

Vanguard

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

Volume 57 #2

For an Independent and Socialist Australia

May Day Special Edition

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May 2020

May Day 2020: The case for Independence and Socialism

By Nick G.

The words “May Day” have two applications. For Communists and supporters of the working class, it is the first day of the fifth month, a day when the working class gives practical expression to the Marxist slogan “Workers of the World, Unite!”

For mariners and aviators, repeating the words three times in succession over the radio expresses a life-threatening emergency.

It is a universally recognized distress signal.

We are confronted this year with the cancellation of most May Day activities because authorities everywhere have issued a distress call in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The distress call is valid. There is indeed an emergency. Governments are sacrificing the welfare of the people for “business sustainability”.

Draconian measures to restrict people’s movements and social contacts reflect not only socially necessary measures to deal with the pandemic, but also the very real fear of the so-called 1%, the ruling class, that the virus will jump class barriers and impact the rich.



Eureka: flag of Australian Independence

The infection of Peter Dutton, a senior federal government Minister in Australia, and Prince Charles and Boris Johnson in the UK, justifies that fear.

When Engels wrote *On the Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1845, he said:

Capitalist rule cannot allow itself the pleasure of creating epidemic diseases among the working class with impunity; the consequences fall back on it and the angel of death rages in its ranks as ruthlessly as in the ranks of the workers.

The great social disease of poverty, on the other hand, is confined to the

poor. Capitalists do not lie awake at night wondering how they would cope on the Newstart Allowance.

It is a disgrace that it has taken Covid-19 to see an increase in that Allowance after two decades in which it was frozen at unlivable levels. The Single Youth Jobseeker fortnightly allowance still ranges from a miserable \$253.20 to \$462.50 (if you are forced to live away from a parent’s home).

Independence and socialism are our core demands

For the time being, we must accept drastic curtailment of mass contact. It will not last forever and we must *(continued on pg.2)*

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be prepared to organise struggle around issues of health, as we must around issues like global warming and attacks on workers' rights.

The time is right to raise the level of discussion about the failures of capitalism, and of the necessity for independence and socialism.

That's a pretty big task and it will take more than a few sentences to make a convincing case.

We must have a genuinely independent economic and political system.

It must be based on the widest democracy for working people and restrictions on any residual powers and influences of the big local and overseas capitalist corporations. Their assets in this country need to be seized without compensation and brought under the control of a government led by the working class.

A socialist government would do a better job of anticipating social crises and developing local capacity for dealing with them. It could sustain initiatives that under capitalism could only operate if they generated profit.

This would include local independent manufacture and stockpiling of essential supplies which, in the case of health, would include expanded numbers of qualified personnel, medicines and associated medical supplies.

Right now, we are almost totally dependent on overseas manufacturers.

90 per cent of our medicines are produced overseas and we are seeing essential supplies like Ventolin disappearing from shelves. If toilet paper continues to be unavailable, we may have to buy



Flags of the peoples' struggles:

First Peoples' sovereignty; Australian independence; and socialism

Murdoch's papers and put them to their proper use.

Warning signs ignored by all-consuming focus on profits

The warning signs of the pandemic were there.

Quite apart from a slew of academic papers on the topic, most of which would not have reached the general public but should have been known to bureaucrats in health departments, there have been mass market books like Stanford University biologist Nathan Wolfe's *The Viral Storm: The Dawn of a New Pandemic Age*, published in 2012. On May 15, 2017, the cover of *Time* magazine read: "Warning: We are not ready for the next pandemic". Netflix has a US documentary called *Pandemic: How to prevent an outbreak*, made in 2019 before the Covid-19 outbreak, that claimed it was not a matter of "if" but of "when". Many people, confined to their homes, are now watching it.

Capitalism failed to prepare for the bushfire catastrophe of 2019-20. It failed to prepare for the pandemic. The warning signs were ignored.

Capitalist neo-liberalism has seen medical services cut and/or privatised, reducing the capacity of health care systems to deal with a pandemic.

Economists call this phenomenon a "grey rhino event".

A grey rhino is a "highly probable, high impact yet neglected threat... grey rhinos are not random surprises, but occur after a series of warnings and visible evidence," according to the US author who popularised the term.

Why are grey rhinos ignored? Because there is no profit in making preparations for them. Capital has no social conscience, but a very well-defined sense of smell for investment in areas of the highest return.

So, we need an independent capacity to properly prepare for various sorts of social crises, and we need to sever the relationship between finance capital and the profits to which it is addicted. A socialist system is more capable of placing people and their needs before profit, and to be driven under pressure from its working class and other supporters to have a social conscience.

Let the ruling classes of the world tremble at the Covid-19 pandemic. We hear their distress calls and watch their economies plunge into recession and Depression.

May Day reminds us that we are part of a global movement against imperialism, against fascism, against capitalism.

Workers of the World, Unite!

For Independence and Socialism!

For Communism, for Socialism, but why for Independence?

By Lindy Nolan

Just above Warrane, Sydney Cove, in the colony of NSW's earliest days, a young Gadigal or Cammeraygal woman, Patyegarang, exchanged language with a British lieutenant, William Dawes.

In the priceless dictionary they created together, the word *car-rah-mah* means 'to steal'.

Invasion, the greatest theft of all, and the most brutal.

First Peoples have no trouble understanding that Australia is occupied by a foreign invader. They live with its consequences every day.

Yet, their Lore, their language, and culture, their lives, come from sovereign Country never ceded.

Marx and Engels lived at a time when "civilisation" was accepted as the opposite of "savagery". The word "primitive" was then an acceptable description of pre-machine age societies. These concepts regrettably run through some of the works of Marx and Engels. The unfortunate term "primitive communism" was coined as a description of pre-invasion Aboriginal society.

The term nevertheless contains a truth, namely that private ownership of the means of production did not exist at that time. Land was not "owned". Individuals and groups belonged to land in a form not recognised under British rule. (*continued on pg.4*)

EDITORIAL

An Independent Working Class Agenda – the workers' way out of the crisis

The capitalist ruling class never lets a good crisis go to waste. And the current economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception.

As businesses feel the pinch of the economic shutdown, and the government spends big to keep the capitalist economy alive – on life support, but still breathing – the ruling class will put the burden of the crisis on the backs of the working people. "Privatise the gains, and socialise the losses" is their doctrine.

Already the bosses are using the health and economic crises to push hard for their long sought after changes to industrial relations and economic legislation. Jennifer Westacott, head of the Business Council of Australia, peak lobby group for imperialist big business in Australia, has called for the scrapping of "unnecessary red tape" in order "to make it easier to do business". That's a euphemism for doing away with anything that hinders profit making – union and workers' rights, wages and conditions, health and safety, corporate taxes (they hardly pay any now!). And they are doing it all in the name of "getting Australia back to work", an appetising prospect if you are one of the thousands of workers forced on to the dole queue recently.

But, like the "we are all in this together" rhetoric, it's a crafty cover for the reality of the class system we live in. The virus might not discriminate, but capitalism does. As workers, if we are going to come out of this crisis with our heads held high as a class, then we need our own demands, our own priorities, and our own organisations to take up the fight. In short, we need an independent working class agenda and movement.

It must start from an understanding that as workers our interests are not the same as the interests of the capitalist ruling class and their institutions of class rule, like parliament and the courts. An independent working class agenda would not subordinate itself to the electoral interests of parliamentary parties (has anyone seen the "Opposition" lately?), nor would it line itself up with the interests of businesses to "keep the economy going", something too many of the official trade union leadership have been doing.

It would demand the nationalisation of big businesses in such a way as to empower and benefit workers and the people, not tax-payer funded bailouts. It would place peoples' health and the environment before profits. It would build unity of the people through solidarity and community based mutual aid.

It will require rank and file organising in work places often opposed by class collaborationist union leadership. It will require mass, militant, and sometimes illegal, action by large sections of workers – our victories have always come from waves of militant struggle on the jobs, in communities and in the streets.

Particular demands will change with different workplaces and communities, but the common thread must be the working class taking independent action to build its capacity to fight as a class in its own class interests.

This crisis is only just beginning, it has a very long way to go. The capitalist ruling class won't let the opportunity go to waste to further its own interests. Nor should we!

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Consequently, for the British invaders, First People were a double threat. Their lifestyles were based on values long since discarded by people who had entered, and passed through, various forms of class society. Values of obligation, kinship, caring for Country predated the slave revolts, the peasant rebellions, ruling classes, capitalism or the working class.

Long before classes arose on immensely fertile lands beside the rivers of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China, First Peoples lived collectively in classless societies, sharing the lands' wealth, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs." Distribution of food was determined only on obligations based on seniority and gender. No-one profited from the labour of another.

When First Peoples encountered those who were unsettling their collective and sharing lifestyle and destroying the creatures and the vegetation from which they obtained their subsistence, a second threat – that of resistance – faced the unsettlers.

For the double crime of "communism", as yet unnamed but instinctively and existentially threatening to the invaders, everything about First Peoples' ways of being and living had to be utterly destroyed.

The irreconcilable contradiction between the values of the First Peoples and the values of the invaders saw the latter imposing both cultural and physical genocide on the former. This approach continues to this day. So does resistance.

Imperialist bloodbath

In the invader's Australian constitution, its peoples are an afterthought, or even less. The British sovereign is the head of state and parliamentarians pledge allegiance to her, not just a colonial relic, a feudal one.

By World War I, Britain had morphed from an old-style capitalist colonial power to an imperialist one. But useful colonial relics remained, not least in the subservience of Australia's so-called independent governments.

In 1914, then Labor Opposition Leader Andrew Fisher, famously pledged Australia to Britain "to our last man and our last shilling" in that first ever world bloodbath to protect British imperialist domination of the world's peoples, resources and markets against its German rival.

Australians fought under British command and British flag, a flag in which symbols representing the Irish and Scottish are impaled under St George's Cross. It embodies domination by both English sovereign and English god.

There it sits, in "our" flag.

Great Depression to Iraq

Not enough that Australians paid with their lives. They must repay loans incurred fighting that "Great" War.

During the 1930s' Depression, Bank of England head Sir Otto Niemeyer came, demanding a nationwide ten per cent pay-cut by workers, the savings to pay the debt. NSW Premier Jack Lang refused and the British Governor sacked him.

Prime Minister Bob Menzies praised Hitler and Nazism before World War Two. In 1939, he declared Great Britain was at war with Germany "and that, as a result, Australia is also at war".

Off he trotted to England, dragging our young soldiers to defend its influence in Africa and the Middle East, leaving Australia undefended as Japan practised war-making and massacre in China, and armed itself for Pacific invasion.

Is any of this the hallmark of an independent country?

Wartime Labor PM John Curtin's 'turn to America' speech, rejecting ties to Britain, marked a necessary alliance that soon became subservience. From Australian soldiers in New Guinea, the Japanese tasted their first defeat on land, while the U.S. inflicted the first significant damage to Japan's air and naval forces, in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

From war's end, the "alliance" was only downhill. Vietnam War. Whitlam's sacking by the Governor General in a coup engineered by the CIA, to protect U.S. interests. Invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, opposed by over 90 per cent of Australians.

The right to exploit

It's not a question of ethics or bourgeois nationalism. An Australian born ruling class would be no better than a foreign imperialist one. But the fact is, the current ruling class of this continent and its islands represents U.S. imperialism.

What Lenin called the commanding heights of the economy is overwhelmingly foreign owned. Even Gina and Twiggy get their finance from U.S. bank, Blackrock.

State borders mirror the original British colonies. For over a century they have undermined even a unified capitalist response, as state administrators of imperialist rule fall over each other to give foreign corporations the right to exploit Australia's people and lands for their profit.

Our military is now a wing of the U.S. armed forces, particularly since its tilt to contain its Chinese rival in our region.

Now Covid-19 exposes an economy totally reliant on foreign controlled supply chains for basic needs.

The imprint of thousands of years of class rule

People often think socialism is a soft alternative to communism. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Although led by communist parties, what arose in the 20th century was not communism.

Surrounded by immensely hostile capitalist powers bent on its destruction, it was a stage on the path to communism, called socialism, where classes exist and class struggle is fierce. It was born from capitalism and feudalism in

hunger, desperation and war, bearing the deep imprint of thousands of years of class rule.

Under socialism, the ruling class is the vast majority of the people, led by the working class – which suppress the capitalists and the tendency of capitalism to arise again in the forces of small production and from ingrained individualism, cowardice and other capitalist traits. Exploitation is ended because capitalists cannot extract profit from workers.

Stories from ages past

Both sobering and inspiring lessons must be learned from the decades of socialism, in the USSR till the mid-1950s and China till Mao Zedong’s death.

Here in Australia, anti-imperialist independence will break the back of the ruling class. It forms the base from which socialism unfolds.

But communism is what we aim for! A classless society, where the needs of all human beings are met, their creative powers unleashed for collective benefit, when war and hunger and exploitation and struggle are sad stories of injustice from ages past.

The 150-year guerrilla warfare by First Peoples is this land’s unfinished war of independence. So is Eureka. So is the outpouring of action when yet another young Warlpiri man was murdered by police in Yuendumu, and the tens of thousands of struggles big and small that collectively educate our Peoples to end class rule forever.

So, we greet this May Day with words that herald the establishment of communism in this land of many Peoples, languages and cultures, “For Independence! For Socialism! For Communism!”

Who Owns Australia: Exposing the Multinationals - an investigation of economic imperialism in Australia

Free download at link below, or email info@cpaml.org to order a paper copy: www.cpaml.org/web/uploads/Who+Owns+Australia+Booklet+A5+Final.pdf

Extracts from the introduction

This pamphlet exposes the basic economic workings of Australian society and looks at the ownership of the key sectors of the Australian economy by foreign multinational corporations and financial institutions who control the power in this country. They are the imperialist ruling class in Australia.

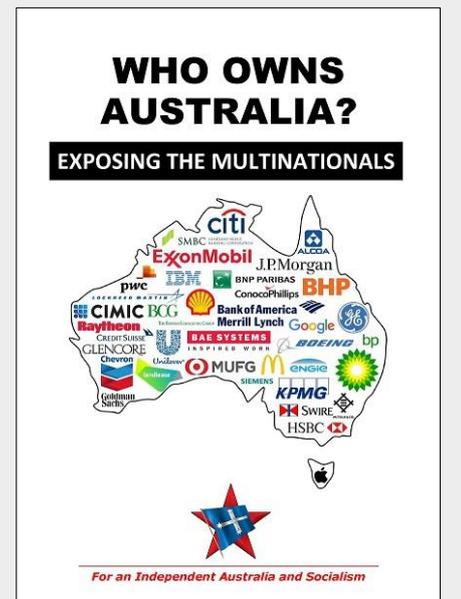
The economic domination by multinational corporations and financial institutions penetrates into all levels of Australian society—politically, economically, industrially, culturally and militarily.

For example, Australia’s taxation system heavily favours big corporations avoiding paying taxes at the same time as wide reaching cuts to

community and welfare services are continuously rolled out.

Big corporations like Glencore, Chevron, John Holland, and CIMIC are driving the oppressive anti-worker laws. Australia’s indigenous people continue to be denied rights to ownership and control of their lands. Manufacturing industries are being restructured in order to accommodate multinational weapons corporations and Australia’s “defence” policies and military are more deeply integrated into the US war machine. US stealth bombers and thousands of US troops rotate through Darwin and Australia continues to play host to US bases such as Pine Gap, which controls US spy satellites and is integral to its drone warfare program.

However, this small pamphlet will mainly concentrate on the economic



domination. Key sections of Australia’s economy such as banking and finance, mining and resources, construction, media, and agriculture are in the hands of foreign corporate interests, predominately US owned. They exercise great influence over compliant federal and state governments through organisations such as the Business Council of Australia.

MARXISM TODAY

Lenin Lived, Lenin Lives

By Alan P. & Alex M.

April 22nd 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Illich Ulyanov, better known as Lenin.

Lenin was the leader of the Russian Bolshevik Party and it was under his leadership that this Party carried out a successful proletarian revolution in October 1917. It was a revolution that irrevocably changed the course of international politics in the 20th century and beyond.

It is not the usual practice for Marxists to ascribe to individuals a singular, commanding influence in major historical events. We rightly focus on classes and the masses in action as the deciding factors in epoch defining moments. Georgi Plekhanov, one of the founders of Russian Marxism (but later an opponent of Lenin's Bolshevism), argued in his essay *The Role of the Individual in History* that there are times when "...by virtue of particular traits of their character, individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable; but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organization of society, by the relation of forces within it. The character of an individual is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such."

The social, political and economic conditions in early twentieth century Russia were such that an individual like Lenin was able to exert a powerful influence in



Lenin: Russian revolutionary and leader of the Bolsheviks – their lessons remain crucial in the fight against capitalism and imperialism today

helping determine the fate of Russian society.

He was a talented individual whose hard work and drive was pivotal in not only building a dedicated group of revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, a Party with deep connections with the Russian working class and peasantry, but ultimately in leading that Party to power in October 1917.

He was able to have such influence because the social relations (the social, political and economic factors both in Russia and outside) were conducive to a revolutionary transformation of society.

What should also not be overlooked regarding the October Revolution is the indispensable role of the masses of the Russian people led by the working class and their vanguard party, the Bolsheviks. Without these other factors, Lenin perhaps would have just been another talented individual.

On October 25, 1917, it was Lenin, as undisputed leader of the Bolshevik Party, who proclaimed the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the transfer of

power to the Petrograd Soviet and the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Throughout his political life, Lenin wrote extensively on the application of Marxism to Russian and international conditions and refuted those of the "left" who revised and watered down Marxism.

Among his major works up to the October Revolution in 1917 were:

- *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*
- *What is to be Done?*
- *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*
- *The State and Revolution*
- *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*
- *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*
- *Marxism and Revisionism*
- *The Three Sources of Marxism* and many others.

These major contributions to Marxist political economic analysis and philosophy are commonly termed Leninism, which promoted a comprehensive alternative to international capitalism and bourgeois ideology, and built the

organisational structure to achieve this alternative.

From October 1917 to the present time, Leninism has provided an essential and inspirational impetus to the global anti-imperialist movement, the successful socialist revolutions in China, Cuba, Eastern Europe, South East Asia and elsewhere.

Lenin was unique in consistently and unswervingly applying the methodology of dialectical materialism to real life circumstances and situations, in pointing out the importance of theory and testing theory in practice.

In *Left Wing Communism – an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin stated that “revolutionary theory is not a dogma”, and that it “undergoes final formulation only when brought into close contact with the practice of the really mass and really revolutionary movement.”

Despite the increased and growing contradictions of capitalism (declining living standards, endless boom and bust cycles, international hot and cold wars, erosion of individual freedoms, the destruction of the environment, the rise of neo-fascist movements, etc.), we also see a marked wave of protest and

insurgency, particularly among young people.

It is only with the guidance and lessons of Lenin and Leninism, and most importantly, their integration into and development of revolutionary theory and practice into the particular struggles in each country, that these progressive movements can thrive and ultimately overthrow capitalism – a moribund political and economic system that promotes and fosters elitism, imperialism, fratricidal slaughter and barbarism.

150 years after his birth, Lenin and his example remain as important as ever.

Short Chronology of Lenin’s life up to October 1917:

1879 -1887 Education at Simbirsk grammar school. In 1887 Lenin’s brother Alexander arrested and then executed in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. Lenin enters Kazan University where he takes part in student protests and is expelled.

1888 -1893 Begins studying Marx and Engels and joins revolutionary discussion groups in Samara. Studies for a law degree from St Petersburg University. Founds St Petersburg Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class.

1895 Arrested for anti-government activities and begins a comprehensive study of the development of capitalism in Russia.

1897 Exiled to Siberia until 1900.

1898 Foundation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP)

1900 First issue of newspaper *Iskra*, edited by Lenin. Lenin points out the need for complete re-organisation of the RSDLP to prepare for its role as leader of the future revolution.

1902 Publishes *What Is To Be Done?*

1903 Second congress of the RSDLP – the Party splits into the majority (the Bolsheviks) and the minority (the Mensheviks).

1905 Bloody Sunday massacre at St Petersburg. Massive strikes begin and Lenin calls for the overthrow of the Tsar.

1907 Lenin goes into exile in Europe.

1908-1911 Writes and campaigns extensively against “revisionism” of Marxist philosophy.

1912 Massacre of hundreds of striking workers in Lena goldfields. First issue of Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda* published.

1914 Writes and campaigns extensively against outbreak of war in Europe.

1916 Completes *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, one of Leninism's most frequently read and important texts.

1917 February Revolution in Russia, foundation of the Petrograd Soviet, abdication of the Tsar and the establishment of a Provisional Government. Lenin returns to Petrograd in April. Lenin and the Bolsheviks lead the October Revolution successfully overthrowing the Provisional Government

Warmly welcome the Centenary of the Communist Movement in Australia

Statement from the Central Committee of the CPA (M-L)

October 30 2020 will mark 100 years since the founding of the original Communist Party of Australia.

The immediate inspiration for the formation of a Communist Party in Australia was the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, and the subsequent creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The introduction of Marxism-Leninism to Australia through the advocacy of the Communist Party built on local conditions and traditions of struggle against injustice, British imperialism, and exploitation.

The Eureka Rebellion of 1854, when the flag of Australian independence was first raised, and the great strikes of the 1890s, when the newly emerging Australian working class stood in direct conflict with capital on a large scale for the first time, gave a concrete Australian context to the theories and international experience of Marxism and Leninism.

Marxism-Leninism stood in contrast to the reformism of the trade union movement which had sought to improve the conditions of the working class through the Labor Party acting in parliament and within the limits of the capitalist system.

The Labor Party and the trade unions in turn also influenced the Communist Party and the ways in which it sought to build the movement for socialism.

Negatively, this led it at times, to place the parliamentary electoral interests of the Labor Party above the independent class interests of the proletariat.

The great struggles in which Australian Communists participated and led are a matter of deep pride and inspiration.

On building sites, on coal fields, the railways, wharves and shipping, in factories and amongst many professional and semi-professional working people, the Party's influence through its members' involvement in many struggles, and party publications, was everywhere in evidence.

Communists led and fought to prevent evictions of the unemployed and destitute, fought fascist gangs such as the New Guard, opposed imperialist wars, and refused to load pig-iron bound for the Japanese imperialist war against China in 1938.

They strengthened the Party during a brief period of illegality during WW2, stood resolutely against the anti-communism of the Menzies government, working day and night for months in cities and country building and mobilizing a broad united front that defeated the referendum to dissolve the Communist Party in 1951-2, stood up to the Petrov conspiracy and the Royal Commission into the Party in Victoria.

Communists led the struggle to defeat the penal provisions of the Arbitration Act in 1969, turned the Vietnam War into a mighty crusade against US imperialism and

actively supported struggles of the First Peoples, women and migrant workers.

Communists and their families were hunted, vilified and demonized by the ruling class. Many lost their jobs for serving the working class in the great class struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialist wars.

The overwhelming majority of party members were workers, dedicated to serving the people. They were selfless and courageous, striving for self-discipline and humility, consciously studying Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, arming themselves with the science of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism for Australian conditions. We strive to uphold these values as communists today.

The ability of capitalism to survive the Great Depression and continue relatively unscathed into the 1950s and 1960s led some leading members of the Party to lose confidence in the people, the revolutionary movement and in the working class as the leadership of that movement. Our Party, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), was formed in 1964 when it proved impossible to support and work with the defeatist leadership of the original Party that was deliberately vilifying and rejecting the main revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. Another group of members left in 1971, forming the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA).

The defeatist liquidators took things to their logical conclusion in 1991 when they dissolved the

original Communist Party. In October 1996, the SPA retook for itself the name Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In early 2019, a group of members left the new CPA and declared the foundation of the Australian Communist Party (ACP).

Neither our Party, the CPA, nor the ACP are the original Communist Party formed in 1920. No Party can claim that the centenary of the Communist movement in Australia and its inspiring history belongs to it alone.

Real ideological, political and organisational differences exist between those parties that can trace their history back to the original Communist Party.

There are differences on the revolutionary working class

organisation, the bourgeois state, parliamentarism, imperialism, mass work and the application of Marxism-Leninism to Australia's local conditions.

Without ignoring these differences, our Party seeks mutual agreement that a revolutionary movement must exist to promote the independent class interests of the workers. We seek mutual rejection of the defeatist notion that socialism has been a failed experiment. We seek agreement with the view that the main class contradictions and class struggle between labour and capital, and the necessity of proletarian led revolution to resolve those contradictions in accordance with the teachings of Marx and Engels, and further elaborated by Lenin,

have not disappeared, but are sharper than ever today.

Our Party honours the aspirations of the founders of the original Communist Party of Australia for an independent socialist Australian republic and continues to work towards that aim.

The greatest tribute we can pay to those who founded that Party is to work to strengthen the revolutionary movement that they began in 1920.

Fight for revolutionary anti-imperialist independence and socialism!

Celebrate 100 years of the Communist movement in Australia!

What makes a working class leader?

By Louisa L

On Thursday, May 1st last year 20,000 construction workers went on strike. Nearly 10,000 marched through Sydney's streets, pouring in by train from across the western, southern and northern suburbs. It didn't come from thin air – there was long lead-up.

“In some places around the world, workers are killed for marching on May 1st. It's not a family fun day. It's the day we celebrate our unity and strength as workers.” So argued a construction worker each year at the NSW CFMEU Construction Division Committee of Management and at delegates' meetings.

Motions for industrial action he moved or seconded had been passed at Unions NSW. Each time support beyond his own union evaporated.



Smiles all round from workers empowered by collective energy. Sydney construction workers marched on May 1 last year for the first time in decades

Necessary compromises or begging for scraps

Let's call the worker "X". Not because he's afraid to be known. His father and uncle were rank and file leaders of the Builders Labourers Federation, who helped wrest it from the gangster rule of the 1950s.

X is not driven by ego or individualism. He could have been a union official any time. He prefers to stay "with the blokes on the site".

There are many effective and courageous union officials.

But in too many unions, workers see officials jockeying for power, *(continued on pg.10)*



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putting buildings and assets above struggle, caving in to laws instead of defying them, installing officials with no experience at work or in struggle, relying on parliament instead of on collective unity, on unholy alliances and media stunts instead of mass action. And, of course, there are some big egos, ever willing to proclaim their supposed militancy and the work that others have done as their own.

These negative traits flourish because unions are part of capitalism. At their best they seek a bigger share of the capitalist pie. Unions, even militant ones, don't challenge capitalism itself. The transition from necessary compromise imposed by relative strengths to begging for scraps doesn't happen overnight. But over time, exactly that has happened in most unions in this country.

X knows where he stands. He puts others before himself in his effort to build militant solidarity.

And he stands against a system of exploitation now surviving only on giant, unsustainable debt as Covid-19 impacts on us all. Who received the billions upon billions of bailouts? Who is left with nothing? And who will pay the bill at the end of it all?

“That’s what I know about him!”

Like CFMMEU Construction Division officials, X refused summonses to the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). If or when the screws are tightened, that would see him and others automatically gaoled for six months. At law, there is no other sanction available for such refusal.

For years, whenever ABCC inspectors arrived at a certain company’s sites, they asked, “Has X been here? What was he saying or doing?”

One worker braved questions about X. “You see this scar? X made sure I was looked after, when that happened. THAT’S what I know about him!”

And ABCC officials demanded answers from a manager, “Who’s that in this photograph?”

There were two people on a building site. One – built exactly like X, wore a T-shirt, “Fuck the ABCC” emblazoned across its back.

“I don’t know. I can only see his back,” replied the manager.

“No, not X,” the inquisitor snarled as if the manager was an idiot to pretend otherwise. The inspector pointed at the other figure in the photograph. “Who’s THAT?” Of course, it was the manager himself.

The wordless message was, “If you don’t enforce our rule, and suppress union visibility on worksites, no

government contracts for your boss. No more profits for you when government contracts are the most lucrative going.”

After all, construction workers need to work to pay the bills and managers want to ensure the profits of their corporate bosses. That was capitalism in its recent super-boom times, when labour shortages gave workers stronger bargaining power.

“Take us all on! This is our flag!”

Perhaps in response to that threat, in 2018 the company prosecuted eight workers for refusing to remove Eureka flags from cranes. X’s name was first on the list when it was lodged with *UnFair Work Australia*.

All hell broke loose. Eureka flags appeared on construction sites round the country. Crew after crew published photos in defiance, the silver stars on blue, shining in dingy concrete bunkers matched by the workers’ jubilant smiles that said, “Come on! Take us all on! This is our flag!”

The Queensland branch of the Australian Education Union issued Eureka stickers to its members and refused orders from the government to withdraw them.

In mid-May, 120,000 workers on Melbourne streets put the nail in the dispute’s coffin. They had many grievances, including the flag ban.

The ruling class wanted Eureka’s message taken out of this fiery mix. By early June, *UnFair Work Australia*, ruled in the workers’ favour.

Deep within the peoples’ ranks

In 2019, a month before May Day, a young apprentice Christopher Cassaniti was killed when nine storeys of steel scaffolding collapsed on him, four days after

his 18th birthday. Another worker, Khaled Wehbeh, was badly injured.

Grief and anger were fresh. May Day for Sydney construction workers would be on May 1st. It would be a strike – the four hours they were docked if they struck for five minutes.

CFMMEU Construction Division was ready to go it alone. The ETU and Plumbers Union soon joined forces, all taking to the streets on this international day of the working class. One MUA worksite also stopped work and marched. Large groups of union officials and some others joined in their lunch breaks.

As midday approached, Belmore Park near Central Station filled, large groups shouting and laughing, greeting old mates from past jobs. Some took proffered political leaflets and newspapers, but many were simply exercising the exhilarating freedom of solidarity.

It was anything but a picnic of lefties or a family fun day. They were everyday people, organised and committed to collective action.

Mass work means leadership is deep within the peoples' ranks. May 1st last year proved it again.

Nothing can change the truth. Working class leaders arise in struggle. We remember it this May Day and it makes us stronger.



Workers march on May 1 in Sydney last year

Respect the First Peoples

By Shane S.

As we traverse the current COVID-19 crisis, serious thought should be given to the oppressed and most vulnerable of people, the First Peoples of this land.

It may be said that many others are in the same situation and it is true that many others are seriously disadvantaged but, it is the First Peoples who are the most vulnerable in this, *their own country*, at a time when history is repeating itself.

In 1789, the smallpox epidemic killed 90 per cent of the First Peoples in the Port Jackson area and some three quarters of those in the Hawkesbury river and Port Hacking areas of NSW. In 1919, the so called, “Spanish flu” (not originating in Spain), resulted in a 50 per cent mortality rate for the First Peoples across Australia. We hope this will not be the case today with COVID-19, yet all credible indicators suggest it has the potential to cause greater anxiety and harm to the First Peoples than to all others in Australia.

Statistically the First Peoples have a life span of 8.6 year less than others. Aboriginal health standards in Australia let almost half of Aboriginal men and over a third of women die before they turn 45. At all ages, Aboriginal life expectancy is lower than for non-Aboriginal Australians. Half as many First People reach 65 as do people in Bangladesh. These are just a few of the distressing statistics to be found relating to First Peoples' mortality. Causes are varied and numerous, commencing with the original invasion of this country and what

followed as a result of the invasion including:

- Poor health and nutrition
- Poor or non-existing housing
- Low education levels
- High levels of unemployment
- High infant mortality rates
- A host of preventable diseases
- Destruction of their culture, language, country etc
- Racism
- Colonialism

How is it that Australia, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, has one of the worst records IN THE WORLD for protecting its own First Peoples?

Terra Nullius, The Big White Lie

Can Australia ever come to grips with its history of invasion, genocide, racism and rejection of the original inhabitants based on the concept of Terra Nullius, “land belonging to no one”, which ironically is fundamentally opposed to the First Peoples' “*everyone belonging to land*”?

On June 3 1992, the High Court decreed that Indigenous people had ownership of the land long before European settlement, and that therefore Terra Nullius was void. Yet the trickery and deceit that followed was awe inspiring in its boldness to undermine and maintain the Terra Nullius lie.

White laws changed to concede the legal decisions of the High Court but then, State and other laws are introduced to ensure it is business as usual. Collusion between Governments and miners, and other concerned members or lackies of the very rich and powerful elite, ensure politicians of all persuasions (*continued on pg.12*)

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fully understand the implications and devastation to occur (for the ruling class) if these legal changes are not made. The changes build in legal loop holes to get around the High Court decisions and build more barriers for First Peoples to jump over or get around just to start the process for Land Right Claims. The real problem was that it had taken hundreds of years for the highest Australian Court to make a positive decision relating to the ownership of this land, so in the meantime the great lie, Terra Nullius, was built upon.

If there was no one for the land to belong to, then no person was on the land prior to invasion.

No one had to be consulted prior to entry or for any other activities the colonisers wanted to participate in. Laws were drawn up, the country carved up, the First Peoples sliced up, their languages, traditions and cultures ripped up and their basic way of life, stuffed up, all based on the original lie, Terra Nullius. The lies continued developing, expanding from generation to generation. All-encompassing, all powerful, promoted at every opportunity, undermining the basic values encompassing the First Peoples culture, traditions and life.

Rotting Stench of Terra Nullius

The stolen generation's stories of degradation, pain, suffering and humiliation were told for decades by the First Peoples, who were ignored, rejected and ridiculed, until the **whites lies** were eventually exposed and the truth cut through the nation in disbelief and even now, some people are still not sure that the First Peoples were telling the truth. A truth established in fact and shattering the lies and cover-ups propagated by an



Invasion Day rallies are growing every year. But respect for First Peoples and their struggles must not stop at one day a year

establishment determined to maintain the status quo, the rotting stench of Terra Nullius, the mainstay of the great lie, "First Peoples don't tell the truth".

In the Northern Territory, land never given, never ceded and never agreed to, invaded through politicians' consent to remove the Racial Discrimination Act and based on more lies, "First Peoples men were paedophiles and the children had to be saved" and other outrageous claims. Send the army in to sort it all out. Coincidentally, a national election was brewing and Prime Minister, John Howard, was in strife.

Outcome? No gangs of paedophiles were found, the army was engaged for a while putting up tents and arranging for the inoculation of people and other petty stuff more suited for department of health or other like organisations, but enough distraction was created and John Howard was re-elected then the army went home. Still the fabrications go on and on and on. Intervention has continued in the NT with more negative than

positive outcomes for the First Peoples. Theft of children continues, with more in custody than ever before.

No political gains here now so let's just move along.

While this is happening women all around Australia are being raped and bashed to death by the hundreds in nice, quiet suburbia without a murmur of any government intervention to protect those unfortunate women which, would have been, unlike the Northern Territory, welcomed.

At the same time children were being raped and abused by "well respected members" of the community, good Christians and church leaders. The houses of faith were houses of debauchery and suffering, endemic with cover ups and sleazy deals, hiding the truth and protecting the guilty. Let's not forget those society leaders who were up to their necks in it or who were too busy pointing a misguided finger at the First Peoples. Yet no intervention to stop that. Just more lies.

So, what's to be done?

- Easy – show respect to the First Peoples, accept without equivocation their original ownership of this land.
- Compensate them for the trauma, devastation and theft of their land.
- To be treated as fellow human beings, no better, no less, worthy of intelligent thought, with a unique understanding of this land and its surrounds.
- To celebrate the world's oldest continuous culture of tens of thousands of years instead of celebrating their subjugation.
- To treat with respect and learn from their laws, cultures and languages.
- Ensure their mortality rates and health are no less than the general populations and that all preventable diseases are eradicated.

There is no separation of the First Peoples and the land they were born on, it is one and the same, good health is intrinsically linked to the land. Country sick – People sick.



Women on the front lines of COVID-19 and economic crisis

By Alice M.

As the Covid-19 epidemic ravages the world, women, as always, are in the front lines carrying the main burden of the economic and health crises.

The global health epidemic and the worsening economic crisis of capitalism have exposed and deepened the inequality, the double exploitation, and violence against women under capitalism.

The vast majority of frontline workers in hospitals, in aged care and disability facilities, in homes and in communities are women. They are nurses, cleaners, carers of the elderly, the disabled, the sick, the children and the families.

Globally, 75 per cent of frontline workers in the healthcare system are women. In Australia, 80 per cent of workers in health and community services are women.

Many in the lowest paid and insecure jobs. They are also the main organisers at home and in the community, shouldering the responsibility of caring for the people and keeping society functioning.

In overwhelming numbers women are also concentrated in the low paid industries hardest hit by the pandemic lockdown in retail, community services, hospitality and travel. Many are casuals in precarious jobs and excluded from government allowances and subsidies, facing long term unemployment and poverty.

Women do most of the unpaid care and domestic work at home. The

epidemic is locking down most schools, shifting society's educational responsibilities on to individual families, especially women. The lack of resources and support for working class children and families is widening educational inequalities even more.

Violence against women at home and in society are endemic under capitalism. The added pressures of the pandemic lockdowns, loss of income, future job insecurity, isolation and the threat of homelessness amplify domestic violence against women.

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General declared, "Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of Covid-19 are exacerbated for women simply by their inferior position. The Covid-19 pandemic is causing untold human suffering and is likely to heighten gender-based inequalities around the world. As economic activity comes to a halt, women who face disadvantage in access to decent work will suffer most." He warns against rolling back the rights of women.

The UN Secretary General's warnings to protect women's rights achieved in the past 40 years are commendable. But reality shows that capitalism cannot deliver and guarantee the protection of women's rights, even during the economic boom periods of capitalism. The enormous profits made from the exploitation of workers are squirreled away by big business, and the people are made to carry the burden of health and
(continued on pg.14)

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economic crises through high unemployment, austerity, intensified exploitation, cuts to social services and impoverishment.

Capitalism is the cause of the inequality, exploitation, violence and the subordination of women. The patriarchy of capitalism casts women as inferior and submissive, to empower the double exploitation at work, home and the wider community. The exploitation, commodification, abuse and violence against women will not cease under capitalism, a class system that creates and depends on the exploitation of people and the environment.

Capitalism commodifies women as domestic and sexual objects for market profiteering. The patriarchal culture and ideology permeate capitalist society at all levels.

Formal, but not real equality and liberation

In Australia in the past 100 years, the struggles of working women forced the ruling class of big business and their governments to make a few concessions to women's demands.

However, the few legislative gains made by working women have proven to be tenuous and temporary, eroded or disappeared in the past 40 years due to capital's demands to intensify the exploitation of workers, extract more value from labour, and remove limitations and obstructions to maximise profit making.

Legislation on equal pay, equal opportunity, sex discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, parental leave and child care entitlements, and other rights fought for long and hard, are



Women on the front lines: nurses in the US forced to wear garbage bags due to shortages of protective equipment in hospitals

unenforceable formalities on scraps of paper.

Women make up the overwhelming majority of sole parents living on or below the poverty line, and are now hit with the double whammy of the health and economic crises.

Concessions wrung out of the ruling class are minimised so they do not interfere with the profit making by the capitalist class.

Women's struggles for political equality have won us the right to vote and stand in parliamentary elections. But parliament is an instrument of big business whose power and interests it protects. The double exploitation of working women at work and at home is sacrosanct and continues untouched.

Relentless abuses and brutal violence against women continue. Every week a woman is killed in domestic violence, and there are many other acts of abuse, sexual harassment and denigration of women.

The miniscule government funding for services to women and children escaping domestic violence is

severely cut back because profit can't be extracted from working class women fleeing domestic violence. At the same time, governments spend hundreds of millions of dollars strengthening the state's armed forces and equipping police to use violence against dissent and people's protests.

Socialism lays the foundations for the rights of working women

In its early historical period capitalism freed women from the enslaved conditions of feudalism. But the class exploitation and patriarchal suppression continue under capitalism.

Inequality, discrimination, abuse and violence against women cannot be ended under capitalism. Only overthrowing this exploitative class system and replacing it with socialism can do that. Only a society free from exploitation can guarantee and protect women's rights and security. The economic and social system where the means of production (our resources, industries, services), presently owned by a handful of monopolies for private profit, are placed in the

hands of the working class and run collectively to serve the needs of people and the environment.

Only then will working women, as equals, have the power to move society to the establishment of real equality between women and men in all fields, where exploitation is

ended and the liberation of both women and men from the oppression of capitalism and patriarchy are guaranteed.

The fight for women’s rights, equality and liberation is inseparably linked to struggles against capitalism and imperialism.

It must continue today and draw women into the revolutionary struggle for an independent socialist Australia.

It is a struggle for socialism, and ultimately the classless society of communism.

How should we respond to virus epidemics – a working class perspective

By Ross Gwyther

We are currently in the midst of a worldwide health crisis, with millions of people infected with COVID-19, and hundreds of thousands of deaths. This has focussed the attention of everyday people on what causes such worldwide epidemics of infectious diseases, and what should be done to prevent them

Those scientists who study epidemics – the “epidemiologists” – have been warning for decades

that just such a world-wide pandemic would strike sooner rather than later.

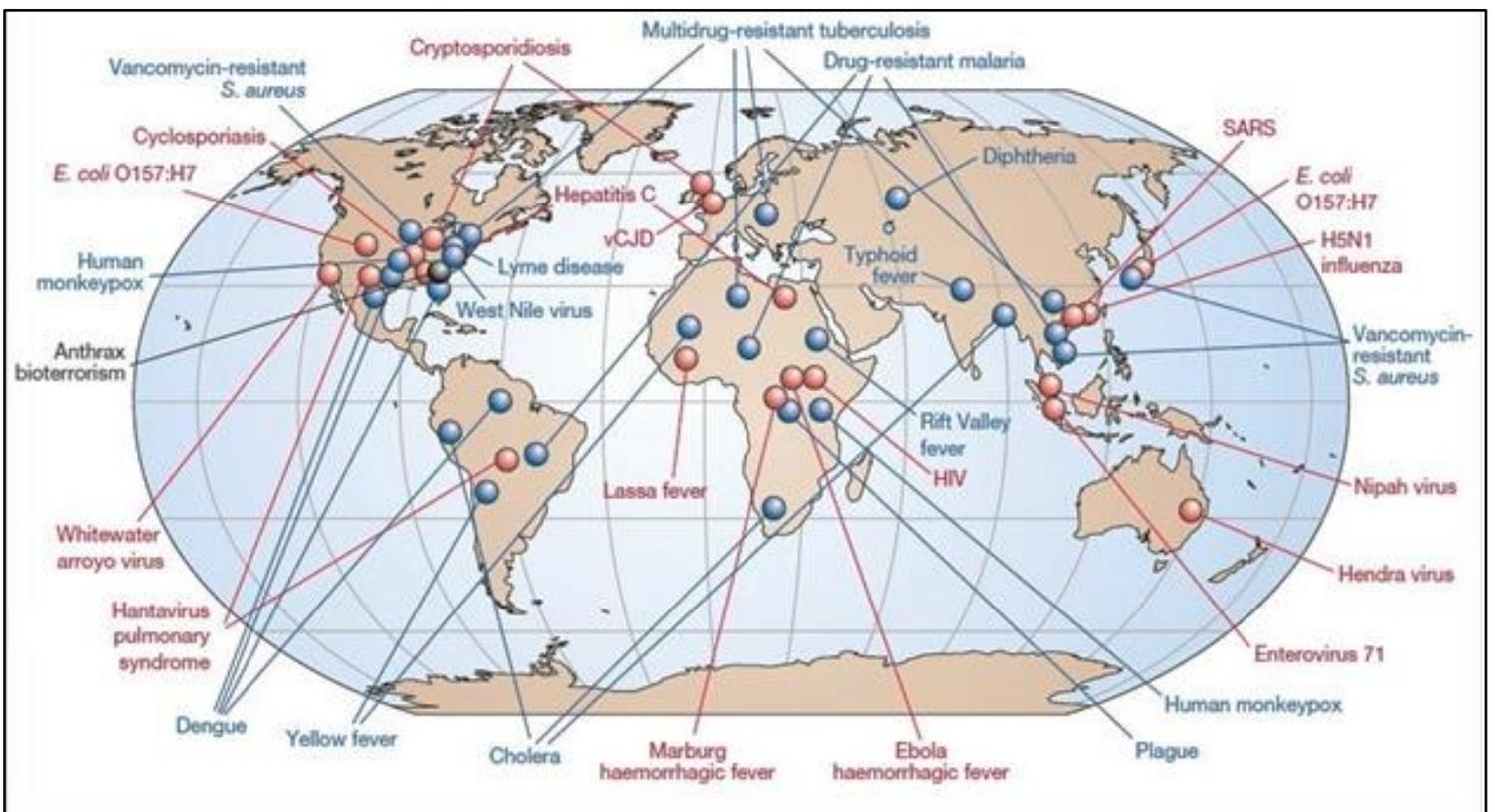
The twentieth century saw some truly terrible epidemics. For example, the so-called “Spanish Flu” in 1918, with more than 50 million deaths, and the 1980s HIV/AIDS epidemic with more than 30 million deaths.

Over the past 30 years an increasing number of deadly viral epidemics have occurred, infecting millions of people and sometimes with extremely high mortality rates –

Ebola (2014) in West Africa, SARS (2003) infection in South East Asia, Zika virus (2015) in Central and South America, Avian Flu (1960 and again in 2005), BSE – Mad Cow Disease (1990) in UK, Henna virus (1994) in Queensland, as well as seasonal influenza epidemics each year.

Of these infectious disease outbreaks, more than 70% are viruses which have spread from animals to humans – so-called “zoonotic” disease.

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Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases: red represents newly emerging diseases; blue, re-emerging/resurging diseases; black, a 'deliberately emerging' disease



Deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest is continuing at record pace to make way for profit driven farming and agriculture

(continued from pg.15)

The more common original hosts of the diseases have been vertebrate animals such as cats, birds, bats, and the viruses are often quite harmless to their host animals. The life cycle of the viruses is such that they reproduce very rapidly, and can also mutate rapidly as well. Once spread by means of ticks, mosquitoes, rats, mice etc, the viruses can have devastating impacts on humans.

Evolutionary biologist Rob Wallace has written extensively on the origins of these infectious epidemics amongst human populations. He points out that the pathogens have always been present in wild animal populations, particularly in the wilderness regions of the tropics and sub-tropics where there are a multitude of animal species present. What has changed, then, over the past decades?

Capitalism's relation to nature

In the past 50 years there has been a drastic change in agricultural practices in the “developing

world”. Capital accumulation has faced a crisis since the 1970s, with gradually falling profits and excess production, and the responses of the owners of capital have been not only to reverse gains made by the working class in social democratic states, but also to search for new sources of capital turnover and accumulation.

In his book *Big Farms make Big Flu*, published in 2016, Wallace pointed out that one of these new sources of capital accumulation has been agricultural and animal food production in the developing world. This has entailed large scale deforestation, wide scale planting of commodity crops such as palm oil, and factory farming of animal such as pigs, cattle and chickens. These practices have all led to a greatly increased connection between wild animals (and the viruses they “host”), and both human and domestic animal populations.

These impacts are made much worse by two other changes during this current crisis of capitalism.

Health and profit

Firstly, public health facilities have been significantly downgraded and dismantled in most western countries. This has been part of the neo-liberal assault on working class gains from the previous social-democratic era of the 1960s. Public hospital beds, widespread training of public health doctors and nurses, adequate numbers of beds available to working people have been gradually degraded. The widespread use of “just-in-time” production techniques have ensured that there are never adequate supplies of medical equipment when real social emergencies – like the current COVID-19 crisis-occur. Globalised production chains and international travel have ensured that viral outbreaks spread rapidly.

Secondly, there are four pharmaceutical companies which together are the monopoly producers of most drugs used internationally – GlaxoSmithKline, Sanofi-Pasteur, Merck, and Pfizer. The treatments for viral diseases are

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vaccines, and require much research effort, and long lead times to develop. These monopoly corporations are focussed on profit making and are an actual impediment to a real international effort to develop vaccines quickly that produce immunity from these emerging viral diseases.

Nobel laureate and immunologist Professor Peter Doherty said the world needs to change its funding model for vaccine development. "There is just not enough profit margin in it for pharma companies," he said. "They live by profits and the rules of capitalism. And capitalism has no interest in human beings other than as consumers."

How can the working class respond to the increasing likelihood of disease epidemics, in the light of these factors?

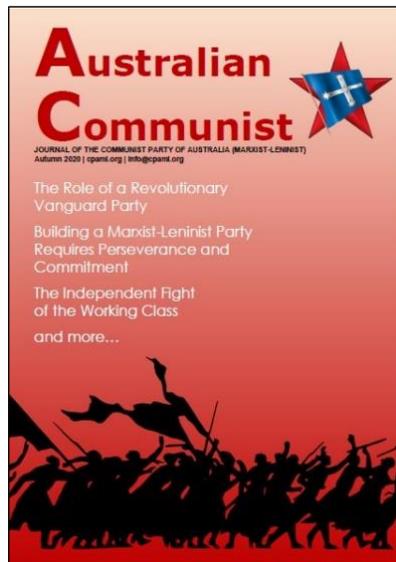
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NEXT EDITION RELEASED: SPRING 2020

A system to serve the people, not profit

This discussion has touched very briefly on the underlying forces behind the continued occurrence of epidemics and their disastrous impacts on working peoples' lives in all parts of the world. In the near future we need a much more thorough going analysis of the role of epidemics worldwide, their causes and health implications, and ways in which socialism can ensure that disease outbreaks do not have such drastic impacts.

However in the immediate term we can highlight some of the aims which working people's

organisations can campaign around – building a genuine public health system to serve the people; ensuring that pharmaceutical research is carried out in the interests of everyday people rather than in the interests of capital accumulation; developing sustainable agricultural and food industries which do not displace the livelihoods of farming communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has provided an ideal opportunity for a renewed working class movement to campaign for health and food systems designed for people not for profit.

A People's Call for Healthcare not Warfare



Vanguard has received a request to publish the widely circulating statement “A People’s Call for Healthcare not Warfare”, issued by the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) to promote discussion and collect signatures. IPAN is a broad based national network of more than 60 peace, anti-war, faith and community organisations, unions, and individuals advocating for an independent and peaceful Australian foreign policy. We support this statement and encourage our readers to sign and circulate it widely. To sign, go to: https://ipan.org.au/healthcare_not_warfare/

We the undersigned, call on the Australian Government to stop funnelling billions of dollars into offensive weapons for unjust U.S. led wars, and invest instead in the health and safety of people and the environment.

On 23 March 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for a global ceasefire. The UN call highlights the disparity between the huge financial and technological resources invested in wars, and the under-funded and under-resourced public health systems desperately trying to control this deadly virus.

We call on the Australian Government to support the UN Secretary General’s call.

COVID-19 has sharply exposed the dangerous and unsustainable priorities of our society. On the other hand, the vast majority of Australians are co-operating to control the virus. World-wide, there are desperate shortages in the supply of most basic safety and life saving equipment – ICU beds, ventilators, virus testing kits and personal protective equipment for front line health workers.

At the same time there are vast stockpiles of technologically advanced military weaponry worth trillions of dollars, waiting to be used in endless profit-making wars.

Redirect military spending

The UN call for a worldwide ceasefire means little unless foreign military forces are sent back to their home countries. To that end we call on the Australian government to bring home our military forces from battle zones in the Middle East, Afghanistan and the Philippines, and to close the Pine Gap function that supports U.S. drone warfare. Hundreds of billions of our tax dollars are used to buy military equipment largely to support the U.S. military agenda around the world. Instead, huge expenditure is urgently needed here in Australia, for health and medical services and to address the climate crisis.

Australia’s immediate priorities should be providing support for millions of people facing unemployment, homelessness and poverty during the national disasters of coronavirus, the climate crisis, drought and bushfires – rather than supporting unjust U.S. led wars.

Prioritise people and environment

In spite of this difficult period of physical distancing, people are organising and helping each other and building social unity. We need to make sure we come out of these crises with a more humane, just and democratic society.

We need a society that prioritises the health, education and safety of people and the environment over war.

We need a society that builds Australia’s self-reliant and diverse industries to manufacture and produce for the needs of the people, and an economy that’s not based on multinational profit making.

We need a society that invests in our research scientists, the CSIRO and other public research institutions, not globalised corporations in search of profit.

We need a society that prioritises peace, justice and the health of people and the environment - an independent and peaceful Australia.

14 April 2020

To endorse this statement, go to: https://ipan.org.au/healthcare_not_warfare/