

Pandemic Doesn't Stop the Class Struggle

Ned K. (16 August 2020)

Each night on the TV News, we hear and see reports of the latest numbers of those testing positive to COVID-19 and those losing their lives.

The TV News reports even show maps of the suburbs most effected, particularly in greater Melbourne. The worst hit areas are working class suburbs where many have had to make a choice between going to work feeling a bit sick in order to keep their casual or labour hire job, or because they and their family live week to week regarding income reserves.

It is in these suburbs where most Award-reliant workers live. Just when they needed a boost to their income the most, the Fair Work Commission handed down a measly 1.75% pay increase and these increases were delayed increases as far out as February next year for many of the Awards.

Meanwhile companies like Rio Tinto make millions (or is it billions?) now from exporting iron ore (a resource belonging to First Peoples and working Australians) overseas, mainly to China.

Blue collar production and service workers have to keep going to work and have the greatest range of contact with different people, while many managers and CEOs and Board members of companies, senior bureaucrats and politicians are able to try and patch up the capitalist system from home!



Woolworths warehouse workers in Wyong, NSW, strike for better pay

Most of the latter group are well versed in the English language and have access to the best Information Technology, whereas many of the workers in the virus hot-spot suburbs have English as their second language and less up to date information about COVID-19 restrictions in a form they can easily understand and explain to their families and communities.

Then there is the hypocrisy of the big end of town regarding ideology. They promote the ideology of individualism over collectivism, especially since US imperialist culture became the dominant imperialist culture in Australia post Second World War.

Now in COVID-19 times they wonder why some individuals don't stick to the restriction and rules around the virus. This is a case of the capitalist ideology of individualism before the collective interest coming back to bite them, the capitalists.

Organised Working Class Leading The Way

However, the advanced sections of the working class are leading the way

in regards to practicing collectivism. This is demonstrated by the collective efforts of hospital workers, truck drivers, aged care workers, early childhood workers, doctors, food production workers, farm workers and other frontline and 'essential' workers. It is their collective efforts that have prevented outbreaks of the virus like we have seen in the USA or Brazil. It is their collective work that still feeds the population during these hard times.

The collective action of workers has also seen some notable victories, such as Paid Pandemic Leave for aged care workers and a magnificent struggle and win by Woolworths warehouse workers in Wyong, north of Gosford in NSW.

These workers have been the "poor cousins" of other Woolworths warehouse distribution workers in the eastern states. Only this time round in the enterprise bargaining cycle they decided enough was enough.

They were not only wanting a decent catch-up wage increase but also greater job security through a casual conversion clause and existing regular casuals being made permanent.

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They went on strike for a couple of weeks and then Woolworths locked them out. This did not dampen their spirits. In fact, it broadened the dispute with Woolworths distribution workers taking their struggle to the doors of the company offices in Sydney and a solidarity protest around the country telegraphed to the company to occur on Saturday 8 August.

Just before the day of solidarity action on the 8th, Woolworths caved in and made an offer that was acceptable in principle to the Wyong workers. They returned to work having withstood a company lockout.

Not surprisingly there was no report of this victory of collective action by workers in the mass media. Nor did Morrison and Co say what a great example of collectiveness these workers showed and that this was what was needed to beat COVID-19. Strange about all this silence! Then again, we only need to ask 'whose side are you on?' to understand why. ■

Another corporate mouthpiece calls for attack on our rights

Nick G. (14 August 2020)

We have already commented on demands by the Minerals Council of Australia and the Australian Industry Group (see Vanguard July 2020) that the federal government rewrite the industrial relations playbook in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These two corporate mouthpieces have now been joined by the so-called Centre for Independent Studies, a corporate think-tank whose claim to "independence" is as effective as the emperor's new clothes in hiding its naked intentions.

The CIS has a 30-member Board comprising representatives of the very biggest end of town. Its Chairman is a former Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Group Limited, and the names of finance capitalists, their legal attack dogs and foreign multinationals litter the CVs of Board members. Wesfarmers, Caltex, Prudential Finance, Cathay Pacific, QBE Insurance, SingTel, UBS, LJ Hooker, the American Chamber of Commerce, Deutsche Bank and Coca Cola Amatil are some of the better-known guarantors of the "independence" of the CIS.

One of the CIS's leading opinion-makers is Murdoch columnist Judith Sloan. What are her credentials beyond the A\$357,000 she was earning in 2018 for her work as contributing economics editor at the *Australian*?

Sloan was a commissioner on the Australian government's Productivity Commission and the Australian Fair Pay Commission, and she was deputy chair of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and is a former board director of the Lowy Institute. She sat on the boards of several companies, including Mayne Nickless, SGIO Insurance, Santos, Primelife (chair).

Let's keep all that in mind as we look at the report she has just published on behalf of the CIS.

Her report, released a few days ago, is called *Industrial Relations in a Post-COVID World*.

Although the title implies a forward-looking approach, Sloan's prescription is for a revival of Howard's WorkChoices expressed in the double-speak of the pastoralists of the 1890s. The pastoralists wanted to crush the unions and abolish award wages and sanctified this behind their demand for "freedom of contract" between individual shearers and pastoralists.

She bemoans the fact that the current industrial relations (IR) system is "highly prescriptive and complex, with substantial third-party involvement". The third parties she objects to are the unions, employer organisations and the Fair Work Commission.

She objects, not on behalf of the Board of CIS, but on behalf of the poor worker deprived of the benefits of "freedom of contract". "There is also a strong collective bias in the system," she complains, "with only limited rights of individual workers to make their own arrangements." She continues:

Reform must mean moving away from a one-size-fits all approach and allowing employers and workers to agree to arrangements that suit themselves. Rather than having third parties such as the Fair Work Commission impose often uncommercial dictates on employers, the new approach must confer primacy on the common sense of employers and workers to establish mutually-acceptable arrangements in respect of wages and conditions. Freedom of contract needs to replace paternalistic and costly third-party intervention.

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Pity the poor worker, shielded by unions and tribunals, from the common sense he or she shares with such unselfish types as Wesfarmers, Caltex and Co!

Didn't Carlton United Breweries only want a "mutually-acceptable arrangement" with the workers they locked out? Wasn't that the benevolence behind ExxonMobil's lock-out of its workforce at Longford? When Kimberly-Clark sent its production offshore, wasn't that a "mutually-acceptable arrangement" with the 220 workers it sacked?

On Sloan's hit-list are the minimum wage, permanent employment ("contain the risk of directly employing workers"), the referral of IR powers to the Commonwealth, preventing "past regular casual workers (from being) able to claim back-payments for leave entitlements", and "matching the duration of greenfields agreements to the duration of projects".

Her proposed changes to greenfield agreements echo those of the Minerals Council about which we said "Greenfields agreements are those negotiated between an employer and a union before the company has started operations. At this stage there are no workers on site and the company can strike a deal with a preferred union and exclude unions it dislikes. Greenfields agreements run for four years at which stage the workers are free to negotiate a new agreement, hopefully with improved wages and conditions. By seeking to extend greenfields agreements for the life of the company's operations, the MCA hopes to lock workers out of any future claims based on increases in their productivity and on the company's profitability."

She also wants either "a streamlined and simple award covering small businesses" or "enterprise contracts contemplated by the Productivity Commission, in which small businesses could seek variations to awards based on light-handed oversight."

"Light-handed oversight" to cut wages and all other rights at work!

No doubt platforms will now be offered to Sloan to spoon feed us her poisonous remedies to over-regulation and prescription.

Forewarned is forearmed. We know what their agenda is. Now we need to gather and unify our own forces for the coming struggles. ■

Could you clean a hotel room in 15 minutes?

Ned K. (30 August 2020)

The outbreaks of COVID-19 in Melbourne and Sydney have put residential hotels in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

Large corporate owned hotel groups such as Travel Lodge, Rydges, Hyatt and Pullman have been used by arrangements with state governments to quarantine people for 14 day periods or longer in an effort to contain the virus.

Poorly trained, low paid contract security industry workers have been unfairly blamed in the media for the spread of the virus. Then people holed up in these big hotels released to the media that the rooms they were "imprisoned" in for 14 days or more were filthy and much in need of maintenance updates.

Rydges and Travel Lodge Hotels in particular were named as providing unhygienic rooms. In the Travel Lodge hotel in Wentworth Street, Sydney, the state government was forced to act and move all those quarantined to another hotel.

The unhygienic state of some of residential hotel rooms is not something that has just occurred in the COVID-19 period. For many decades now huge corporate hotel chains have been in a race to the bottom to cut operating costs to make more profit. The people most affected by this race to the bottom are the housekeeping staff who clean the hotel rooms. They are at the bottom of the profit-making pyramid. At the top are the international hotel group owners like Hyatt. Then comes the management companies who operate the hotels. In some cases, they have a direct contract with the owner of the hotel/s. In other cases, the hotel owner acts as franchisor and the management group are the franchisee.

Then there is another management layer with an industry calling itself

"accommodation services industry". These companies provide the labour to clean and service the residential hotel rooms and provide the catering. To get their cut in the profit pyramid, they employ a large percentage of low paid, migrant labour to do "back of house" work which includes the cleaning of rooms.

The rise of serviced apartments and people renting out their own homes for short term accommodation also increased competition between the residential hotel chains in their shrinking market.

This intensified the workload pressures put on back of house workers, particularly housekeeping cleaners. First their employers cut the number of cleaners from two per room to one per room. Then they cut the time given to clean each room. Cleaners in large residential hotels are given on average 15 minutes to clean a room. They are told to "do the basics" which is a euphemism for doing a 'looking good' clean which will fool the hotel guests into thinking they are in a clean hygienic room.

What happened recently with the exposure of the Rydges and Travel Lodge hotels is that people cooped up in a small room for 14 days were themselves more fully exposed to the unhygienic state of the rooms, whereas in the pre-COVID-19 days, guests would be spending more time outside their hotel room and often not notice the actual state of the room regarding hygiene standards.

Hotel workers and their Unions across the world have been struggling for years for better conditions and pay for hotel workers. They have taken on the big end of town and had some important wins.

For a taste of their struggles, go to You Tube and watch "*This Is A Bad Bad Hotel*", which shows the workers and community supporters' actions against a big US owned hotel chain. ■

US Imperialism Responsible for Military Tension in our Region

Contributed. (1 August 2020)

The Indo-Pacific region, in recent times, has experienced a massive wave of US-led militarism.

As one military exercise ends, another begins, in a relentless campaign to dislodge China's influence as a competitor in the wider region.

A closer study of one recent military exercise, however, has revealed a great deal about dominant thinking at the highest levels of the Trump administration and Pentagon and their Cold War positions toward China.

The wave of US-led Cold War militarism sweeping the Indo-Pacific region is not particularly difficult to establish. A recent edition of the *Australian* newspaper, for example, carried front-page coverage that about 'as many as fifty US patrols have been carried out this month' around Taiwan, together with other military manoeuvres and war-games elsewhere in the region.

A page two article of the same edition carried a five-column article about a supposed network of Chinese secret agents operating in Tasmania. No evidence, however, was provided from official government sources. The article, quoting two little known academics, was highly speculative. Quotations in the article, furthermore, also included lurid reference to China's Consulate in Melbourne being used to co-ordinate 'a network of CCP agents of influence operating in Hobart's political, business and university communities'.

The media coverage was fairly typical of daily Cold War propaganda from mainstream media outlets in contemporary Australia.

One recent US-led military exercise in the Philippine Sea, however, has revealed a great deal about US Cold War military planning: the exercise,



composed of US, Australian and Japanese navies, took place in late July with a minimum of publicity. Diplomatic links between the US, Australia and Japan form the main triangular defence and security provision for the vast Indo-Pacific region. The area of the Philippine Sea, close to the main South China Seas, is regarded as highly sensitive with access and egress to major shipping-lanes.

While the military exercise was US-led and planned, it was composed of five Australian naval vessels: the Canberra, Hobart, Stuart, Arunta, Sirius. The US and Japanese contribution was based on one naval vessel each, revealing the commitment the US expects of Australia for regional policing roles.

The exercise also rested upon numerous US military facilities being re-opened in the Philippines in recent times. There was, however, no official Philippine military involvement in the exercise. They were quite clearly, not invited to participate. Duterte, fascist murderer of his own people that he is, said on July 27 in his annual State of the Nation Address that the Philippines would continue upholding an independent foreign policy, would not pick sides between China and the United States, would now not agree to allow U.S. troops back to military bases in the country, and would not confront China over the South China Sea.

The Philippines, nevertheless, has had long-time involvement with the US, being centrally and strategically placed in Asia. However, it has long

been regarded by the Pentagon as politically unstable and highly volatile; US military facilities, therefore, are invariably linked to other places for longer-term viability and security.

The US-led military exercise in the Philippine Sea, for example, would appear closely linked to manoeuvres around the strategic Bashi channel in southern Taiwan, which runs to the island of Luzon in the Philippines. The Pentagon, in recent times, has become obsessed with island chains in the Asia-Pacific region, which are assessed as acting as buffers to repel adversaries.

The Philippines also rests upon the same arc as Guam, in Micronesia, a main US hub, from ADF facilities in Brisbane, forming a strategic triangle for US-led military operations, resting inside the main triangular relations with the US and Japan and providing demarcation lines with Island Chain Theory. The relationship between the two has revealed the linkage between main defence and security hubs and other military sub-facilities.

The fact the US subsequently flew two bomber planes from the Anderson Air Force Base on Guam to the South China Seas via the Sula Sula entrance point part way through the naval exercise formed part of the grander military plan with real-war scenarios being a calculated option.

The developments have taken place amid an escalation of regional Cold War hostilities directed toward China despite the findings of two recent credible studies:

- Early last year an official US Defence Intelligence Agency assessment of China as an adversary concluded that there 'was no indication China was looking to take military action anywhere soon';
- A risk assessment of likely military conflict between the US and China conducted by Air Power (a think tank) recently published a

- report stating 'conflict in the next twelve months as likely, over the next two years as highly likely and over the next three years as almost certain'.

Evidence, therefore, from highly credible sources would point to US-led militarisation in the Indo-Pacific region being the outcome of Pentagon planning with calculated real-war

scenarios being the chosen option. There is little ambiguity.

With Australia being drawn ever closer to these US-led military plans: **We need an independent foreign policy! ■**

AUSMIN Summit 2020: Between the lines of official media releases

Contributed (7 August 2020)

The 2020 Australia-US Ministerial Summit (AUSMIN) in Washington was dominated by an agenda of China-based issues and considerations and took place behind closed doors. Official media releases from the high-level diplomatic meetings were carefully worded.

Some highly significant information was, nevertheless, divulged about the so-called alliance between the US and Australia and the escalation of US-led militarism sweeping the Indo-Pacific region.

The annual 2020 AUSMIN summit in late July with Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Defence Minister Linda Reynolds and their US counterparts, Mike Pompeo and Mark Esper, was billed as the 'most important AUSMIN meeting yet', in the dying months of the Trump administration. The stakes for the White House administration, therefore, were very high.

The US has long relied upon Australia as a major regional hub for operations in the broadened Indo-Pacific region. It was no surprise, therefore, to find the initial series of meetings led to a joint press conference and media release mid-way through proceedings. Later media releases continued to play down the US-led nature of the talks, although Pentagon military planning clearly rested upon the compliance of Australia for the maintenance of traditional hegemonic positions.

Increased role for Darwin in US military planning

Information about the plan to place Darwin at the centre of future military



strategy together with 'a new bi-lateral team to co-ordinate decisions on joint operations and deployment of hardware and personnel across the Indo-Pacific', left little to the imagination. Coverage that 'this AUSMIN was dominated by China', likewise, clearly showed how the US regard competition to their traditional regional position.

In more recent times US-led military upgrades to existing facilities have revealed how defence budgets have already established Darwin as a support centre for operations. Intelligence facilities, likewise, on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Guam in Micronesia, have been upgraded to function as operational hubs. Both intelligence facilities exist on an arc from Pine Gap, revealing the importance of Australia for US regional military planning. Elsewhere across the Indo-Pacific region smaller military facilities hosted by various governments have been re-opened to operate at a clandestine level, as links to the main US-led hubs for defence and security provision in a spider-web of matrix-type formations. They form part of the highly secret Pyramider orbiting satellite system at Pine Gap which provides the US intelligence services with secure communication

with agents using transmission and reception devices in what are regarded as 'denied areas'.

Information from the recent AUSMIN summit also revealed:

- the US intend to escalate their wave of militarism across the region. It was noted, for example, 'a possible expansion of annual joint training with US marines in Darwin', was linked to the establishment of 'a new force posture working group that will co-ordinate the nation's Indo-Pacific military planning';
- No reference was provided about the composition of the working group and how it fitted into existing defence organisational structures, including the recently Pentagon-established China Strategy Group.

Further information about continual all-year round military deployments of US marines through facilities in Darwin was also announced together with a plan to 'include other friendly nations to bolster regional relationships and capabilities'. No US allies were, however, identified.

Co-operation measures were also announced which included defence industry links with 'greater (continued on pg.6)

(continued from pg.5)

maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade of US military platforms and components in Australia'. No specific industries or their locations were noted.

Plans to establish a huge US commercial fuel storage facility in Darwin with a budget of \$86.4 million would tend to reveal the harbour being used by US vessels for re-fuelling on regional deployments, and the strategic significance of the port facilities in the Northern Territories as a support centre.

Joke of the year: "We make our own decisions...."

Partly to acknowledge growing concerns that Australia is too subservient towards the US and its aggressive stance towards China, attempts were made to "show that we made our own decisions in our own interests". Thus, the *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter* stated:

The Australian side however, pushed back against US efforts to force Australia to conduct assertive freedom-of-navigation exercises in the South China Sea. Australia's Reynolds told reporters such exercises were "subject of discussion" but that "our approach remains consistent, we will continue to transit through the region in accordance with international law". Payne went a step further and said while Australia had much in common with the US, "we make our decisions, our own judgements in the Australian national interest and about upholding our security, our prosperity and our values."

In the same vein, toward the end of the 2020 AUSMIN summit an official diplomatic statement from Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison noted that 'Australia makes its decisions based on our own national interests and our own timings'. US ambassador to Australia, A.B. Culvahouse, likewise, replied, extending diplomatic niceties and double-talk, with the statement that he 'applauded Australia's robust and ongoing leadership'. When people conduct their professional lives in such

a manner, one can but wonder about codes of conduct in private life. Is duplicity ever an ethical consideration for such people?

The 2020 AUSMIN summit quietly closed; the Australian delegation had been briefed and informed of their duties and responsibilities toward the US war-machine. ■

Military spending is an obscenity that must stop!

Nick G. (21 August 2020)

Imperialism is depriving people all around the world of funds that could alleviate poverty, provide for better health and education, and help save the planet from global warming and environmental destruction.

Threats and counter-threats are the stuff of holding onto spheres of influence, of areas for investment, of markets for goods and for the cheapest sources of available labour. They are also the stuff of the struggle to redivide those spheres of influence according to the relative strengths at any given time of the of those powers in a position to exercise control, bullying and domination.

The US is still the world's wealthiest and most powerful imperialist nation. It survived the threat from its superpower rival, Soviet social-imperialism when the latter imploded at the beginning of the 1990s. Puffed with arrogance, US imperialism boasted that it would seek "full spectrum domination" – that it would control everything, everywhere.

It hasn't.

It has failed to impose itself militarily on Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria.

Although smaller and weaker Russian imperialism has contributed to its failure to dominate the Middle East, its most significant challenge now comes from the social-imperialism ("socialism in words, imperialism in

deeds") of China following that country's restoration of capitalism.

Data from the *globalfirepower.com* website on military spending (they call it "defense" spending) of the ten leading nations, and their numbers of military personnel (they call it "man" power) are provided in the graphs below.

They show that US imperialism outspends China 3 to 1 in US dollar terms; China, however, leads the US in military personnel.

The data also shows that the top ten countries globally control a military spending of \$1.4 trillion as of 2020. That's better written as \$1,400,000,000,000!

That figure is a colossal act of social theft since its only purpose is to threaten and counter-threaten rivals for the control and plunder of the vast majority of us who do not want and do not need imperialism.

Where does Australia fit into this?

The Australian ruling class long ago attached itself to its "great and powerful friend" – US imperialism. It had little choice in the matter as the Australian economy was penetrated by US capital and came under its near-complete control.

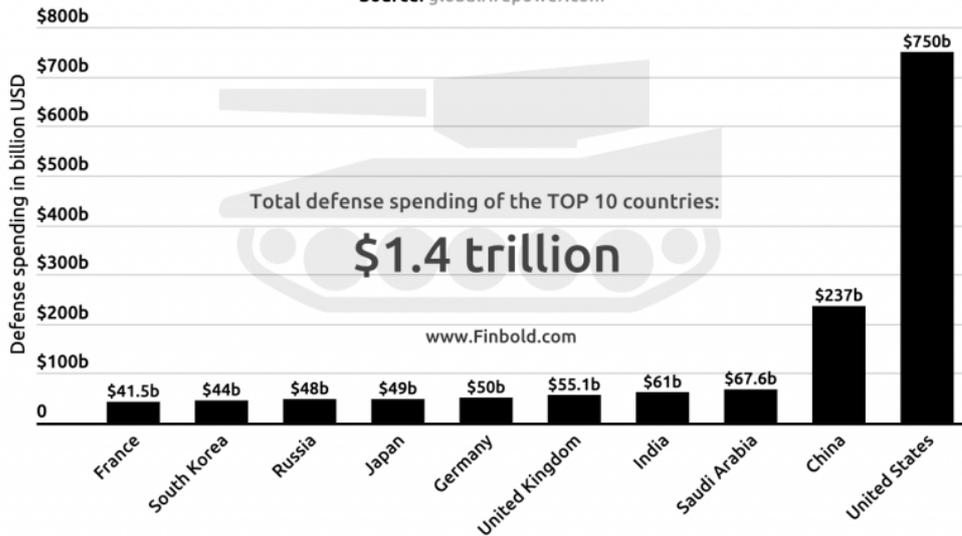
Part of that attachment is the humiliating exercise of proving our "loyalty" to US imperialism by blindly following it into whatever act of aggression it undertakes. What the Gurkhas were for the British Empire, Australia has become for the US Empire.



Defense spending by country in billion U.S. dollars (2020)

Information: Total annual defense spending by nation officially allotted by respective governments to maintain and strengthen a standing fighting force. Data presented on this list is through 2020. Some spendings are estimated in cases where no official budget is available.

Source: globalfirepower.com



Active Military Manpower by nation in millions

Information: Active Military Manpower tracks all those personnel considered under 'active service status', these being 'ready-to-fight' elements available to a nation at any given moment. Data presented on this list is through 2019.

Source: globalfirepower.com



Not only do we send troops whenever and wherever US imperialism wants them, we spend enormous sums of money to keep ourselves ready to serve Uncle Sam. Most of that money goes to the major multinational armament manufacturers based in Australia (Raytheon, BAE, Thales etc), but a growing proportion is allocated to small local manufacturers slotted into the military value chain. Hardly a day goes by without some contract or other being awarded to local companies - a great way to buy off the small national bourgeoisie and tie it into US domination of this country.

Australia stands in 13th place in terms of military spending. Yet our population is relatively small. When military spending is converted to per capita US dollars (see below), we suddenly sky-rocket from 13th place to second place, behind only the US imperialists themselves!

This is not a silver medal we can be proud of!

This level of military spending is an intolerable burden and we must end it.

Australia should be respected as a nation, peaceful and independent; instead we are viewed as little Americans, as US imperialism's deputy-sheriff, as its latter-day Gurkhas.

Join the movement against war and against imperialism.

Support and join organisations like the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

Condemn the obscenity of military spending. ■

Country	Defence Spending	Population	Per capita spending
USA	\$750,000,000,000	329,256,465	\$2278
China	\$237,000,000,000	1,384,688,986	\$171
Saudi Arabia	\$67,600,000,000	33,091,113	\$204
India	\$61,000,000,000	1,296,834,042	\$47
UK	\$55,100,000,000	65,105,246	\$846
Germany	\$50,000,000,000	80,457,737	\$621
Japan	\$49,000,000,000	126,128,156	\$388
Russia	\$48,000,000,000	142,122,776	\$338
South Korea	\$44,000,000,000	51,418,097	\$856
France	\$41,500,000,000	67,364,357	\$616
Brazil	\$27,800,000,000	208,846,892	\$113
Italy	\$27,800,000,000	62,246,674	\$447
Australia	\$26,300,000,000	23,470,145	\$1121

Vale Comrade Betty Little/O'Shea: Lifelong Communist

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is saddened by the recent passing of our veteran comrade Betty Little/O'Shea. To her family and friends and comrades, we express our deep condolences.

Up to her last breath at the age of 97 Betty devoted a lifetime of service to working people and the struggle for an independent and socialist Australia.

She was born into a working class family and from an early age spent many years organising and supporting struggles in numerous workplaces and communities.

Betty did not have an easy life. For many years she worked as a machinist in clothing factories along Sydney Road, Brunswick, Melbourne, where she was deeply involved in struggles of clothing factory workers, many of them migrant women. Betty organised strikes, go-slows and pickets outside the factory gates. She was warm, deeply interested and cared for people. Her working class roots gave her deep insight and respect for workers' lives and struggles. All her life Betty immersed herself in mass work and the study of Marxism-Leninism.

For many years Betty managed the Party bookshop Kalkadoon in Melbourne CBD. She warmly welcomed everyone into the bookshop with a big smile and a handshake. She never imposed herself or her politics on anyone, instead always wanting to listen, learn and guide.

She expressed the strongest feelings of international solidarity and friendship with the struggles of oppressed peoples and nations across the world and was a spirited defender of the Chinese Revolution and the contribution of Mao Zedong. For many years she was a leading figure in the Australia China Friendship Society, and helped to break down the ruling class propaganda barriers, leading to



the opening of extensive trade links and Australian government diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China.

Her close connections to the people, her experience in struggle and her dedication to the great cause of an anti-imperialist socialist revolution placed her on the Central Committee for many years, where she consistently continued to make important ideological and political contributions.

Betty was a former Vice-Chairperson of the CPA (M-L) and wrote articles for *Vanguard* on workers' lives and struggles.

Betty was highly valued and respected by many in the Party and in the people's mass movements.

Betty was proud of her family, her daughters and grandchildren who admired and supported Betty in her work.

As the last of the founding members of our Party, she has left us big shoes to fill.

A more complete tribute to comrade Betty will be published shortly. ■

EDITORIAL

Understanding the role of the state is vital

There is an understandable concern about anti-worker attacks that are being demanded by employer groups as a new, post-pandemic, "normal".

Then too, there are widespread concerns about the sorts of threats to democratic rights that are put forward by the likes of Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton.

The mass media encourage us to focus on this or that politician, on this or that industry spokesperson as if they are the substance of power and authority over us.

Of course, they have some say, some influence, and must be fought.

However, what the media and others conceal behind phrases like "equality before the law", "the right to vote", "freedom of belief" and so on is the nature and role of the state machine.

In every society since the very earliest times, the state has existed as a means to coerce and oppress the majority in the interests of the few.

Whilst it is correct to despise a Morrison or a Dutton, removing them through elections is really no more than pulling gloves off a many-fisted being that keeps us all in place. Putting a "better", "more progressive", "kindlier" glove back on that fist does very little to restrain its power over us.

The modern bourgeois or capitalist, state arose from the struggles waged by the capitalists against the remainder of the population. It is a machine they have created with legal and political structures to protect private, capitalist ownership and control of the means of production.

Workers collectively are the vast majority of the population. If the capitalists have learned to create a state that serves their interests, so can the workers.

Yes, down with Morrison! Down with Dutton!

But down with the capitalist state as well!

Fight for working class power in a socialist state.

Book Review: They Did Not Come From Nowhere

Ned. K (26 August 2020)

Round 13 of the Australian Football League (AFL) from 21 August marked the "Indigenous Round of the "Aussie Rules" football season in 2020.

The game at the top league level has featured many outstanding footballers, especially from the 1960s to present times. Since the 1990s the AFL was taken over by corporate interests with games programmed to maximize the interests of corporate advertising around the grounds, on players' clothing and particularly for the TV audiences. Teams in the AFL searched the land for the best players to pick at the national draft each year.

The teams' corporate backers realised that First Peoples players attracted spectators and therefore profits to the game, so recruiting First Peoples players from far and wide became a top priority.

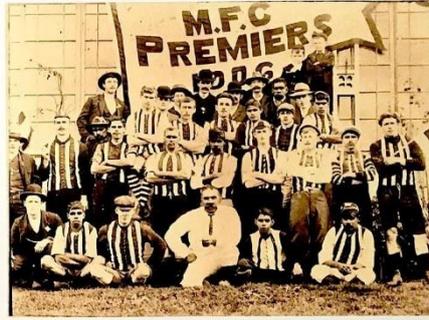
However, First Peoples football players had to struggle for recognition as footballers many, many years ago. Sports historian from Melbourne Roy Hay's new book *Aboriginal People and Australian Football In The Nineteenth Century - They Did Not Come From Nowhere* collects evidence to show how in the mid-1800s First Peoples in regional Victoria, SA and WA (the three mainland Aussie Rules states) on Missions and stations learned the game and brought their own skills to it.

In the 1860s the game of Australian Rules football was characterised by

ROY HAY

Aboriginal People and Australian Football in the Nineteenth Century

They Did Not Come from Nowhere



slow position play and congested play which suited the heavier European born players. The First Peoples brought to the game "speed at ground level, rapid hand movement and brilliant hand-eye and foot-eye co-ordination". They also introduced the kicking of the ball to space, anticipating where the receiving player was running to. Roy Hay argues that this skill was similar to their ability to bring down wild animals with a woomera or throwing spear.

Despite the injection of exciting new skills into the game, First Peoples' top players found it near impossible to play at the top level. An example of this discrimination was at Corandeeck Station in the Upper Yarra Valley, about 60 km from Melbourne.

One player from there, Dick Rowan, also played for Healesville and

played so well that he attracted the attention of the South Melbourne Football Club who played in the top league in the Victorian colony from as early as the 1880s. Rowan played one game for South Melbourne against Williamstown. He applied to play a full season for South Melbourne but the football governing Board "feared that the granting of the application might lead to numerous other similar requests and refused it"!

In other words, the white authorities were quite happy for First Peoples to play football in regional teams but went out of their way to exclude them from playing in the top league. In the local regional leagues across Australia, the First Peoples players formed their own teams and won local competitions.

As Roy Hay says, "they were prevented from reaching higher levels by the gatekeepers of the domestic game until late in the twentieth century".

Like in most areas of society, Roy Hay displays to the reader of his brilliant book stories to be told about attempts to deny First Peoples equal opportunity and stories to be told about their skills and knowledge not only about football but their contribution to local communities.

His book is well worth a read as football fans among us marvel at the brilliance of modern day First Peoples players in many sports. ■

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ICOR Resolution: Lebanon is exploding!

(26 August 2020)



INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF
REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Lebanon has been a land of tears and struggles! In October 2019, starting with the uprising on 17th October a movement built up in Beirut against the government politics. It called for building an independent and democratic Lebanon. It also contains a majority of forces who are opposed to the politics of the USA and Zionist Israel and almost all other imperialist and regional powers which are trying to destabilize Lebanon and dominate it. Also Saudi Arabia and Iran belong to these, the latter especially via Hezbollah. Though this movement was dampened due to the onset of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, the protests continued into January 2020.

Beirut has for decades become the target of Zionist Israeli and other bombings. The explosion of bombs has become the norm in Beirut rather than a novelty.

On 4th August there was a massive explosion in the port of Beirut which left dozens dead and thousands injured and 300 000 homeless. This has also been attributed to Government corruption and to apathy by the people. We firmly reject the latter!

In spite of curfew and imposing martial law there were again massive protests which called for the resignation of the Government and the formation of a democratic government. The protesters took over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and rechristened it as the "Ministry of Revolution". On 10th August the Government of Hassan Diab who had taken over in January did resign and has been asked to continue by the President Michel Aoun till a new Government takes over.



The USA, as imperialist warmonger, and China have been blaming each other in their attempt to control this important part of West Asia. After all the Belt and Road Initiative planned by China is supposed to lead across the port of Beirut. Chinese aid to Lebanon is well known and the US is now blaming China for laying a "debt trap" forgetting that the largest debt trap has been laid by the IMF which is controlled by the USA. On the other hand, the Israeli-Zionist bombings of Lebanon with the approval of the USA are too brutal to be forgotten. Zionist Israel cannot be ruled out as the possible originator of the explosion even now. We call upon the people of Lebanon to resist all attempts by all foreign and imperialist powers to take over their justified struggle for freedom, social justice and democracy, as for example the former colonial power France is trying to do.

For the right of self-determination of the Lebanese people! For a revolutionary change according to the will of the masses!

At this time, we support the call of the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) who have given a call for the movement of October 17th to come together once again. They rightly demand a policy in the interests of the working class and the broad masses of the population and want to build a truly democratic and progressive Lebanon. We call upon all democratic forces in Lebanon to come together and for all sections of workers and other toiling masses to get organized and fight for this goal. The ICOR supports this movement in solidarity and in the spirit of the Beirut Middle East Conference of the ICOR and together with revolutionary forces in Lebanon promotes its revolutionization for a democratic and socialist Lebanon.

Strengthen the revolutionary forces in Lebanon and the ICOR!

Workers of all countries, unite!

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!

Forward with the construction of the ICOR!

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is an affiliate of the ICOR (International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations). The CPA (M-L) signed on to this resolution along with 29 other organisations around the world.