

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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Vanguard expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist - Leninist)

Class struggle never ceases

by Bill F.

At the same time as they're sharpening their knives for the next round of anti-worker legislation and union-bashing, the ruling class in Australia pushes the myth that class struggle is old-hat and outdated.

What they really mean is *our* class struggle, not theirs. In fact, "they only call it 'class struggle' when workers fight back."

This ruling class represents the interests of the biggest multinationals and corporate monopolies, together with their local agents and apologists in the mass media and parliamentary parties.

They serve the globalisation agenda of modern imperialism in its crisis of overproduction and surplus capital seeking to intensify exploitation and capture new markets.

Trade unions

Since the election of the Abbott government an intense ideological and political attack has been launched that goes far beyond the organised section of the working class in trade unions.

Certainly, unions are a prime target, as the ruling class well knows that militant struggle by informed and mobilised workers gives confidence to the whole class and carries a greater promise of success than trade-off deals and drawn out legal proceedings.

Hence there is the wide-ranging Royal Commission into trade unions, headed by the arch-reactionary former High Court Judge Dyson Heydon, ostensibly to examine governance and corruption issues in the union movement, but in reality a kangaroo court to justify smashing the most organised unions and intimidating the rest.

Leading up to the announcement of the Royal Commission and continuing every week since, there has been a concerted media campaign by the Murdoch and Fairfax monopolies against the level of wages, penalty rates and working conditions of ordinary workers in a number of industries.

Workers at Ford, GMH, Toyota, SPC



Ardmona and many in the retail sector have been branded as over-paid bludgers that are driving profitable businesses to the wall.

Yet the real bludgers and parasites in society are the big business bosses and finance moguls that enrich themselves from the labour of others while sticking their snouts in the trough of government subsidies and tax concessions.

Who's "unproductive"? Which class can society do without?

A pincer attack

No attack on the working class is ever complete without the back-stabbing and the back-peddling of what used to be called 'social democrats'. (The socialist bit was dumped decades ago; the democratic bit goes into hiding during pre-selection time)

Back-stabbing of the working class was delivered by Paul Howes, national secretary of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) when he grovelled before the National Press Club.

Puffed up with more self-importance than a cane toad, Howes endorsed the anti-union beat-up and even said that some sections of the working class were overpaid! No such issues with workers in his union!

He went on to advocate another sell-out "accord", this time between the union movement and the anti-worker Abbott government.

Mussolini, you've got to admire this bloke's style!

The back-peddling was delivered by the former AWU national secretary,

Workers are entitled to a share of the wealth their labour creates.

Under capitalism, there is no such things as a 'fair share', only what can be won and held in struggle. Whatever is won today has to be defended tomorrow. Security is only temporary, the spectre of unemployment flares and dims as the system cycles from crisis to recovery and back to crisis again.

Nevertheless, workers have expectations, hopes and deep-seated feelings that they are entitled to a decent life.

These aspirations need to be expressed in the workplace and community struggles which will inevitably break out as the anti-worker onslaught is rolled out.

They need to be taken up and hammered by the trade union movement if it is to become more than just an appendage of the Labor Party.

- Safe, secure, sustainable jobs
- Affordable, decent housing
- Cheap and accessible public healthcare services
- High quality public education
- Safe, reliable and efficient public transport

Workers are entitled to these things, but they're always out of reach. That's why class struggle never ceases.

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SPC Ardmona – ideology before people's livelihoods

by **Duncan B.**

The Shepparton Preserving Company was established by growers in the early 1900's to process locally grown fruit from the Goulburn Valley. In 1917 SPC incorporated as an unlisted public company, while Ardmona started in 1921.

In 2002 SPC and Ardmona merged to become SPC Ardmona. In 2004 SPC Ardmona bought the Henry Jones IXL jam company.

In 2005 Coca Cola Amatil (CCA), acquired SPC Ardmona for \$650 million, as a result of a decision taken by CCA in 2004 to move into food manufacturing.

Times have been tough for many years for SPC Ardmona. As early as



SPC workers to be diced and crushed

1990, SPC reported a \$25 million loss. Job losses and pay cuts for the workers helped get the company back in the black.

In addition there has been the 10 years



Goulburn Valley. SPC Ardmona adds \$165 million to the region. 3000 direct and indirect jobs are at stake. About 50% of the region's fruit growers would go out of business if SPC Ardmona closed.

Shepparton cannot afford to lose SPC Ardmona. The population of Shepparton is 30,000, with 62,000 in the greater Shepparton area. Nine percent of the population is unemployed, and a quarter of the population is on benefits.

There are 70 empty shops in the shopping centre. There are many small businesses such as maintenance contractors relying on SPC Ardmona.

When rejecting SPC Ardmona's application, Abbott also attacked SPC's workplace agreement with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Abbott and Treasurer Joe Hockey tried to paint the wages and conditions of SPC Ardmona's workers as 'extraordinary' and "over-generous."

SPC Ardmona itself released information to refute Abbott's claims.

Even Dr. Sharman Stone, the Liberal Federal member for Murray which takes in Shepparton, very bravely condemned Abbott and Hockey's attacks on the SPC workers in no uncertain terms, saying that their attacks on the workers "were not the truth." No doubt she will suffer for her honesty at the hands of Abbott and the Liberal Party machine the next time pre-selection comes around.

Coca Cola Amatil is faced with a decision whether to use its own balance sheet to fix SPC Ardmona or to sell the company. A decision is expected in late February.

In a late development, the Victorian Government announced on Feb 13 that it will put up \$22 million as an investment subject to CCA meeting certain conditions. SPC Ardmona will have to continue to employ 500 people for 5 years or will have to pay the money back.

Australia cannot afford to lose another important sector of manufacturing industry. We are facing the loss of Ford, GMH and Toyota in the car industry. The Alcoa aluminium plant and the Shell refinery in Geelong (Vic) are both likely to close.

The workers in these industries and those who rely on them such as small business people are at the mercy of the multinational owners of these companies.

When they are making profits everything is great, when the profits stop, they shut up shop and throw the workers and others on the scrap heap.

An independent Australia is needed where production will be for the benefit of the people and not the profits of the multinationals.

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:

Vanguard Editorial Staff
PO Box 196, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065

Vanguard strives to provide a Marxist analysis of Australian society, economy and politics. An important aspect of developing this analysis is an intimate knowledge of and close involvement in all aspects of Australian struggle.

The cost of producing a national newspaper is considerable. Readers are encouraged to contribute whatever they can by sending donations to the above address.

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of drought, the rising Australian dollar, the change of consumer preferences away from tinned fruit, the increase in imports of canned foods and the growth of supermarket house brands.

Under the first year of CCA ownership, SPC benefited from the synergies achieved in putting the businesses together. However, SPC Ardmona has only posted one very good full year result in the past eight years. In other years it has been a drain on CCA's earnings.

SPC's profits declined in 2010 and CCA copped \$110 million in restructuring costs to get rid of old stock and surplus workers. In 2012 CCA wrote down the value of SPC by \$48 million.

Restructuring and redundancies failed to stop the rot. This led CCA to seek a \$25 million innovation grant from the Federal Government to allow a move away from canned products to plastic packaging and to develop new products.

The Federal Government money would have been matched by \$25 million from the Victorian Government and \$90 million from CCA's own pocket.

However the Abbott government rejected CCA's application. Abbott said, "This is a government that will make sure that the restructuring that some Australian businesses need, some Australian sectors need, is led by business as it should be."

A commentator in the *Weekly Times* (5 Feb) summed up the reasons for the Government's decision. He wrote "It's basically an ideological decision. No longer should the tax-payer bail out profitable multinational businesses – especially those where the government thinks the union has too much influence."

He went on to say, "But the PM's decision puts the entire Goulburn Valley on the line. Everyone from factory workers, growers, pickers, truckies to those in retail."

The loss of SPC would devastate the

Editorial

50th Anniversary of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)

by Nick G.

March 15, 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist).

The founding of our Party marked the formal reconstitution of the Communist Party of Australia as a genuinely Marxist party after it had succumbed to revisionism. The former CPA was founded on October 30, 1920.

The break between modern revisionism and Marxism-Leninism in Australia occurred within the context of an international struggle over the correct direction of the communist movement.

That led to opponents of our Party labelling us as “Peking-liners”, “pro-Peking” and “Maoists”.

The impression was conveyed that the rupture in the Australian communist movement was merely a reflection of external events with the respective sides in that dispute having allegiance not to the Australian working class but to one or other of the two main centres of the international struggle.

Australian conditions determined the need to break with revisionism

In fact, the basis of the rupture within the ranks of Australian communists was a set of contradictions internal to the former Communist Party of Australia.

Organisational, politically and ideologically those contradictions had become antagonistic by virtue of the revisionist position of the main leaders of the former CPA.

Had there been no differences in the international communist movement, those Australian contradictions would have still existed and had their own life and their own process of development and resolution.

Organisational, the former CPA practised open membership and had party branches based on suburban and regional localities.

This lent itself to involvement in local, state and federal election campaigns, to a blurring of the distinction between the parliamentary and revolutionary purposes and goals of organisation.

Politically, the former CPA tended to view the ALP as a working class party by virtue of its ties to the trade unions and its mass electoral base.

Equally erroneous was the view that the ALP was a “two-class party”, which could simultaneously exist as a bourgeois and a proletarian party.

This lent itself to the pursuit of joint membership between the two parties, to

support for the Labor Party as a reform party sharing a socialist objective, to not wanting to “embarrass” Labor in office by pursuing the independent agenda of the working class.

It lent itself to minimising the differences in the demands of the two parties so as to facilitate their cooperation and unity, and always at the expense of the demands of the CPA rather than of the ALP.

Ideologically, the former CPA tended to embrace peaceful transition to socialism, placed undue emphasis on the position held by certain big Australian families and monopoly groups in the Australian economy and state, and lost its clarity on the decisive questions of the state and revolution.

It took on board the ideas of a number of pseudo-Marxist and even anti-Marxist theoreticians in preference to continued study of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and ridiculed and rejected the great contributions to Marxist theory of Mao Zedong.

This lent itself to the vulnerability of the former CPA to the revisionism of Khrushchev, and at a later stage, to the revisionism of the so-called Euro-communist movement.

Reconstituting the Communist Party

In order to reconstitute the former CPA on a firmly Marxist-Leninist foundation, and in order to enable Australian communists to continue the great work begun in 1920, Comrade E.F. Hill and others in the early collective leadership of the CPA(M-L) consciously proceeded to set themselves apart from the revisionist organisation, politics and ideology of the old party.

Apart from a small number of leading comrades, the majority of members were advised not to disclose their connection to the Party.

This served a two-fold purpose. One was to enhance Party members’ personal security in the event of a fascist crackdown on communists.

The other was to enable members to more effectively conduct political work without the encumbrance of a label that was often rejected out of sheer ignorance or fear.

Instead of large location-based branches, members would be organised as far as possible into workplace or industry and occupational cells of around three or four people.

This was designed to lend itself to the organisation of advanced workers



at the point of production and to enable informed leadership of the developing class struggle.

Politically, the correct Marxist characterisation of the ALP as a party of capitalism emerged.

This freed the new organisation from the tailism of the old party and placed initiative and leadership squarely on the new party’s agenda.

Thus, amongst other things, the great battle to defeat the penal powers led by Party vice-chairman and Victorian Tramways Union leader Clarrie O’Shea unfolded after thorough preparation by leading comrades.

There was clarification of the distinction between parliamentary reformism and revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class.

Ideologically, the new party adhered to the essentials of the revolutionary theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, with proper acknowledgement of the great significance of Mao Zedong Thought.

The pacifism that had come to characterise the old Party’s approach to the peace movement was rejected in favour of support for anti-imperialist people’s struggles.

On March 8th, International Women’s Day, people of the world celebrate and honour the achievements and struggles of women for economic and social liberation, justice and equality.

In Australia, decades of struggle by women have won limited pay equality, rights to publicly funded child care, women’s reproductive rights, and rights to employment, education, superannuation and sex discrimination laws.

However, rights are difficult to enforce under capitalism where the power is held by big business monopolies. The few gains made by women are never permanent and always under pressure from capital to ignore or dismantle altogether.

Working class women carry the heaviest burden. The majority are in lowly paid jobs, on processing lines, in call centres, in shops and stores, cleaners in hotels and offices, and carers

The dominant position of US imperialism within the Australian ruling class was identified and the subsequent characterisation of the Australian revolution as a two-stage revolution under direct working class leadership was developed.

Importantly, there was a thorough exposure and rejection of the bourgeois ideology of trade unionism which sought to impose on the struggles of the workers an acceptance of the permanence of capitalism.

Trade union ideology tended to lead to the structural separation of the great body of trade union officials, through the perks and perks of office and the daily grind of working within the legal and political circumstances of the prevailing industrial and political system, from the grass roots members of trade union organisations.

To have survived for a half century is a testament to the founding leaders of the CPA (M-L), to their courage and wisdom in moving to reject revisionism and uphold correct revolutionary Marxism.

To be able to look back on those fifty years is a testament to those members and adherents of the CPA (M-L) who took up its cause in the years since its founding, including some of the excellent young members of today who cannot yet count their membership on the fingers of one hand.

Our comrades of the past may be gone, but they live on in the work of our Party and in the enthusiasm of our members for the great cause of anti-imperialist independence and socialism.

All power to the working class!

Workers of all lands, unite!

Women’s battles never stop

in nursing homes. Many are migrants. Women make up more than half of part-time workers and casuals and are the first to be sacked.

Women are also unpaid primary carers of children, families, the sick and elderly. The overwhelming majority of single parents are women living on poverty line.

The present crisis of imperialist monopoly capital is unleashing savage attacks on people’s economic and social livelihoods. Working class women are at the pointy end of these attacks.

Women in the developing nations and countries ravaged by imperialist wars of occupation are in intense and bitter struggles against the economic and social oppression of neo-colonialism, semi-feudalism and imperialism in all their forms.

Liberation from neo-colonialism, imperialism and monopoly capital is the only road for women of the world to take and move towards socialism.

Opposition to TPP growing across the Asia-Pacific region

by Bill F.

The long saga over the Trans Pacific Trade Agreement (TPP) was supposed to be well finished by now, but growing resistance from the people in the various participating countries has blown out the timetable for this US-inspired devious trade pact.

Substantial opposition has broken out in the United States as well, as many people there see the TPP, quite rightly, as a deal to enhance the profits of the biggest multinational corporations at the expense of smaller and medium-sized domestic companies.

American workers fear the impact on jobs, wages and conditions, farmers and manufacturers fear cheap imported products will cripple them, and others are concerned for environmental protections and internet privacy and patents on medicines – the same things that threaten us.

In response to the building wave of opposition, and in a significant rebuff to President Obama, more than 170 members of the US Congress have said they will vote against his plan to “fast-track” approval for the TPP and other pending trade deals.

“Fast-track” means that Congress could only vote Yes or No without any amendments.

Whether this will greatly delay the TPP, or the bullies will ram it through anyway, we will have to wait and see.

Meanwhile, advisors and trade bureaucrats have been meeting in Singapore to smooth the way for their Trade Ministers, including Australia’s Andrew Robb, to sign the final documents.

Behind the scenes, US diplomats and trade envoys have been busy doing



Rally against TPP in Malaysia

the rounds, putting pressure on the more reluctant countries to withdraw their objections to some sections and clauses.

Australia

Needless to say, Australia has few, if any, objections to anything US imperialism wants, and Prime Minister Abbott is slavering to get it signed as soon as possible.

Here, too, organised opposition to the TPP has been building, as those sections of it revealed by WikiLeaks have become more common knowledge, confirming the worst fears of many and shocking those who have just learned about it.

For several years, organisations such as Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET), the ACTU, some trade unions and Spirit of Eureka have been agitating against the TPP.

Now they are being joined by new groups, including farmers, small producers, students and people concerned about copyright laws and threats to cultural diversity, etc.

Interestingly, some sections of the left that regard Australia as an ‘imperialist country’ and have until now largely

ignored this issue, are starting to realise that Australia is itself a target/victim of imperialism.

In Melbourne, 140 people attended an informative public meeting on February 5, followed by a rally of similar size in the late afternoon of February 7.

Speakers at both events presented detailed information and urged people to continue to alert their families, friends and workmates.

A leaflet distributed at the rally said, in part, “Foreign investors, multinational corporations and foreign banks will be empowered to sue our governments for hundreds of millions of dollars where local laws and regulations restrict their profit making.

“The US driven TPP is only about giving multinational corporations more freedom to exploit people and plunder the environment.

“Under the TPP more local jobs will vanish. Our hard won wages, working conditions and workplace rights will be attacked, even harder. More local jobs, skills, scientific and technical expertise will be trampled down or sent overseas.

“Our environment will be trashed by the plunder of multinational mining corporations. Australia’s manufacturing,

services and agricultural industries will be wiped out. The livelihoods of local farmers and rural communities will be destroyed. Public health and public education will be gutted. The cost of medicines will go up. Food labelling would no longer be enforceable.

“The cost of living for the people will go up. Local culture and the livelihoods of our cultural workers will be drowned by the flood of imported US commercialised “culture”. Multinational agri-business corporations will overrule our standards on clean, safe and GM free food.”

The leaflet concluded with the words, **“Tell the government “don’t sign TPP!”**

Another rally was held outside Parliament House in Canberra on February 11, organised by Civil Liberties Australia who are calling for a national referendum on the TPP. Speakers included Labor MP Kelvin Thomson, Greens Senators Scott Ludlam and Peter Whish-Wilson and historian Humphrey McQueen.

Struggle will intensify

The political domination of Australia by US imperialism is enshrined by the ANZUS Treaty and the military domination completed by the permanent presence of US marines and an expanding network of bases and ports.

All of this is encouraged and assisted by both the Coalition and the Labor Party.

If the TPP does get ticked off, it will formalise and accelerate the economic domination of US imperialism over our country. Inevitably, the people will see their real enemy and the collaborators more clearly, and lift the struggle for an independent Australia and socialism to a new level.

Putting the heat on the Victorian government

by Bill F.



Melbourne rally for better public transport 6 February 2014

With heat-wave weather conditions exposing the frailties of the Melbourne suburban rail system, and the East-West tunnel project criticised and opposed by many - planners, residents and commuters - the campaign for better public transport is attracting wide support in an election year.

The usual daily tally of train cancellations and signal faults has been boosted this summer by continuing days of fierce heat which caused rail authorities to slow trains due to the fear of buckled rails (More extreme weather is another feature of climate change).

Many were cancelled due to air

conditioning and other failures, but some were cancelled deliberately to plug holes elsewhere.

For the sweltering Melbourne commuters, getting to and from work became a nightmare, with crowded platforms, packed trains that turned up late, overflowing replacement bus services and traffic jams all over town as family and friends tried to help out.

The privatised public transport system is lurching from crisis to disaster with lack of spending and deferred maintenance putting great strain on outdated infrastructure, especially the signalling and tracks, let alone the trains.

Never mind, the government sanctions fare increases each year and doles out subsidies to the private operators just for running ‘mostly on

time.’

Any money available to eliminate some of the suburban level crossings is more to overcome delays to road traffic than for safety considerations.

The state government is firmly wedded to tollways and road transport to meet the demands of big business to transport freight. That is the priority.

East- west road tunnel fiasco

The East-West tunnel is designed to facilitate freight movements between the proposed new port at Westernport and the Western and Hume Highways.

That is why more and more B-doubles and triples are taking the place of once reliable rail freight services.

continued page 5...

Medicare to be killed off by the Corporate Health Industry

by Max O.

As Medicare turns thirty years old, the corporate health industry is closing in to decimate and swallow it up, with a little help from the 'Audit Commission' and the Abbott Coalition government.

It was established by the Hawke Labor government back in 1984 as a government health insurance fund, financed partly by an income tax levy of 1.5%.

Whilst the ALP trumpets Medicare as their crowning achievement, it never was a fully universal health care scheme.

It replaced Medibank, which was created by the Whitlam Labor government with a 1.35% levy and then increased to 2.5% by the Fraser Coalition government.

The current scheme provides for treatment in public hospitals and 85% of GP fees, when doctors do not bulk-bill their patients. Dental care is not covered by Medicare.

Corporate lobbying

The so-called Australian Centre for Health Research (ACHR) submitted to the Audit Commission the proposal that a \$6 co-payment be mandatory for visits to GPs who bulk-bill.

This follows in the footsteps of the Hawke Labor government which also attempted to bring in a Medicare co-payment in 1991. The move was dropped because of a widespread backlash.

The ACHR also calls for a freeze on Medicare rebates paid for basic GP visits for 4 years, which would kill off bulk-billing.

The ACHR was set up by the corporate health industry, which includes the

largest health insurance companies and pharmaceutical industries.

Guess who are some of the leading figures within the ACHR?

Well there's Terry Barnes, a former health adviser to Tony Abbott, who wrote the ACHR's research paper that argued for the \$6 co-payment for bulk-billing GP visits.

Then there's Neil Batt, ACHR's executive director and a former ALP president and deputy premier of Tasmania.

Batt philosophises: "There's nothing in the Labor tradition that says everyone, rich and poor, should get something for free. Supporting policies like this would help Labor restore its economic credibility with the electorate."

They claim over-servicing will be stopped by the co-payment which will reduce visits and therefore the cost of Medicare rebates going to doctors.

This stance is reinforced by Peter Dutton, Minister for Health who whines, "It's hard to understand where we are going to find money to pay for these services."

A super profits tax on mining corporations and banks would be a good place to start collecting money!

No doubt the co-payment would reduce the number of patients visiting their GPs – such as the chronically ill, the poor and pensioners.

However the reduction of early intervention via GP visits would more than likely see a huge increase in costly hospitalisation of patients.

Takeover of Australia's healthcare system

The co-payment and a freeze on Medicare rebates for GPs is the foot in the door for the health insurance companies to eventually take over the



Sydney rally protesting proposed co-payment for visits to doctors and the end of bulk-billing

primary care offered by GPs.

Once they have demolished bulk-billing this will open the way to start gap insurance for GP visits and specialist services. No doubt there will be open slather for health fees to then sky rocket.

Once these changes take place the health insurance industry and the big private hospitals can start running totally Australia's health system.

The sacrosanct liberal notion of 'choice' will transfer from the patient/GP relationship to the health insurance companies.

They will choose the GP you will see, which hospital you can go to and so on.

Eventually a corporate controlled health system will inevitably see costs escalate and patient care based on what people can afford.

The rich will have high quality care because they can afford high cost health insurance and the medium to low income patients will receive cursory care, because that is all they can afford.

Another method of reducing health costs being contemplated by the Audit Commission is to privatise management of public hospitals.

This recommendation comes from

the Centre for Independent Studies, a right wing policy making institute. The attempt here is to profit from further lowering staffing costs and increasing working hours.

What should be done away with is the 30 to 40% private health insurance rebate, which costs the government \$6 billion.

This is in effect money transferred from the public hospitals to bolster private hospitals and line the pockets of the health insurance companies.

The current capitalist stagnation is requiring governments to roll back state backed health services.

Capital, once more, is on the offensive against these needs of life, via the austerity policies about to be implemented by the Coalition government.

The important needs of life – health, education, housing, transport, and employment would be guaranteed by a decent government.

Capitalism is only interested in providing these services as a commodity for profit.

The task of Socialism is to involve the population in the planning and distribution of these services so that they meet peoples' needs.

... continued from page 4

Napthine's government has no new plans to improve or extend either Victoria's run-down rail freight system or Melbourne's crumbling suburban rail network.

Almost all of the money for the transport budget has been committed to the East-West tunnel project, costed at \$6-8 billion dollars, leaving nothing for the public transport system in spite of predictions of a rapidly growing population.

Heading for grid-lock

A number reports and leaked confidential briefings reveal uncertainty and confusion about projected traffic numbers and flows, leading many to believe the East-West tunnel will add to the congestion misery rather than

decrease it.

For example, some forecasts predict that traffic at the Eastern Freeway end of Hoddle St. will increase by 35% because of the project, while traffic at the city end will increase by 9%.

There will also be grid-lock congestion on feeder roads at the western end, with traffic on Racecourse Rd. projected to increase by 20% and Mount Alexander Rd. by 25%.

Dr Alan March, Melbourne University planning expert, was quoted in *The Age*, "All of the evidence all over the world suggests these sorts of projects are unlikely to fix things in the longer term. It is as if the government is determined to press ahead with a truck-based transport system at all costs irrespective of the impact on the rest of the city in the longer term."

There will be considerable impact on the region, with more than 100 houses to go, parklands lost and sporting clubs disrupted, with noise and vibration a huge concern for locals, including the nearby Melbourne Zoo concerned for the well-being of its most sensitive animals.

At present, construction contracts have still to be signed and only so-called 'test drilling' is taking place around Alexandra Parade, frequently delayed by demonstrations of irate local residents and opponents of the tunnel.

The opposition Labor Party has opposed the East-West road tunnel and favours building an alternative suburban rail tunnel and extending the current Melbourne Underground Loop. This is well and good, but to fund it they want to privatise the Port of Melbourne.

In addition, Labor has not committed to abandoning the East-West road tunnel if the construction contracts are signed before it can be elected to government.

With the state election due in November, this only gives incentive to big business and the Napthine government to get it signed off early!

Melbourne's future

People are sick of the promises, secret negotiations and vague costings.

They are demanding safe, reliable and efficient public transport as the only way to make Melbourne function well into the future, rather than pandering to the interests of big business and multinational oil companies, car manufacturers, insurance companies and road transport cowboys.

Film review: *Utopia* exposes Australia's apartheid

by Max O.

John Pilger's new film, *Utopia* presents the case that racist policies against the Aboriginal people still continue in Australia 28 years after he made his first film, *Secret Country*.

The film exposes the shocking and brutal discrimination meted out to Australia's First Peoples by detailing the hypocrisy and outright contempt that still exists from political leaders to the police force.

The initial images that are presented to the audience (CCTV footage of an Aboriginal man being smashed against a wall, dragged along a floor and then thrown into a cell and left to die; a film clip which shows police officers who cruelly taser an Aboriginal boy) set the tone of what this film is all about – a tale of conquest, genocide, brutality, theft, discrimination and destitution.

The movie's name is taken from the Aboriginal community of Utopia, 250 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs.

The appalling living conditions that this community has to endure are contrasted with the hugely expensive holiday apartments on the Sydney beaches that overlook the Pacific Ocean.

The litany of shameful treatment continues when the Mutujulu community's dilapidated asbestos buildings are compared with the nearby Uluru luxurious eco tourist hotel.

The enforcers of the law are again put under the spotlight when the film examines the death of Eddie Murray in 1991: he died of a smashed sternum whilst in a police lock-up in Wee Waa, NSW.

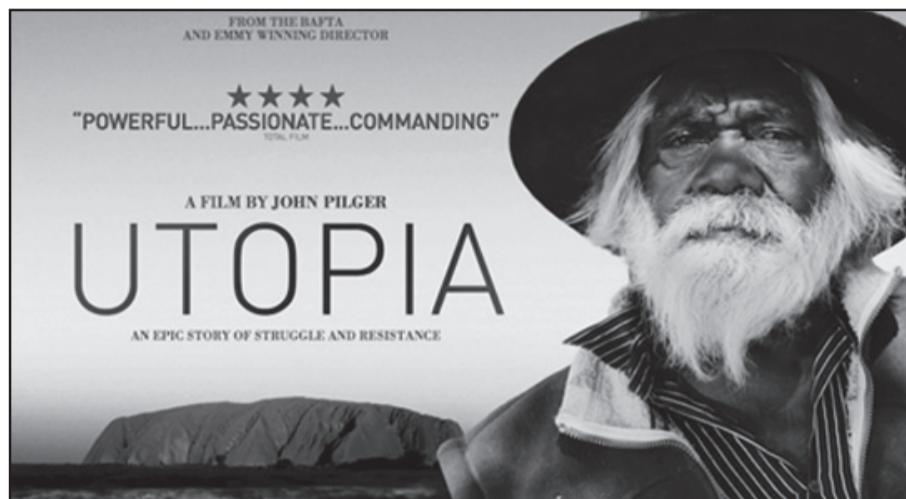
Then there is the killing of Ian Ward who died in 2009 while being transported in a virtually sealed police van where the temperature reached 56°Celsius and he was cooked to death. None of the police or correctional officers were prosecuted.

Pilger outlines the successful Aboriginal struggles of the Wee Waa Aboriginal cotton weavers and pickers, who were grossly under paid and subjected to aerial spraying, who struck for better wages and conditions and the successful Wave Hill/Gurindji walk off (1966/77) that eventually led to their land rights.

The history of Rottnest island, just off the coast of Perth, is also investigated.

The island's old gaol is now a spruced up holiday resort but was used in the 19th century as a concentration camp for troublesome Aborigines. This fact is not pointed out to the holiday visitors.

The expunged history of Indigenous Australians continues with Pilger's visit to the Australian War Memorial. Here he was refused permission to film, after



asking why there was no display of the frontier wars where black Australians fought the British invasion of their country.

The mentality of this denial is dramatically summed up by Australia's first prime minister, Edmund Barton who in 1901 crafted the White Australia Policy. The film reiterates his words of the time, "The doctrine of equality of man was never intended to apply to those not British and white-skinned."

Parliamentarians were given the chance to justify their policies for Aboriginal people in the film and they proved wanting.

Whilst they are proud to have Aboriginal art in their offices they

take offence when questioned why they have not solved the issue of the First Australians being the poorest, sickest, most oppressed section of the population.

For example Warren Snowden, former Labor Minister for Indigenous Health, took shelter with the angry reply to Pilger, "What a stupid question. What a puerile question."

The appalling record of parliament continues in the film with the Howard government's 2007 Northern Territory intervention. Police-military rule was deployed and the hand over of local community land leases was demanded otherwise basic services would be withdrawn.

"Women's rights inferior to those of the foetus"

by Louisa L.

International Women's Day this year is marked by an open attack on the people, the complete expression of imperialist economic and foreign policy attached to extremely conservative social policy.

Economically women suffer disproportionately because on average they are much poorer than men.

Promised pay increases to childcare workers are scrapped, a royal commission against unions begins, and financial protections (introduced after Storm's collapse stole millions from Australians' life savings, especially superannuation) are removed. Industries shut down. Prices rise. All this hammers women.

But there's another dangerous pill for women to swallow.

In November last year the NSW Lower House passed an amendment to the Crimes Act, which will create personhood for a foetus for the first time in Australia. It comes before the Legislative Council in early March.

The bill was created after a drugged driver hit a pregnant woman, causing the loss of her unborn child.

The Australian Medical Association,

the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), have all vocally opposed the bill, which creates a foetus's personhood after 20 weeks, raising concerns about its implications on women's reproductive rights.

According to Wendy Carlisle, (*RN Background Briefing 10/11/13*) the NSW Bar Association says it will be almost impossible to quarantine the human rights of the foetus into one small corner of the Crimes Act under the heading of grievous bodily harm.

Bar Association President Phillip Boulten SC said, "What's the difference really between a special law saying that if you cause grievous bodily harm to a foetus that's one thing, why would it not be the logical next step to criminalise the deliberate killing of a foetus or the deliberate and wilful killing of a foetus? That could be manslaughter or murder."

The NSW Law Society, a medical indemnity organisation, civil liberty groups and most women's groups also oppose the bill.

Our Bodies Ourselves have pointed out that attaching rights to a foetus has been the first step for many American anti-choice groups seeking to limit

The intervention was justified on the spurious assertion that Aboriginal children needed to be rescued from widespread sexual abuse that was going on in Aboriginal communities.

ABC's TV *Lateline* programme supplied the so-called evidence. An anonymous "youth worker" appeared disguised in a camera interview making outrageous claims about Aboriginal paedophile rings. Later the supposed "youth worker" turned out to be a senior government official and the *Lateline* programme refused to comment publicly that there was no evidence to back up their claims.

As was commonly understood, the purpose of the intervention was to demonise these Aboriginal communities and take over the land for the benefit of the mining companies.

The film is uncomfortable viewing for Non-indigenous Australians.

Anmatyerr elder, Rosalie Kunoth Monks, from Utopia, sums up the matter of their oppression when she points out that their sovereignty was never ceded and the land was stolen from them.

As Pilger states, the Aboriginal peoples' struggle for freedom will only start to be achieved when their sovereignty is officially recognised and a treaty is entered into between Indigenous and Non-indigenous.

access to abortion.

"Alicia Beltran was 14 weeks' pregnant when she told her doctor, during a pre-natal medical visit, about the pill addiction she had successfully beaten the year before.

"The doctors accused her of endangering the foetus. Beltran was taken in shackles before a family court commissioner and refused a lawyer, while her foetus had already been assigned a legal guardian to represent it in court. She was ordered by the court to report to and stay at an inpatient facility for drug rehabilitation as she had refused to take an anti-addiction drug she didn't need."

Beltran's case is not unique, nor is it new.

US Law professor R. Alta Charo, who also analyses consequential restrictions on medical research and the banning of cancer, Parkinsons and arthritis drugs because they are used in abortions, put it this way: "women's rights were seen as inferior to those of the foetus".

Australians overwhelmingly support women's hard-won rights to safe, legal, affordable abortions.

We need to protect those rights. Two protests have already started the ball rolling, but there's a big battle ahead.

Pete Seeger – a voice raised for the people

by Nick G.

Pete Seeger passed away on January 27 at the age of 94.

It is right to acknowledge his enormous contributions to the body of songs and music that come from, and are sung for, the people.

He helped keep alive a history of working people's complaints and hopes expressed through music – and not just US working people: he incorporated into his repertoire people's music that he gleaned from around the world.

He sang, with Bruce Springsteen, Woody Guthrie's *This Land Is Your Land* at Barak Obama's inauguration. He pulled no punches. Woody was a communist at heart and had written a verse that many other artists ignored.

Seeger dictated the words as he encouraged all present to sing:
*As I went walking I saw a sign there
 And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
 But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
 That side was made for you and me.*

It is right to acknowledge his front line advocacy of civil rights, particularly those of black citizens of the US, and his defiance, as a Communist, of the McCarthyite witch-hunts.

In defence of his own civil liberties, he refused to plead the Fifth Amendment before the House Un-American Activities Committee. His example of open defiance of the Committee was inspiring:

"I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs. I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this."

This led to a conviction for contempt of Congress and a one-year gaol sentence, subsequently dismissed by an appeals court.

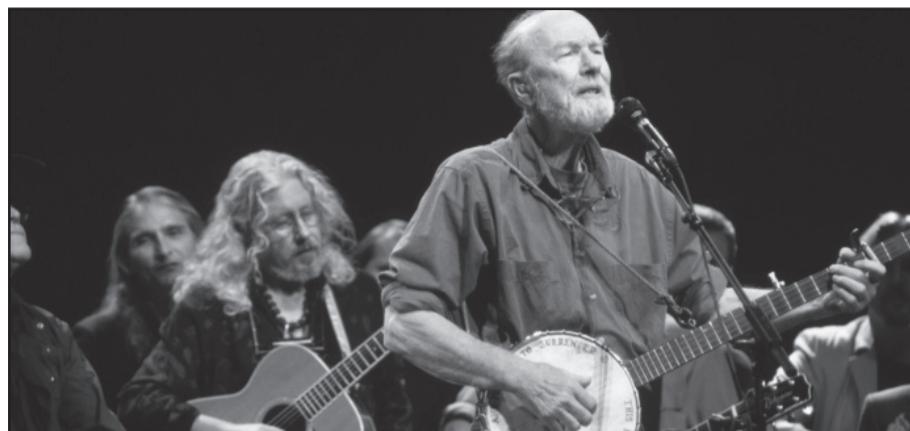
He was a staunch opponent of US wars of aggression.

It is right to acknowledge his tireless work for the environment and for his pet project: cleaning up his own backyard - the Hudson River in New York State.

In his second to last performance, at last September's Farm Aid concert, he again sang *This Land Is Your Land*, adding a final anti-fracking verse.

Seeger claimed to have become a communist when as a 7 year old he began reading about US First Nations ("Indian") peoples. He made himself a tepee, lived in it and tracked animals.

"Indians shared within each tribe,"



*At the Woodie Guthrie Tribute with the words on his famous banjo saying...
 "This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender"*

he wrote in a 2005 letter to a friend. "If there was food, everyone ate. If there was hunger, everyone was hungry, even the learned chief and his wife and children. When I was twenty I learned that anthropologists called this 'tribal communism'".

He joined the Young Communist league in 1937 at age 18, and graduated to full membership of the Communist Party after serving in the US Army for three years during World War Two.

However, his membership did not last. Between his 1956 appearance before the McCarthyites and his 1957 indictment for contempt of Congress came the so-called "Secret Speech" in which new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev denounced Joseph Stalin.

Khrushchev spoke with the prestige and authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Under the guise of seeking to dismantle a personality cult around Stalin, Khrushchev painted a horrifying picture of abuses of power, of gross injustice, of murder and dictatorial practice.

Leaked almost immediately to the anti-communist US press, reactionaries everywhere had a field day with the so-called "revelations" of the "tyranny of communism".

Seeger was not alone in being unable to withstand the pressure placed on his commitment to communism and left the CPUSA.

We should not judge too harshly those who, like Seeger, were unable to keep the faith.

Likewise, we should eulogise those who rejected Khrushchev's attack on Stalin for what it was – an attempt to change the direction of the Soviet Party under the guise of a rejection of "Stalinism".

It is only now, with the partial opening of former Soviet archives and the work of researchers such as Montclair University's Professor Grover Furr that we can state with some assurance that virtually every claim against Stalin made by Khrushchev was a lie.

That research and that knowledge

I have known. Bravery, steadfastness and, yes, continual intellectual searching and thinking. Every communist leader I have known has lived his life in the frank knowledge that it was unlikely that he or she would live their lives through without suffering jail sentences and possibly cruel death because of their beliefs. I never knew people so intent upon a long-range goal to make this a better world to live in.

"They were not content to say, 'tsk tsk' about such a thing as Jim Crow. They organised a committee or something and agitated and propagandized for its abolition. They gave of their time and money to a fantastic degree. Their entire lives were dedicated not to personal success, but to changing a selfish and evil world into one where all mankind could truly be comrades."

Despite his departure from the CPUSA, his description of the qualities of communists paints a pretty good picture of the man himself.

What has US occupation given to the women of Afghanistan?



by Nick G.

The much-vaunted "liberation" of Afghanistan's women – key justification for US imperialist invasion and occupation of that country – is to receive yet another set-back at the hands of the Karzai regime.

The Afghan parliament, the Loya Jirga, is set to pass a law that will allow people to attack their wives, sisters and daughters without fear of punishment.

The law will stop relatives of an attacker from testifying against them – effectively silencing women who experience domestic violence, along with other members of their family who have witnessed the abuse.

The proposed law reflects the strength of reactionary patriarchal ideology within the Loya Jirga, as well as the Karzai government's determination to welcome the anti-women Taliban into the government.

In a statement last year on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of the US occupation of Afghanistan, RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, commented:

"The US government and its allies

promised our people democracy, but imposed upon them the most undemocratic, corrupt, and mafia government of our history; they spoke of 'war on terror' but brought the murderers and terrorists of the Northern Alliance, gun-lords and drug kingpins to power, and have now extended their hands in friendship to the Taliban; the US used human rights and women's rights as an excuse, but Afghanistan still faces the worst kinds of human rights violations and horrifying catastrophes against its women; they promised our people liberation and freedom, but practically turned our country into a narco-state and the center of their longest-running criminal war."

An international campaign is underway to force President Hamid Karzai to refuse approval for the new law.

As RAWA has consistently pointed out, human rights abuses and the oppression of women will only be able to be dealt with in an independent Afghanistan freed of US imperialist occupation, and with a democratic government prepared to confront the militarists, the drug lords and the reactionary leaders who demand women's oppression.

'Hands off Aussie Post'

No privatisation and cuts to jobs and services!

by Alex M. and Alice M.

The wind whipped the Eureka and unions flags outside the Geelong Mail Centre in North Geelong on Monday 3 February.

A group of concerned citizens, unionists, postal workers and others gathered to protest at Australia Post's imminent cuts to jobs and postal services in Geelong and other regional centres, and the looming privatisation of the last few remaining public assets in Australia.

In the past few years the people of Geelong and the region have been at the pointy end of a devastating loss of local industries and the disappearance of thousands of jobs.

Local people and communities don't want even more job losses and cuts to community services.

The cuts to postal jobs and services are part of the government cost-cutting and preparations to sell off Australia Post's parcels operations – the most profitable section of the business.

In the last financial year Australia Post made a healthy net profit of \$312 million, and paid \$244 million dividend to the government on top.

The CEO of Australia Post and ex-chief of the NAB, Ahmed Fahour, paid himself \$4.75 million for his services to big business.

Profits in the parcels part of the business are growing because of a large increase in volumes while the wages of postal workers remain low. The retail and letter deliveries are also making smaller profits, but are not running at a loss.



Local and big business demand government puts Australia Post up for sale so they can get their hands on the profitable parcels business. At the same time, government and big business want to slash spending on the less profitable community retail and household mail delivery services.

Imperialism drives privatisation

The push to privatisate Australia Post is not something Abbott or even the Business Council of Australia dreamed up.

The push for privatisation of national postal services, slashing jobs and community services, is on the march globally. International monopoly capital and multinational corporations are scouring every corner of the world for new profitable investments and markets, demanding privatisation of lucrative public services and the shifting of more public funds to them.

It is in this context that the Commonwealth government has appointed a Commission of Audit with a clear agenda to slash public expenditure, cut services to the public,

lay-off Public Servants, privatisate state owned enterprises, but of course not cutting MP's or CEO's wages and perks or increasing taxes on the multinational corporations and big business.

At the Geelong rally, Ged Kearney the ACTU President addressed the crowd, as did Joan Doyle the Victorian Branch Secretary of the Communications Workers Union (Postal and Telecommunication Division).

They condemned the plans to slash services, cut jobs and privatisate publicly owned assets.

Ged Kearney spoke about the importance of Australia Post to community and small business. She said the profit motive should not be the sole determinant of what services are provided to the public:

"It's all built on the [misconception] that an organisation like Australia Post has to run at a profit, it doesn't. Mail delivery is one of those things that keeps communities connected; it's something that every civil society should have."

"Not only that, it provides good decent public service jobs that are the heart and soul of communities like Geelong."

Kearney said the Commission of Audit was set up to pave the way for harsh cuts to public and community services and privatisation.

"No one seriously expects the Commission of Audit (headed by Tony Shepherd, President of the Business Council) will recommend anything other than privatisation, outsourcing and cuts to public services and jobs.

"We are likely to see recommendations to broaden the scope and raise the Goods and Services tax, including extending it to food... Another favourite of big business agenda is to outsource more public services to the private sector."

An alternative – a government bank

The union and postal workers have a different, practical agenda to the big business' demands for the privatisation of Australia Post. They are arguing that the government should utilise the present nation-wide Australia Post infrastructure to establish a government bank and other financial services run by the federal government.

In his first term, former Prime Minister Rudd meekly raised this proposal. However, the four major banks and their international money-bags killed off the idea before it was even heard by the public.

Pity Rudd didn't go to the people, instead of begging for approval from global financial oligarchies.

It was a similar story with the super profits mining tax. If Rudd had gone to the people, defying threats from the mining monopolies and big banks, he would have unleashed unstoppable public support. And that's why he didn't!

The Geelong rally is part of a wider, national ongoing campaign to resist moves to privatisate Australia Post under the slogan 'Hands off Aussie Post'. Let's get behind this campaign!

The struggle to stop the privatisation of Australia Post and advocating for a government bank operated through publicly-owned Australia Post is part of the movement to free Australia from imperialism, and building a vision for an independent and socialist Australia.



Police can also apply for an "exclusion order" from a Magistrate banning people from the area for 24 hours, with a penalty of two years jail.

Speakers at the rally included Brian Boyd, Secretary of the Victorian trades Hall Council, Kevin Bracken, Secretary

of the Maritime Union, activist Father Bob McGuire, and Anna Brown from the Human Rights Law Centre.

A longer article will be posted on the website www.vanguard.net.au to deal with the implications for workers and communities.

Vanguard Blog

Readers and supporters of Vanguard can find more articles at vanguard-cpaml.blogspot.com.au. Articles can be printed, emailed, or shared on social media.

Comments are welcome