

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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Big business is drafting Abbott's horror budget

by *Bill F.*

The federal budget is due to be released by Treasurer Joe Hockey in May this year. It promises to be a blueprint for savage austerity measures and increased attacks on the livelihood of the working people.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott and his motley crew have out-sourced the job of drawing up targets for harsh austerity cuts and anti-worker legislation to their mates in the Business Council of Australia (BCA).

The BCA should more properly be known as the "Big Business" Council of Australia, since it is comprised of the 100 biggest companies in this country, many of them foreign corporate monopolies or companies with large foreign share-holdings.

It represents the most powerful and influential core of monopoly capitalism in Australia.

No surprise therefore, that Abbott has appointed Tony Shepherd, straight from his role as president of the "Big Business" Council, to head up his Commission of Audit which will examine all government spending and services and suggest/order where the axes will fall and what will be out-sourced or privatised.

"All items are on the table" said Shepherd when asked about extending the rate and scope of the Goods and Services Tax.

Just to be sure that no detail is missed and no section of the working people escapes unharmed, the Executive Officer for the Commission of Audit will be Peter Crone, Chief Economist for the "Big Business" Council.

In addition to the Commission of Audit, the Productivity Commission has been tasked with a whole series of reviews into such things as pension rates and benefits, grants and concessions, taxes, industrial laws and union governance, child care, the motor vehicle industry, as well as existing legislation that protects the natural environment and preserves national parks and conservation areas.



On the chopping block

Government spokespeople and public service bureaucrats have already leaked a few selective items, partly because they cannot contain their joy at the opportunity to belt the working class into submission, but also to test the water and work out how far they can go before all hell breaks loose.

Also on their list...

- Postage stamps and rates and delivery frequency – as a prelude to full privatisation of Australia Post
- Privatisation of Medibank Private
- Privatisation of SBS
- \$6 "co-payment" to visit the doctor – and then get rid of bulk-billing altogether
- National education curriculum and education funding

Parasite health funds

Just two days before Christmas, the government announced increases in the premiums for the private health funds ranging from 6-8%, almost triple the official level of inflation. Over the past 15 years, average private health fund

premiums have risen by 130%, while average prices have gone up by less than 50%.

For example, Medibank Private which posted \$232.7 million profit last financial year, easily topping the \$126.6 million it made in the previous year, has been granted a 6.5% lift in customer premiums.

Talk about fattening the cow for market! Now it's fattening the cow for privatisation! That can only mean further increases down the track, while public health services are being run down and starved for funds.

Open slather for big business

While hacking into anything that benefits the people, the government has been smoothing the way for the corporate monopolies and big business to boost their profit-making. Hand-outs to the mining industry amount to \$4.5 billion a year according to the Australia Institute, and pay for the roads, fuel, ports and railways that cart away our mineral wealth.

Not only are the carbon tax and mining tax going, going, gone, but so too are many regulations and limitations on foreign investments and environmental approvals, sneeringly referred to as "red tape" and "green tape".

Perks such as 'profit shifting' to off-shore tax havens and negative gearing on investment properties will continue for the rich and better-off, but there will be no such relief for ordinary workers.

No choice but struggle

Waiting for a Labor government is no good. Working people will have to make a stand. They will have to find ways to get conversations going in their workplaces and communities, to get people organised to protest and to put demands on the government and the big business bosses. Demands not to just "back off" but to "get out of our way".

In fact, all hell *should* break loose!

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Mundine's speech: Too many elephants

by Verity M.

Warren Mundine delivered a speech to the Gama Festival corporate dinner, 'Four Giant Steps: Shooting The Elephants'. The Gama Festival and conference on Indigenous culture, policy and economic development is held in Darwin.

The conference audience was comprised primarily of a cross section of 'the most successful companies in Australia'.

Mundine's speech was obviously tailored to this audience just as the advisory committee he leads advising Tony Abbott has structured its thinking to meet the needs of the Coalition and capital.

Mundine began his speech with a run-through of the seemingly intractable problems impacting on the lives of



Aboriginal people, too well known to need reiterating here.

These he attributed to failed policies over preceding decades, but in particular the failure of these to challenge the collective ownership of land and the closed nature of remote communities.

These are two of the elephants in the room which, according to Mundine, impede economic development and 'wealth creation' in remote Aboriginal communities.

Mundine speaks of the possibility

and desirability of the establishment of Aboriginal small business in remote areas, and of course that is desirable and possible given funding, training and ongoing support, providing of course there is sufficient population to support the facility.

What Mundine is really pushing is the privatisation of Aboriginal land to facilitate commerce which in turn, so the conservative belief goes, creates employment.

Private land ownership according to Mundine is "the foundation of commercial systems and a critical enabler for economic development".

In another critical part of his speech, Mundine speaks of "outside investment" as a means of lifting living standards of remote Aboriginal communities. This kind of thinking fits in snugly with Abbot's message to the world that "Australia is open for business" or more accurately 'for sale'.

The largest elephant in the room is obviously foreign investment.

It seems the prevailing vision is for Aboriginal lands to be open for business, particularly the kind of business that delivers huge profits for international capital.

Once the land is bought or 99-year leased, it can be developed in any way the new owners find most profitable unless the sale/lease is tightly regulated, and this is not a regulating government.

Open access to Aboriginal lands may entice some small businesses to set up

a commercially viable business in an aboriginal community, but opening land for commercial interests will primarily benefit global mining and agricultural capital which will move in, take over the land and give a few locals a job.

Sounds like neo-colonialism, a lot like old colonialism that created the problem in the first place.

What is missing in Mundine's speech is the voices of the people living in the remote areas Mundine is talking about.

Mundine's committee is not going to solve the problems he itemises in his speech, nor is big business.

Global capital is feverishly seeking investment opportunities, particularly in the energy sector and agriculture and is also becoming a money spinner with Asian markets seeking more Australian produced food.

Marketing Aboriginal land must sound very appealing to governments more interested in meeting the needs of international capital than in meeting the needs of their own people.

Incidentally, Abbot has set up a committee to examine locations for dumping uranium waste - only local waste of course, but if government can find a bit of land to dump the waste of the international nuclear industry then it will be doing some capitalist a big favour. They would not want to hold their breath however; there is almost universal resistance to using Australia as a dumping ground for the world's uranium waste.

Vanguard

Vanguard is a national monthly newspaper which expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist - Leninist), the CPA (M-L). Readers are encouraged to comment on, criticise or contribute material to *Vanguard*. Articles, digital graphics, cartoons, clippings, comments or a few lines are all very welcome. All material should be sent to:

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Rural Round-Up: Up-date on take-overs

by Duncan B.

Much to everybody's surprise, Treasurer Joe Hockey rejected US giant Archer Daniels Midlands take-over bid for Australian grain trader Graincorp.

Hockey declared that ADM's \$3.4 billion bid was contrary to the national interest.

Hockey copped a barrage of criticism over his decision from bodies such as the Business Council of Australia and the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia.

Both organisations are concerned about the message this decision sends to other potential foreign investors.

Hockey was quick to stress that "we are open for business. Of the more than 130 applications that have come over my desk since the election, only one has been declined and this is it."

Warrnambool Cheese and Butter

In mid-January, Bega, which was at one stage in the race for WCB, sold its



18.8% share in WCB to the Canadian dairy giant Saputo, which was trying to take over WCB. Murray Goulburn, the other contender for WCB, has terminated its ACCC hearing and sold its 17.5% share to WCB, giving Saputo a 75% share. in WCB.

Mundella Foods

Meanwhile, it has been announced that China Bright Food Co Ltd, will, through its Australian subsidiary company Manassen Foods, buy the Western Australian dairy processor Mundella Foods. Mundella produces cheese and yoghurt and has a small but valuable share of the market in WA.

Gonski campaign to continue

by Nick G.

schools should get equal amounts of funding.

Public education workers are determined to continue campaigning for a new deal in education funding in 2014.

Labor finally took on board a 20-year campaign by supporters of public education for a better funding deal for their sector.

Abbott and Pyne tried to put the matter to rest prior to last year's Federal election, promising to match Labor's Gonski commitments "dollar for dollar" and touting a so-called "unity ticket on education".

Theft from the disadvantaged

Theft from the disadvantaged is most prominently displayed in the three places that refused to sign up to Gonski – WA, Queensland and the NT.

They have now been given their Gonski funds by Abbott and Pyne minus any obligation to use it as Gonski intended.

In WA an extra \$31m of Gonski funds is unlikely to make it to schools given that total cuts to schools in the current



Abbott and Pyne undermine Gonski

This was revealed almost immediately as a bare-faced lie.

All they had committed to was the funding contained in the first four years of a six year funding package.

With most of the funding coming in the last two years of the package, their "commitment" was to just one third of the total.

And as Australian Education Union Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos noted recently, "Gonski is not just about extra money, but changing how money is invested in schools".

Gonski pledged to put the extra money into addressing equity issues in education, giving all schools a base level of funding, but providing extra where there were greater numbers of disadvantaged students, and giving greater again where there were higher concentrations of disadvantage.

Representing the most reactionary sections of the ruling class, those sections that regard any spending on socially disadvantaged groups as a waste of resources, Abbott and Co first denied that Australian schools had an equity problem, and then started working on their own version of equity according to which all schools, from the most wealthy and elite closed door private colleges to the most run-down, poorest "we'll-take-you-all" public

financial year already exceed \$100m.

Five hundred education jobs have been cut and teacher numbers have been capped at 2013 levels despite increased public school enrolments.

In Queensland, the extra funding of \$131m of Gonski funds looks more likely to replace funding from the state government's own budget than to end up in schools.

In the NT, an extra \$68m of Gonski funds is likewise set to remain in the Territory Government's coffers as education minister Peter Chandler proceeds to cut over 100 jobs in teaching and support staff.

Put money where it is needed

To promote the goals of getting WA, Queensland and the NT to commit to using Gonski funding for those for whom it was intended - disadvantaged students in the first place - and to force Abbott and Pyne to agree to the full six-year Gonski funding package and funding framework, the AEU and its supporters will send campaign buses to Canberra from all corners of the continent in March as the first part of a long-term campaign.

There should not be huge gaps in the resource standards for schools.

No worker should have to search beyond his or her community for a

Editorial

Rights are won, not given

"Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich – that is the democracy of the capitalist society." (V.I. Lenin)

And this is how it is in Australia today. Big business, not the working people, really run parliament and all the arms of the capitalist state - legal, police, army. Federal and State laws and regulations are designed to protect and facilitate the exploitation of workers and plunder of the environment, and to suppress any resistance.

Most of the rights and liberties that working people have enjoyed in this country have been won through many battles, sacrifices and hardships starting with the Eureka Stockade rebellion. These hard won rights have always been under attack by big business and foreign monopoly capital, but always defended by people's struggles.

Big business is now mounting a new wave of intensified exploitation of labour and austerity on the people – cuts to community services, health, education, welfare. It demands governments shift more of public funds to big business, while facilitating cuts in wages, conditions. It wants all restrictions on labour removed, a casualised workforce, no penalty rates, and freedom for corporations to bring in overseas labour on lower wages and conditions. It directs governments to remove all obstacles to plunder of the environment. That is the objective of the Commission of Audit, headed by Tony Shepherd.

Under the directives of the biggest monopolies in Australia – the Business Council of Australia, construction companies, developers and mining corporations, State and Federal governments are adding more oppressive laws to the armoury of the state to deal with rebellious workers and communities.

The desperate measures by the capitalist state are a sign of the ruling class' own weakness and fear of mass movements and the outbreak of mass struggle.

Following the draconian anti-bikie club laws of Queensland's LNP Newman State government, the Victorian LNP government is preparing to legislate more laws that cut even deeper into the rights of working people and communities to protest, picket, to even take 'legal' industrial action, to hold rallies and take solidarity action. The laws give wider powers to police and the courts to order and ban individuals and organisations from protesting, picketing and attending peaceful rallies and community assemblies.

These laws carry heavy financial penalties and gaol for breaches of 'move on' orders. They are aimed to weaken and intimidate workers and unions fighting for wages, conditions, and the right to show solidarity with each other's struggles. They are aimed at communities and environmental groups opposing destruction of their local neighbourhoods, livelihoods and the environment by the multinational construction companies and mining corporations hungry to mine coal seam gas and other profitable minerals.

The Federal government's new Building and Construction Industry Bill strengthens and widens the scope of the Howard government's original ABCC, giving greater powers to courts and bigger fines. It captures workers and unions in the transport, maritime, manufacturing, warehousing, and off shore oil and gas drilling industries.

The new Federal ABCC Bill and the Victorian government's Summary Offences and Sentencing Bill virtually ban rallies, protests and picketing by workers, even during the EBA protected periods. Communities and environmental movements are targeted.

Working people's history and experience has shown that anti-worker and anti-people laws have only been pushed back in the course of struggle and in defiance of these laws, to improve workers' rights and conditions and protect the environment.

It's also in the course of these struggles that the strength and confidence of working people grows and ensures that these laws are made unenforceable by the state.

school happy to take his or her children and provide them with the very best of resources and opportunities.

Every parent of a disadvantaged child or a child with disabilities should be confident that their child will be

supported in a local school by additional funding and support.

These are the basic elements of a working class agenda for immediate improvements to school education in this country.

Marxism Today

Extracting Australia from the grip of imperialism:

Australia's two stage revolution - A contribution to discussion

by Alex M.

One of the central elements of the political programme of the CPA (ML) is the concept of the 'two-stage revolution'.

The party's analysis of the concrete social, political and economic conditions of contemporary Australia reveal that there is no easy road to socialism in this country.

Despite the difficulties, the goal of building socialism here, and by extension, across the globe, is not only desirable but also possible.

Given that Australia is where we are situated, our primary arena of struggle has to be this country.

How then can we accomplish the task of building socialism in Australia?

The obstacle of imperialism

The key feature of contemporary Australia is that it is dominated by US imperialism.

A relatively recent and lucid definition of imperialism – which enhances previous work on the subject by Lenin amongst others - has been developed by David Harvey and is worth bearing in mind because it helps us make sense of the world and Australia's place in it.

According to Harvey, imperialism (and by that is meant the specific form of *capitalist* imperialism) has two components which exist in a dialectical relationship.

The two components of imperialism are on the one hand the 'politics of the state and empire' which is a 'distinctively political project on the part of actors whose power is based in command of a territory and a capacity to mobilize its human and natural resources towards political, economic, and military ends'.

On the other hand there are the 'molecular processes of capital accumulation in space and time' which Harvey suggests are integral to imperialism and '...in which command over and use of capital takes primacy' (Harvey, 2005: p.26).

Harvey glosses this further by incorporating the concept of logics of power drawn from the work of Giovanni Arrighi.

In short, capitalist imperialism is made up of two logics of power, the

'territorial' and the 'capitalist'. They are different from one another, but they are parts of a whole.

The 'territorial' logic of power is the recognition that in the realm of global politics, states may act in the interests of particular classes but '[p]oliticians and statesmen (sic) typically seek outcomes that sustain or augment the power of their own state vis-à-vis other states'.

The 'capitalist' logic of power is not as territorially based and does not have the same time constraints that apply in the bourgeois democracies, that is, electoral cycles, but as Harvey points out 'capitalist firms come and go, shift locations, merge, or go out of business' (Harvey, 2005: p.27).

The capitalist accumulation process lies at the heart of this logic of power.



Thus there are two sides to capitalist imperialism, two logics in operation which exist in a dialectical relationship.

Sometimes it is possible that what is driving particular global and/or domestic events is not so much the pressures of capitalist accumulation, the 'capitalist' logic of power, rather it is the 'territorial' logic of power that is the dominant factor.

That is, states and their actors are the driving forces behind events.

A recent example would be the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by the US and the so-called 'Coalition of the Willing'.

The invasion was not primarily driven by business interests (though business



interests did benefit – Halliburton for one) but by Bush and his cronies who sought to enact 'regime-change' in Iraq and underline the strength of US power in the region and thus globally.

The US state was acting as the imperialist thug *par excellence* invading and occupying a sovereign country.

At other times, the 'capitalist' logic of power is the dominant factor, with the state helping to promote the interests of particular corporations and/or sectoral interests.

One only has to look at the TPPA for evidence of the operation of this logic.

Imperialism's impact on Australia

How then does this influence the situation in Australia?

As noted above, Australia is dominated by US imperialism.

The mainstream political parties here accept the hegemonic position of the US state in international politics.

The ANZUS treaty binds Australia militarily with the US and closer military ties with the latter have been a disturbing feature of the past decade.

Labor and Coalition federal governments have demonstrated an eagerness to uncritically accept US foreign policy goals and integrate Australia into America's 'territorial' logic of power.

Australia largely acts as a 'client state' of the sole superpower.

Regarding the other part of the dialectical relationship that makes up imperialism, the 'capitalist' logic of power, we see that US based multinational corporations (or US capital in short) dominate the commanding heights of the Australian economy.

Trade agreements act to increase the presence, depth and breadth of US capital in Australia. American pharmaceutical corporations, for example, want the

PBS scheme eroded to help maximise their profits.

There is scope for Australian governments and capitalist corporations to make decisions relatively autonomously such as 'turning back the boats' or making overseas investments (hello QANTAS) but the US imperialist framework remains currently inviolable.

Two stages of the Australian revolution

Recognising the constraints imposed on Australian political and economic development by US imperialism, our party has proposed a two stage process in ridding Australia of the incubus of imperialism.

The first stage is the winning of real independence with Australian working class interests to the fore.

The process involves the coming together of the masses of the Australian population led by the working class, to amongst other things, fashion an independent foreign policy free from subservience to US geopolitical imperatives.

In tandem with this struggle, it will be necessary to develop and implement alternative economic policies to the neoliberal agenda which predominantly benefits US capital and which presently blights the Australian and global capitalist economy.

The first stage will culminate in a truly independent Australia on the basis of which the second stage, the building of socialism can then proceed.

This is how we can accomplish the task of building socialism in Australia.

Reference:

Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

Changing times require changing tactics

by *Louisa L.*

The guard is changing in teaching. Many are retiring and young teachers face a much bleaker environment than their elders did.

Yet the history of campaigns for justice teaches that people will continue to fight, even in the most difficult circumstances, but that doing things the same old way in new conditions, means you get smashed.

World War One saw flesh and blood hurled against walls of bullets. It was not till the advent of tanks that the stalemate was broken.

In China, Mao led the people to victory after near annihilation, rebuilding in Yan'an and en route in the Long March.

In NSW, teachers and other workers used to go on strike till the Industrial Relations Commission figured they had the numbers and strength to win. They'd rule in the workers' favour, even while fining the union for striking. Employers would grit their teeth and put up with it.

Since O'Farrell organised the state wages legislation, the Commission can still fine unions, but they can't award a pay increase beyond 2.5%, because the government's rewritten the rule book and productivity arguments have been abolished.

Until the legislation is overturned, there will be no ruling above 2.5%. One union alone cannot defeat that legislation.

Devolution quarantined

In late 2013 the government attached a restructure to teacher salary negotiations, with traps that could have seen the union accused of 'protecting bad teachers' and opposing professionalism if they opposed the changes.

It exploited existing fault lines between various sections of the workforce, but, critically, quarantined the devolution agenda. It also enshrined teaching qualifications, a key protection against educational vandals worldwide, including Pyne and Abbott, and significantly increased professional development funding.

While conditions are left intact, some see it as undermining the very collective, mass structures of teachers' employment. The concern is genuine and has some foundation.

Yet the Teachers Federation Council, which brings 280 delegates together from across the state twice each term, after unanimously rejecting its first incarnation, overwhelmingly supported

the agreement, when some sticking points were resolved. This was endorsed at stopwork meetings across the state, attended by over 17,500 teachers.

Key links

Teacher unions have been fighting on a series of fronts, and the union has been keen to grasp the key battles, while closing down other fronts.

Winning the Gonski battle is critical. Even Pyne's reopening of the history wars, as important as it is, is seen as a deliberate diversion from the main game.

Danger lurks if workers are not mobilised. Mass strikes and rallies give an unmatched sense of collective strength, but that can dissipate and turn into pessimism if victory is denied.

As a teacher at a stopwork meeting stated, "We're used to thinking of

industrial action as the core of our activity, supplemented by political action in its broadest sense of people in action. Under current conditions it's the other way round. There's a reason Poodle Pyne got kicked back into his doghouse over Gonski, and that reason is us.

"We led that campaign without one minute of industrial action. We got private schools and a raft of Coalition leaders on our side through our members' strength and action over many years."

Stick together!

In a recent retirement speech, a teacher said, "We're in for very tough times. The whip is in the hand of the rich and powerful, the Rupert Murdochs, the mining and construction companies, the banks. I reckon they've always run the joint, but ordinary people like us,

organised and determined, have kept them from running amok for most of my adult life.

"It's not about individuals, though of course each person is precious, with all our differences and occasional disagreements. As teachers, as people, we're a collective... It will be more difficult for people to organise in the future, but there's a basic method: to listen, ask questions, assess whether you can succeed, to be - as a Chinese leader said - like fish in a sea of people.

"It's simple, common sense - stick together. If you can't win the big victories, win the little ones. Don't take unnecessary risks, but be brave. Across the school, across the state, across the country. If it gets too hard, back off, take stock. You can't win everything. There are very powerful forces trying to divide and defeat you.

"But don't give up. Stick together."

Capital has no loyalty other than to maximise profits

by *Ned K.*

The destruction of the car industry in Australia demonstrates the stark reality that capital has no loyalty to particular countries.

In the age of imperialism and global competition, corporations set up production where they think they can make the most profit.

In Australia, it suited General Motors and Ford to manufacture cars in Australia when tariffs and the scale of production plants made it profitable to do so.

Now there are single car plants in China that produce more than the car plants of Toyota, General Motors and Ford in Australia combined in any one year.

There are similar trends in other industries with some unexpected, unpredictable shifts in production.

On 23 December 2013, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that a Chinese yarn spinning manufacturer, Keer Group, based in Hangzhou, is relocating its plant. You may think the relocation would be to Bangladesh or perhaps Cambodia? Wrong. The yarn spinning plant is moving to South Carolina!

According to the *Journal*, a growing number of Asian based textile manufacturers are setting up production in the southern states of the USA because production costs are cheaper. The yarn is then sent to clothing sweat-shops in Central America and the finished items are then sent back duty free to the USA retail market.

Oh! Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way,
Christmas in Australia
on a scorching summers day, Hey!
Jingle bells, jingle bells, Christmas time is beaut!,
Oh what fun it is to ride in a rusty Holden Ute.



In both examples above, in whose interests were the decisions made to close factories, whether it is car or yarn spinning production? Who made the decisions? Were they made by the workers through governments representing their interests? Or were the decisions made by a handful of owners of big capital seeking to maximise profit?

These are the key questions to consider when contemplating what future lies ahead for car workers and car component workers in Australia with the closure of Ford and General Motors imminent and Toyota a real possibility to follow them.

Jay Weatherill, the SA Labor Premier, perhaps with the best intentions, is desperately seeking commitment from an alternative multinational company to

set up production of something (!) in the soon-to-be-vacant General Motors plant at Elizabeth. However, this is unlikely to occur and even if it does occur, on what terms and conditions would a new multinational 'player' set up here and for how long?

There is an opportunity for the Premier to strike a blow for Australian independence from the ravages of internationally roaming capital by a government takeover of the Elizabeth plant and equipment and manufacturing either environmentally sustainable vehicles or public transport. This would have widespread support from the workers, northern suburbs community and locally based manufacturing and services related business.

Workers here have the skill base to make this a reality.

Mandela's legacy - Liberation or Capitulation?

by *Max O.*

An outpouring of tributes and obituaries came gushing forth from the worlds' media when Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela died, in early December of last year.

Over the last two decades the imperialist states and their media have presented him as the father of South Africa, creator of the Rainbow Nation and the archetypal figure of forgiveness.

All this is in contrast to the position they took against the anti-apartheid movement from the 1940s to the late 1980s.

These reactionaries then did a complete somersault from condemning 'terrorism' to approving one man's monumental efforts for human dignity and opposition to racism!

But did Mandela single-handedly really liberate the country and put an end to apartheid in South Africa?

In all the effusive praise for Nelson Mandela much of the truth about the struggle to end racism and liberate the Azanian (land of the Africans) people has been deliberately omitted by the Western media, and by the African National Congress (ANC*) itself.

Undeniably Mandela sacrificed 27 years in prison for the struggle against apartheid; however it is misleading to say that it was only he and the ANC that led this resistance.

There were other famous leaders and organisations that were out there facing off and combating the white South African regime. In actual fact the ANC was quite often caught out avoiding militant actions and later forced into playing catch-up!

Sharpeville and Soweto

The famous uprisings of Sharpeville and Soweto, names that went around the globe and brought to the world's peoples' attention the regime's willingness to ruthlessly massacre Africans who resisted their racist policies, were not actually led by Mandela and the ANC.

When Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, leader of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC*) launched the positive action campaign against the pass laws and invited the ANC to join in, the Secretary-General of the ANC, Duma Nokwe rejected the offer and replied in the 20-3-1960, *Johannesburg Sunday Times*: "It is treacherous to the liberation movement to embark on a

campaign which has not been prepared and which has no reasonable prospects of success."

The PAC had organised crowds of 50,000 people at Sharpeville and Langa on 21 March to present themselves to police without their passes, and the regime responded by killing 83 people and wounding 365. The PAC leadership were arrested, and on the 28 March, the Unlawful Organisation Bill was introduced that banned both the PAC and ANC.

Len Lee-Warden, a member of the South African Parliament in 1960 and associated with the South African Communist Party, who was one of the four white representatives elected to represent Africans, actually argued that only the PAC should be banned, that the Government of the day ought to talk to the ANC to restore order in South Africa after Sharpeville.

After the Sharpeville massacre, Sobukwe was put on trial that year, 1960, and refused to plead guilty or not guilty in court, because he declared the courts were illegitimate, set up according to laws entirely made by a white minority, without participation by the African majority. Sobukwe died 1978, a prisoner in Kimberly, under heavy restrictions which included denying him an exit permit to receive medical treatment from outside of South Africa.

Mandela faced the courts two years later, 1962 and then in the well-publicized 1964 Rivonia trial. Interestingly Mandela's trial speech recording has survived, but not Sobukwe's trial speech.

Similarly, the 1976 Soweto student uprising in opposition to using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction were the result of propaganda campaigns of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the PAC who galvanised youth support and participation in the struggle around Africanism and Black Consciousness. As a result, the apartheid regime massacred at least 700 young Africans and saw the torture and murder of Steve Biko, the leader of the BCM.

Zeph Mothopeng, a PAC leader in Soweto at the time of the uprising, was soon after arrested and put on trial. The white judge, Justice Curlewis declared that Mothopeng had "...acted to sow seeds of anarchy and revolution. The riots he had engineered and predicted had eventually taken place in Soweto on 16 June, and Kagiso the next day."

He had led the teachers' fight against introduction of Bantu Education and

was banned from teaching in 1953/54 when he was President of the Transvaal African Teachers Association (TATA).

Mothopeng served two years with Sobukwe and other PAC leaders after Sharpeville, 1960-62, and was imprisoned with them on Robben Island, 1963 - 1968. He inter-acted very much with the South African Students Organization (SASO) and Black Peoples Convention (BCP) in the years before the Soweto Uprising.

Mandela's capitulation started early

Much fanfare has been made of Mandela's so-called ground-breaking trial speeches; however what has been overlooked was his continual willingness to make accommodations with the regime.

For example, Mandela announced at the Rivonia trial in 1964: "The ANC has never at any period of its history advocated a revolutionary change in the economic structure of the country, nor has it, to the best of my recollection, ever condemned capitalist society."

This foretold his eventual betrayal of black Africans, when as early as the 1970's, after Soweto 1976, Mandela privately started negotiations in secret with the racist Botha/de Klerk regime.

That is why he was transferred from Robben Island in 1982 to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town, and then onto a Prison Officer's house in Victor Verster Prison in 1985. All these transfers were designed to facilitate easy access to him for negotiations.

After the 1970s the ANC put enormous effort into marginalising and eliminating rivals such as the PAC and the BCM and capturing the leadership of the black movement, as opposed to leading a protracted revolt against the apartheid regime.

The racist regime, knowing that the ANC leadership were willing to compromise, and accepting that the apartheid regime was unsustainable, were more than happy to start negotiations with them. Mandela, without a blink, ditched policies such as the so called Freedom Charter straight away.

Arundhati Roy, India's famous human rights activist stated that: "When Nelson Mandela took over as South Africa's first Black President, he was canonised as a living saint, not just because he was a freedom fighter who spent 27 years in prison, but also because he deferred completely to the Washington Consensus. Socialism disappeared

from the ANC's agenda. South Africa's great "peaceful transition", so praised and lauded, meant no land reforms, no demands for reparation, no nationalisation of South Africa's mines. Instead, there was Privatisation and Structural Adjustment."

Africans now suffer under the ANC

The plight of black Africans has not improved but rather has deteriorated since Mandela and the ANC won government back in 1994.

Many still suffer appalling living conditions of no running water, electricity, decent sanitation and in contrast they see a small black bourgeoisie cosy up to a white-imperialist dominated economy.

This political perfidy culminated in the ANC government using black police to gun down the Marikana miners in support of the Lonmin Corporation in 2012. 44 African mineworkers were murdered at Marikana, marking it as a watershed moment in the history of the ANC, Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

All three organisations opposed the Marikana mine workers in their industrial dispute with the Lonmin Corporation.

In fact Cyril Ramaphosa, a former leader of the NUM and COSATU and current vice president of the ANC, who is a board member of Lonmin, called on the 15 August 2012 for action to be taken against the striking miners. He is regarded as one of South Africa's richest men, with Forbes estimating his wealth at \$675 million. Hence the moniker for his ilk, 'black diamonds'!

Unfortunately Mandela was no Chavez, for he forfeited his claim to liberator many years ago.

Much has been said about the hypocrisy of western media, politicians and celebrities mourning the death of a great forgiving man who stood up to racism.

Might not the same criteria be applied to Mandela himself? In the end he should be judged by the company of western media, politicians and celebrities he so craved and the neglect of his own people that he oversaw.

* The PAC split from the ANC in 1959. Essentially the difference between the two was that the ANC saw the struggle in terms of civil rights whereas the PAC saw it in terms of the African people being dispossessed of their country and winning back their sovereignty and land.

Commemorating the 120th anniversary of the great revolutionary leader Mao Zedong

by Nick G.

December 26, 2013 marked the 120th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong.

Mao is rightly revered by all genuine revolutionaries. He had an unswerving commitment to the great ideals of Communism and led the Chinese nation and people along the road of collectivism and socialism.

Contributions to the revolutionary struggle

Among his many achievements and contributions during the revolutionary struggle were his insistence on investigating a matter thoroughly before speaking about it; practising the mass line method of leadership ("from the masses to the masses"); his theoretical leadership on the nature of the Chinese revolution (protracted warfare as a process of surrounding the cities from the countryside); his military and political leadership during the War Against Japanese Aggression (people's war, democracy in the army, relationship between the army and the people, unity and independence in the united front); and the Yan'an spirit of living simply and leading a plain life.

This was the time when he also emerged as a teacher of Marxist philosophy. He wrote profound yet understandable tracts *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* and thereby brought dialectical materialism within the reach of millions of revolutionary workers and peasants.

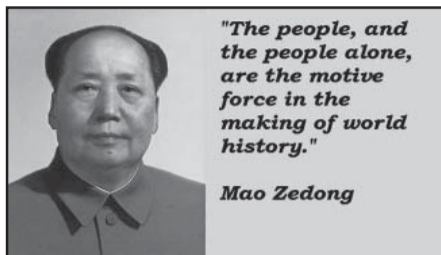
He also gave a new direction to the conduct of rectification movements in the Communist Party, to the nature and purpose of study and the writing of Party materials, together with a focussed and unambiguous direction for the development of literary and artistic creations of a revolutionary nature.

Boldness in developing along the socialist road

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, he brought about a clear understanding of the nature of socialist construction in a country emerging from backward semi-feudal and semi-colonial conditions.

He also placed the correct handling of contradictions between the people on a firm theoretical foundation and worked out the essential line for resolving major social and political dilemmas that arose in the course of socialist construction.

He continued to insist on high standards of moral and ethical



behaviour. Corruption and nepotism were contained and all but eliminated.

The slogan "Serve the People", first elaborated in September 1944 by Mao as a eulogy to an ordinary PLA soldier, the Long March participant Zhang Side, was widely popularised through the campaign to learn from another model Communist soldier, Lei Feng.

Lei was only 22 when he died in 1962, yet he was a paragon of modesty and Communist selflessness.

Identifying and opposing revisionism

Following Stalin's death, Mao Zedong refused to condemn the great leader of the Soviet Union.

Despite differences of opinion on certain matters, Mao quickly identified Khrushchev's attack on Stalin as the beginning of a change of direction in Soviet policies and of a rewriting by the new Soviet leadership of some of the fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism.

Mao Zedong would not accept this

revision of Marxism, but realised that there was considerable support for it amongst the Chinese Party leadership.

He conducted a socialist education movement, but finding this blocked by some of his fellow leaders, took the unconventional and unprecedented step of launching the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The concept of continuing the revolution under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat was a bold and courageous initiative.

There were no guidelines or blueprints and the first year or so was a matter of letting events take their course, with all the spontaneity and mistakes that this involved, just as they were also subject to investigation and analysis.

For the remainder of the Cultural Revolution great advances were made in strengthening the leadership of proletarian revolutionaries in all sectors of society, of developing free primary health care and extending schooling to the rural areas.

New forms of socialist political organisation emerged. Production grew as revolutionary commitment deepened.

In the three years after Mao's death in 1976, the struggle between the capitalist road and the socialist road, and between capitalist-roaders and Marxist-Leninists intensified.

A resolution on certain questions in

the history of the Party was adopted, condemning the Cultural Revolution in its entirety, and diminishing the stature of Chairman Mao.

Although the Communist Party, of which Mao Zedong was a founding member, remains in power in China, the capitalist-roaders and new bourgeois elements in its leadership have turned it into an entity that Mao Zedong would shudder to recognise.

Mao Zedong's teachings continue to guide revolutionary development

Our Party continues to regard Mao Zedong as one of the greatest Communist theoreticians and practitioners of all time.

Despite the laws of uneven development having turned China onto the path of capitalism during this stage of its history, Mao's prestige among the people is sky high.

That is why diatribes like those of Jung Chang, and Mao's so-called personal physician Li Zhisui, find a ready market in the West: the need to demonise and undermine Mao Zedong remains a huge problem for the imperialists and the capitalist-roaders.

Study and learn from Mao Zedong!

Nothing can destroy his stature as a great revolutionary leader and thinker!

TPP threatens and betrays the Australian people

by Bill F.

Negotiations for the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement are currently being concluded in Singapore, and look like caving in to demands by US imperialism to include so-called Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions. (ISDS)

At the secretive talks are trade delegations from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US and Vietnam.

Australian Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb will inevitably sign on the dotted line sometime in the next few months.

He will be signing a document of treachery and betrayal which will allow foreign corporate monopolies to sue Australian governments for introducing or maintaining laws and regulations that prevent or hinder the corporations' ability to make profits – laws such as health and safety regulations, environmental protections

and preservations, Australian content quotas for TV, subsidies for art and culture, even quarantine provisions!

ISDS clauses typically have any disputes determined by international trade bureaucrats drawn from the corporate monopoly legal parasite class.

ISDS clauses in an obscure trade agreement with Hong Kong have already been invoked by a subsidiary of tobacco monopoly Philip Morris to sue Australia over plain packaging laws, despite having lost the case in the Australian High Court.

Robb already has form on this. Only a few months ago he signed off on a "free trade" deal with South Korea which included ISDS clauses.

The Finance Minister Mathias Cormann has refused a Senate request to see the text of the TPP before it is signed and it won't even be debated.

Parliament may get to see it when it comes up for formal ratification, but that's a rubber stamp job with only 20 days provided for any sort of scrutiny, let alone public consultation and debate.

It just demonstrates the irrelevance of parliament when it comes to issues of the economic and political agenda of US imperialism. Like the people, it is just brushed aside!

It also demonstrates why the Australian people can't rely on parliament and treacherous politicians to defend either our well-being or our national independence.

The only guarantee of this is to cast out imperialist interests and restructure society so that working people own and control the wealth and resources rather than the big corporate monopolies.

Nation-wide public meetings and rallies against the TPP are being organised in all the capital cities on February 7th to expose and condemn the imposition of this treacherous deal.

**Melbourne: 6 pm City Square
Brisbane: 4 pm Parliament House
Sydney: 12 pm Sydney Town Hall
Perth: 1 pm State Library**

Whatever happened to neoliberalism?

by Verity M.

Bourgeois economists have gone quiet on neoliberalism of late which does not mean it has been abandoned as an economic and political strategy to make the working class pay for a system in crisis.

Neoliberalism reinforces the requirement that capital and the state act in tandem to restore profit certainty and the preservation of the system.

The primary role of the state is to ensure that favourable conditions exist for the investment of the surplus that workers have created for capital.

If that means privatising public assets, or importing workers either to break strikes as in the 1998 waterside workers' struggle, or to create a surplus supply of workers as a means of controlling wages, then so be it.

Privatisation

We are already seeing a new spate of privatisation of public assets as the states are being urged to sell off 'old' assets such as wharves to pay for new infrastructure which will undoubtedly be handed over to private developers.

Privatisation is not just about getting some cash in hand to ameliorate the impact of high government debt; it is also about ensuring that capital has state-created spaces for the realisation of profits.

Productivity

Productivity is another sacred cow,



usually measured in amount produced per working hour.

Productivity, closely related to profits, can be increased by improved technology, new methods of organising the workspace etc., but the cheapest way is to have workers work for less.

Profits

Productivity is also measured by profits realised out of the surplus accumulated from the labour of workers.

Workers and the general population receive concessions and the occasional handout when things are going well, but the needs of capital will always take precedence over the needs of the people.

Neoliberalism, applied to varying degrees depending on the immediate and long term needs of capital, becomes apparent in times of economic crisis and less obvious in the good times (for capital that is) but it is always

there: a system of applied economics incorporating in particular, wage control, destruction of working class organisations and privatisation of public assets.

A decline in profit as is the case in economic crises cannot be tolerated. Profitability has to be restored and continually increased.

Profits decline for a variety of reasons – overproduction, under-consumption resulting from wage cuts and people's loss of faith in the economic system, and the inherent tendency of the rate of profit to fall as explained by Marx.

Technology

Profits tend to fall as technology replaces workers. It must make a lot of sense to capitalists to replace labour with machinery which works long hours without complaint and doesn't go on strike, but unfortunately (for

capital) only human labour can produce what Marx called surplus value derived from free labour time which makes up the bulk of profit: just one of the many contradictions that bedevil capitalism.

Wages

Cutting wages and public services will always be the first option of capital with the blessing of the state.

We are currently being groomed to accept the necessity of wage 'restraint'.

Employer organisations are all over the media telling us that the basic wage of 'like' economies is much less than ours; promised improvement in child-care workers' wages is being reviewed while the conservatives' own newspaper *The Australian* tells us that if car workers want a job they should accept the wage the company can afford or move on, all being reinforced by a manufactured budget crisis.

Fighting back - that's class struggle!

When the economy slows and profits decline, governments are called upon to legislate change and they invariably do so whichever parliamentary party holds office.

Workers are well aware of the threats to their organisations and to their job security.

Fortunately, or unfortunately for the powers that be, workers are many and the powerful are few, and they will be widely supported in the struggle for a truly just society and a people's democracy that serves the majority of the people.

State election in March as SA workers face jobs crisis

by Ned K.

The SA parliamentary election outcome on 15 March this year will give little hope to thousands of blue and white collar workers in South Australia.

Neither the current Labor government nor the Liberal Party "Opposition" has any answers to the economic crisis facing working people.

This crisis will intensify as the closure of General Motors operations at the northern suburb of Elizabeth will add to a manufacturing industry already in crisis.

According to research done by the manufacturing union, AMWU, 1 in every 5 SA manufacturing workers lost their jobs between 2008 and 2012.

The number of jobs lost was 19,600, a 20.7% reduction, compared

with a 9.9% reduction (105,900) in manufacturing jobs nationally during the same period.

The AMWU research predicted that if this trend continued in the state, a further 15,000 manufacturing jobs over the next five year period to 2018 would be lost. This estimate was made prior to General Motors' announced closure of the Elizabeth car plant by 2017.

Research by John Spoehr and others from the University of Adelaide demonstrates that these job losses in manufacturing are concentrated in the western and northern suburbs of Adelaide, where unemployment is already as high as 20% in some suburbs and 9.1% overall.

Added to this is underemployment: workers who want and need to work more hours per week to exist with a minimum of dignity (see *State of South Australia* –*Turbulent Times*, edited by

John Spoehr, 2013).

Even if the 'mining boom' took off in SA with the expansion of Olympic Dam and/or other mines, this will not solve the high unemployment crisis caused by mainly multinational corporations' decisions to continue to scale down manufacturing in the state.

In 2012, mining in SA employed 12,953 people. Manufacturing employed 74,763.

Both Labor and Liberal Party leaders in SA still talk of mining as a potential saviour, but they have both shifted their attention to the defence industry at Port Adelaide and nearby northern suburbs.

These industries do employ a sizeable number of the 74,763 manufacturing jobs in the state, but the decision-making of where these defence products are made and how many are made is in the hands of multinational companies.

Neither state Labor nor Liberal Party

leaders confront this central question of ownership of the economic lifelines of the state and where economic power currently lies.

The political leader who boldly mobilises the people's support for a publicly owned manufacturing base in SA will have widespread support leading up to the election. However we should not hold our breath waiting for such an announcement!

Vanguard Blog

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