

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

# Vanguard

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## Economic Crisis Shows Need For Planned Economy

By Ned K. (17 May 2020)

**T**he economic crisis in Australia, and indeed the whole capitalist world, magnified by the shutdown of industries due to COVID-19, has been a big shock to millions of people.

Millions of people thrown out of work, millions more on reduced hours. This situation forced the Morrison Government in Australia to introduce Job Keeper. Thousands of businesses applied for it and hundreds of thousands of workers are receiving \$1,500 gross payments a fortnight under the scheme. An inadequate relief measure for most, but the Government hoped it was enough until it was time "to get people back to work again", code for a return to the free market economy of capitalism so employers could resume chasing maximization of profits again.

A return to the chaos of the free market of capitalism is all the capitalist class rulers can envisage. However, the masses of people in Australia are learning through their own experience just how fragile this market economy is and how quickly it can destroy their living standards and way of life.

People also saw how reliant the capitalist economy in Australia is on the decisions of multinational corporations and the governments who serve them. Whole industries shut down and many more stagnating due to their reliance on overseas markets to sell their services or products.

The media commentators and some politicians of various persuasions cried out that the solution to this problem was for business in Australia to become less reliant on one country or a



couple of countries for their export markets. "Diversification" is to be the saving grace for the Australian people!

The Australian people are questioning the whole system, as well they might. They hear a lot from individual captains of industries and from politicians about planning. Ah yes, "planning"! Ask any CEO how important planning is for their company.

They are right but they never say that planning of the whole economy of production and services for people is needed.

Why not? Surely if planning is good enough for their own business it is good enough for society as whole?

The problem is, their planning is in order to maximize profit, whereas the planning the people want and need is planning that drives an economy serving the people and not profit maximization.

Imagine if all the wealth created by working people that was in excess of daily needs was held in common for

social needs instead of disappearing in to the bank accounts of multinational corporations. Imagine also if the means of production could be converted (as occurred in wartime) to produce what was needed for the people in times of crisis such as this pandemic?

A planned economy with production and services for the needs of the people is something that people sense is needed and also possible. That possibility requires private, competitive ownership of the means of production to cease. It has to be replaced by public, cooperative ownership vested in a new form of people's state power.

The only problem is that the ruling minority class and their state apparatus are standing in the way.

In the course of time, the people will find a way to overcome this historically obsolete class with experiences like the COVID-19 pandemic providing rich lessons of why this is needed. ■

# Beware proposed legislation to strengthen state power

Contributed (24 May 2020)

A very brief article in an Australian mainstream media outlet about proposals to extend state power has provided evidence the Morrison coalition government in Canberra is committed to implementing draconian powers with the bare minimum of publicity.

As it seeks to strengthen state powers, the issue of security vetting has received virtually no media coverage. It has, however, potentially far-reaching implications for ordinary Australian working people.

The track record of federal governments when dealing with internal security assessments, historically, has raised serious questions about safeguards for civil liberties and other problems.

The *Australian* newspaper in mid-May provided four short columns about proposed amendments to present security laws. Using blanket-type terminology intended to deal with threats of terrorism, espionage and political violence, Australian security personnel will not require legal warrants for placing surveillance devices for tracking suspects. Other parts of the same amendment restrict the rights of lawyers to represent clients and lower the age of consent for questioning of minors to 14 years. The amendment, if passed and contained in the wider legislation, will mean security personnel will only require internal approval for what are regarded as official duties at the behest of the highest echelons of the Australian state.

This is serious curtailment to what the bourgeoisie calls its "rule of law", by which class society is supposedly held together.

At face value the proposed amendment might appear sensible when taking into account the lengthy legal procedures involved in acquiring warrants. That is, until other criteria are studied and considered in detail.



These include the question of accountability of state power. While official procedures are in place for accountability of government departments, they are, at best, extremely difficult to access. The procedures also often require months, if not years, to reach completion. Most ordinary working people would lack the necessary resources or time.

A further matter for serious consideration is the prevailing political climate.

Hardly a single day passes without reference to China's supposed espionage against Australia. Evidence would appear to have become unnecessary in the shadowy and perverted world of the far-right and their endless conspiracy theories.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought out legions of conspiracy theorists whose main preoccupation was demonising China, its political system and those of Chinese ancestry and their associates in general.

## Long history of security vetting

Such behaviour has a long history. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War the then Attlee government in Britain introduced security vetting as a standard procedure. It was directed primarily toward anyone who was, or had been, a member of the Communist Party. Operating through the Cabinet Committee on Subversive Activities, the system was extended in 1952 and again on numerous occasions in later years. The committee was involved in scrutinising the backgrounds of those regarded as employed in sensitive positions and looked for evidence of

character defects, which included: 'drunkenness, addiction to drugs, homosexuality or any loose living'.

Later amendments to the scope of the Cabinet Committee were to establish whether those under investigation were 'that wider body of those ... sympathetic to communism'. Still further amendments included references to 'fellow-travellers' and 'anyone with left-wing or radical views.'

Later obsessions amongst vetting officers were directed against those who had access to sensitive documents and the ability to leak information to left-wing media outlets through small political groups.

Readers of *'The Spycatcher'* by Peter Wright, will no doubt, be aware of the direct implications of the further amendments concerned. Amid the hundreds of pages of scurrilous allegations and innuendo written by a former spy with an axe to grind, numerous examples appear whereby anyone, including Roger Hollis the Head of MI5 itself, were considered threats to national security.

Guilt, in the eyes of those around Peter Wright, was established and signed, sealed and delivered by mere association either knowingly or unknowingly. No further evidence was required.

The role of the Cabinet Committee ushered in a wave of tale-telling within British society, from the very bottom to the top. The fact MI5 was also responsible for establishing an Australian counterpart, ASIO, at the same time would indicate they also exported the whole model to Canberra. And it exists to the present day.

Studies of the problem in Australia have revealed widespread discrepancies and other problems. Serious shortcomings have not been difficult to establish.

The fact workers can subsequently lose employment by either failing a vetting clearance or being swept up in an investigation of someone attempting to seek clearance has been given credible publicity elsewhere.

Vetting procedures are commonplace in the Australian defence industries with implications for those employed in what are considered vital supply-chains. Just what is the position of a trade-union delegate with an active interest in Asian history and politics in such a supply-chain? Would they, for example, be considered a threat? And in what capacity?

Recent studies in both the US and UK, likewise, have also provided a chilling insight into downright incompetence in the hands of well-placed government officials and employers seeking to compromise workers.

A recent study in the US established a large number of files used by the FBI to monitor US citizens 'suspected of having links with foreign intelligence or terrorism' contained numerous errors. An investigation found an average of at least twenty errors per application, with a total of 65 recorded in one case.

The fact the files were potentially used to justify surveillance raise serious concerns about civil liberties.

In the UK a study conducted by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) established a majority of British workers believed their employers were systematically spying on them. The findings rest upon earlier studies conducted in the early 1980s where it was established US intelligence agencies routinely spied on British trade-unions.

The recent period in Australia has been marked by three highly significant factors, revealing discrepancies and their linkage between state and society:

- an intensification of US hostility toward China has been increasingly played-out in Australia;
- police raids on journalists to specifically suppress information and silence whistle-blowers capable of embarrassing government officials have been deemed incompatible with usual legal processes;
- a systematic failure by security organisations to correctly identify Brenton Tarrant, an Australian citizen and close associate of far-right political groups, who spent sixty days in the country prior to carrying out the Christchurch terrorist atrocities in New Zealand; why was he never identified?

With developments such as these taking place, we need to remember the Eureka oath and fight to defend our rights and liberties.

For independence and socialism! ■

## EDITORIAL

### Hard or Soft? Two Tactics of the Ruling Class

Since the beginning of the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the peak union leadership of the ACTU has been in close talks with the LNP federal government.

The usual hardline anti-union “thugs” and “law breakers” vitriol of the government and business class has been replaced with “dialog” and “working together” to achieve “the best outcomes for workers and businesses”.

The government has reportedly even shelved its second bid to pass its anti-union *Ensuring Integrity Bill*, supposedly as a sign of “good faith” (more likely they still couldn’t get the numbers), wanting to sit down with the unions to reform the country’s industrial relations system. A new recruit to the ACTU’s *Change the Rules Campaign* perhaps?

Unlikely. While the bosses and the governments that represent them may have been forced by the economic crisis to shift their tactics, the goal remains the same. Just as a leopard never changes its spots, so too the capitalists never change their drive for ever greater profits at the expense of the working class. Sometimes it can get them with an open attack on workers’ rights and conditions – the hard tactic. Sometimes it takes a little flattery and co-opting as it sets a surprise attack – the soft tactic. The ruling class chooses its tactics depending on what it thinks will give it the best outcome in the situation.

What will come out of the round table talks on industrial relations still remains to be seen. But Australian workers have an important historical lesson in the *Prices and Incomes Accord* of the 1980s to see the price paid for class collaboration between unions and big business.

As workers we should have no illusions that the interests of our class can be served by walking hand in hand with the bosses. The economic crisis is threatening their profits. Working people must be organised and prepared to defend their rights and conditions.

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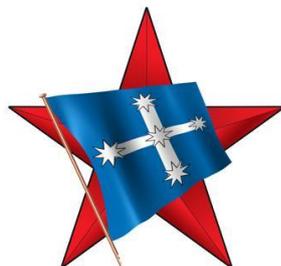
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## MARXISM TODAY

# Capitalism Develops and Expands in Ironic Ways

By Ned K. (9 May 2020)

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has caused illness and death on a scale not seen in developed capitalist economies for a hundred years. The shutdown of industries resulting from it has caused further misery for millions of working people thrown out of work for who knows how long. Despite this capitalism inevitably must find ways to extract surplus value and expand sometimes in unexpected ways.

For example, in Millicent South Australia, the paper mill owned by US multinational Kimberley Clark was contracting with local workers fearing the place may close altogether. Then along comes COVID-19 and the paper mill is working 24/7 just making toilet paper. Boutique breweries, faced with no sales to closed pubs, found a new way to make profits by producing alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

On a larger scale the Chinese-American Mr Yuan who owns Zoom conferencing for virtual meetings announces \$4 billion profit in the last 3 months. How ironic that a Chinese-American heads up Zoom while Trump escalates the war of words against the rising world power China!

That capitalism expands and creates whole new industries and occupations was pointed out by Marx in this amusing and brilliant example in *Theories Of Surplus Value*, or the fourth volume of *Capital* as it is sometimes called. The quote from Marx is lengthy but worth the read.

"A philosopher produces ideas, a poet poems, a clergyman sermons, a



*Coffin makers in Brazil work hard to keep up with demand due to increasing number of deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic*

professor compendia and so on. A criminal produces crimes. If we take a closer look at the connection between this latter branch of production and society as a whole, we shall rid ourselves of many prejudices. The criminal produces not only crime but also criminal law, and with this also the professor who gives lectures on criminal law and in addition to this the inevitable compendium in which this same professor throws his lectures on to the general market as 'commodities'...The criminal moreover produces the whole of the police and of criminal justice, constables, judges, hangmen, juries, etc; and all these different lines of business, which form just as many categories of the social division of labour, develop different capacities of the human mind, create new needs and new ways of satisfying them.

Torture alone has given rise to the most ingenious mechanical inventions, and employed many honourable craftsmen in the production of its instruments. The criminal produces an impression, partly moral and partly tragic, as the case may be, and in this way renders a 'service' by arousing the moral and aesthetic feelings of the public.

He produces penal codes and along with them legislators in this field, but also art, novels, and even tragedies, as not only Mullner's *Schuld*...but Oedipus and Richard The Third.

The effects of the criminal on the development of productive power can be shown in detail. Would locks ever have reached their present degree of excellence had there been no thieves?

Would making bank notes have reached its present perfection had there been no forgers?

And if one leaves the world of crime, would the world market ever have come into being but for the national crime? Indeed, would ever the nations have arisen?"

Now the captains of industry in Australia and the USA with Morrison and Trump faithfully following their commands want their capitalist economies to again generate maximum profits no matter what the cost of human life from a second wave, or third, or fourth, of COVID-19.

Will this call to arms by capital create the conditions for another surge in previously low volume production such as coffin making or worse still more front-end loaders to bury the dead from COVID-19 outbreaks, or even worse a catastrophic war of aggression by the US against China?

These and similar possibilities will occur as long as the system of capitalism remains and that is what Marx's brilliant work of *Capital* in all its Volumes is really all about. ■

# Munday and Gallagher, two lives in working class struggle

By Lindy Nolan (16 May 2020)

**J**ack Munday, former NSW Builders Labourers Federation leader and Sydney Green Bans' champion who died on May 10, won huge praise in capitalist and progressive media.

As former Labor MP Meredith Burgmann stated in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, through 54 green bans, "It is not exaggerating to say that the NSW BLF is responsible for the shape of Sydney as we now know it."

Her weighty list includes what were once working class areas: The Rocks and Woolloomooloo saved from high rise; Glebe and Ultimo from expressways; Centennial Park from a sporting complex; Victoria Street, Kings Cross; parts of Surry Hills plus the State Theatre, the Pitt Street Congregational Church, the Colonial Mutual, National Mutual and ANZ bank buildings as his and his union's legacy.

The alliance of environmental groups and workers led by Munday was powerful and important. But it is not the whole story.

In a eulogy to Munday, one speaker attacked "Australian Maoists" for the

Federal intervention into the NSW BLF led by BLF General Secretary Norm Gallagher in the mid-70s. Ms Burgmann refrained from attack, though she has been vocal in the past.

An article by James Lesh in *The Conversation* went much further.

Lesh, who "received funding from the Australian Government Research Training Program", basically credits "Munday and his fellow unionists Joe Owens and Bob Pringle" with battles which took place around Australia, including in Melbourne.

He states the Kelly's Bush battle in Sydney in 1971 was the first green ban. Certainly, it was the first using that name. But Norm Gallagher was jailed in late 1970 for assisting Carlton residents in a victorious black ban that turned commercial land into a public park.

He led the Victorian BLF and resident action groups to save "the City Baths, Mac's Hotel, Victoria Market, Gothic Bank, Regent Theatre, Windsor Hotel, Princess Theatre, Collins Street and the Rialto precinct, and Tasma Terrace", all of which Lesh appears to credit to the then NSW BLF and Jack Munday. Lesh does credit Gallagher with stopping the Victorian Housing

Commission's high-rise housing program. But the Victorian BLF won its first successful environmental black ban in the 1940s. It also saved the site of the Eureka Stockade from development.

Lesh calls Norm Gallagher a "Corrupt Melbourne unionist" who "notoriously clashed" with Munday.

## The intervention into the NSW BLF

A number of issues led a large group of high-profile NSW builders labourers (BLs) who had worked closely with Munday to break with him. The most prominent were Johnny McNamara and Joe Ferguson. Munday had been best man at McNamara's wedding.

While many BLs supported Munday, Joe Owens and Bob Pringle, many others thought Munday was too close to residents and not close enough to them. The sheer numbers of bans were cutting people out of work, especially as the 1974 recession hit the construction industry.

National BLF campaigns were not implemented by the NSW branch. More importantly, Munday proposed allowing residents to vote on bans.

Prominent members siding with national policies and opposing Munday, like McNamara and Ferguson, were blacklisted. On top of this, the BLF was deregistered nationally in 1974, pushed by the Master Builders Association largely in retaliation to "excessive" industrial action by the NSW BLF, including worker control of job sites, as well as green bans, all of them laudable!

But the Federal branch leadership understood that prolonged deregistration meant the risk of losing coverage of builders' labourers to other construction unions, the AWU and BWIU, particularly in NSW where the branch didn't have a state award to protect builders labourers' classifications. A tactical retreat was chosen. Gallagher pointed out that the NSW leadership failed to appreciate (continued pg.6)



Jack Munday being arrested during a Green Ban action in Sydney

(continued from pg.5)

the BLF was “only a small union and could not fight for the whole of the working class in Australia.” (Sadly, Gallagher failed to take his own advice when bosses were gunning for the BLF in the 1980s.)

The NSW branch maintained its line, pushing on alone. A takeover of the NSW Branch was supported by all other states. By this stage, Joe Owens, who ignored offers to talk, was BLF leader, not Munday, who may have taken a different stand, despite fiercely opposing the intervention.

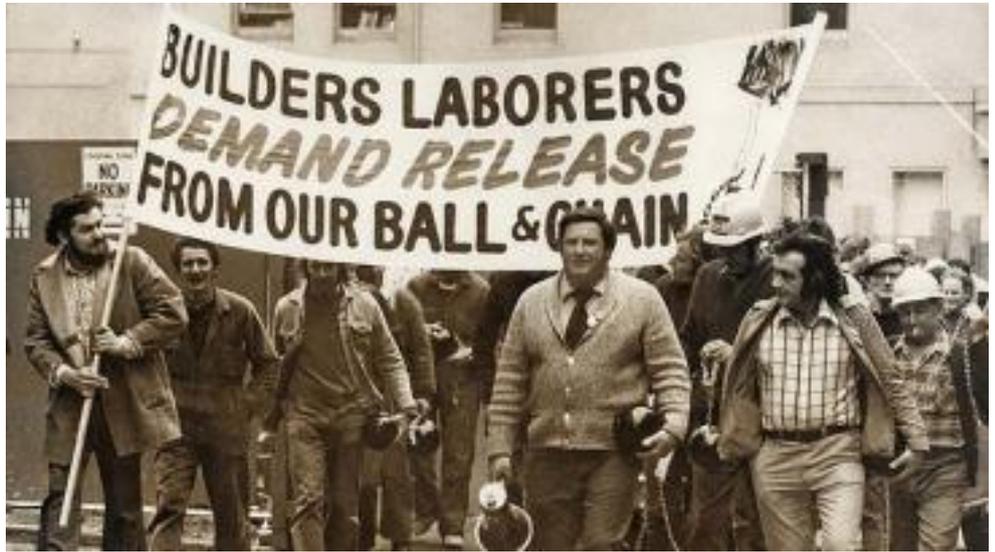
### Unions belong to their members

Numerous articles, speeches and books have alleged Norm Gallagher used thugs to enforce a takeover of the NSW branch in 1975.

We are talking builders labourers here, workers in one of the toughest, most dangerous and historically most violent industries in Australia. The source of most of that violence was the clique of developers who variously sought to bribe, intimidate and physically coerce construction workers and their leaders. The BLF in NSW, and elsewhere, was for many years run by gangsters who worked with employers against their members. Communist members of the union fought to rid the BLF of these thugs. On both sides of what later became a split in Communist ranks, were men who'd wrested control of the union from those violent gangsters in the 1950s.

Violence and threats occurred after a split in the ranks of Communists in the building industry, but it was not one-sided. Joe Ferguson's home was a boat he'd built at the quiet southern suburb of Como, when it was bombed and badly damaged. He ended his days living in public housing in Malabar.

An organiser for another union was shot in the stomach at a Sydney pub, mistaken for a BLF organiser. He died of his wounds after terrible suffering, but too long afterwards for his attacker, who had been drinking with Munday supporters immediately before the shooting, to be charged with murder.



*Norm Gallagher leading Builders Labourers in a union rally*

Munday himself tracked this writer's then partner, a former BLF media official, to the back alley exit of his office, and threatened to have him killed for acting as returning officer in a union election.

Despite this, when one of Munday's most prominent officials turned up at Johnny McNamara's site looking for work, McNamara did not apply the same treatment he'd received. He was given a job. McNamara, always a rank and file worker, was BLF President at the time.

Joe Owens and Bob Pringle worked in the industry for years after the intervention after a period when they and others were denied BLF membership.

There were some in the new NSW BLF who were not as accommodating as McNamara. When Joe Owens rejoined the union he was sacked from a job at the old Moore Park Showgrounds. An organiser ensured he was reinstated. Union secretary Steve Black demanded to know why the organiser supported Owens, who was generally well regarded by workers and organisers alike. "Because he's a member," the organiser replied. Owens kept his job.

Underlying all this was a bitter split in the communist movement. Munday was a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). Ferguson and McNamara were members of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA (M-L)).

By the 1970s, the CPA focussed on what would now be called “identity politics” and issues like the environment. (This isn't to suggest that issues like gay liberation, which Munday vocally supported, were unimportant, especially when being gay carried risk of gaol or murder.) The CPA was “mass party”, aligning itself with New Left ideologies and with Eurocommunist parties that focussed on parliament as a way to socialism, though there was struggle within it for a deeper analysis. It attacked the CPA (M-L) as “Maoist”. The CPA dissolved itself in 1991, against the wishes of many of its members. Munday, by then an environmental socialist, soon helped found the NSW Greens.

The CPA (M-L) used Marx's term, “revisionist”, to attack the CPA. Our party's name tells our allegiances. While every person makes mistakes, the ruling class inflates those of communists to a fabricated frenzy, equating leaders like Mao with fascists like Hitler. While some use the term “Maoist” as an insult, we hold Mao as a great leader, equal in stature to Marx and Lenin. His methods in leading the Chinese people to socialism, in the face of Japanese invasion, civil war and foreign intervention, taught our party that a communist party worthy of the name needs to do more than gain leadership of trade unions and celebrate the achievements of foreign socialist countries. We have to apply

detailed Marxist-Leninist analysis to Australia in its myriad of practical struggles, in order to serve the people effectively. We seek to build a Leninist vanguard party, with the indissoluble links to the masses described by Mao as being “fish in a sea of people”.

There is no doubt this all played out in the bitter dispute leading to, during and after the national intervention.

But the lessons are clear. While communists seek to lead the workers and help them sum up lessons they learn in struggle, unions must belong to their members.

At their worst unions have been political play things of the Labor Party. But mistaken views of unions as revolutionary vehicles rather than as part of the capitalist system, tolerated only while it suits capitalism, have done enormous damage on all sides.

### Corruption double standards

Now, let's look at corruption allegations. Norm Gallagher lived in a flat above the union office. With his own and friends' labour, he built his only home and one for his son, on what was then a very cheap block of land. He made a huge error in accepting loads of bricks and sand and loans of equipment from construction companies. This was normal practice throughout the building industry, but it left him vulnerable to allegations of taking bribes to build a “beach house”. Low angle camera shots on countless front pages converted a relatively modest home into a mansion.

The attacks were unrelenting. In 1981 Liberal Prime Minister Fraser instituted a Royal Commission against the BLF (one of a dizzying number against construction unions over the years). The Hawke Labor Government deregistered the union in 1986.

Compare this with the inaction over corruption costing people billions by banks. Unlike bank CEOs, none of whom have been charged, Gallagher was sentenced to prison for eighteen months, though he served less.

Never was evidence provided of Gallagher selling out his members in return. He retained their support. They

knew the union was militant and hated by the ruling class.

Again, and again he led them to corporate headquarters demanding multinational insurance companies pay up, or stopped concrete pours to ensure workers' wages, conditions and safety were guarded. He was gaoled numerous times for failing to bend his knee to the bosses, once gaoled for crediting his members' struggle for his release.

Jack Munday leaves a very strong legacy. He turned his back on communism, but not on struggle. He continued to fight for working class housing all his life. Like all of us, he was a human being affected by the capitalist system in which he lived.

Likewise, Norm Gallagher had his faults. His time in gaol, ill health, a waning revolutionary movement, his reputation trashed by an avalanche of ruling class lies, and finally isolation from the workers he had served all his adult life, saw him hit out at Marxist-Leninist leaders like John Cummins. Our party should not have interfered in internal union business to back Gallagher. It is testament to Cummo's generosity of spirit, and his deep commitment to communism and the revolutionary working class, that he overcame this to remain one of our standout leaders.

Once a Vice Chairperson of the CPA (M-L), Gallagher left the party not long before he died. Yet he never rejected his adherence to communism. He leaves a lifetime of struggle that will long be remembered by the people, and hated by the ruling class.

**Correction:** *this article originally omitted the fact, that Joe Owens and Bob Pringle and others were denied membership of the NSW BLF for some years after deregistration. It also wrongly intimated that Joe Ferguson ended his days in public housing because his boat was destroyed during the violence of the intervention. It was badly damaged, but he was able to rebuild it. The author would like to apologise for these errors. ■*

## Chips and Barley Wars Hotting Up

By Ned K. (23 May 2020)

**A**ustralian farmers grow potatoes and barley which give us hot chips and beer among other products. Now both are caught up in the intensifying trade wars within the chaotic worldwide capitalist "free trade" economies. China, a major importer of barley from Australia, slaps an 80% tariff on imports of barley from Australia, accusing Australia of dumping cheap barley in China to the detriment of barley producing farmers in China.

At the same time, Australian potato growers are "digging in" for an anti-dumping fight with another big power, the European Union, which threatens to flood the Australian market with potatoes in the form of frozen french fries. AUSVEG, representing the potato growers, claims that the dumping of frozen french fries from European Union countries is part of the Union's assistance package to farmers worth Australian \$1.08 billion.

AUSVEG estimate western Europe has about 2.6 million tonnes of excess potatoes due to the economic downturn during the Corona Virus period. Potato farmers in South Australia and the Riverina would be hit hard if the dumping of french fries goes ahead. It will also affect workers' jobs in potato processing plants which are mainly located in regional areas where full time jobs are hardest to find.

The pro-US media in Australia has made a bigger story out of the 80% tariff by China on Australian produced barley than the potential dumping of french fries from western Europe. No surprises there. The pro-US media has gone further and claimed that the 80% tariff put on barley is a political act in retaliation for the Morrison Government colluding with the Trump administration in the blame game on who is responsible for the Corona (continued pg.8)

(continued from pg.7)

Virus and the Morrison Government's demand for a so-called "independent inquiry" in to the origin of the virus.

The 80% tariff announcement was followed by a fear campaign by the media that soon there will be tariffs on imported iron ore, coal and even wine imposed by China.

Maybe that will occur, although unlikely on iron ore, as there is still a high demand for it in China.

Underlying these latest trade skirmishes is the on-going instability of the world capitalist system in its advanced but declining imperialist stage. Despite all the nice words about trade for mutual benefit between countries sprouted by China, the EU, Australia and others, the reality is that the biggest capitalist powers in particular act the same way. They look after the economic interests of their own ruling class first.

With respect to China this point has been hidden somewhat by the media blowing up the political motive behind China's 80% tariff on barley.

There is an arguable case that the tariff on barley by China and the very recent reduction in its import of coal is



to try and address its own internal economic crisis. The Corona Virus crisis caused among other things a reduction in orders of goods manufactured in China for export.

For example, "in Guangdong, a southern coastal province that alone would stand as one of Asia's top five economies, the situation is getting dire in some labor-intensive sectors that are more China's past than its future. In the dank back alleys of Dongguan, a metropolis with about as many people as New York city, small textile makers are struggling to survive. Thousands of migrant workers have already headed

back to China's poorer interior" (AFR 22 May).

This situation is repeated across industrial areas of China with the AFR claiming there are 50 million more out of work since the onset of the Corona Virus and the already existing trade war with the USA.

So, no surprise really to see the Chinese try and quell rising anxiety in the population about the sluggish economy by announcing protection of farmers against barley dumping and now protection of its own coal industry ahead of imported coal.

The timing of the 80% tariff on barley and the reduction in coal imports also came on the eve of the CCP Congress within which there are competing regional and economic sectional interests, as indeed there are in political houses of the bourgeoisie in Australia.

Marx said in his essay on Free Trade words to the effect that if he was asked which he preferred, protectionism or free trade, he went for free trade because it laid bare all the contradictions of capitalism. We are seeing an example of this before our very eyes. ■

## Agribusinesses Still Dominate Australian Agriculture

By Ned K. (31 May 2020)

**Ownership and control of agricultural land in Australia is an important part of the people's struggle for independence and socialism, especially with climate change likely to contract the total amount of agricultural land in Australia and indeed the whole planet.**

In the 1960s and early 1970s the First Peoples won a great victory regarding ownership and control of agricultural land with the seven-year Walk Off at Wave Hill against British cattle baron Lord Vestey. Vestey and another cattle baron, McAlpine, had seized control of about half the Northern Territory's agricultural land.

In 2020, corporate ownership of agricultural land has expanded across all States and Territories with the modern day Vestey's called 'agribusinesses'. Many of these are

controlled by the finance capital centres of world capitalism.

According to the May 2020 edition of *AgJournal*, the agribusinesses in Australia have continued to prosper during the Corona Virus period while other sectors of capitalism in Australia have shut up shop.

Old money, family-owned agricultural empires in Australia are fast disappearing. A symbol of this trend was the sale of Kidman family's 12 cattle stations to the Outback Beef/Hancock Prospecting conglomerate. This agribusiness is 65% owned by Gina Rinehart and 35% owned by Shanghai CRED, which trades in Australia in the name of Zenith Investment Holdings.

Gina Rinehart's track record as a "respectable corporate citizen" is well known. Less known is that Shanghai CRED breached an Indigenous Land Agreement on a cattle station in northern Western Australia. Shanghai

CRED is WA's biggest landholder, with extensive cattle stations in the Kimberley and the state's goldfield region and farm ownerships on the edge of the Wheat Belt.

However, contrary to the China-bashing pro-US mass media, Chinese ownership of agricultural land is minor compared with agribusinesses owned and controlled from North American and Western European finance capital interests.

The *AgJournal* May edition contained a list of the top 10 agribusinesses owning land and food processing in Australia with a few surprises in it.

Top 10 In Order of Asset Value:  
 1. Public Sector Pension Investments (PSP) from Canada. A superannuation management fund for Canadian police and other public servants. Asset value in Australian agriculture is \$3 billion  
 2. Macquarie Agriculture. A division of Macquarie Financial Services. Asset

value of \$2.7 billion in agriculture in Australia

3. Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America and College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA - CREF). This New York based investor is the biggest investor in agriculture globally. Asset value in Australian agriculture is \$1.7 billion.

4. Rural Funds Group. Asset value in Australian agriculture is \$950 million. Major shareholders appear to be Australian based. The Group has large scale investment in cotton, almond orchards, beef and vineyards across four states.

5. Warakirri Asset Management. Manages agricultural investments for major superannuation funds, include the retail workers' fund REST. Asset value in Australian agriculture is \$800 million. It has extensive property ownership in the dairy country of western Victoria and the south east of South Australia. It is also one of the largest grain-growing owners in the country.

6. Outback Beef/Hancock Prospecting. Asset value in Australian agriculture is \$800 million. These interests complement Gina Rinehart's extensive mining interests and mineral exports to China in particular.

7. Australian Agricultural Company. Asset value in Australian agriculture of \$738 million. This British owned agribusiness was started in Australia in 1824 by a British Act of Parliament. It still "owns" 1% of the Australian land mass with cattle stations sprawling across the NT and Queensland.

8. North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO). Asset value in Australian

agriculture is \$650 million. This agribusiness was started in 1877 and is majority owned by the Queensland Government's Queensland Investment Corporation.

9. Consolidated Pastoral Company (CPC). Assets value in Australian agriculture of \$600 million. It is owned by a private equity company from the UK, Terra Firma Capital Partners. It is in agriculture for speculative purposes, selling off properties to the highest bidder. Recently it sold cattle stations in WA and Queensland to a company calling itself Clean Agriculture And International Tourism which is a Vietnam based investment group.

10. Hancock Agricultural Investment Group. Assets value in Australian agriculture of \$600 million. This Group manages \$US3.1 billion worth of farmland globally including substantial holdings in California, Mid-West and Mississippi Delta regions.

There are another ten agribusinesses not far behind these Top 10 by asset value. By land mass value, the pecking order changes slightly but the players are the same.

The corporate nature of agriculture ownership has created a large rural First Peoples led working class which creates the surplus value and profits for these agribusinesses. As can be seen in the Top 10 list, a lot of the wealth created ends up overseas, following the pattern of Vestey in the days when British imperialist interests were dominant in Australian agriculture.

The struggles at Wave Hill by First Australians with their seven-year strike to win back their land is very relevant today. ■

## The crisis proves public ownership is needed

By John S. (12 May 2020)

**T**he COVID-19 crisis has exposed, yet again, the complete failure of the capitalist economic system to meet the needs of the Australian people.

Virgin Airlines has collapsed. Politicians whine about the potential lack of competition, and about how regional centres will be serviced, because the transport system only services profitable routes.

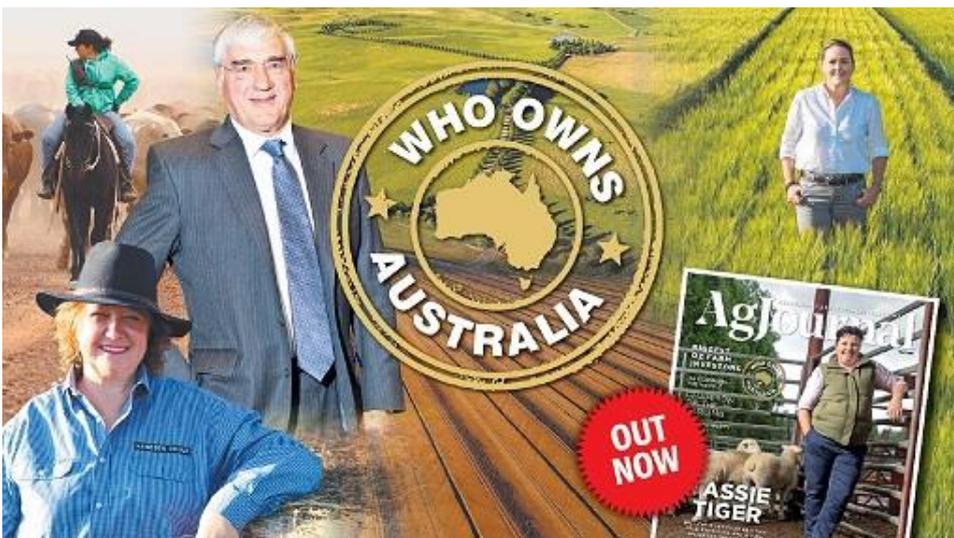
World oil prices have temporarily collapsed, but petrol prices still fluctuate wildly, and the full savings have not been passed on to consumers. The multinational oil companies forever price-gouge.

Globalisation has meant that multinational companies export capital and jobs to the lowest wage countries in the chase for maximum profit. Countries like Australia are left with an emasculated manufacturing industry, and are at the mercy of international supply chains. We can't get what we need, especially in a crisis, when, in reality, we could easily produce things here if people's welfare, not profit, were the motivation.

The transport of needed goods is at risk in any crisis, because 98% of the shipping to and from Australia is foreign-owned. We don't even control our international transport system.

For years, the multinational natural gas producers have sold our gas overseas to the highest bidders, leaving Australia short of gas, even though we are one of the world's biggest suppliers.

For years, Australians have been ripped off by big companies price-gouging our power and water supplies. Privately-owned power companies continue to use polluting coal and drag their feet in investing in renewable energy. The world needs to use less energy and use it more efficiently, yet our system is run by companies that  
(continued pg.10)



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want to sell as much power as possible, as expensively as they can get away with.

Australia's banking system is privately-owned, run solely for profit, and at the mercy of intentional financial capital and its prices.

We clearly need these fundamental services under Australian control, and run for the public good, not for profit.

In the past, there were many state-owned enterprises providing power, water, banking, rail and airline services. While their main purpose was to oil the capitalist system, they did enable governments to provide some better basic services to the people.

In the recent decades, these have been steadily privatised to give private capital the opportunity to make more and more money.

The upshot is worse and more expensive services for Australians.

These basic services should be nationalised – run by the public, for the public. This could happen now if governments were willing. And they could be very efficient and effective if run by the workers rather than just by bureaucrats.

However, we know that capitalists will not accept their cash-cows being taken away and brought under public ownership. Their mouthpieces in the media will scream about 'big government', "inefficiency", "the sanctity of private property", "the superiority of private enterprise" etc

And, while some publicly-owned services would be an improvement, the rest of the capitalist system would continue to operate purely in pursuit of profit. Workers would still be exploited; jobs would be insufficient and insecure; capital would be invested in the most profitable speculation rather than productive endeavours; the planet would continue to be exploited beyond its sustainability.

In the end, we need a total change of system – an economic system based on meeting the needs of the people and the planet, not based on the pursuit of profit.

Social ownership – socialism is imperative. Not capitalism – the dominance of private capital. ■

## People's War – People's Movement: 50 Years On

By Alice M. (8 May 2020)

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Moratorium mass rallies across Australia during 1970.**

The Vietnam War Moratorium mass movement was a united front of Australian people from many different walks of life, opposing military conscription and Australia's involvement in US aggression against the people of Vietnam fighting for national liberation and self-determination. It was an anti-imperialist movement.

The Vietnam War movement emerged in 1962 and grew from a handful of activists into a nationwide mass struggle throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1970 under immense pressure and persistence by the majority of Australian people the Liberal government started to withdraw Australian troops from Vietnam. In 1972 the newly elected Whitlam Labor government finalised the withdrawal of all troops and ended conscription.

The unyielding resistance of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam inspired and mobilised struggle against US imperialism around the world. The global struggles against the Vietnam War and US imperialism were part of the worldwide movement and

rebellion against imperialism and capitalism in that period.

Organisation of the nationwide 8th May Moratorium mass rallies across Australia was the culmination of years of mass work, protests, and wide ranging activism by broad cross sections of Australian people. Mass resistance and civil disobedience, defying and breaking laws; arrests and imprisonments; strikes and stop work meetings by workers, unions, university and school students; militant protests outside US embassies and corporations; occupations of universities, US chemical and weapons companies and magistrate courts; signing petitions, letterboxing millions of homes, street meetings and public protests, passionate discussions and arguments in homes, workplaces and in the community, characterised a vibrant and dynamic people's movement.

### The Vietnamese people's struggle for national liberation and socialism

The Vietnamese people's war against US imperialism was an extension of their long revolutionary struggle for national liberation from French colonialism and Japanese militarism. In the early 1950s, the US, alarmed at the French defeats at the hands of heroic Vietnamese people, intervened to help the French colonialists to crush the national liberation struggle. In early 1954 the



2020 marks 50 years since the mass mobilisations of the Moratorium Campaign against the Vietnam War

Vietnamese people, led by Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam, overthrew French colonial rule. The US saw an opportunity for themselves to replace the French as the foreign power controlling Vietnam.

Vietnam was temporarily divided into two zones at the 17th parallel, with elections scheduled within two years. However, the US and its puppet South Vietnamese governments ensured no elections were held. Instead, for the next 20 years the US installed and bankrolled a succession of corrupt and brutal puppet regimes unleashing a reign of terror on the people of Vietnam.

“US leaders had no intention of allowing a free election because they knew - President Eisenhower actually made the admission – that more than 80 per cent of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh against former emperor and pro-Western puppet Bao Dai. Washington swiftly wheeled in a new stooge, Ngo Dinh Diem, a Vietnamese aristocrat living in New York with absolutely no following in Vietnam. Diem, described by President Johnson as the ‘Churchill of Vietnam’, immediately cancelled the elections promised for July 1956.” (Joan Coxedge, *Background to the Vietnam War*)

In 1960, Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam provided political leadership for the formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. The NLF was a united front of many groups in South Vietnam – peasants, urban and rural workers, health workers, teachers, doctors, engineers, Buddhists, patriots, Communists, liberals. Guerrilla resistance by the National Liberation Front to US occupation and the brutal puppet government strengthened and intensified.

By 1967 the US had sent 485,600 soldiers and military personnel to crush the Vietnamese people’s fight for national liberation. The US dropped more bombs on Vietnam than the overall number of bombs dropped on Europe during WW2. The US sprayed more than 21 million gallons of toxic defoliants and herbicides over South Vietnamese villages and



*Fighters of the National Liberation Front fly the flag during the capture of Saigon marking victory for the Vietnamese people in 1975*

countryside to uncover and flush out the NLF guerrilla fighters. The defoliants included the most poisonous chemicals Agent Orange and Dioxin. In ten years nearly 400,000 tons of napalm was dropped on the Vietnamese people.

#### **“All the way with LBJ” – Australia follows Uncle Sam**

In 1962 the Australian government, a compliant and loyal ally of the US since WW2, dispatched 30 military advisors to serve alongside the US army and its South Vietnamese puppet government forces. In 1964 the US called again on its most obedient “ally” to start sending combat troops to South Vietnam. The Australian government jumped to the US command and, even before parliament officially declared war on Vietnam in 1965, the National Service Act (conscription) was legislated in November 1964, making it compulsory for all 20-year-old males to register for national service to fight in Vietnam.

On a visit to the US in June 1966 the Australian PM Harold Holt pledged Australia’s servitude to the US and its President Lyndon Johnson, proudly declaring Australia was “all the way with LBJ”.

Between 1965 and 1972 about 60,000 Australia ground troops, naval and air force men were sent to fight in South Vietnam. 521 Australian soldiers were killed and 3,000 wounded.

#### **Struggle, unity, resistance and mobilisation against the Vietnam War**

The 8th May 1970 Vietnam War Moratoriums are mainly known for the mass rallies that drew between 150,000-200,000 people into the streets of cities and regional centres across the country. They were the biggest protests in Australia’s history up to that time.

The 8th May mass mobilisations were the culmination of many years of organised work and struggle by tens of thousands. It was a broad and diverse anti-war movement engaging and uniting people from different walks of life, political views and backgrounds.

The political direction of the anti-war movement was constantly discussed, vigorously argued and tested in practice. Calls for the defeat of US imperialism and support for the National Liberation Front and the Vietnamese people’s armed struggle for national liberation were widely explained, promoted and acted on. With experience, and increasing exposures of US aggression and growing respect for the heroic Vietnamese people, calls to end US imperialist aggression and Australia’s subservience to US imperialism were more widely accepted.

Many in the anti-war movement understood the necessity for principled unity to build a broad mass movement (*continued pg.12*)

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on key demands. In the unity and struggle within this broad united front, anti-imperialist working class politics were vigorously promoted.

Opposition to Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War had started in 1962 and built up almost immediately after parliament passed the National Services Act (conscription) in 1964. At first a small number of women set up *Save our Sons*, a national network of women opposing conscription. A few young men started to refuse to register or declared themselves conscientious objectors. By 1972 more than 100 draft resisters and conscientious objectors were in hiding or served time in gaol under the Crimes Act. Many were on the run for years, protected and hidden in people's homes and union offices.

Hundreds of active grass roots anti-Vietnam War groups and organisations sprung up across the country in workplaces and unions, schools, universities, religious organisations, communities and neighbourhoods. Organising local discussion groups, public meetings and rallies in workplaces, communities and neighbourhoods. There were millions of homes letterboxed and poster paste ups during the night. Anti-war concerts, performances and street theatre in the suburbs and shopping centres.

### Stop Work to Stop the War!

The core and backbone of the anti-Vietnam War movement in Australia was the organised working class and militant unions without whom the movement could not have grown in numbers, militancy and strength. Militant workers and unions led and inspired the anti-war movement.



*Some anti-war activists took explicitly anti-imperialist positions openly supporting the victory of the Vietnamese people against US imperialism*

Workers' and unions' call to *Stop Work to Stop the War* echoed across the country. Wharfies, seafarers, metal workers, plumbers, printers, electricians, shearers, mining workers, food workers, teachers, meat workers, railway and tramway workers, public servants stopped work to attend rallies. In factories, offices, schools and universities motions and resolutions calling for an end to conscription and the Vietnam War were enthusiastically supported. Hundreds of thousands signed petitions.

As early as 1966, builders' labourers, wharfies and seamen, led by Communists, regularly walked off the job in opposition to conscription and US imperialism.

Wharfies and seafarers in Melbourne and Newcastle refused to load and crew the military cargo ships *Boonaroo* and *Jeparit* bound for Vietnam. In Sydney, seafarers placed a ban on U.S. warships. The nation wide Penal Powers struggle led by Clarrie O'Shea and the Victorian Tramways Union members in May 1969 inspired and instilled confidence in workers, unions and many others.

The working class was active in the political class struggle against imperialist wars, echoing Clarrie O'Shea a year earlier that "[i]f the workers confine themselves merely to

economic questions, they confine themselves in a very narrow sphere. It is necessary to go further than mere economic questions. For myself, I believe you must end capitalism altogether...It is all coming to a great fight. And I believe the workers and working people must prepare for this."

### The power of mass movements

It was a truly broad united front mass movement. People joined in activities at all levels from signing petitions, attending local suburban meetings and rallies, holding meetings in workplaces, people's homes and streets. For years angry and militant protests were held outside the US embassies and consulates, calling out "Yankee Go Home". US flags were burned and public declarations of independence from US imperialism were made outside US Consulates on the 4th July. Occupations in universities, schools, government offices and even a Melbourne Magistrates' court.

Defying the Crimes Act and the threat of long gaol sentences, workers and students publicly collected funds for the Communist led National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

By 1969, the majority of Australian people were calling for our troops to be brought home from Vietnam. More

young men refused to register or declared themselves as conscientious objectors.

In early 1970 a national Vietnam Moratorium committee was formed. It was an organisational expression of the united front mass movement of hundreds of grass roots and official organisations (unions) united on immediate demands to end conscription, withdraw Australia from the war and end Australia's support for US imperialism and the US-Australia alliance.

On 8th May close to 200,000 people poured into the streets of major cities and regional centres demanding an end to the war. In Melbourne 100,000 took over the streets of five city blocks and sat down in the centre of the city. The sheer numbers of protestors from different walks of life shocked and paralysed the 1,000 police hiding behind state parliament, on standby ready to provoke and attack the protestors, make mass arrests and break up the march.

In Adelaide the 8th May

Moratorium rally led to the 4th July becoming an annual expression of anti-imperialist action. In Sydney tens of thousands of workers, teachers and students walked out and marched through city streets and sat down in the middle of the city.

The peaceful rallies on 8th May were in stark contrast to Moratorium rallies held later in the year with police removing their badges and viciously attacking protestors.

By 1972 the Vietnamese people were winning the war against US imperialist aggression, bolstering confidence of the anti-war movements across the world, including Australia.

The consistent and patient mass work over the years amongst workers and in communities laid the groundwork for significant growth and success of the campaign against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. It was the independent mass movement of tens of thousands relying on mass mobilisations, not parliament, that ended conscription and Australia's involvement in the



*The Moratorium marches were the largest protest mobilisations in Australia's history at that time*

Vietnam War.

The 1960s and early 1970s Vietnam War struggles galvanised the fight to end US imperialist control of Australia. The legacy of the anti-Vietnam War campaign and mass movement holds many lessons for us today in the unfinished struggle to end US domination in the fight for an independent socialist Australia. ■

# Australian Communist

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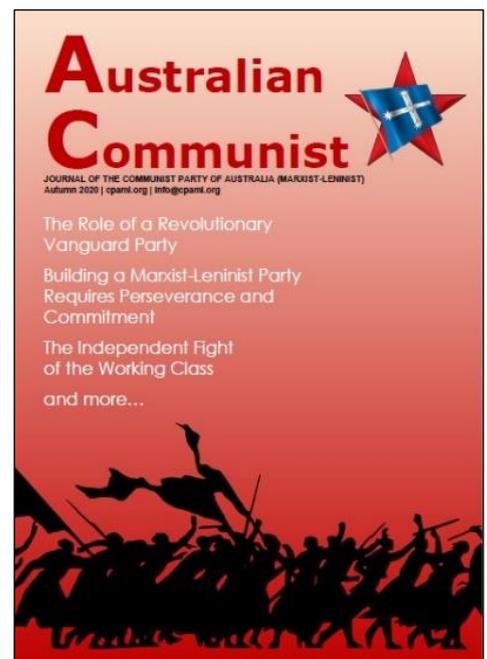
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## ICOR Resolution:



INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF  
REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

# 75 Years Victory Over Fascism

**O**n 8 May 1945, the Second World War ended in Europe. The Red Army of the socialist Soviet Union defeated the fascist “Third Reich“ and was the driving force for the liberation of millions in the occupied countries, concentration camps and prisons. It made the liberation of entire peoples possible and the construction of people's democracies in Eastern Europe.

On 8 May 1945, German Hitler-fascism capitulated. The Second World War had wreaked havoc on all continents for six years and claimed over 60 million lives, and still years after the end of the war, it left immeasurable misery and death. However, the result of the heroic struggle and victory over fascism was that the peoples in the countries under capitalist rule stepped up their struggle for national liberation against imperialism, and in the countries of people's democracies intensified the struggle for building up socialism. So, one-third of humanity was liberated from imperialism and capitalism, and people's democracies and socialism were constructed!

For anti-communist reasons, the capitalist Western Allies had hesitated for a long time to enter this war against Hitler because they wanted the aggressive German imperialism to fight against and defeat the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union and its allies among the workers and broad masses all over the world. They had not succeeded in this with the War of Intervention from 1918 to 1920 supporting the White Terror. Again, they had not reckoned with the working class and the broad masses in the Soviet Union. They struggled and defeated Hitler together with the heroic resistance of the communists and partisans of the European countries in the firm conviction of constructing socialism in their own country.

Fascism is the deadly enemy of the working class and the peoples of the world, of socialism and communism and their organizations. Imperialism and colonialism are the womb out of which fascism always emerges anew. In the lee of the present Corona crisis too, the fascist and proto-fascist governments, as in Hungary, Brazil, Israel, India and Turkey, are attempting to organize the transition to fascism or have built up a fascist system. In further imperialist countries like the USA, Germany, France or Great Britain the rightward development of the governments is also continuing to develop and has attained acceptance for proto-fascist ideas among certain parts of the population. At the head of this development is US imperialism.

In different parts of the world fascism has increased under the cover of the Corona crisis.

May 8/9, August 6 (Hiroshima Day) and September 1 (beginning of World War II) are the international days of struggle against fascism and war for the ICOR.

"Every nation can celebrate this day in its own way. But the essence remains the same: Down with fascism! Down with capitalist wars!" (from a call by KSRD Ukraine)

As revolutionary world organization, the ICOR promotes the socialist revolution and the construction of socialism, democracy and freedom in the entire world. Celebrating 75 years of the victory over fascism and learning from this today means putting all our efforts into strengthening the revolutionary movement in the world, as is stated in the Founding Resolution: “The desire and search for a society liberated from exploitation and oppression has to become a force for changing society which overcomes the basic evil of the imperialist world system.“

***Onward with the construction of the anti-imperialist and antifascist united front!***

***Onward with the construction of strong revolutionary parties and organizations worldwide!***

***Onward with the construction of the ICOR!***

***Onward to democracy, freedom and socialism!***

*The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is an affiliate of the ICOR (International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations). The CPA (M-L) signed on to this resolution along with 28 other organisations around the world.*

