

Labor: How can anyone call it an 'Opposition'?



Nick G. (10 August 2021)

The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison (left) flanked by the leader of the "Opposition", Anthony Albanese (right)

The Labor Party's latest act of deferring to the needs of the capitalist class has taken the unedifying form of support for the Government's refusal to be transparent about which big corporations are refusing to pay back JobKeeper supplements, introduced at the start of the pandemic in 2020.

Labor and the independents had said they would require the tax commissioner to publish the names of entities which received JobKeeper, the number of individuals for whom the entity received the JobKeeper payment and the total amount that they received, with the option of also publishing information about how much the entity has paid back. These are companies that predicted a downfall in sales because of the pandemic, but which subsequently turned in big profits,

meaning that they did not need to retain the JobKeeper payment. Only five companies have so far paid back the funds.

It is well-known that big exploiters like Gerry Harvey (of Harvey Normans) simply thumbed their noses at the suggestion that they pay back the money. The car dealership Eagers Automotives paid out more than 100 per cent of the \$67 million they received in JobKeeper for July-December in shareholder dividends. Others gave CEOs, already on obscene levels of remuneration, huge personal bonuses. And this was public money meant to keep workers in jobs.

Labor announced yesterday (August 9) that it would withdraw support for the transparency measures, leaving independents and the Greens like shags on a rock.

It followed Labor's capitulation over the proposed low and intermediate-level nuclear waste dump proposal. Instead of holding the line with the independents and the Greens and blocking the dump, Labor worked with the government on a compromise that would allow the dump at Kimba in SA to proceed in return for opponents having the right of appeal through the courts. The Barngarla First Peoples, having been subjected to a racist exclusion from a community vote on the dump, are now faced with having to plead for funds. Anticipating the possibility of being forced into a judicial review of the dump, they established a Go Fund Me appeal several months ago, hoping to raise \$100,000. To date, they have raised just \$5,232 (including a donation from *(continued on pg. 2.)*

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our Party). They have been thrown to the wolves by Labor.

Crawling at the heels of the Government like a dog with a broken back, Labor is so determined to achieve office by making itself indistinguishable from the Liberals that they finally junked their negative gearing policy (which promised at least a partial redistribution of wealth) whilst attaching themselves firmly by the leash to the Government's scheduled tax cuts for high-income earners.

Here's a tip for the journos in the mainstream media: stop calling Labor "the Opposition". An Opposition opposes. It is possible to do that even within the common acceptance of Parliament as the social institution of capitalism, and within the agreed framework of capitalism as the accepted economic system.

The Greens can oppose the Government on most things. So can

Jacqui Lambie, Rex Patrick and others in the Senate, and some of the independents in the Lower House.

As an exasperated Senator Lambie said to Labor Senators on Monday, "You are supposed to be the Opposition. God, you've been doing it for eight years! No wonder you're still there! Stand up to them, because I can tell you that they won't be giving in by Thursday afternoon. Goodness me! Here you are, both Liberal and Labor, with all these staff, yet it takes the Independents and the micros to come up through the lot of you and call you out."

And the determined and hard-working Senator Rex Patrick also addressed the Labor seat-warmers: "I think I said in the chamber last year that I was going to help you with your marketing. I'm going to buy you a dog. I am going to buy you a dog and it's going to be a dog that rolls over every time a Liberal Party member walks

into the room, because that's exactly what you're doing here."

We have said, and we say it again, the Labor Party is a party of capitalism. It has no vision for an independent and socialist Australia. It does not provide any leadership in the direction of these goals of the Australian people. The "Opposition" label pinned on the ALP creates illusions of democracy and choice, as well as illusions that Labor represents the working class and socially progressive policies.

That it can't even badge itself as a fighting Opposition says heaps about its sole goal of obtaining the fruits of holding office for the imperialists who really run Australia.

Its unwillingness to even play the role assigned to it as an Opposition, will give further credibility to the need for an independent working class agenda led by a real party of change, a party that will always stand by the right of the people to struggle and win. ■

Charity hand in hand with military, strengthens capitalism's hold on Australia

Louisa L. (20 August 2021)

For the first time in 90 years, charities are feeding large numbers of Australians. Most are grateful to those who keep them from hunger, but bewildered at the unimagined difficulties they suddenly face.

Successive governments have gradually vacated the social welfare field. Most tax income relies on workers actually working, and with the middle and upper managers receiving tax handouts for the privilege of being relatively rich, the taxation kitty is pretty empty.

Our US imperialist overlord birthed philanthropy to promote its soft power. Originally focussed on the arts and research, it eventually flowed into Australia.

Corporate hands here have long held a stranglehold on peak arts' funding and board seats. That control is seeping into many smaller arts' organisations.

He who pays the piper calls the tune. Corporate uproar erupted when the Sydney Biennale called out its

sponsor Transfield for profiting from refugee jails. Biennale funding was threatened and then slashed.

Recent federal laws penalise charities for political comment (except "Thank you, masters for your great generosity") with loss of all government funding.

Multinational charity

No wonder OzHarvest looked to corporations like Google, Lendlease, BP, Menulog, Domain and others to fund their food for the hungry.

The Big Issue's content changed dramatically with the arrival of more corporate support. Gone were articles denouncing the cause of homelessness. In came front covers lauding the rich and famous.

Another multinational-sponsored charity is Aussie Helpers, touted by Alan Jones. Food Bank is a supporter. Foodbank itself has nearly 150 corporate supporters, including Nestle, Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, Zurich, QBE, ANZ, Linfox and Johnson and Johnson. The latter is struggling with credibility after its baby powder was



Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest

exposed to contain asbestos for decades, while it also faced legal action over the US opioid epidemic, and over dangerous vaginal mesh implants and a number of other products.

Military links

We can also expect billionaire philanthropists like Dr Twiggy Forrest to try mop up some public feelgood deeds in the wake of this Covid disaster, especially as his Indue Card impoverishes people.

After the NSW flood disaster, the May 26 edition of *Camden Haven Courier*, lauded Forrest and his Mindaroo Foundation for financial support to the volunteer efforts of Disaster Relief Australia (DRA).

Alongside Mindaroo, major sponsors of DRA are gambling organisations Clubs NSW and Keno, plus a little-known rising US multinational, Drone Deploy.

The newspaper's Tracey Fairhurst wrote, "Eighty-five per cent of DRA's crews are veterans or serving military while another 10 per cent is made up of first responders."

The board of DRA is mostly retired military brass.

Drone Deploy has 5000 corporate clients over a range of major economic sectors from mining to agriculture to construction, all described as unifying "commercial drone industry under one roof." Military clients aren't highlighted, but with drones buzzing the Delta hotspots in Sydney, militarism and paramilitarism hide behind civilian shields.

Effectively critiquing charities is difficult, because many will be fooled. The ruling class is reorganising the way it operates. When mobilising people we need to ensure we don't play into the hands of their enemies.

Neo-liberalism's day is almost done. Mindaroo's links with the military prepares for capitalism's next phase. Corporate feet already wear jackboots on the streets. But what they hold in their hands is also critical. In one is deception, and in the other, divide and conquer.

The people need to understand and be ready for all three. ■

Geelong protests seismic testing

Duncan B. (August 18 2021)

Geelong's waterfront has been a busy place for protests lately. On Sunday August 15th more than 40 protesters staged a protest at the gates of the port at Corio Quay, or paddled their surfboards in Corio Bay. They are members of an environmental group OCEAN---the Otway Climate Emergency Action Network.

They were seeking to disrupt the loading of the seismic survey ship Geo Coral. The ship was due to leave Geelong, bound for the Otway Basin west of King Island to conduct seismic blasting in a search for oil in the area. Recently the Federal Government gave the go-ahead for oil exploration in the Otway Basin, as close as 5 km from the Twelve Apostles.

Seismic blasting involves releasing 259-decibel blasts from the rear of the ship to determine gas and oil deposits deep below the ocean floor. The blasts kill, damage and disturb marine creatures including whales. One

protester, who is a rock lobster fisherman at Apollo Bay, said he had seen at first-hand that seismic testing was decimating the marine life in his fishing grounds off Apollo Bay. He said, "Over the last year or so, fishing has been in strong decline, the ships just go there and blast away and don't care what they wipe out."

An OCEAN spokesperson said, "If we are to limit global warming and for our planet to be a safe place for our children to live, we must leave fossil fuels under the ground."

On Wednesday 18th of August OCEAN members returned to the port in the early hours of the morning for another protest. Two intrepid people actually boarded the Geo Coral and attached themselves to the ship. They were able to delay its departure until police could forcibly remove them. The two will be charged on summons with trespassing and will appear in court at a later date. They have been threatened with severe penalties under the Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003. ■



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SANTOS Pulls Out of the Bight

Nick G. (17 July 2021)



Gas-producer SANTOS and its partner, the US-owned Murphy Oil Corporation, have pulled out of the Great Australian Bight in yet another great Australian environmental victory.

Equinor (Norwegian), BP (British) and Chevron are other multinationals that have been forced by peoples' actions to surrender exploration leases in the Bight.

Greenpeace Australia Pacific chief executive David Ritter described the development as a "momentous win for people and the planet".

"This is an incredible win for all of those who relentlessly campaigned for years to protect the Great Australian Bight from offshore drilling," he said.

"So many determined Australians worked incredibly hard to kick big oil companies out of our precious Bight, including coastal communities, Indigenous Traditional Owners, surfers, the seafood industry, tourism operators and other local businesses.

SANTOS had an 80% stake in the lease identified as EPP43 and Murphy Oil held 20%.

Canada's Bight Petroleum is now the only company that still intends to drill in the area, even though its most recent plans were rejected by the regulator, the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA). Bight Petroleum has the leases for EPP 41 and 42.

Greenpeace has stated that "The Australian government should now impose a permanent moratorium on oil drilling in this precious marine wonderland."

We support this demand and will support actions to enforce it. ■

Foreign takeover of agribusiness continues

Duncan B. (11 August 2021)

Not only are foreign buyers rushing to buy Australian farmland, they are also snapping up other agribusiness operations.

In July the billion-dollar Chinese-owned food processor Kilcoy Global Foods purchased beef and lamb processor Hardwick Meats, a family-owned company based in Kyneton (Vic).

Another multinational beef giant, JBS announced plans in June to acquire pork processor Rivalea Holdings, increasing JBS market share in Australia's pork industry. Farmer groups have raised concerns about access to pork processing facilities in

Victoria.

JBS has also announced plans to acquire Tasmania-based Huon Aquaculture, one of Australia's largest salmon producers in a deal worth over \$500 million. (The deal is subject to approval by Australian authorities and minority shareholders in Huon.)

Huon Aquaculture is one of the companies named as environmental polluters by author Richard Flanagan in his recent book *Toxic: The Rotting Underbelly of the Tasmanian Salmon Industry*.

The Canadians are also still busy. Recently Hewitt Cattle Australia, backed by Canada's PSP Investments, paid \$40 million for the historic Tubbo Station in the Riverina. ■

More on the Takeover of Huon Salmon

Duncan B. (17 August 2021)

The takeover of Tasmanian salmon producer Huon by Brazilian meat producer JBS has taken an unusual twist.

Billionaire iron ore miner Andrew Forrest, who holds a PhD in marine biology, has intervened. Forrest's investment firm Tatterang already held a 7% shareholding in Huon, but Forrest recently doubled this shareholding in an apparent challenge to JBS. Forrest wants JBS to agree to a list of environmental and animal welfare improvements he desires for the company.

We are not talking small fry here. The Tasmanian salmon industry is a billion dollar industry employing over 1500 workers and producing over 50,000 tonnes of salmon per year. Salmon has the highest gross value at the farm gate of any agrifood commodity at over \$700 million, far outgrossing beef, dairy or wool.

There are three main producers of salmon in Tasmania, Tassal, Huon and

Petuna. Tassal recently reported a rise in revenue to \$594 million, although net profit fell 50% to \$39.6 million. Tassal blamed the effect of COVID on the world salmon market for the fall, together with higher airfreight costs, but predicted a turnaround this year.

JBS is not squeaky clean. Four years ago, JBS was involved in a bribery and corruption scandal in Brazil which resulted in millions of dollars in fines and gaol sentences for its controlling shareholders. JBS has also faced claims of involvement in slave labour, illegal deforestation and questions about its animal welfare practices.

Meanwhile, allegations are being made that many of the companies busily engaged in buying Australian farms, water and agribusinesses are taking advantage of the use of overseas tax shelters such as Jersey, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands to avoid tax. Some of the companies involved are vigorously denying these allegations, claiming that they pay tax where required in Australia. ■



Australian Farmers Leaving the Dinosaurs for Dead

Duncan B. (15 July 2021)

Recently many Australians were fascinated to learn about the discovery in outback Queensland of the fossilised bones of what was Australia's largest dinosaur Australotitan Cooperensis, nicknamed Cooper. Cooper is believed to have stood 6.5 metres high, was about 30 metres long and weighed over 70 tonnes. We can only imagine the damage that Cooper did as it trampled through the countryside of Prehistoric Queensland.

A group of dinosaurs has also been discovered in Canberra. They are known as the leadership of the National Party. With their denial of climate change, support for coal mining and their sabotage of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, the National Party is doing more damage to the environment than a whole herd of Coopers could ever do.

Fortunately, many Australian farmers are leaving the National Party dinosaurs for dead. The rural press regularly reports on farmers who are recognising the threat that climate change poses to agriculture and are going to great lengths to deal with that threat, working to set their farms up to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

Many farmers are working to make their farms carbon-neutral or even carbon-positive. They are implementing numerous measures to reduce their carbon footprint. They are planting trees, combatting soil erosion and restoring degraded areas. Many are active in organisations like Landcare.

Farmers are making use of technology to better manage their use of water, electricity, fuel and other inputs such as fertiliser. They are finding ways to recycle waste water and waste products such as effluent from dairy farms. Solar power is being used extensively on many farms.

There are also companies like Sundrop Farms at Port Augusta (SA). Here over 23,000 mirrors capture solar thermal energy which is used to provide electricity, heating and desalinated water for 20 hectares of

glass houses, producing over 17,000 tonnes of truss tomatoes annually.

Progressive farmers are making Barnaby Joyce, Bridget McKenzie, Matt Canavan and the rest of the National Party leaders increasingly irrelevant. They belong back in the Cretaceous Period with Cooper and all the other dinosaurs. ■



Anti-China Government Policies Having an Effect

Ned. K (17 July 2021)

The Morrison Government has moved further into the US camp as rivalry between the US and China intensifies, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

The Murdoch press ran a story on a recently released KPMG report on Chinese investment in Australia. The report says that Chinese investment in Australia is the lowest it has been since 2007 and that it has declined by 83% since 2016!

KPMG said this decline was following a trend of Chinese decreased investment in OECD countries overall. Concerns by the Morrison Government about "national security" (read "protecting US interests in Australia") were given as one of the main reasons for the reduction in Chinese investment, particularly by large state-owned corporations from China.

The Morrison Government will no doubt get a pat on the back from the US imperial power about these latest figures. However, it may come back to bite the Morrison Government if China goes one step further and sources iron ore from another country. Iron ore exports to China have been the

Morrison Government's saviour in terms of balance of trade figures, especially with the Covid-19 caused decline in the export industry of overseas students paying an arm and a leg to study in Australia.

Many workers in Australia tend to welcome investment from any overseas corporation provided it creates jobs but are equally unwelcoming of overseas corporations when they withdraw investment and that withdrawal means workers lose their jobs. The car industry is a case in point.

The impact on employment in Australia with the decline in Chinese investment is not mentioned in the daily press articles about the KPMG report.

The history of China itself in the years 1949 to 1979 (before the Deng restoration of capitalism) show that the best job security for workers of any country is economic self-reliance and minimal, selective reliance on overseas investment.

This path is the way forward for Australian working people as well.

Foreign investment in Australia has shown that the investors take out much more than they put in, and put the people's lives at risk by setting up military bases here to protect their investments. This is the history of British and US economic dominance over Australia over the last 100 years. Would any other big power that became the dominant investor in Australia act any different? I doubt it.

Independence and socialism the only way forward. ■



Touch One, Touch All – Fighting Call of the Working Class

Alice M. (12 July 2021)

Maritime Union of Australia members across Australia are gearing up for a long and hard fight against Svitzer-Maersk, the biggest global multinational shipping company. Svitzer, owned by Maersk, operates 104 tug boats in Australia.

For 2 years the MUA has been in drawn out EBA negotiations with Svitzer. MUA members around the country took 29 industrial actions against Svitzer during the tough EBA negotiations. An in-principle agreement had been almost reached and signed off. Until Covid-19 broke out and the company used the cover of the pandemic to slap on 30 new demands stripping back many hard-fought conditions MUA members had won over 80 years. Whilst Svitzer cried the pandemic was ruining its business, the parent company Maersk recorded \$2.6 billion profit. It's a story repeated across the country in all industries and workplaces.

Repeatedly MUA members unanimously voted down the 30 new company demands that wipe out their rights, wages, job security and conditions. They succeeded in pushing back 20 of company's new claims, but Svitzer is determined to abolish job security and push through casualisation of tug boats crews by refusing to budge on its remaining 10 demands.

In December 2020 Svitzer sacked all tug boats crews in Sydney and Geelong. For six months Geelong tug boats sat idle, but in June 2021 Svitzer flew in labour hire workers on lower wages and conditions to replace the sacked tug boats crews. Svitzer had contracted out its workforce to labour hire company Strategic Workplace Solutions.

Nationwide fighting campaign

On Friday 9 July at 12pm, at the start of a nationally coordinated campaign, 22 MUA members working for Svitzer-Maersk at Webb Dock in Port of Melbourne walked off the job for a 12 hour stoppage. They were met by hundreds of cheering Victorian unionists from many unions pledging solidarity.



Workers and unions rally outside Svitzer in Melbourne on July 9

Speaker after speaker from different unions strongly pledged their unions' support for the MUA members' fight against the multinational's attacks. Speakers invoked the long and victorious 1998 MUA struggle held on the same Webb Dock site 23 years earlier. It was only the mobilisation and unity of the working class, unions and communities on the ground, especially the months long powerful and disciplined 24 hour community picket outside the Webb Dock gates, that succeeded in pushing back the shipping bosses and the government's agenda to smash not only the MUA but all unions and the organised working class.

Christy Cain, National President of the MUA, sent a warning to Svitzer-Maersk that the MUA is not afraid of taking on multinational corporations. "We took on Rio Tinto, BHP, Chevron, Alcoa (Portland in Victoria). We have been fined, sued, maligned but we're still standing here today."

The MUA has launched a nationwide campaign of collective working class struggle taking on Svitzer-Maersk. The fighting campaign will be a long and protracted struggle "until every one of the sacked tug boat workers is reinstated permanently and the company abandons its agenda of casualisation and slashing workers' rights, wages and conditions. It will be a week in, week out, month in, month out

struggle, until workers' job security, wages and conditions are protected".

"Every one of the 32 unions in Victoria will be asked to come together as one, to fight as one, to win as one", said Christy Cain. "All bets are off, no more talk ... if they want to meet us, they have to agree to a union agreement – put people back on the tug boats in Geelong and Sydney!"

The national campaign will reach out across the country, from port to port. All Maersk vessels will be affected by industrial action. On Friday 16 July at 12:30pm a joint unions rally outside the Maersk office in Kielor, Melbourne, will kick off the nationwide campaign. From Melbourne to Sydney, to the Newcastle coal terminal, to Adelaide, to Port Kembla, to a 48 hour stoppage in Fremantle, "until a proper union agreement is reached".

The Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, Luke Hilakari, told the rally that the MUA-Maersk fight is a much bigger union story stretching out across all industries, a story of workers battling casualisation, precarious employment and thousands of permanent jobs contracted out to labour hire companies.

Independent working class agenda

The Svitzer-Maersk attack on the MUA exposes capital and multinational corporations' permanent agenda of relentless attacks on the rights, wages and conditions of the

entire working class. Corporate attacks can only be fought by the collective power of the working class with its own independent and fighting demands - an independent working class agenda not beholden to or reliant on politicians, parliamentary parties and the courts.

The enduring legacy and tough lessons of the 1998 MUA struggle for the next generation of workers is that job security and union rights have to be fought for and can be defended on the ground by the mobilised and organised working class and its allies in the wider community. It's a lesson that can, and will be, repeated. ■



Time for a Shorter Work Week

Ned K. (9 July 2021)

One response of the capitalist class to the Covid-19 pandemic in North America is an acceleration of automation, particularly in services sector of the economy.

Canadian economist Casey Warman from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia has studied the impact of automation on economic productivity (the exploitation rate of workers) for many years. He argues that in North America the rapid re-opening of the economy after the worst period of Covid-19 there led to an increased demand for waiters, hotel workers, retail sales and other workers stood down during the pandemic. This led to a temporary shortage of workers in low wage jobs giving them in Warman's words "a rare moment of leverage" for winning wage increases.

However, this rare moment is likely to be short-lived as capitalists respond with an acceleration in the move to automation in service sectors. The President of the Food and Commercial Workers Union summed up what is happening when he said, "Six months ago, all these workers were essential. Everyone was calling them heroes. Now they're figuring out how to get rid of them."

In Australia, we see the same trends. For example, in warehousing, a growth industry arising from so many

imported finished goods after manufacturing was moved off shore, Coles are leading the charge to build automated warehouses with reduced number of workers. Self-serve systems at the check-out is another example of the creep of automation and technological change replacing workers with machines.

Balance of Work and Family Life

The capitalist heads of industries now pat themselves on the back about accommodating the needs of workers for work patterns that suit their family needs. However, there is no balance at all for workers thrown out of work completely due to automation.

Automation by its very nature increases the rate of exploitation of the working class as a whole because fewer workers produce more surplus value. Where does that increased surplus value go? Not to the working class as a whole but into the hands of the capitalist class. In particular into the hands of the big corporations whose headquarters are outside of Australia.

One way of workers winning back a bit of this surplus they have created as a class due to automation is to struggle to win a shorter week.

It is time for a 30 hour week for a five day worker with 6 hours ordinary time pay per day on current full 38 week pay.

A campaign for a shorter working week will unite full time, part time and casual workers as all these workers increase their hourly rate of pay. Will it create more jobs? Initially probably

yes, but real job security across the whole working class will not occur under capitalism.

In the mid-1980s workers won the 38 hour week and the employers said the sky would fall in with the change from 40 hours to 38 hours. Of course, it didn't. Capitalism continued of course and workers then had to struggle to maintain what they had won through gaining the 38 hour week.

That was 40 odd years ago. Time for another crack at winning a shorter working week for the benefit of all workers. ■

Geelong Librarians Fight for Better Pay

Duncan B. (3 July 2021)

On Friday July 2nd librarians employed by the Geelong Regional Library Corporation walked off the job in an escalation of a long-running dispute over wages and conditions.

Over 100 staff joined by about another 100 supporters from other unions protested outside the Geelong Regional Library.

They are taking action in support of EBA negotiations that have been going on for over 12 months. A union representative said that Geelong library staff are among the lowest paid in Victoria despite the library being ranked the state's best. Geelong library staff are seeking parity with the top paying libraries in Victoria.

We wish them well! ■

Locals compare Sydney suburbs under lock-in to war zones

Louisa L. (24 July 2021)

Police have been let loose in Sydney. Capitalists demanded our city stay open. The NSW Government complied. Covid's fearful spread is a direct result.

Now demands rise for government action to protect peoples' health and economic well-being. Sydney is locked down.

Whole working class and migrant districts across the south west and west are locked in. People strive to keep themselves, their families and communities safe. Little assistance is provided.

But much more is afoot.

Key roads in and out are watched. We aren't talking highways, just roads linking suburbs. Cameras detect people out of area by number plate. An expanding list of targeted suburbs are ringed by police and largely isolated, unless residents have passes.

Working class Yonan D'Baz from locked-in Fairfield says he would "die defending Australia", but after "emergency" restrictions unfolded it does "not feel like I'm living in Australia."

Listing mounted police, highway patrollers, paddy wagons, helicopters "from the morning till you go to sleep," he adds, "UAVs. Are you serious?" He rages against these surveillance drones, used as if "in war zones".

That's right. Drones look into peoples' yards. Helicopters with powerful cameras and lights patrol overhead incessantly. Police car and foot patrols stop people, interrogate and search them.

Even quiet suburbs without major shopping centres, like Chester Hill, suddenly have 30 plus cop cars, their occupants trawling the streets. Shopping bags are searched without warrant, looking for "non-essential items".

This has happened in at least one non-red zone suburb too.

"I can't see the cops trying the same shit at Woolies in -----, much too well heeled, though only a few kilometres away," a friend texted.

Few people in other parts of Sydney know.

Learning, they react with shock. "What??? What's essential???" asks a friend who shops at night to avoid crowds. "What about ice cream?" We laugh and imagine her arguing the point with a cop.

Beware the Emergency Response

If the crisis had been dealt with effectively by early hard lockdown and clear messages sent to ALL sections of the population in languages and media they relate to, people would have responded more sensibly and safely, as they have done in Melbourne and as they are now overwhelmingly doing in Sydney.

Instead, we went from unrestrained Ikea therapy to the armed force of the capitalist state in one step.

And remember, emergency response legislation is rarely repealed.

After fourteen years, police remain in NT communities as an "emergency response" (originally enforced by the military) despite the trigger being publicly exposed as a lie. NT Aboriginal jail populations are growing exponentially as a direct result.

The Territory is remote enough for the media to ignore as rights are systematically stripped from First Peoples which make up a third of its population. It's a testing ground for how to get away with this in other places.

Why there? The NT is home to huge resources on Aboriginal lands that an overwhelmingly foreign owned mining and gas industry want.

Additionally, there are expanding US military bases and rapidly growing troop presence, all amid sabre rattling and preparations for US war with China.

Blakfellas elsewhere, especially the youth, are also targeted by police for systematic brutality and harassment. Bag searches have been an increasing part of life for years. There's jailtime in parts of the Territory for a bottle of beer, despite the battle to stop Woolworths opening another outlet in walking distance of several dry communities.

In 2020 *Vanguard* warned of emergency legislation (which removed criminal culpability from any soldiers) combining with the NT Intervention and an already existing secret military training manual, 'Australian Army Manual of Land Warfare', called 'Aid to the Civilian Authorities'.

The manual is a step by step how-to for a military coup or dissolution of parliament or other moves to open capitalist class rule. Isolating suburban centres of political concern; travel passes; indiscriminately searching people plus identifying and shooting protest leaders; and "disappearing" people, bodies and any filmed evidence: are all in the manual.

Australia is not ripe for such an extremity. But police are certainly getting good experience.

When urgently requested extra vaccines, General F---knuckle (supposedly running national vaccine non-rollout) offers Sydney soldiers instead. Up here police chiefs lecture



us at 11am press conferences. It normalises their role in public leadership.

Ideas gather their own momentum

Many thousands protested against lockdown in central Sydney on Saturday, partly because of its economic impact, but probably also about the way lockdown has been imposed.

Dangerous to health and against science the protest is, but it's a symptom, not the cause.

Mass arrests and venomous police take oaths to track more participants through surveillance footage. Still no charges against corporate chains that packed their stores like sardines.

A mate asks how we raise the open moves by state forces without looking like conspiracy theorists.

It depends. Some people will be open to the whole story, as long as we don't lecture or become too irate.

Each time this writer has raised the suburban shopping bag searches, especially with laugh emojis or their conversational equivalents, friends have been gobsmacked.

It opens a door to something very unexpected in their own backyard. Let that idea percolate, because that image of cops searching women at Aldi is powerful.

It creates its own momentum. It brings up other questions.

We take inspiration from First Peoples. This is no petit bourgeois romanticisation of their experiences, as if the last 230 years of brutal invasion and dispossession didn't happen.

It's their brave defiant spirits, that we emulate. For despite everything they say, "We are exhausted, but we have survived. We will never give up."

In a lifetime of struggle, this writer has often been teased, and even ridiculed, about the non-public nature of most of our membership. Perhaps

we could have been more open at times and gained more strength. But we recognised always the repressive nature of the state, despite the appearance of freedom and democracy.

Our members protect themselves in a sea of people. The grassroots are our teachers and comrades. We move forward depending on their understanding, their strength, their unity and above all on their preparedness to act. We take their ideas emerging from experiences to further develop our theories of when and how to act, of how to lead.

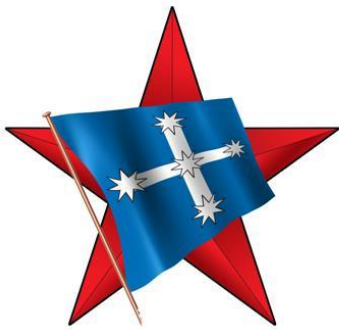
We aren't reckless, but moves to fascism don't frighten us.

We acknowledge reality and find ways to move forward.

Like First Peoples, our Party will never, ever give up the struggle to build a society that serves the people not capitalism.

We aren't alone. ■

STATEMENT The Pandemic and People's Rights



Central Committee, CPA (M-L)
(28 July 2021)

The Covid-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, continues to threaten the health of people around the world.

That threat is complicated and magnified by the health measures that states are taking to enforce compliance with steps taken to deal with the pandemic.

These include mandatory vaccinations for some categories of workers; the lockdown requirements to stay at home except for very limited exemptions for food shopping, obtaining essential medical services, being in an essential area of work, and the like; mandated wearing of masks in public; and logging in with QR codes,

or a sign-in sheet, when entering any business, agency or sporting event for the purpose of contact tracing. It is not alarmist to say that, for the authorities charged with administration of the capitalist state, this is all a very useful dress rehearsal for future political crackdowns. In Sydney, the step from lockdown-lite with almost every business sector open – as demanded by capitalism – to lockdowns and lock-ins accompanied by mass police presence, heavy surveillance including searches of shoppers without warrant, sets a particularly dangerous precedent.

Epidemiologists and other health professionals chosen by experts rather than government should be in control as they were in the AIDS crisis, when Australia's response led the world. This would include thorough mass messaging in appropriate languages and media created and distributed by experts.

It is right that people want their rights and liberties protected. It is healthy that a certain skepticism exists towards the pronouncements of state authorities. The fact that "big pharma" sees the pandemic as a source of mega-profits, protecting its interests with vaccine patents and controlling the sale

and distribution of its products adds another layer of popular anger to the mix.

Australian soldiers sent to Vietnam were compulsorily vaccinated with a dangerous cocktail of vaccines. The failure to stagger doses and monitor health was pushed aside in the rush to throw them into US imperialism's brutal war. Some veterans say these vaccinations affected them as much as Agent Orange, and that their health was ruined. A complex set of factors has given rise to vaccine hesitancy, and this is certainly not to be conflated with the nonsense of anti-vaxxers.

This set of circumstances tests the ability of a Marxist-Leninist Party to "apply this Marxism daily, hourly, in the most diverse, peculiar, unprecedented circumstances" (Mikhail Kalinin, President of the USSR during the Stalin era).

For example, what leadership should we offer on the question of mandatory vaccination?

At one extreme, there are anti-vaxxers who simply refuse vaccinations on principle. Aligned with them are a small number of otherwise politically advanced
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members of the working class who are suspicious that the Covid-19 vaccinations could “turn out to be biological class warfare”.

The question of vaccinations is certainly a class question. Under a system of privatised and corporatised medicine, the right of workers and their children to free vaccinations must be upheld. Together with vaccines should go a raft of social measures to support prevention of the spread of illnesses including the provision of nutritious foods, non-crowded housing, and secure and well-paid employment. Vaccines alone can never be the whole answer.

But workers should not fear vaccinations, and except where there are other underlying, verifiable medical issues, should accept mandatory vaccination particularly in health, education, aged care, disability and working class settings, such as the abattoirs, public transport, food processing, etc.

Vaccinations, including those that were mandatory, were definitely a part of the socialised medical services of the Soviet Union and China during the time of Stalin and Mao respectively.

We therefore reject the proliferation of conspiracy theories that seek to encourage people to refuse to be vaccinated. We know that these theories come in a number of guises and, unlike the one that suggested that Bill Gates would surreptitiously place micro-chips in the vaccines, others themselves adopt a “scientific” veneer to oppose the science of vaccines.

There is also a group of people who object to the necessary coercive measures taken to protect public health on the grounds of individual liberties. They raise the slogans of “freedom” and “the rights of the individual”.

The question of rights is also a class question. The bourgeois revolutions that overthrew feudal relations of production advanced the concept of universal human rights so as to secure the support of the broadest ranks of the people for the introduction of capitalist relations of production. Feudal obligations of the serf to the landlord were replaced by the right of individual workers to sell their labour power to

whomever they chose. Mass struggles led by the working class broke out in countries where capitalism was taking root to demand that substance be given to these “universal rights”. Every political, industrial and social right contained in the promises of the slogans of the bourgeoisie had to be fought for and won by the organised working class. Knowing the sacrifices made for these rights by earlier generations of workers makes us determined to resist their erosion.

However, we cannot support the reactionary demands and actions of libertarians, far-right activists and a minority of anarchists. Those who rally against the compulsory wearing of masks, who demand the premature lifting of lockdowns, or who oppose the science of vaccination, are objectively aligning with a right-wing agenda that hides behind slogans of “freedom” and the “rights of the individual”. Mao Zedong said “It is right to rebel against reactionaries”. It is not right to rebel for reactionary causes. The storming of the US Capitol by Trump supporters clearly illustrates this point.

None of this is to defend the Australian government, or governments elsewhere, from either their incompetence in the handling of the pandemic, or their response to demonstrations and rallies held during the pandemic. The police, for example, are refining tactics of suppression and control that will be used to restrict our freedoms long after this pandemic has passed. We also note the highly coercive police practices in working class areas such as Fairfield, in Sydney, compared to the light treatment of affluent suburbs. This is the standard behaviour of capitalist states, but intensified (and exploited) by the circumstances of the pandemic.

Against the anti-vaxxers and the various vested corporate interests, **we demand:**

- **free and effective vaccination for everyone in the world.**
- **all data and research related to vaccination against COVID-19 be made public domain and everyone must have the right to develop vaccines based on it.**

- **all vaccines developed be scientifically tested and reviewed expeditiously by an independent body such as the WHO. All safe vaccines must be approved for use immediately.**

- **all vaccine production be taken over in the public interest and that all vaccines produced be centralised and transparently delivered worldwide, based solely on society's need for the vaccine.**

- **the costs of the entire vaccination process be recovered from the major corporations around the world in proportion to their profits.**

- **there must be purpose-built quarantine facilities in each state and territory of Australia to replace the use of medi-hotels.**

- **the government should establish a single National Emergency Storage (NESt) facility, completely owned and operated by the government and publicly accountable through an annual report to parliament; its directors should answer questions by committees of the parliament. It should not only have emergency medical supplies to pandemic levels of requirement, but bushfire chemical fire retardants, firefighting PPE, oxygen bottles, flood pumps and other requirements for dealing with unprecedentedly critical natural climate catastrophes.**

- **that libertarian agendas and anti-vaxxer theories be countered with campaigns of education and persuasion, and that the government publicly commit to lifting socially necessary coercive measures at an identified point in the suppression and control of the virus and its variants.**

Capitalist governments have as their first priority the protection of capitalist relations of production in which the pursuit of private profit obtained through the exploitation of working people is central.

Anti-imperialist independence and socialism alone will allow us to prioritise the needs of the people whenever national crises arise. ■

Unprecedented national link up demands the end of the NT Intervention

This article is the first of three by Lindy Nolan on the NT Intervention. Parts 2 and 3 can be read on our website

Lindy Nolan (11 July 2021)

The homelands of Utopia, hundreds of kilometres northeast of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), used to be one of the healthiest communities in Australia, black or white, says Arrernte woman now resident in Melbourne, Celeste Liddle.

Never conquered or missionised, Alyawarre and Anmatjere Peoples lived in family groups, still practising land and resource management, culture and decision-making with significant self-determination.

In 2007 the “Emergency” Intervention brought invading troops and police into First Peoples’ communities across the NT, including Utopia.

Utopia lost its water supply, allowing disease to spread, after the Intervention’s white-run Barkly Shire Council replaced Urapuntja Aboriginal Corporation and broke a bore. It took crowdfunding to shame the NT Government into fixing it. Urapuntja had successfully managed community services for over three decades before the Intervention stripped it and all other self-determining NT Aboriginal organisations of their power.

Humiliating signs banning alcohol and pornography also went up.

In Utopia, Elder Rosalie Kunoth Monks and her daughter Ngarla, outspoken from the first day, had to explain to Elders what pornography was.

“It broke our men,” says Rosalie Kunoth Monks’ granddaughter, Amelia Kunoth Monks.

“Our kids fear... It’s a bleak future for them,” she says.

Based on a lie

Anger is still palpable about the lie on which the Intervention land and resource grab was based. ABC’s 2007 Lateline reporter Tony Jones made no attempt to scratch the surface of allegations that Elders led paedophile rings in communities.



Aunty Cathy (in foreground at 2018 Sydney rally) introduced the conference

A so-called long term NT youth worker, Greg Andrews, the allegations’ source, was soon exposed as working for Minister Mal Brough’s office. He had never been a Territory youth worker or worked in communities. Andrews is now High Commissioner to Ghana.

“When we found out it was a lie, it should have been disbanded then!” says Aunty June Mills, a Larrakia musician, artist and Elder of great renown, who recently featured in ‘Ernie Dingo’s Going Places’.

Neither Tony Jones nor the ABC apologised. Jones was promoted.

Amelia Kunoth Monks and Celeste Liddle, a writer, unionist and now Greens candidate for the upcoming federal election, were two of 17 speakers at a ground breaking online conference over two days, marking the Intervention’s 14th anniversary on June 21.

Three groups: Intervention Rollback Action Group from Mparntwe, Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney and concerned Australians from Victoria, coordinated the event. First Peoples’ law professor, writer and filmmaker Larissa Behrendt, and Gomeroi poet and legal researcher Alison Whittaker were moderators.

Assimilation enforcing compliance

Some spoke of the Intervention as assimilation rebadged.

Emeritus Professor of Economics

and Anthropology Jon Altman states, “The intervention sought to revisit and amplify an earlier colonial attempt by the Commonwealth from the 1950s to assimilate Indigenous peoples, some then still living at or even beyond the frontier, speaking Aboriginal languages, largely adhering to their own laws, customs, beliefs and values. Government policy looked to reform those with tradition-influenced ways of living into compliant mainstream subjects.”

Such “reform” was and remains deceitful and violent. Altman says the Intervention deploys “constitutional powers, as well as fiscal and military might.”

Many people are enslaved in the Community Development Program (CDP). Jon Altman slams the 500,000 CDP penalties suspending payments since 2015.

“It’s colonialism on top of colonialism,” says Steve Kumerungi Hodder Watt, a writer, media and theatre worker.

A Lardil man who has long resided in the Territory, Mr Hodder Watt was particularly enraged when recalling the threat of sexual medical tests on all children, eventually defeated by refusal of families like his and by doctors to allow them to proceed.

Meanwhile, Aunty June tells the conference that she is being evicted from public housing. The first time she was contacted was when a court notice was served. It’s daily life these days. *(continued on pg. 12)*

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Aboriginal royalties to fund mining

Indigenous Law Centre's Professor Greg Marks exposes a secret Memorandum of Understanding not part of the original legislation.

"It fell off the back of a truck," he says.

It bans ANY Commonwealth funding for housing in 500 homelands. Most houses are 30 to 40 years old, and have had zero maintenance since 2007. Between 2018 and 2023 NO money is budgeted for homelands, despite their indisputable success in improving the lives of First Peoples.

Professor Marks also condemns a related announcement by former Deputy PM Michael McCormack at Barunga Festival a week earlier.

A "charter for development" on Aboriginal lands, it foreshadows amendments to the Land Rights Act to facilitate mining, all funded by the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA). The ABA distributes royalties from mining on Aboriginal lands. So, Aboriginal royalties will fund mining!

"Undermining traditional custodians, there is no mention of housing," Professor Marks says, "instead a new statutory body gives crumbs for art centres."

Tellingly, he is investigating "international Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide, and the potential relevance of the development and jurisprudence of these international laws to the Australian context."

Ironically, Covid restrictions have allowed remote voices to be heard more widely.

Instead of bringing small numbers of speakers from communities, where they have obligations and needs to survive, to far away Sydney and Melbourne for small forums and yearly anniversary rallies, these strong women and men, mostly First Peoples, but also committed allies, have united online.

The conference's strength is enough to ensure that some mainstream media will share the truth widely.

More importantly, it concentrates knowledge of the Intervention's colonialist aims and methods. It helps crystallise the way forward. ■

For peace, fight big power domination and surge towards war

John G. (2 July 2021)

The threat of war has been rising over the last few years. This year it has hit new heights, raising new levels of concern to people the world over.

People want peaceful lives and oppose any new war between the big powers. They want to be free of big power domination and bullying.

The way the US and China are mustering their own strength and drawing in others to confrontations with the other power, worries people.

On the one side US monopoly capitalism is working to muster European powers, hold and consolidate its dominance over other OECD countries, strengthen and consolidate the hold it has to one extent or another over countries in the developing world using its net of financial, military and diplomatic dependence. The momentum marks a heightened stage in the US preparations for war. In concert with those financial, diplomatic and military preparations, the stream of media bile against China has been being ramped up across the western world.

On China's leaders' part, it has been expanding its net of financial and industrial dependence through massive exports of finance, purchasing resource, industrial, agricultural and logistics enterprises, creating new industrial enterprises and particularly developing new logistics infrastructure, much integrated into a Eurasian trading network. It has used its financial strength to prise open new sources of raw materials, workforces and markets to exploitation, expanding Chinese capital accumulation from foreign countries (see our booklet *Explaining China*). It expands its military activity but at a small level compared to American activity. It has stepped up anti-US media output in concert with heavy handed repression in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

Looking at China from the West has difficulties attached. Western media has been swept up in a level of US anti-China hysteria. We all recall the notorious US 'intelligence' reports

'confirming' that Iraq harboured weapons of mass destruction in the lead up to the US invasion of that poor country. Formal presentations were made to the UN, and allies were briefed to 'justify' US aggression. It was all lies. It was used to justify racing to war with the US, despite UN inspectors correctly reporting there were no such weapons where the US said there were.

This is not to say the reports of repression of people in China, Hong Kong and of Uyghurs have no substance. It is to say much caution has to be exercised over the barrage of propaganda from the US and various pro-US elements in Australian parliamentary parties, the media, academia, and their echoes wider in society. What is clear is that the Chinese state is strong and intrusive, imposes itself on its people, and exercises tyranny in defending and extending its dominance over society and peoples within China.

China's rise involves expansion overseas, confronting US dominion

The US-China rivalry involves a rising China in itself being a challenge to US imperialist dominance over the globe. China need do no more than continue to have a growing economy, technological advances, and expanding international trade to be a challenge to the incumbency of the US. China's economy and society features a system of state monopoly capitalism, with its large state-owned and operated industrial and financial sector accompanied by heavy state macro-economic intervention providing the framework of Chinese capitalists' accumulation of capital from exploitation of the Chinese working class.

This has featured rapid growth in Chinese production, fuelling rapid expansion of Chinese capital accumulation by the Chinese state and Chinese capitalists, in turn needing continuously expanding fields for investment.

The hoard of Chinese capital, having bubbled over the opportunities for lucrative investment in China,



US and Australian war ships in the South China Sea, April 2020

needs overseas fields for the purchase and development of resources, markets and for workforce exploitation internationally. It drives the Chinese state to open overseas markets, resources and workforces to Chinese capitalist exploitation. Where there is resistance the Chinese state and Chinese capitalists have proven quick to use inducements, corrupt local political figures and resort to bullying and abuse. It leads to rightful resistance.

China is rising while the US has been stagnating or even declining. American imperial world domination is threatened just by Chinese capitalism's operations. Its capital accumulates, which seeks locations for lucrative investment both in and outside China. There are very limited regions outside the world capitalist domain open for Chinese investment. It leaves the two powers competing for raw materials, markets and workforces internationally, with its Chinese rival confronting American imperial world domination.

American imperialism frustrated and agitated, China hitting out at strictures

The American response has been growing more virulent as the process continues and imposes itself on American business, government and consciousness. Sanctions, tariff barriers, boycotts and bans aimed to constrain China's economic growth and capital accumulation have been growing.

The necessity for Chinese capital to

find new fields overseas in which to produce even more value leads it to knock down barriers to Chinese capital intrusion. It leads China to bully countries raising barriers to protect their industries, markets and financial independence. China seeks to weave around American sanctions, tariffs, boycotts and the like, engaging in tit-for-tat actions. With smaller countries China's actions are more openly abusive and bullying.

Australia has been caught up in the American-China rivalry as an American dependency.

Australian leaders, after decades of submission to Chinese capital intrusion, have taken to struggling to purge elements in Australia which have been snared in a net of financial and industrial dependence on Chinese capital. That is good, but comes after much Chinese capitalist purchase and financial penetration of Australian industry, agriculture, commerce and finance that they previously bent over backwards to welcome. They are scrambling to reverse decades of their submission to Chinese economic penetration. It leads to Chinese reaction to tear down barriers erected. Chinese reactions have hit many industries, particularly agricultural industries, like grain, seafood and wine, in a wave of bullying and abuse.

Australian leaders' actions against Chinese capital stand in stark contrast to their embrace of the American net of financial, industrial and military domination of Australia. That hypocrisy seriously weakens struggle against China's intrusions and against

big power war preparations.

Externally, Australian leaders have been acting as provocateurs for the US, picking fights with China like the go-it-alone demands for investigation of China's involvement in the pandemic, rather than joining others to establish non-targeted scientific investigations normally conducted with every pandemic. The breadth and tone in which issues have been raised with Chinese leaders, including megaphone diplomacy in the media, has been strident and accusative rather than normal diplomatic, while forthright, exchanges. They have an air of performing for American plaudits.

Australia's leaders have a fraught history of falling over themselves to get into American wars in the era of American pre-eminence in the western capitalist world. Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq stand out among a longer sorry sequence of failures to stand against aggression and invasion, and for peace and national independence.

Stand for peace against the superpowers, weaken America's grip on Australia

The question of how to avoid and put off any outbreak of war is in people's minds. How people defend peace and look after themselves is crucial.

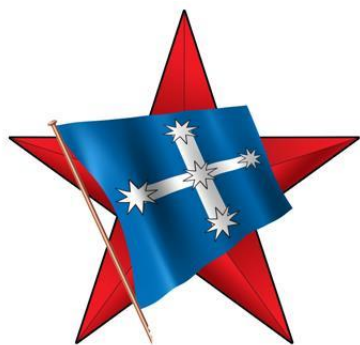
In some ways it's a simple matter of breaking big power dominance and war policies. Easy to say, what to do?

The internal situation in Australia has US imperialism predominant, backed by the bulk of political and business leaders, the top state administrators, the military forces and other machinery of state, and a wide coterie of academic agitators and media commentators among others.

To alert people of the dangers of US-China war and how US domination contributes to the danger is the first step. Anti-China hysteria has raised concerns about the danger of war widely in the community.

Wariness of American wars is widespread among Australians not caught up in the net of financial and political dependence on American imperialism. The enormous demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq is testament to that sentiment. ■

STATEMENT On Events in Afghanistan



Central Committee, CPA (M-L)
(19 August 2021)

The Communist Part of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) welcomes the withdrawal, in defeat, of US imperialist aggressor forces and their accomplices from Afghanistan.

The withdrawal of US imperialist military forces and the fall of its Afghani puppet government is a tribute to the long and determined resistance by the Afghani people to imperialist occupations of their country by the British, Russians and now the US and its allies.

The new government of the Taliban represents the Afghani peoples' desire for independence, but is a reactionary religio-fascist organisation with a track-record of cruel oppression of secular Afghans, women and national minorities such as the Hazara.

Focus in Australia is currently on the attempts to withdraw from Kabul, those Afghans who had cooperated with Australian occupation forces. Prime Minister Morrison said on Tuesday that "They fought under our flag and for our values". This clearly shows that he sees Afghanistan as a possession of imperialism, that he is incapable of understanding an oppressed people's desire for independence and liberation. It clearly shows his refusal to acknowledge the war crimes committed by a number of Australian soldiers which can only have been committed by soldiers undertaking occupation and denial of other people's rights to independence.

As US imperialism inflicts the humiliation of a desperate withdrawal on itself, other imperialist powers are busy in the background. A Taliban delegation was in China only weeks ago. China once supported the Afghan

people's fight against the occupying forces of Soviet social-imperialism and a Marxist-Leninist Party, armed with Mao Zedong's Thought, was active in the anti-Soviet fight. Remnants of that Party remain and continue the fight for independence and socialism, but they are not strong enough to defeat the reactionary Taliban at this time.

Now China and Russia are advising the Taliban on the best way to stabilise the country so that they can exploit its resources and its people. Chinese Premier Wang Yi said yesterday that, "under the new circumstance, China and Russia are necessary to strengthen communication and coordination in order to support each other to protect the two countries' legitimate interests in Afghanistan - personnel, companies and organizations.

In order to protect their companies operating in Afghanistan they have been advising the Taliban to "build a broad-based and inclusive political structure and friendly and peaceful foreign policies", advice echoed in the Taliban's first press conference. If the advice calms tensions in Afghanistan, it will have served a useful purpose, but it is essentially self-serving, and its ready acceptance shows the influence that the newer imperialisms already have over the Taliban government.

Our observations, necessarily at a distance and on the basis of a limited understanding, are that the very welcome defeat of US imperialism and its accomplices does not yet guarantee the independence of Afghanistan, and that under the Taliban's new government, the struggle for secularism, for women's rights, for self-determination for national minorities, and for democracy, land redistribution and democratic rights will continue within the framework of a fight for socialism.

The defeat of US imperialist military and its allies in Afghanistan encourages the people's movement in Australia to end the US-Australia alliance and Australian support for US-led wars and occupations. It reinforces the struggle for Australia's anti-imperialist independence from all imperialist powers. ■

Solidarity with Greece

The following message of solidarity to the Greek people currently facing devastating bushfires was sent 8 August 2021:

To the Communist Party of Greece (Marxist-Leninist):

The CPA (M-L) is watching with great concern the wildfires devastating parts of your country.

From September 2019 to February 2020 Australia experienced bushfires unprecedented in their scope, duration and intensity. Fire-fighting services had warned the government that such a crisis was imminent, but still the government did nothing. Its biggest failure has been its failure to take action on global warming, leaving the fossil fuel industry free to continue its damaging carbon emissions.

The working classes of Australia and Greece fought together against fascism during World War 2 and ties were further developed as the numbers of Greek people migrating to Australia increased after that war.

We sincerely hope that the terrible losses of life and property can soon be contained and that that we can support each other to demand immediate action to limit and reverse climate change.

In solidarity,
Nick G., Chairperson, CPA (M-L)

The following reply was received:

Comrades,
Thank you for the message of support and solidarity you have sent us.

The capitalist-imperialist exploitative system itself, and the policies of its governments, are responsible for the devastating fires and all other major "natural disasters" and more generally for the destruction of the planet and the very life of the working class and peoples.

Our people, in the areas affected by the fire, were left "helpless to their fate" by the government and the state apparatus, and there were not a few cases where they themselves fought to save their lives. At the same time, they demonstrated en masse on 9 August in the streets of Athens, denouncing this new crime and demanding real fire protection and real compensation. This is another aspect of the struggle that must be fought, along with all the other serious fronts of struggle.

In solidarity, CPG (M-L)

Statement of the C(M)PA

(continued from back page)

was always relative to their political power and political weight. For example, Karzai and his VP Fahim and their cronies looted around 1 billion dollars from a Kabul Bank, a private bank; it was a simple transfer of government money into few private hands. In the past twenty years, the top in the pecking order of the ruling classes appropriated a large number of state-owned lands. The capital accumulation through dispossession—such as simply turning ownership of public land into private property—was unprecedented in the history of the country.

The extravaganza of wealth and power of the ruling classes was unprecedented in the history of the country. The masses whom these pharaohs were trying to impress with this ostentatious display of wealth and power were of course overawed, but they also hated them. Such an extravaganza also encouraged and normalized the misuse of power and corruption. Therefore, the system was corrupt from the top to bottom. Even government soldiers were stealing ammunition, oil, and gas and selling them—most often to their enemies, the Taliban.

The crisis of the puppet regime in Kabul is of the same nature as the crisis of US imperialism, and that is the crisis of legitimacy. The puppet regime lacked legitimacy; it was a regime that was in the service of imperialist occupation. It did not even have legitimacy in the eyes of its soldiers. The soldiers knew they were there for an income. The soldiers also did not believe the empty slogans of the puppet regime; they knew that the top brass of the puppet regime did not believe in their own slogans. The Taliban's rapid victory was made possible by the hollowness and rottenness of the puppet regime.

To save the puppet regime, the US imperialists started the Doha peace process. The Doha process was intended to make peace between the puppet regime and the Taliban, integrating the Taliban into the former's governance. The US imperialists conducted prolonged negotiations with the Taliban, bypassing the regime. Now it is quite

clear that the US diplomatic efforts in Doha were an utter failure; they only enhanced the Taliban's prestige, provided them an international platform, and intensified the crisis of legitimacy of the puppet regime in Kabul.

With the Taliban takeover of Kabul, we are witnessing not only the defeat of American military efforts but even more glaring is the US diplomatic failure. The US could not even stop the Taliban from taking over the capital until the last US troops had left, which was supposed to be on August 31.

In their first press conference in Kabul, the Taliban spokesperson said that they are in the consultation process about the exact shape of the future political system. It seems that the sheer speed of their victory has even caught the Taliban off guard. The Taliban does not have an exact idea and outline for their future political system. What they are insisting on is that the future system would be "Islamic" and "inclusive." Now that the Taliban has won the war with the help of reactionary foreign powers specially Pakistan, they would dictate their form of political system on the country. However, the Taliban are now caught between their ideological commitments to re-establishing the Islamic Emirate and their demands of achieving international recognition. This tension has the potential of igniting internal friction within their movement. The Taliban are aware that their system of government, which they call Islamic Emirate, a system of government ruled by a council of mullahs headed by a supreme religious leader, is extremely unpopular. The Taliban spokesperson hinted that they are in consultation, and they could have a different name for their system. By willing to name their system something other than Islamic Emirate, the Taliban is showing political flexibility and the willingness to accommodate imperialists interests and other forces of the ruling classes, possibly sharing political power with them.

However, the Taliban now has a monopoly on violence. The emerging political system, no matter what its title, would be a theocracy dominated by the Taliban. It will be a dictatorship of the feudal bourgeois comprador class implemented with the whip of an

austere theocracy. The theocracy will enhance the social oppression of women, religious, and national minorities. National and gender chauvinism under this theocracy would be grimmer.

Thus, the revolutionary camp must brace for the struggle ahead. Now that the principal contradiction is between the people of Afghanistan and the feudal bourgeois comprador classes and their imperialist masters. The contradiction and cooperation between different reactionary camps in the ruling classes will continue, reflecting the contradictions and cooperation between different imperialist and reactionary foreign powers. Despite their contradictions, the new emerging semi-feudal/semi-colonial regime in Afghanistan would be subservient to foreign imperialists. With the retreat and the decline of the influence of the American imperialists in the region, the new regime would be closer and subservient to Russian imperialists and Chinese social imperialists... doubtlessly American imperialists and allies would also continue to interfere in the affairs of the country and the region. Afghanistan and other countries in the region would still be an arena of inter-imperialist rivalry that would intensify the contradictions between different reactionary camps. However, the American imperialists would support the emergence of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial regime of the feudal bourgeois comprador classes with the centrality of the Taliban.

The masses of the people hate the Taliban. Therefore, many people are trying to get out of their authority. The Taliban's reactionary nature is going to further alienate the masses, pushing them to fight back and resist the Taliban's reactionary and anti-people policies. The revolutionary camp should brace for coming challenges and opportunities. The new emerging regime will be a lethal cocktail of class, gender, and national oppression—a guarantor of semi-feudal and semi-colonial obsolete social relations of oppression and exploitation. The Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan must strive to play its role in strengthening the revolutionary camp and in offering a revolutionary alternative. ■

Statement of the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan:

The collapse of the puppet regime, the disgraceful defeat of the US imperialism and the rise of the Taliban fundamentalism to power

20 August 2021 | sholajawid.org

The deadline for the withdrawal of the imperialist occupying troops was set for August 31, but the puppet regime in Kabul collapsed on August 15. Despite the constant utterance by the American officials that the “Saigon moment” would not be repeated, the Kabul moment became worse. On the day Kabul fell to the Taliban, thousands of US military personnel were stationed at the Kabul airport scrambling to evacuate the US embassy. As the Taliban were waiting at the gates of Kabul, the American and other western diplomats were begging them to wait for a “peaceful” transfer of power. Thick dark smoke was rising from the American embassies and other western embassies from the burning of “sensitive” documents. The entire episode, from abandoning the embassy to their previous departure from the Bagram base in the middle of the night without announcement, is a stunning display of the military and political defeat of the American imperialist project in Afghanistan.

Now the US imperialists are adamantly trying to downplay their shameful defeat in Afghanistan. They are emphasizing that their project in Afghanistan had a narrow focus to defeat Al Qaeda, which was accomplished by Osama’s death in 2011. Biden and his cohorts are downplaying their state-building objectives; gone are the slogans for building modern state institutions that respect “human rights and women’s rights.” For the failure, Biden blames the people of Afghanistan who, according to his imperialist and racist worldview, is incapable of living in harmony. Biden and the US imperialists are trying to hide their role in creating the now 40 years of crisis and chaos in Afghanistan. Although they are hardly successful at obscuring this fact because the history of the US imperialist role in creating and unleashing the current crisis and chaos is well known and well documented.

The American debacle in Afghanistan, more than anything else, shows that imperialists are paper tigers. But this paper tiger is truly in a stage of decline and decay. This debacle shows the decline of its hegemony, the fickle influence of its diplomacy, and the ineffectiveness of its criminally vast and expensive military capability.

The US had realized its failure in Afghanistan by the end of the Bush presidency. The Obama administration was debating cutting their losses and withdrawing from Afghanistan. However, the Obama administration, apparently under pressure from the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex, chose to increase the American troops to defeat the Taliban. The formation of the “Afghan National Defence Security Forces” was the most important and expensive component of the “national reconstruction” project undertaken by the occupying forces in Afghanistan. By January 2015 the US occupying forces had ended its “Operation Enduring Freedom,” the name of the American imperialist war in Afghanistan, and handed over the responsibility of the war to the ANDSF. Nonetheless, the occupation of the country continued, although the occupying forces stayed away from the ground battlefield and only provided air support and continued providing training to the ANDSF. Yet the Taliban insurgency continued and inflicted huge casualties to the ANDSF.

The ANDSF were recruited from the poor and the unemployed and used as cannon fodder for a bourgeois comprador state-building project carried under imperialist occupation. Biden touted that the ANDSF was 350,000 compared to the Taliban’s 75,000 in a press conference announcing the withdrawal of the US troops in April. Biden also touted that the Afghan forces were better armed and equipped. It was thus that the US government assumed that the ANDSF would be able to hold on without US aerial support. But where their assessment missed was that the ANDSF was a mercenary force that

lacked the commitment and the political will to fight.

The puppet regime was notoriously corrupt. The last president Ghani, who ran away, called his interior ministry, which controlled most of the ANDSF, as the “beating heart of corruption.” All government officials from the top to the foot soldiers viewed their position as an opportunity to get something. When US aerial support was withdrawn the ANDSF rapidly crumbled, surrendered their positions to the Taliban, and ran away. It was clear that they were unwilling to fight and die for a state that belonged to the bourgeois comprador class who were living like pharaohs. The state institutions were a burden and a system of oppression for the masses; the masses were receiving little from it in terms of services but suffering a lot from its corruption and brutality. This state was only good for feathering the nests of the rich. There appeared to be a competition among the political elite to see whose mansion and palace were the biggest. Or which one drives around, from home to office, for example, with the largest numbers of bulletproof SUVs, and armed guards?

This ruling class that was serving the US imperialists in the past twenty years was composed of two camps. There was a camp of western-educated technocrats who were the favorites of the western policymakers; they had the lion’s share of political power. The president running away from the country, Ashraf Ghani, is a good example of the first camp because, before coming to Afghanistan in 2001, he was a professor at John Hopkins University. The second camp of the regime is famously known as warlords. The warlords helped American imperialists in invading Afghanistan; they had worked as foot soldiers of the American imperialist occupation. Both wings were equally corrupt, anti-people, and subservient to their imperialist masters. Their immediate and primary goal was to expand their wealth. Government institutions were only a mechanism of getting rich. Of course, everyone’s share of the loot (*continued on pg.15*)