big business and voted to go to war in support of their nation's empire.

At the beginning of WW1, the Australian Labor Prime Minister Fisher pledged that Australia would "...stand beside the mother country to help and defend to the last man and last shilling."

This subservience to the British Empire was long standing and saw Australian troops sent off to fight for Britain in the Sudan (1885), the Boer War (1899-1902), and the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900).

WW1 deeply divided Australia, split the ALP and saw two conscription referendums lost.

Enthusiasm for the war plummeted with high casualty rates, the return of war wounded and trauma victims. Many soldiers came back disillusioned and anti-war.

It shaped Australians in despair and bereavement and few at the time thought of it as forging, but rather gutting, the nation.

# “Lock the gate” campaign unites many people

by Ned K.

The “Lock the Gate” campaign against the expansion into agricultural land by Coal Seam Gas (CSG) companies is spreading at a rapid rate across Australia wherever the profit hungry CSG companies appear.

CSG exploration using the method of fracking is strongly opposed by thousands of rural communities and regional communities.

Fracking involves the creation of fractures in rock formations deep underground by injecting fluids containing toxic chemicals in solution into cracks to force them to open.

The larger fissures allow oil and gas to flow out of the formation and into the well bore from where it can be extracted.

Large volumes of water are required to mix with the chemicals in the process, leading to the risk of contamination and exhaustion of local groundwater supplies.

Opposition to CSG exploration and mining is activating people who would see themselves as ‘law abiding citizens’ and would never have seen the day coming when they were standing on a picket line at a farm gate to prevent a CSG exploration vehicle and equipment from driving onto their farm or vineyard



or that of their neighbours.

In fact, many would have voted for the Liberal/National Parties Coalition not just for decades but generations, but now can see that neither major political party is a reliable ally in their fight against the CSG companies.

## Robe, South Australia

A case in point is the Upper South East town of Robe and its local government Council.

Robe is a small coastal town which comes to life for three months in summer as a laid-back holiday destination.

It is the last place you would expect to see “Lock the Gate” signs on farm gates in the area or a local hall meeting to organise action against CSG mining company Beach Energy.

Beach Energy has a petroleum

licence to drill in the Robe area and has already drilled once to a depth of 4.5 kilometres!

However, in January this year the Robe Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing CSG in the South East and calling for the state government to declare a moratorium on all/any CSG exploration and mining.

The resolution reflected the local people’s concerns not only about the intrusion of CSG mining onto farm land, but also the impact on the vast naturally occurring fresh water aquifer system which is important to the whole community, including the viticulture and wine industry in the South East.

At one of the public meetings in the South East organised by local people, the Mayor of Robe attended and spoke about the Council’s resolution and said that other local government Councils in

the South East would be approached to support similar resolutions.

Another speaker at the meeting said that there was widespread support for the “Lock the Gate” movement in the South East, including from the wine industry in the region.

Picketing of locations where Beach Energy and other companies intended to start drilling was being organised, and many local people had already committed to take a stand at any ‘Lock the Gate’ farm entrance.

Fracking as a method of extracting coal seam gas has also met fierce resistance in the USA.

In Massachusetts, the state parliament is about to debate a Bill banning any fracking for 10 years.

The tide against these voracious mining and petroleum companies is turning.

## Winery workers and grape growers in the same boat

by Ned K.

In February this year, angry grape growers from the Riverland wine and vineyard area of South Australia descended on the city of Adelaide with vineyard tractors and a tip truck full of grapes.

They stopped at the state Parliament House, where they received a lot of attention from the public and local constabulary when they started tipping the grapes onto the road to symbolise that the grapes they were growing could not be sold at all, or only at below the cost of production prices.

Large wineries are importing grape juice from vineyards in Argentina and Chile rather than buying from local growers and/or squeezing down the price paid to growers as low as \$80 a tonne.

It costs on average \$240 a tonne to produce the grapes.

Consequently, growers are on the bones of their backside.

Many of the approximately 1500 small producers have worked and lived in the Riverland for two or more generations.



They are an important part of the Riverland community. Their demise will have a negative impact on towns like Berri, Waikerie, Renmark and further up the Murray in places like Mildura in Victoria.

Their desperation showed as they assembled on the steps of Parliament House. An angrier group of people on Parliament House steps had not been seen for a long time.

They were looking for answers and chose Parliament House steps as a destination in the hope that with a state election in March this year, some politicians may take notice.

They have formed the Riverland Grape Growers Association, complete with web site.



Some of the grape growers and vineyard workers have traditionally tried for work in the wineries in the Riverland to supplement their incomes.

However the winery workers are on the wrong end of decisions also made by the same wineries who import the grape juice from overseas.

Once the grape juice arrives, it is processed into wine.

However instead of being bottled in the Riverland wineries, there is an increasing trend for it to be transported to ports here and pumped into huge bladders in ships bound for Europe.

Once in Europe, the wine is transported to bottling halls for bottling, ready for retail sale to the people of Europe.

The big wineries, mostly foreign owned corporations, have worked out that it is more profitable to bottle the wine overseas than in local wineries.

Over time, this has caused hundreds of lost jobs in the wineries across Australia, adding to the stress for local communities.

## Made in Australia?

So when you open a bottle of wine with a label saying it is made somewhere in Australia, have a think about it.

It may in fact be from a vineyard in South America, and it may not even be bottled at the winery claiming to have “produced” it.

Grape juice is cheaper from South America because of exploitation of cheap labour, often the labour of peasants displaced from their land which they too have farmed for generations.

No wonder there were both grape growers and winery workers at the protest on Parliament House steps.

“Free trade” of the international capital market is teaching the people who are their enemies and who are their friends.

# The dangerous rivalry over the Ukraine

by Max O.

**“The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex not only agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a redivision to reach out for every kind of territory, and (2) an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine his hegemony.” (Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*)**

The above quote from Lenin encapsulates the current struggle going on in the Ukraine since November 2013.

The confrontation and occupation in the Kiev Maidan (the central square of Kiev) and the United States (US) and European Union (EU) sponsored coup against an elected government and president, is essentially a struggle between two factions of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and how they align with the opposing imperialist powers of the US/EU and Russia.

When Ukraine became an independent country after the collapse of the USSR, former leaders of the Ukrainian state took over personal ownership of the nation's privatised industries, became billionaires and forged links with either Western bankers or the IMF or with Russian oligarchs.

Ukraine's present bankruptcy stems from these billionaires transforming the country to capitalism and pillaging the nation's assets.

These new Ukrainian billionaires brought misery to the working class, with the rise of unemployment and the erosion of living conditions.

The Ukrainian peoples' willingness to revolt stems from both the country's financial and political bankruptcy.

## **Collapse of the Ukraine economy under capitalism**

Consequently the ordinary people have become thoroughly disillusioned with the political leadership that is coupled with the billionaire class in Ukraine's recent history - whether it be Viktor Yushchenko (past president) and Yulia Tymoshenko (past prime minister) who align themselves with the US and EU capitalism, or Viktor Yanukovich (recently overthrown president) who aligned with the Russia Oligarchs.

This is demonstrated by the 40%



*This photo of the WW2 Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera is now hanging in Kiev's City Hall*

fall of GDP from 1991 to 1999, with a quarter of the populace living below the poverty line and life expectancy falling to 69 years.

The comprador nature of the two differing factions of the Ukrainian capitalist class, is illustrated by the fact that foreign investments in 2012 were \$55 billion, whilst investments abroad were only \$8 billion.

Currently Ukraine is in need of \$35 billion for the next 2 years to pay back its creditors from the East and West.

These creditors are involved in a joint tug of war where there is much more at stake than cash; it is a battle for spheres of influence, and the expansion of economic control.

The recent economic shambles had been used by the West to pressure Ukraine to integrate with the European Union through signing an association with the EU.

Yanukovich refused to sign, because the EU actually demanded from him that the country's economic, political and military sovereignty be handed over to them via their requirement for austerity measures

This refusal, and his acceptance of a \$15 billion aid package and a huge reduction in gas import prices offered by the Russian government, saw the US and EU manipulate the Ukraine's people's economic despair into a violent riot against the Yanukovich government, where pro-Nazi parties such as the Svoboda (All Ukrainian Union) and Pravy Sektor (Right Sector), were instrumental in his overthrow.

## **The strategic importance of Crimea**

Curiously, Khrushchev in 1954 transferred the Crimea from the Russian Soviet Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. This produced unforeseen consequences and conflict 60 years later.

If the US and EU could control the Ukraine and the Crimean peninsula they

would then achieve strategic influence over the Black Sea.

This would be another step towards strategically encircling Russia economically and militarily. It would also allow the US and EU to start breaking up the Russian dominance of oil and gas shipments to the West.

The Crimea is such a prized jewel in the rivalry between Russia and the West, for the base in Sevastopol is the home of the Russian Black Sea naval fleet.

The geography of Sevastopol and Crimea provides an important link for Russia to the Middle East. In particular, Crimea is the conduit where Russia supplies the Syrian government with aid and military assistance in its war against the Western supported and Islamic fundamentalist backed rebels.

Understandably the Russian military

## **Greetings for 2nd World Conference of ICOR**

**In April 2014, the International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations (ICOR) will hold its 2nd World Conference. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) has sent the following message of greetings:**



Dear Comrades,

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) sends warm greetings to all participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICOR World Conference.

The CPA (M-L) highly appraises the promotion of international links between the revolutionary parties of the working class undertaken by ICOR.

We are very pleased to note the

development of ties between ICOR and the International League of Peoples Struggle (ILPS).

The strengthening of ties on the basis of proletarian internationalism is an important part of the struggle against imperialism at a time when the threat of war brought on by rivalry over spheres of influence is with us, when there is an orchestrated revival and resurgence of actual fascism, and where people everywhere are forced to defend their rights and liberties in the face of the neo-liberal agenda.

Our Party celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on March 15, 2104. We pledge to continue our work to build the revolutionary movement in Australia.

For a militant and successful 2<sup>nd</sup> ICOR World Conference!

The Central Committee  
Communist Party of Australia  
(Marxist-Leninist)

March 17, 2014

moved into the Crimea when the pro-West faction of the Ukrainian ruling class and their Kiev Maidan movement overthrew the Yanukovich government.

The battle for the Ukraine is not about “Western democracy versus Russian dictatorship”, for in fact Yanukovich was repeatedly elected into government.

The pro-Western ‘interim government’ which now controls Kiev placed Ukrainian billionaires into important government posts, by-passing the Kiev Maidan people's protest movement, and ended Russian's status as a second official language anywhere in Ukraine.

They are thoroughly reactionary and ruthless.

The Kiev Maidan billionaires have deep links with the Svoboda and Pravy Sektor fascists, which they used to overtake the people's protest and storm troop out the Russian influence.

The West has successfully manipulated Ukrainian chauvinism to seize political control of the country for the moment.

The potential now for war over Eastern Ukraine and Crimea (where there large numbers of Russian speakers) is a possibility that is never far away.

The current turmoil in the Ukraine is the result of the seismic catastrophe of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR after the death of Stalin, and also the cynical fight among the big imperialist powers over not only who gets to plunder this country, but for hegemony of empire as stated by Lenin!

# Golden Circle – giving workers the rough end of the pineapple

by Greg C.

**Workers at the Heinz Golden Circle factory in Northern Melbourne are pitched in a battle with the American owned corporation.**

The manufacturing workers entered a period of indefinite strike action on Thursday February 20, in response to the company's imminent closure, and subsequent treatment of outgoing employees of the Mill Park juice factory.

The plant's one hundred employees, members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), were dealt a severe blow last October when Heinz management informed the workers, some of whom have given twenty-five years' service, that the Golden Circle operations would be relocated to Queensland.

Tony, one of the AMWU members employed at the site, along with the other workers manning the twenty-four hour picket line were irate at Heinz treatment of its employees; "They have decided that they are not making enough profit, so they are going to move things to Queensland to increase their profits, and kill our livelihoods"

The workers currently engaged in struggle, are resigned to the fact that the factory is in the twilight, yet continue to mount a battle in order to obtain a fair redundancy package; one that sufficiently pays recognition to their service at the multinational's Melbourne based factory.

Fifty workers have already been notified that their labour will no longer be required mid-March, while the remaining fifty face an uncertain future in a period of rising casualisation in the midst of an insecure work crisis in Australia.

One hundred more permanent manufacturing jobs lost in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, a region devastated through the manufacturing crisis in the state of Victoria in recent years.

Adding insult to the wound, Heinz Golden Circle vindictively denied those soon to be displaced employees, who had successfully sourced new employment, the opportunity to be released from the company prior to closure.

Tony noted "A lot of people have found work and Heinz are refusing them to go, so those members have actually lost jobs in the process".

High in priority for the AMWU membership, a key claim was a demand that the company provide an additional payment should the dispossessed workers engage in training and education in order for the transition into alternative employment.



In yet another example of corporate irresponsibility, Heinz pathetically offered to place the workers on a Government funded program. "It (the

## 'March in March' rallies unite the people

by Henry L.

**Between the 15th and 17th of March, tens of thousands of ordinary Australians took to the streets to take part in the 'March in March' demonstrations, which occurred in cities and towns all across Australia.**

The demonstrations that occurred in the capital cities drew some of the biggest crowds seen marching and having their voice heard for a long time, in some places braving heavy rain.

Conservative estimates suggest that a crowd of at least 35,000 in Melbourne braved the elements, with at least 20,000 in both Sydney and Brisbane, 5,000 in Adelaide and 4,000 in Perth. On the final day thousands gathered in Canberra to deliver a motion of no confidence directly to Parliament House.

The sheer sizes across the board came as a surprise to both organisers and police. In addition to this, in an almost unprecedented manner, in almost every major regional centre and a smattering of smaller localities, sizable demonstrations did occur, demonstrating both the widespread and diverse nature of discontent as well as the organising potential provided by effective use of social media platforms.

Although portrayed in the capitalist media as containing a simple anti-Abbott sentiment, this would do a disservice to the diversity and nature of the issues that the people present across the county felt strongly enough to march about.

Many of these are inherently caused by the nature of the society we currently live in, which is propped up by both major sides of the parliamentary coin.

This includes the need to sow division amongst the working class which leads to cruel treatment of asylum seekers

offer) was basically token gestures" Tony added.

In the midst of the Victorian manufacturing crisis, and the casualisation crisis to grip this country, whereby 40% of Australian workers are placed in insecure, precarious employment, the striking workers fear for their employment prospects once the Mill Park operation closes its doors.

Facing an uncertain period, the workers have witnessed the tragic loss of two of their comrades since the announcement was made in October that production would cease at the Golden Circle factory.

Their angry workmates said both deceased workers had passed away due to stress related illnesses. The Mill Park workers continued the fight for justice in memory of their deceased comrades;

they all deserved better.

Workers returned to the factory on Friday February 28, securing a one year deal, meaning that once Heinz vacates the premises on the first of April, any company that operates out of the Mill Park plant must abide by the new AMWU Enterprise Agreement.

The victorious workers returned having secured a 3% wage increase, which also applies to leave redundancy payments of four weeks' pay for each year of service, backdated to January 10.

Casual workers will now receive one week's wage for each year service, calculated from the first day of employment, rather than the company's original position which would have seen casual workers only receive redundancy benefit after five years' service.



and the continuing subjugation of the First Nations, the relentless attacks on the working class, the proposed sale of Australia Post and the ongoing US imperialist domination of Australia, currently most clearly represented by the odious ongoing negotiations to seal the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), to name just a few that were expressed widely.

The sheer amount and intensity of discontent that has been building up within the Australian populace within recent times over the aforementioned issues and more, with many individuals simply waiting for an outlet to express this discontent, was self-evident to all those present at the various marches.

Among the reasons the 'March in March' was such a quickly built and runaway success with people, many of whom who had never attended a demonstration before in their lives, was that it was a clearly non-partisan and organically organised phenomena. It was a genuine expression of discontent with what the political system is inflicting on the people.

All across the country, a broad array of speakers were involved, including trade union figures and rank and file workers involved in struggle, Indigenous leaders, peace activists, environmentalists and anti-imperialists.

The lack of response and input from the ALP in particular, which claims to

be involved with many of the issues marchers were critical of, proved a very interesting and promising part of the evolution of the rallies, providing a shining example that working people don't need to rely on parliamentary politics to prove a point.

Whilst Tony Abbott was a particular target of anger, as is to be expected with such an aggressive first six months of government, it was by no means an ALP love-in or 'day of hate' directed at one man.

It is vital that this impressive show of strength and discontent is built upon, and not lost.

Such a broad array of people, protesting and expressing their anger over issues that can all be linked back to the bankruptcy and chaotic nature of capitalism in the imperialist stage, has real potential to give this rotten system a shock.

### Vanguard Blog

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