

Vanguard

For an Independent and Socialist Australia

May Day Special Edition

May Day 2021

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

May Day: stand up, fight back, and really do it!

May Day 2021 is an occasion for regrouping and reorganising following the necessary restrictions taken to control the spread of Covid-19 in 2020.

The workers well understood the seriousness of the pandemic and acted accordingly.

Even when mass rallies occurred, especially in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign, social distancing and mask wearing were generally accepted.

But now is the time to be bold in developing our fighting spirit and lifting the level of struggle.

Already massive rallies have been organised by women in the wake of the appalling revelations from Canberra.

And school students were able to maintain the momentum of their Schoolkids Strike for Climate campaign.

Two things stand out from the perspective of class struggle.

Firstly, workers understand and want greater unity of action.

A few weeks ago, fires and ambo in South Australia, both of whose unions are in dispute with the state government, held a joint stopwork, rally and march. Over a thousand took part.

This was a lawful activity, but the scope for mutual support, for standing together as a class, is constrained by laws against sympathy strikes and similar restrictions on solidarity pickets. Ways must be found to defy such restrictions!

Secondly, workers must develop their own independent agenda of demands and the means of achieving them.

We use the phrase “an independent working class agenda”.

This means raising demands that go beyond what the Labor Party leaders (the leaders of the so-called party of the trade unions and workers) would be prepared to accept, and taking actions that Labor leaders would not condone or support.

The “independence” of such an agenda means precisely not being dependent on, and not thinking it is possible to rely on, Labor and its



McCormick's workers win 3%, \$5000 bonus and keep conditions after 6 weeks on strike!

parliamentary focus, to achieve our objectives.

The working class remains the strongest and most numerous class in Australia. But like Gulliver, it has been tied to the ground, its great strength taken from it, by the mass of restrictions and laws designed to stop it fighting back as a class.

Whereas Gulliver was able to win his freedom by giving the Lilliputians assurances of good behaviour, we can only be released from our restrictions by “bad” behaviour.

Behavior is, after all, a class question, and what is good for our class will always be seen as “bad” from the viewpoint of our exploiters.

When we march today and make the streets ring with the shouting of “Stand up, fight back!”, we must be prepared to make the next step a reality by really supporting each other and being bolder in defying the obstacles put in our way.

The workers, united, will never be defeated!

Women's struggle is class struggle

By Alice M., Vice Chairperson, on behalf of CPA(M-L)

On International Working Women's Day on 8th March working people honour the long and tenacious struggles of women to end economic and social exploitation and oppression.

We pay tribute to the courageous women in all corners of the world organising and leading struggles for freedom, national liberation, to end the barbaric system of capitalism and imperialism and advance the fight for socialism and communism, the liberation of all humankind.

We take stock and review how far women have advanced, but also the setbacks, the deceptions, and how far working women still have to go to achieve our liberation and equality.

The history of working women is one of long and arduous struggles for our

rights, our dignity and emancipation from capitalism and patriarchy. It is a history of class struggle and continues today in numerous ways and places.

Every day working women are fighting for the livelihoods, health, security and wellbeing of all people, for workers' rights and democratic rights, for the environment, for justice and peace.

We fight against the patriarchy, sexual abuse and violence, racism, against fascism, imperialism and its wars.

First Nations' women

The British colonial invasion and dispossession of the First Nations' people in 1788 brought with it the brutal oppression and patriarchy to their country and communities.

Resilient and powerful First Nations' women are leading the fight

against colonialism, for protection and empowerment of their communities and culture, for sovereignty and self-determination.

In December 2020, June Oscar, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission wrote on the recently released Wiyi

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Women's struggle is class struggle (continued)

Yani U Thangani report on First Nations' women and girls, "Wiyi Yani U Thangani shows how imposed western systems continuously fail to recognise the vital worth and contributions of our women and girls ... our women are the backbone of our societies and have been for millennia. In every part of life, our women and girls are there. They are, and always have been, integral to the making of history and the future we all want and deserve."

Working women and capitalism

The global Covid Pandemic has laid bare and amplified the exploitation and oppression of working women in developed capitalist and semi-feudal, semi-colonial developing countries.

The Pandemic exposed the illusions and deceptions of equality and improvements in working women's economic and social conditions under capitalism. All over the world the weight of health, social and economic crises is shouldered mainly by working women.

During economic and social crises capitalism has little capacity to even maintain the illusion of women's equality and economic independence.

Many roads and struggles have been tried and tested by working women to ameliorate or to end the economic and sexual exploitation and oppression of women within capitalism. But with every step we come up against the profit-driven capitalist system and its cruel patriarchy and sexism.

For the majority of working women, the few legislative improvements that promised women even a few crumbs of social and economic empowerment, equality, rights and independence have proven to be mere window-dressing to silence and divert struggle.

Protection against sexual discrimination, harassment and violence

against women is illusory, existing only on scraps of paper.

For working class women equal pay for equal work, affordable childcare, jobs, economic security and independence, remain unreachable.

Women as commodities

Male chauvinism, sexism and degradation of women saturates capitalist societies casting women at all levels of society as inferior to men.

Women are too often ignored and dismissed. For working class women, the exploitation is doubled as workers and as women.

Notwithstanding the capitalist exploitation of working class men, women continue to be cast as inferior and of less value than men in paid work, domestic work, socially and politically.

Patriarchy and male chauvinism protect the capitalist exploitation of working class women and men, and normalise denigration, abuse and violence against all women.

The commercialisation and commodification of women in the profit-driven capitalist market is as pervasive as ever. Monopoly capitalism has turned women into a profitable market and a commodity for the capitalist class to exploit.

Capitalism treats women as sexual objects and vessels for the reproduction and maintenance of future generations of workers to exploit for the creation of surplus value and profit.

Women carry the main burden of unpaid domestic work, caring for the children, the sick, the elderly, the family and home. And because profit cannot be extracted from this unpaid labour it holds no value in a capitalist society.

Capitalist culture of patriarchy

The demeaning and oppressive

culture towards women stems from capitalist social and economic relations.

Attitudes and behaviour towards women swing between paternalism, tokenism, patronising, misogyny and abuse, legitimising violence against women.

Working women carry the double oppression of patriarchy and class exploitation in the capitalist relations of production. Patriarchy and the capitalist relations of production are interdependent, oppressing not only women, but all humanity.

Gender inequality, male chauvinism, and domination over women is expressed in numerous ways across all sections of society. The capitalist ideology and culture of male supremacy is endemic, often subtle and couched to deflect the root cause of capitalism.

Men are not the enemy. Nevertheless, the conditioning of men and boys in male dominant capitalist society and culture enables men to be agents and beneficiaries of women's oppression.

The struggle against the culture of gender inequality is constant for both men and women. This responsibility falls especially on communists working with the people developing a genuinely revolutionary movement and Communist Party.

Anger and disgust

Today in Australia recent allegations of rape, systemic sexism, disrespect and belittling of women, and the general degenerate behaviour in the corridors of bourgeois parliament have exposed the exploitation and decadence of the capitalist system.

Public outrage at the treatment of women in parliament exploded on 15 March. 100,000 women from all walks of life marched across the country calling for an end to sexual abuse and violence against all women.

The bourgeois media, fearing the outrage would spill out against the exploitation of working class women, confined the exposure of abuse and discrimination to individuals of the bourgeois political elite class.

Economic class exploitation

This public outrage at the violence and sexual abuse of women must be extended beyond the corridors of bourgeois parliament and women in positions of power and privilege. The outrage must be extended against the capitalist system, the root cause of women's oppression.

Where is the outrage against the violence of capitalist economic exploitation of working class women?

Where are the equally powerful

exposures and outrage at sexism and abuse against working class women, subjected every day to sexual harassment, violence, intimidation, threats and degradation in workplaces by the bosses?

Where is the outrage against Jobseeker cuts to \$43 per day on which many working class women depend for their survival and are condemned to lifelong poverty and homelessness?

Where is the outrage against oppression of the First Nations' women and their people?

Where is the outrage against the demeaning and discriminatory Cashless Debit card imposed on women fleeing domestic violence, unemployed and with no other source of income?

Working class and migrant women suffer the highest levels of unemployment, casualisation and insecurity living a precarious day by day existence.

Where is the outrage against the draconian anti-worker and anti-union laws aimed to crush unions that can provide even the minimum protection from workplace abuse and discrimination of women by the predatory bosses who will go to any lengths to increase the exploitation of workers and abuse women?

Working class women know that only collective struggle can improve and defend our wages and conditions and protect our rights.

We must continue to raise demands and take action for affordable child care and affordable housing for working class women.

The outrage must demand an end to imperialist wars inflicting the heaviest burden on women in the countries attacked, subjected to untold suffering, rape, mass murder and impoverishment.

There are dangers that this spontaneous movement by large sections of Australian women will again be diverted into the cesspool of parliamentarism.

Capitalism cannot deliver justice

There are dangers this movement will disappear unless it joins with working class women's demands and struggles.

Capitalism cannot deliver justice, equality and the rights of working women. The few progressive reforms women have won through many years of struggle are often no more than mirages, quickly dismantled.

It is only through struggle for a better life with working class women and men, and all the oppressed peoples against capitalism and imperialism, for socialism and communism, that the liberation of women, and all humanity, can be achieved.



May Day 2021 – Develop the fighting spirit of workers everywhere! Strengthen worldwide the international anti-imperialist united front against fascism and war!

Statement from the International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations (ICOR) to which the CPA (M-L) is affiliated.



May Day is the one day of the year that unequivocally belongs to the working class and the oppressed peoples of the world.

On May Day we celebrate our strength, reaffirm our resolve to dare to struggle in the face of reactionary pressures, and do so on a global basis, linking arms in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

On May 1, 2021 there is something special to celebrate: after almost two years of preparation, the international anti-imperialist and anti-fascist united front and its coordinating consultative committee of ten international organisations was founded by almost 500 organisations on five continents.

On this year's May Day, the international working class and oppressed masses of the people are facing the devastating consequences of the global economic and financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some countries are overcoming the pandemic, others are still in the grip of a third wave and new increasingly dangerous mutants are emerging.

Some countries are exploiting their ability to access vaccinations that are still beyond the reach of many of the world's poor.

There have been necessary restrictions on people's rights, but also restrictions of democratic rights and liberties under the pretext of the pandemic.

The pandemic has exposed and intensified the class contradictions, exploitation and oppression by capitalism.

Countless people around the world face job loss, poverty and existential insecurity.

US imperialism, as our number one enemy, never went away with Trump, but Biden is determined to remove any ambiguities associated with his unpredictable predecessor: "The US is back!" he asserts in a warning to the world's people that they must not fight against it.

The world economic crisis has aggravated the inequality of

development between different countries and imperialist powers. Now the competition between them is further intensifying. The danger of war is growing.

In many countries around the world, the working-class movement and the popular masses have made it clear that they can fight even in the face of crises.

Especially in the focus of imperialist, anti-communist terrorism are the revolutionaries of the world.

Under the government policy of red-tagging, or indiscriminately labelling its opponents as 'communists' or 'terrorists', our friends in the Philippines are being persecuted and murdered in outright pogroms.

We are inspired by the fighting spirit that has run throughout the history of the working-class movement.

We will fight around our own independent working class agenda, around demands that advance our class's interests and free us from those who would seek to suppress us, restrict us, restrain us, and contain us to activities that are acceptable to imperialism and the bourgeoisie.

We will fight, unite and organise ourselves better and better.

Together with our allies, the progressive elements who are active in an anti-imperialist and anti-fascist way in indigenous people's struggles, in women's movements, in fights against racism, in the great struggles against capitalism's destruction of the environment, and in the fight for democratic rights and liberties.

We will fight and organise bringing more and more of our allies under the leadership of the working class because the working class alone has the power, the motive and the strength to end the capitalist exploitation of people and nature – if it is organised and convinced of socialism!

Building strong revolutionary Marxist-Leninist parties and a strong revolutionary world organization ICOR is today the most important conclusion for the struggle for socialism. We will fight, build our organisations, strengthen their coordination and

Editorial

The Working Class: Back to the Business of Standing Up for Itself

The working class confronts difficult circumstances. We never get anywhere by simply pleading or arguing the justice of the case to the tin ears of big businesses.

History is clear. If you don't fight you lose!

The international capitalist economy is still stumbling along with unresolved problems hanging over from the global financial crisis. Interest rates wallow at levels not experienced in living memory, reflecting excess production and oversupplied markets despite the Covid disruptions to production. Inter-imperialist tensions are rising in the wake of US economic and military dominance ebbing alongside the rise of the Germany-France Axis and China.

Organisation of the working class for the struggles ahead is limited, as is leadership which is prepared and readying the class to stand up for itself. Too many who offer leadership are timeservers, opportunists using the workers to advance themselves, straight out profiteers, and many others looking to ease the workers' burdens, but unable to break from capitalism's restrictions to advance the cause.

For five months the ACTU was party to round table talks with big business lobbies and the government about IR reform. During that time there was not a whimper about the need for workers to get organised and prepared to fight. The ACTU were completely side-swiped when the draft bill was tabled. Did they seriously think they could protect workers' rights by being "partners" with big business?

This outright class collaborationism and compromise is reminiscent of the major sell-out of the Accord and exactly how the trade union movement has gotten to its weakest point in decades. It's the kind of approach to class struggle that's as dangerous as the attacks coming from big business.

The government paid the working class the great compliment of fearing any mobilisation of workers for themselves in the early days of the Covid crisis. They are right to be wary. There are millions of us and very few of them and their greedy opportunist champions in government, commentariat and treacherous organisations.

We should have no illusions in the government or the bosses that they will willingly look after our wellbeing. Every gain, every benefit, every measure that serves the peoples' needs must be fought for and won from the hands of the ruling class. They will never give it up for free. It is not class collaboration, but class struggle; not begging, but the strength of the people organised that will force the demands of the people to be met.

As workers, we need our own demands, our own priorities, and our own organisations to take up the fight and be prepared to organise and mobilise. We need an independent working class agenda and movement that starts from an understanding that as workers our interests are not the same as the interests of the capitalist ruling class and their institutions of class rule, like parliament and the courts.

The workers and others have mobilised in the Covid crisis and done magnificently providing for, caring for, and protecting our communities. This has been done in the face of Covid and capitalist cries to open society to higher risks of unleashing the virus so they can revive their exploitation in industries suppressed by distancing and other measures.

Working people and the oppressed shouldn't pay the price for capitalism's recovery. The time to lift the fight, to agitate, educate, organise and mobilise in action, is now.

cooperation and thus prepare for rapid developments towards revolutionary situations, because this is the concrete manifestation of the highest human ethics summarised by the sentence "Serve the people!"

For this we have a new and sharp weapon with the anti-imperialist united front!

**Workers of all countries, unite!
Develop our fighting spirit and lift the level of struggle!**

Forward with ICOR and anti-imperialist united front!

Unite against imperialism and fascism!

For peace with justice, people's rights, and socialism!

Marxism Today

Saviours no more: Finance capital, Greensill, Gupta and the Whyalla steelworks

By Alex M.

Over the Labour Day long weekend news filtered through that the ‘saviour’ of the Whyalla steelworks, Sanjeev Gupta’s GFG Alliance, was experiencing difficulty with its finances.

That is, one of GFG’s key financiers, Greensill Capital, has spectacularly imploded leaving question marks hanging over GFG Alliance’s ability to continue its various operations here in Australia and overseas.

A Bundaberg born businessman, Lex Greensill, founded Greensill Capital in 2011. Greensill went to one of the heartlands of finance capital, the City of London and established a financial firm that specialises in Supply Chain Finance.

Supply Chain Finance

Supply Chain Finance is like a lot of financial practice; it’s rather difficult for an ordinary person to comprehend. (The jargon and complexity associated with finance and financial instruments seems to be opaque by design.)

Essentially, it is the speeding up of the payment process for companies actually making products.

For example, a large manufacturer producing the bourgeois economists’ favourite item, the widget, has orders for the production of millions of widgets.

The orders are from a number of companies involved in either using the widgets in their own production processes or selling the widgets (Marx called the latter merchants).

Important here is the time discrepancy between the production of the widgets and the payment of the invoices by the companies that ordered the widgets.

For the manufacturer it can be crucial to receive payment as soon as possible in order to have capital to start the production process again.

However, invoices can have payments stipulated for 30 days or later after receipt of the widgets.

In order to overcome the time delay between production of commodities and payment for same, credit came into being.

In volume three of *Capital* Marx describes the importance of credit and what he termed fictitious capital for the circulation of capital and the production process.

Credit helped overcome the constant

struggle to amass money for payment of commodities among other things.

On the basis of the perceived soundness of a business or an individual, financial entities such as banks extended credit, thus allowing the production process to continue or the purchase of commodities to proceed with little to no delay.

Of course the extension of credit comes at a cost; the debtor has to pay back the loan with interest.

Marx highlighted the usefulness of credit and what was later called finance capital, while also pointing out the downside, namely the speculation associated with financial practice.

Since Marx’s time there has been an exponential rise in the number of financial instruments and financial corporations.

Global production line

In addition, the fragmentation of production processes has proceeded apace.

That is, rather than the production of widgets taking place in a single location, the various parts of the widget making process can be separated out with manufacturing firms specialising in producing a part or parts of the widget.

These production plants can be located in various parts of the globe due to lower wages, tax breaks, less stringent environmental laws, higher profits and so on, thus adding complexity to the supply chain.

A classic modern example of this is the Apple iPhone where Apple subcontracts the production of parts of the phone out to Foxconn in China and the packaging of the iPhone to other companies in other cities and countries.

The iPhone and its packaging is the result of a number of production processes located in various parts of the globe, entailing numerous changes of location, warehousing and shipping, before distribution to retailers.

Such complex supply chains have helped drive the rise of Supply Chain Finance.

Greensill Capital as a provider of Supply Chain Finance acted as an intermediary between producers and merchants, buying invoices at a



discount. Namely, paying the producer/manufacturer before the invoice is due at less than the face value of the invoice (the discount)

The manufacturer is happy to get less than the full price as stipulated in the contract/invoice because they are getting payment quickly before the due date. For the purchaser of the manufactured goods, they don’t have to pay the manufacturer; they now have to pay Greensill when they (the original purchaser) take possession of the manufactured goods.

Funny Money

All very well, but there is a further financial twist; the debt owed to Greensill Capital as holder of the invoices was packaged up as Bonds and sold on the Bond market by Greensill. (Or an entity acting on behalf of Greensill; it is not necessary for the purposes of this piece to ascertain who organised the Bond issue as Greensill is the initiator of the process.)

One of the purchasers of the Bonds, a major financial capitalist enterprise called Credit Suisse grew alarmed with Greensill’s exposure to one group of companies – GFG – and stopped trading in the Greensill Bonds.

Such a step was feasible due to the multitude of invoices they held.

Amassing a huge amount of invoices with the attendant streams of income coming in from the original purchasers of the manufactured goods, packaging these income streams into a financial instrument (Bonds) helped Greensill fund their continuing operations in Supply Chain Finance and other areas of finance.

From its beginning in 2011, Greensill Capital grew dramatically due in part to its operating in what is called the shadow banking sector.

Regulations and prudential requirements that financial institutions like banks are subjected to are evaded

in the shadow banking sector.

Emboldened by the lack of regulatory oversight and its ever-expanding Supply Chain Finance business, Greensill Capital indulged in some risky practices, or, more appropriately, speculative pursuits.

As mentioned above, Greensill was one of the GFG Alliance’s major sources of finance. As well as the supply chain financing provided by Greensill to GFG, Greensill advanced GFG some additional unsecured loans resulting in GFG owing something like \$4 billion US dollars to Greensill.

Capitalism exposed

The house of cards started to fall last year, when, with the Covid induced downturn in global capitalism, businesses which owed payments to Greensill Capital began to default in large numbers.

Alarm bells rang in insurance companies that underwrote Greensill’s financial business. Insurers declined insurance to Greensill considering it too risky to stay involved.

Things snowballed, with Gupta’s GFG Alliance refusing to pay back what it owed to Greensill as much of it was in the form of unsecured loans.

Greensill went under in a matter of days in late February, early March and GFG is frantically searching for new financiers.

This sorry tale leaves the Whyalla steel workers and their families wondering what will happen next. This saga has not finished yet.

What is clear though is that capitalism and its parasitical offshoot finance capital are not and cannot be the saviours of working class hopes and aspirations for secure and meaningful work and lives.

Only socialist planning of production and finance can ensure the fulfilment of those working class hopes and aspirations.

Royal Commission Report into Aged Care exposes capitalism's priorities

By *Bill F.*

The exhaustive documentation of neglect, abuse, cruelty and fraud contained in the Final Report of the Royal Commission is no great surprise. Much of this has been known for decades but is still outrageous in its detail.

Two years in the making, it has been completed immediately after twelve months of shocking deaths in Aged Care facilities across the country, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is the latest of a series of government inquiries and reviews into the Age Care system, more than 20 since 1987, and yet the scandalous treatment of vulnerable older people is worse than ever.

Privatised and self-regulated

Of Australia's 909 Covid-19 related deaths, 685 were in aged care facilities.

In Victoria, the state with the highest number of fatalities, 655 occurred in private aged care homes, supposedly regulated by the Federal government.

Many of these 622 facilities functioned with no set standard for staff-resident ratios, lacked 24-hour qualified nursing staff, and operated with inadequate training for nurse assistants, volunteers and contract workers, and poor records of nutrition and palliative care.

For the owners and managements, profits came from the harsh exploitation of the workforce and the mean and uncaring treatment of residents and their families.

The 178 aged care facilities run by the Victorian government are located in mainly smaller rural towns where the private providers choose not to invest.

By way of contrast, these publicly owned facilities have set nursing staff ratios over all shifts, and up to one nurse per seven residents in high-care wards.

While far from perfect in often dated buildings and crowded circumstances, these facilities had far less infection and death than either the expensive private ones or those run on a shoestring by various religious orders.

A note from Wikileaks

"The Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, originally known as Queens Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital, operated from 1904 to its closure in 1996. Perched high on the banks of the Yarra River at Yarra Bend in the inner Melbourne suburb of Fairfield, it



developed an international reputation for the research and treatment of infectious diseases. When it closed, it was the last specific infectious diseases hospital in Australia."

Commodities and the scrapheap

More staff, better training and qualifications must result in better care for the aged.

But this is not the priority for monopoly capitalism.

Everything that people need and want must be turned into a commodity from which profits can be made, whether healthcare, education, vocational training, water, electricity, housing, social services, and so on.

The state extracts people's taxes to build infrastructure for the system and its ruling class favourites, and to dole out enough crumbs to keep the exploited masses from rebellion.

If people are "beyond their use-by date" for exploitation in the workplace, they are tossed aside by the system and left to survive as best they can.

Foreign Control of Australia's Water

By *Duncan B.*

Water is a precious commodity. Life can't exist without water.

In Australia water is something we don't have a great deal of, so Australians will be disturbed to learn that over 10% of Australia's water entitlements are foreign owned, that is 4299 gigitalitres out of a total of 39,383 gigitalitres.

Register of Foreign-owned Water Entitlements

The national register of foreign water ownership released recently shows that corporations and individuals from Canada with 698GL, China with 662GL and the US with 660GL are the main foreign owners of Australian water.

Queensland had the highest proportion of foreign ownership of water at 18.8%.

Just over half the foreign-owned water is held in the Murray-Darling

Basin, equal to 2234GL or 11.3% of the food bowl's entitlements.

For many, that means years of struggling on miserable welfare payments, such as Jobseeker, the single parent pension, the age pension and various allowances well below the "official" poverty line.

For the disabled and those suffering mental illness, it is even harder, and further misery is endured by the deliberately complex and exhausting processes of government bureaucracy.

And for the frail aged, there is the two year waiting list for home care, or the daunting task of finding a private aged care facility that lives up to the promises featured in their glossy brochures.

Government websites are not much help with this. "Commercial in confidence" is the mantra of the private healthcare industry; staffing ratios, qualifications, deaths, doctors' visits, medication practices and government inspection reports are all kept secret.

Recommendations

The two Royal Commissioners have put forward a list of 148

recommendations, but disagree on 43.

This will allow the government room to cherry-pick the least expensive and to water down or reject others that impinge on the profits of the private operators.

Over the coming weeks, people will be examining the Report and Recommendations and hoping for a compassionate response from the Federal government in the May Budget and beyond.

A campaign that brings together workers and professionals in the aged care sector, families and relatives of the aged, medical and social workers, can win support in the community and force some much needed reform.

Yet the government will inevitably scream about the cost and try to frighten people with talk of higher taxes (after cutting them for the rich!)

Older people, including many who have spent big parts of their lives contributing to the development of this country, deserve genuine respect and care, companionship and dignity as they age.

These are not commodities that capitalism can profit from.

Capitalism's focus on economic rationalism means decreasing taxation for the rich, privatising all services and a user pays approach.

The consideration of people's welfare and dignity is not a priority.

Only socialism, a system based on collective support and serving the people, can deliver the full scope of change needed.



Basin, equal to 2234GL or 11.3% of the food bowl's entitlements.

(The figures probably understate the degree of foreign ownership of water and don't discriminate between the different types of entitlement held by foreigners.)

The Canadian investment fund PSP Investments is a major player in investments in Australian agriculture.

It is thought to own 2% of the Murray-Darling Basin water entitlements, using the water to grow walnuts, almonds, cotton and cereal crops.

Our water is too precious to be the plaything of foreign owners and speculators.

Regaining control of our natural resources is an important part of securing Australia's national independence.

First Peoples' Women are warriors Invaders have learned not to underestimate them

By *Lindy Nolan*

Last October Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Bunuba woman June Oscar finalised the first countrywide report giving voice to First Peoples Women since 1986.

Oscar and her team spent thousands of hours sitting down with First Peoples' women in hundreds of communities to create 'Wiyi Yani U Thangani, Women's Voices: Securing Our Rights; Securing Our Futures.'

In the concluding section on overarching recommendations, Oscar wrote, "The success of these recommendations depends on governments entering into genuine partnership and ensuring the full participation of our women and girls in the design, delivery and implementation of them."

The report was addressed to Attorney General Christian Porter.

Who knows if he glanced at it? What's not surmise is that the issues troubling this continent and islands are systemic, not individual, forecast in 1770 and landing in 1788.

Patriarchy a given

British invaders made a huge mistake. They completely discounted the power of First Peoples' women, because they discounted their "own" women.

Ownership was the right word. In 1788, most British women were suffocated by patriarchy or struggling in inhuman conditions in capitalism's slums.

In a world where fake science conveniently supported invasion and suppression, patriarchy was a given.

How could colonialists understand the division of labour that meant women here both raised children and, assisted by those children, provided most of the food? This economic power meant their standing and Lore was as powerful as men's.

Most colonial administrations tut-tutted at massacres, like those committed by the Prime Minister's forebears, or looked away. Women were slaughtered because they were "breeders" of future men, not because of their own power. Murder, kidnap and rape were early weapons. This illegal nation is founded upon them.

British puppet state

By 1901, it was not fake science or a squeaky new Constitution that most powerfully underpinned British power. It was monopoly capitalism. Lenin and others defined this development of capitalism as imperialism.

In 1901 seven British Colonies morphed into a British puppet state.



The racial superiority of eugenics is embedded in Federation's illegal "Australian Constitution".

Despite reserves that opened lands to capitalist profits and stealing children as policy, First Peoples' women still refused to bow the knee. Like men, they resisted by secretly teaching culture, by mission walkouts, Days of Mourning and more. Resistance bubbled along, sometimes breaking out.

Finally, in the 1960s things exploded, with the Referendum's powerful united front, and the Gurindji struggle against the biggest landowner on the continent, British-owned Vestey Pastoral Company.

Women and children, who also laboured without pay in the Company homestead, walked off to great hardships. Their descendants like Brenda Croft, unlike those old women, are better known powerhouses fighting against corporations and corporate policies like the ongoing Northern Territory Intervention, policies which open Country to deeper corporate exploitation, humiliate all First Peoples, but especially men, and saw sexual medical tests on small children, often without parents' informed consent, and much, much more.

Mum Shirl

First Peoples often remind us that they are only three percent of the population. But in 1966 Gurindji determination to sit down in Country as organised workers meant they had strength beyond their tiny numbers. They spearheaded a united front, with First Peoples including powerful women activists, unions, students, churches and many more across the lands, supporting them.

In Redfern a Wiradjuri woman supported rising activists.

'Mum Shirl', before her prison visit pass was revoked always said, "I'm his mum" when challenged about her visits to many Aboriginal prisoners and her support during court cases. By the time she died she had also helped raise 60 children.

Her strength came from culture including the 16 First Peoples' languages taught her by her grandfather, and from

the collective that grew from culture. Mum Shirl and other Elders helped inspire the Tent Embassy and through that almost every Aboriginal legal, medical, housing, children's, theatrical and detox services established in those heady days.

Defiant possibilities

Huge struggles erupted across the country, and young generations of women were increasingly the public face. Foreign-owned mining multinationals ripping the guts out of sacred Country were often the target.

But it was 1988 that cracked the foundations of the corporate ruling class. It showed defiant possibilities.

Gathering in La Perouse and marching from Redfern, where 40,000 First Peoples lived, came the greatest gathering of clans in the history of this continent and its islands.

Their rallying cry? "We have survived!"

Colonialism and the corporate inheritors of invasion used all their power to exterminate First Peoples, to wipe them from the face of the earth, and failed.

All this and more were background to June Oscar's report. Women who spoke to her had their own histories, diverse and similar at the same time.

Partnership?

The report stated, "Genuine partnership requires that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are able to speak in a representative capacity. The form of this is not a decision for government. It is a matter for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women themselves."

Although much of the document is couched in words of partnership, the report warns that women are rising and uniting regardless of government actions.

They are determined to win.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was the first and only national representative body for First Peoples. Signifying strength, it also had problems inevitable under a capitalist system founded upon exploitation. But for the ruling class, ATSIC had to go because it gave control to First Peoples.

The excuse was historic rape allegations against its chair. He stepped down. Then, the whole organisation was abolished with bipartisan support in 2004. The contrast to today's parliament is stark.

Making history

In December, June Oscar wrote, "The report presents fundamental truths so long undervalued and overlooked: that our women are the backbone of our societies and have been for millennia.

In every part of life, our women and girls are there. They are, and always have been, integral to the making of history and the future we all want and deserve."

It has taken two hundred years for the ruling class to comprehend this simple truth.

From their 1988 crisis, the Business Council of Australia planned to transform corporations into "saviours" for First Peoples after two centuries of "government failure". They outsourced the blame to the administrations that all along had done their dirty work.

Though they talk of "empowering" First Peoples, that is the last thing they will tolerate. Rio Tinto and BHP were early converts, and they sponsor the most well-known First Peoples' statement currently circulating.

It takes little to scratch the surface of horrors inflicted upon First Peoples to find corporate profits, or governments protecting them. Waters poisoned by mines, Santos fracking the Pilliga, a "gas led recovery", developers building on flood plains and demanding dam walls rise and flood sacred sites, or agribusinesses damming rivers dry, Woollies making three dry Aboriginal communities in Darwin fight a Dan Murphy's within walking distance for five years, and alcohol corporations delaying health warnings while babies are disabled for life with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and on and on and on.

And, in a weapon aimed knowingly at women as enemies, theft of children – including threats against activist mothers and of children being placed with abusers rather than now safe mothers – spirals upward.

Further military suppression also seems likely to unfold on their lands.

Against all this, resistance rises.

Unity

Like many First Peoples, June Oscar believes capitalism can be reformed. We strongly disagree. But her report has no corporate sponsors. Its agenda rises from the grassroots.

Wiradjuri leader Lynda-June Coe (pictured at top) who was sought to help lead powerful Black Lives Matter protests says, "Everything we do is from love. We fight from love."

Like Oscar, Coe speaks and acts to bring First Peoples together. She organised a Wiradjuri clan gathering in 2017. She calls for wider gatherings, and for allies to unite in mass action with First Peoples.

"Let's stop calling it a government. They're tyrants. ...We need to look at the one percent capitalists running this world... That system needs to be dismantled," she says.

Defiant construction workers fined for defending union flag

By *Danny O.*

Sixty-four Brisbane construction workers have been hit with personal fines of \$1,750 each by the Federal Circuit Court after they took strike action in defence of flying CFMEU union flags on site.

The federal government's anti-union attack dog, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) took the 64 workers to court for "illegal" industrial action following a one-day walkout on 11 September 2018.

The workers on a luxury apartment project in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, reportedly walked off the job in protest against the removal of union flags by Japanese-owned builder Icon.

In his decision to fine the workers, Judge Michael Jarrett noted about the strike that "Whilst it is objectively serious, it falls at the lower end of the scale," and that financial loss was minimal.

The \$1,750 fines are a fraction of



the maximum \$42,000 penalty that the workers could have been hit with.

However, the construction workers remained defiant, with the judge remarking, "There has not ... been any express statement of remorse or contrition by any of the respondents. The respondents have not apologised for their unlawful conduct." And nor should they!

The timing of the fines comes as

the construction industry awaits the decision of the ongoing case between building giant Lendlease and the ABCC over clauses in the Building Code in relation to the legality of displaying union insignia, posters and flags on building sites.

If the courts were to rule in the ABCC's favour in that case, the walkout displayed by this group of workers is the kind of action that would need to

be replicated en masse on building sites across the country to defend the union's presence on site.

The case of the 64 workers is also noteworthy for the unusual fact that the ABCC only pursued the individual striking workers and did not attempt to prosecute the union or its officials, despite two officials being on site when the walkout took place.

It's not the first time the courts have issued individual construction workers with fines, but it may be the first time that only the workers have been fined.

However, the ABCC is also pursuing 53 steel fixers who attended the ACTU's 'Change the Rules' rally in April 2019, though the court is yet to make any decision in that case.

The 64 fined workers should be congratulated for their actions and willingness to stand defiant in defence of their rights and their union.

It will take many more like them to see the back of the ABCC and tear up this country's anti-worker laws.

Enterprise Bargaining System Isolates Workers Workers Want United Action!

By *Ned K.*

When the federal Labor Government under Hawke and Keating legislated in the early 1990s for Enterprise Agreements to become the main method for workers to protect and advance wages and conditions, the ACTU leaders at the time told workers it was the greatest thing since sliced bread.

IR Minister Laurie Brereton went one better and amended the industrial laws to enable employers to "negotiate" non-union Enterprise Agreements with workers on an individual workplace basis.

So, the new system not only facilitated a divide and conquer strategy across whole industries and even within individual companies with more than one workplace, but it enabled companies to accelerate their efforts to smash workers' collective strength through non-union Agreements.

Cartoonist Bruce Petty at that time more accurately summed up Enterprise Bargaining when his cartoon had the caption "Enterprise Bargaining - How To Stuff The Worker Completely!"

Future Governments after Keating had gone went even further through Work Choices and then the various forms of Fair Work Act termed "Work Choices Lite" by many workers.

Workers' struggles continued despite the limited options to take strike action and there are examples right now of these courageous struggles which at

the same time show the need to break through the shackles of enterprise specific bargaining.

For example, in Victoria McCormick food production workers have been on strike for over five weeks to defend conditions such as rostered days off and to break the company's five-year wage freeze, a real wage cut.

In NSW and SA, workers at Symbion Pharmaceuticals went on a 48-hour strike in pursuit of better conditions and a pay increase. This was the first strike action of these workers for many, many years.

However, the workers under the Enterprise Bargaining system come under two separate Agreements. An example of divide and conquer within the one company.

Meanwhile in industries such as security, workers performing the same type of work across hundreds of worksites by multinational companies like MSS and Wilson Security are not able under the Fair Work Act to collectively bargain for even a company-wide Agreement let alone an industry or multi-employer Agreement.

The defenders of the Fair Work Act will cry out, "No this is not true, workers can negotiate a multi-employer or industry wide Agreement".

However, what they don't say is that the Fair Work Act, brought in by the ALP after Work Choices, does not allow workers to legally take ANY industrial action in pursuit of a multi-employer or industry wide Agreement.



Even in the State industrial relations jurisdictions, enterprise bargaining mirrors the federal system in that the major employer in the State systems, the State Governments, use the enterprise agreement system to divide and conquer.

So, we see the situation now in South Australia where ambulance officers, fire brigade workers, hospital workers are all fighting for safer workloads, increased staffing, shorter working hours and safe rosters and wage increases.

However, each sector of these government workers has its own Enterprise Agreement.

Just before the Easter break in South Australia, the ambulance officers/paramedics and the firies from the Metropolitan Fire Services organised a stop work and rally and demonstration in the streets of Adelaide demanding increased staffing in particular for their own safety and for better service to the

public.

Workers from all other areas of the public sector, including duty police at the demonstration who were clearly sympathetic to the demonstration's cause, joined the ambulance officers in solidarity.

Labor's mantra for the next Federal Election is that they stand with the people.

Assuming they win the next federal parliamentary election, a mighty mass movement of workers will surely test them out.

One area of struggle that workers will put Labor under the microscope, if they are next government in Canberra, is to what extent Labor supports workers' right to struggle collectively across industries, across multiple employers and across the bosses' supply chains to defend and advance workers' collective interests.

Interesting times ahead!

The QUAD Summit and US expectations of the Australian military

Contributed

The recent Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) summit in March was given widespread media coverage.

A subsequent high-level diplomatic visit to Asia a few days later, however, was given extremely limited publicity despite its importance for US-led regional alliances.

The developments take place amid an escalation of diplomatic tensions where observers openly discuss war preparations, within a context of a changing balance of forces away from US-led traditional hegemonic positions.

The recent Quad summit with the leaders of US, Australia, Japan and India, took place with huge publicity.

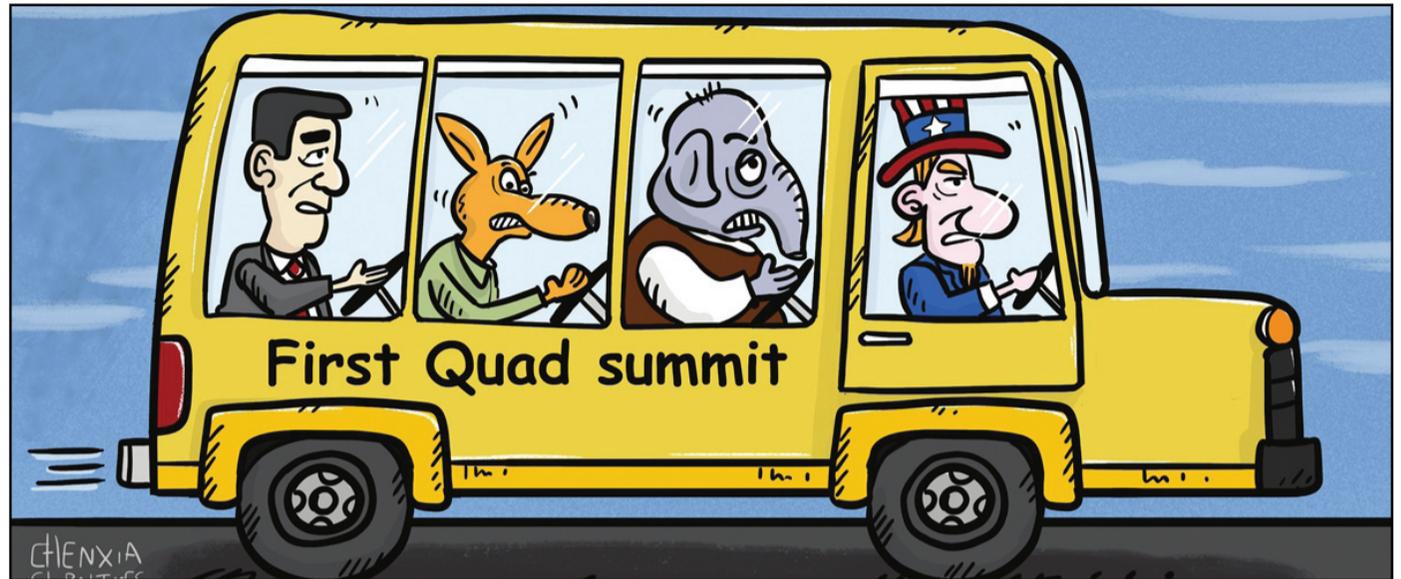
Stated agenda items included regional security issues, the South China Seas and related maritime matters, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic considerations related to climate change; it was noted the 'soft agenda ... for the ... Quad alliance has been extended beyond a security partnership'.

Elsewhere, carefully-worded media releases have taken considerable time to emphasise the Quad is not a security alliance 'but an informal strategic forum of like-minded countries with shared interests'. Other media releases noted 'the Quad is not an Asian NATO'.

The ninety-minute virtual Quad summit began with a video showing how the four countries had co-ordinated a response to the 2004 tsunami; time was possibly too pressing to talk openly about other matters.

Defence Ministers from the four countries were also not invited to participate in the summit, although it was noted, nevertheless, the Quad 'has a military significance'.

Following the seemingly befuddled summit an official media release from Canberra noted the Quad amounted to 'the most important development for



Australia's security in the past 70 years', with reference to the forthcoming ANZUS celebrations in September which have included an invitation to President Biden.

US demands ramp up

Within days, however, another high-level US-led diplomatic initiative began; it would appear to have been far more important than a ninety-minute on-line Quad-chat between Joe Biden, Scott Morrison, Yoshihide Suga and Narendra Modi.

It began when Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin accompanied by Secretary of State Antony Blinken travelled to the region to brief allies on US military planning.

A major concern has been a Pentagon military assessment that China could seek to invade Taiwan within the next six years.

The assessment has also included the concern that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would 'supplant the US as the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific'.

While the Quad has the specific purpose of 'hemming China in from all sides', the Indo-Pacific strategy is centred upon the US-Japan alliance which has also included Australia as a southern hub for 'US interests'.

The regional allies regarded by the US as important include: South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, and others as 'lower level partners'.

The role of Australia was subsequently clearly defined by the Biden administration as an important logistics and training centre for US-led operations.

An announcement that the US 'is shaping to ramp up ship and aircraft visits and consider more defence infrastructure, especially in the north', was followed by a commitment to build a multi-million commercially operated strategic military fuel reserve in Darwin for joint use with US and Australian forces.

Fuel security is of vital importance for war preparations.

Elsewhere, it was reported that Admiral Philip Davidson, head of the Indo-Pacific Command said 'more money is likely to be spent on equipment and facilities that Australia is well placed to provide and support', together with a call to increase defence budgets to US\$27 billion over the next five years including new mobile missiles, radar systems, staging areas, intelligence-sharing centres, supply depots, testing ranges and exercises 'with allies and partners'.

The announcement also coincided with information about the allocation of an extra \$115 million by Australia to develop Loyal Wingman combat drones with a range of 3,700 kms from ground control systems. The drones are intended for use with electronic warfare systems with guided missiles and surveillance sensors. Their range provides coverage of most of the vast Indo-Pacific region through use of out-reach military facilities linked to Australia.

Reject the idea that Taiwan is the 'front-line of Australia's defence'

The centrality of Australia for US-led regional military planning has

also included an announcement from Defence Minister Linda Reynolds about a \$1 billion investment into 'advanced guided weapons to enhance Australia's maritime security', and a diplomatic statement that Taiwan was 'in fact, the emerging front-line of Australia's defence'.

With such US-led military planning already taking place it has not been particularly difficult to establish why two leading members of the Biden administration visited the region soon after the Quad summit.

Davidson and Blinken were not primarily concerned with existing defence and security agendas, but with escalating diplomatic tensions and war preparations toward China still further; the high-level diplomacy also coincided with a call from the Pentagon 'for more missiles to be placed in allied countries around China to enable the US to win the game'.

Such developments push Australia into a front-line type position with US-led regional military planning, specifically designed for real-war scenarios.

We need an independent foreign policy!



Australia's new Air Force: Loyal Wingman to US imperialism

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with name, location and a contact mobile phone number, to arrange a discussion with one of our comrades.