



Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

May Day Special Edition

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Workers lead the fight for a better world

by Alice M.

On 1st May the working class celebrates the victories of workers' collective struggles for a better life for working people. On this day the working class demonstrates that the fight for justice and workers' rights is not over, and asserts its own independent vision for fundamental change.

The declaration of International May Day in 1886 drew inspiration from the Melbourne stonemasons' victorious strike action in 1856 for an 8 hour working day. The stonemasons' victory came 2 years after the 1854 Eureka Stockade rebellion in Ballarat, with some of the Eureka rebels leading the 8 hour day fight.

May Day declares that improvements to the rights and living standards of working people can only be won through collective actions of the working class,

The capitalist ruling class constantly schemes and uses different tactics to take away these gains, and weaken the collective power of the working class.

It's only the unity, organisation and determination of workers and many allies in the community that can push back the capitalist class assault.

Resist big business attacks

The living standards, workers' rights, and community and welfare services won in struggle by working people over many years are again under sustained and far reaching attack by the multinational corporations and their servile parliament.

Monopoly capitalism is in deep economic crisis and is shifting the burden on to the backs of ordinary people. However, public outrage at the 2014 austerity budget, promoted by the Business Council of Australia, has forced big business and the Abbott government into temporary retreat. They are now coming back with the softer tactics of rolling out austerity incrementally.

Multinational corporations and banks operating in Australia are raking in super-profits created by the collective labour of millions of workers



in Australia. Very little of these mega-profits stay in Australia.

Tax evasion by multinational corporations, banks and local big business is the norm, and runs into the billions of dollars. At the same time, the multinationals demand increasing and extending the GST, putting more hardship on ordinary people.

Volumes of anti-worker and anti-union laws are rushed through the federal and state parliaments to chain down organised labour and suppress working class resistance. Draconian, anti-worker laws have been strengthened through the legal and administrative powers of Fair Work and the ABCC.

People's democratic rights are being wound back whilst the anti-democratic and oppressive powers of the capitalist state are expanded and extended in preparation for people's resistance and struggle.

Big business runs parliament

The Business Council of Australia, the peak body representing the 100 largest, mainly foreign corporations in Australia, sets this country's economic and industrial relations agenda. They demand austerity and the crushing of the organised working class. The BCA wrote the Commission of Audit Report that spelled out big business demands for the 2014 anti-people austerity budget. The same handful of multinational monopolies and banks

are now instructing the Productivity Commission.

Irrespective of which parliamentary party holds office, Labor or Liberal, the real power in this country lies in the corporate boardrooms of multinational and local corporations who run this country.

Independent working class agenda shows the way forward

Working class demands and mass action based in workplaces and communities, and not tied to parliamentary parties and reliance on parliament, has enormous capacity and power to organise, unite and mobilise the working class and communities to fight back the big business assault and advance the interests of all working people.

An independent working class agenda will advance people's immediate demands for a decent standard of living for all people, workers' rights and democratic rights and job security.

It will vigorously oppose austerity and promote taxing the profits of multinational corporations and big business to pay for public health, education, public transport, affordable housing, social and community services for all.

It will put forward an alternative vision for our country that puts the needs of the people above the electoral fortunes of politicians and parliamentary parties, and the profit interests of big

business.

The independent working class agenda will build broad unity and mobilise the working class, city and rural communities, farmers and environmentalists. It will unite people from all walks of life who are attacked by the capitalist economic crisis.

Every day in struggle the people come up against the imperialist domination of our country. They find out that the real power in this country is held by the multinationals, banks and big business, not the people.

The mass movement towards an anti-imperialist, independent Australia is growing. It is a necessary step towards a genuine socialist Australia where the working class will run the country for the well-being of the majority, not a tiny handful of multinational corporations and banks.

Fight for Workers' Rights!

Fight for our Living Standards!

Vanguard Blog

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

Comments are welcome

Aboriginal resistance to capitalist profits, and the fight for traditional lands

by Verity M.

What is behind the Western Australian Government's attempt to force Aboriginal people off their traditional lands, Homelands and Outstations?

The Homelands movement has previously been supported by Coalition and Labor alike as a viable alternative to failed Government policies such as assimilation.

The answer lies in the changed use of land. What was seen in the sixties as land with little or no commercial value is now seen as offering wealth creating opportunities for giant corporations.

It is also a product of Abbott's use of the Constitution's definition of state and federal powers: by cutting federal funds to areas such as maintenance of remote communities, which Abbott says is a state responsibility, he provides an excuse for the sort of community closures being enforced in WA.

WA, which has ripped huge amounts out of Aboriginal lands in the form of mining royalties, now cries poor in response to Abbott's cuts, and says it cannot find the money to provide services to remote Aboriginal communities.

Capitalst accumulation

Governments of Western "democracies" are facilitators for capital accumulation. This is their main function.

The current 'opening up the North' is the focus for generating profits for foreign multinationals who are licking their lips at the prospect of new territory to exploit, and for our resident billionaires who are already diversifying away from mining and into cattle farming in North Western Australia.

Mining has reached its peak and is producing lower rates of profit.

"Feeding Asia" is the new mantra. Gina Rinehart has already advocated lower wages for foreign and local workers and lower tax rates for those who are prepared to 'develop' the North.

Apart from the opportunity to provide a food basin to feed the increasingly lucrative Asian market, the area offers mining opportunities as well as geologically stable spaces for dumping the world's nuclear waste.

Unfortunately for our would-be investors swathes of the North across Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland are under Aboriginal title, and having to negotiate with



land title holders is a time consuming disincentive for those who are used to free, largely unregulated markets and who see unimpeded access to profiteering opportunities as theirs by right.

The process of weakening Aboriginal ownership and control of land began with the racist NT Intervention and has been forcefully pursued by the current government and its sycophants on its Advisory committee (Mundine et al) through attempts to persuade Aboriginal people to privatise their land.

This has been strenuously opposed by communities, Elders and land councils, most of whom are aware that privatising land, far from benefitting Aboriginal people, would simply be a means of transferring Aboriginal ownership to non-Aboriginals.

The submission to the Queensland Government, *Extract of the Consultation Draft the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land (Providing Freehold) Bill* emphasises the longevity and purpose (to care for country and preserve for future generations) of community ownership and the risks of land loss associated with private ownership.

This report sees privatisation as allowing land to ultimately be for sale on the open market and to result in a "patchwork effect with Indigenous-held land being small islands in a sea of private non-Indigenous ownership".

Uranium waste

Another issue the Government is faced with is finding a community which will accept uranium waste.

Most Aboriginal communities

are strongly opposed to having a waste dump on their land and have campaigned against it with women Elders threatening to lie down in front of trucks.

The Aboriginal owned Muckaty Station in the Northern Territory was a site with an agreement to accept a nuclear waste dump, but community controversy and resistance has seen this option cancelled.

Given that the government is committed to accepting reprocessed nuclear fuel rods from France this year the search is becoming urgent.

As well there is pressure from countries using nuclear fuel to find a burial site for their waste and Australia because of its geological stability is a prime target.

There is money in it for investing capitalists and some for cash strapped governments which is why the South Australian Government is holding a royal commission into all aspects of nuclear power hoping it will get the answers it wants to change public attitudes.

All of this makes Aboriginal Land Rights and tenures an issue for capital accumulation.

When homelands were being established from the 1960s to the 1980s, the land that people were returning to had little commercial value.

"No, never again!"

Aboriginal people are used to being turned out and moved on when the land they were living on is needed for other purposes, but not this time. Demonstrations around the country

have said so.

Ceasing to remain connected to land means loss of title and loss of Law and Culture. This is the aim behind what amounts to forced removals.

In many communities poverty and neglect have caused distress.

Others are self-sustaining and productive, training land carers, growing and collecting native foods for commercial use, providing plants for medical and scientific use, drawing incomes from art and ecotourism and importantly providing respite for people recovering from a spell in prison or drug rehabilitation or just providing a space for people to return home to.

The homelands are important for all Aboriginal people where ever they live, which is why the entire Aboriginal nation is militantly opposing the forced removal, through planned neglect, of people from their traditional lands.

Capital has no use for that which does not contribute to its profiteering.

They tossed Aboriginals away a long time ago but find they are still in the way.

They tossed away the car workers and many other artisans and skilled workers when they found they could make bigger profits elsewhere.

They will toss aside the submarine workers if they can get away with it.

But the Aboriginal Nation has said "No, never again!" and the working class will stand with them.

One thing our Prime Minister has been able to achieve is to unite the people against injustice, exploitation and inequality, legislated for in the name of capital. We are moving on, the real struggle is just beginning.

Anger builds over Multinationals' tax avoidance

by Max O.

The recent Senate parliamentary committee hearing into corporate tax avoidance has generated a lot of anger and will inflame opposition to the coming Federal government's budget and the treasurer's tax 'discussion' paper. The working and under class have received an excellent education with the latest revelations about the rorts of the rich and corporations.

They have learned how the rich use superannuation as a vehicle to stash away their assets to evade tax on their income; how big business manipulates capital gains tax concessions and negative gearing to reduce their profits on paper and so reduce their tax bill; and now have become aware that the world's largest corporations use profit tax shifting so as to pay next to no tax.

News that has come out from the Senate hearings into corporate tax avoidance has been staggering in terms of the contempt and arrogance shown by the giant corporations, who have basically refused to cooperate and answer questions about how much of their profits they have siphoned away to tax havens.

Corporate defiance over tax

Google, Apple and Microsoft's supercilious attitude to questions from the Senate committee has become the hallmark of corporations who followed.

Maile Carnegie, a Google executive asserted: "We are not opposed to paying tax. We are opposed to being uncompetitive."

Then she argued that Australia is way behind company tax rates of other countries, such as: Bermuda 0%, Singapore 17%, South Korea 24%, Ireland 12.5%, UK 20%.

Tony King, Apple's Australian managing director, played difficult when confronted with the question from Senator Xenophon: "Of the \$6 billion that Apple earned in revenue in Australia how much of that went overseas?"

He garbled the following replies: "We report all of our revenues and all our costs."

"We, um, our net profit was \$250 million."

"I'll take that question on notice to give you a specific number."

"Ah, we pay all our products..."

BHP Billiton executives refused to say how much the Australian Tax Office (ATO) thinks it is owed as a result of the way the mining conglomerate routes its

profits through their marketing hub in Singapore. They also wouldn't tell how much tax it paid in that country.

The Corporate Tax Association vigorously denied suggestions that their members improperly minimise tax payments, although interestingly some of its own executives work for companies that have legal disputes with the ATO.

This association submitted to the Senate inquiry that it "...objects to views that paint a picture that the Australian corporate system is fundamentally flawed and that corporate taxpayers in Australia are inappropriately minimising their tax bills."

Chris Vanderkley, treasurer of the association, who works for GE Corporate GE Capital saw his company settle a legal battle with the ATO for over \$144 million of tax deductions before it got to court, in January this year.

Within the ATO itself the Senate hearing has heard of a 'comfortable' relationship with four major accountancy firms (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, KPMG, Ernst and Young, and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu) that advise companies on tax issues.

Pricewaterhouse Coopers employed a former senior ATO official soon after that employee oversaw a tax settlement involving one of the company's big 4 bank clients.

The Senate hearing asked the ATO to name some of Australia's worst corporate offenders, unfortunately Chris Jordan from the Commission refused. A strange position to take when the ATO informed the hearing that \$60 billion a year is shifted to overseas tax havens. At a minimum, \$5 billion a year of taxes is being taken out of the Australian economy.

Class antagonism building

Blind Freddy and his dog can see who is getting all the prosperity out of the Australian economy; it is certainly not the poor and workers.

Treasurer Hockey's tax 'discussion' paper, advocating an increase of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will further ignite class antagonism against the rich, especially multinational corporations and their operations in Australia.

The poor and workers are well aware that all the tax 'lifting' is being done by them and the all the 'leaning' by the rich and big business.

Australian governments since the 1980's have cut the highest income tax rate from 60% to 46.7% and the

Editorial

Organisation is the key

Every evening the TV news bulletins tell us how the share prices have reacted to the latest speculative trading deals or new mergers and takeovers by international and local monopolies. It is a necessary function of the monopoly media to monitor their masters' profit-making and pick out current opportunities and pitfalls.

No such concerted effort is made to inform the working class of matters which might impact on their livelihoods, or perhaps reveal the extent of workers' exploitation, poverty, debt and unemployment, let alone the cause of it. You have to dig it out of Bureau of Statistics data and business reports and academic papers.

For instance, by the end of last year there was a 12% increase in people receiving long term unemployment benefits - more than 527,000 people. In Victoria, hit hard by the export of manufacturing jobs, 9.5% of the workforce is now classed as 'under-employed', more than 290,000 workers with only part-time jobs.

For instance, a recent report by Barclays Bank stated that household debt in Australia (mortgages, credit cards, overdrafts and personal loans) was greater than all other developed countries, running at a record high of 130% GDP.

For instance, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia report titled *Addressing Entrenched Disadvantage in Australia* reveals that 1-1.5 million people are in poverty, which is defined as "... whether households have access to goods and services that are deemed necessary, such as a substantial meal at least once a day, access to medical treatment if needed and a separate bed for each child. Another method looks at people's social exclusion across seven areas, including employment, material resources and health."

These raw figures don't reveal the anguish and misery that many working families suffer as imperialist globalisation restructures Australia's economy into a 'service hub' with a small core of professional and skilled jobs and a large periphery of part-time, casual and transient jobs.

This is all made worse with vicious government austerity cut-backs to social services, healthcare and education.

This is capitalism - a small boom, a bigger bust! Wealth created by workers is increasingly transferred to a small minority of filthy rich while poor and middle income workers work harder and harder and get poorer and poorer.

Workers know this in their bones. They know the system is stacked against them. They want to change things, but whatever small gains they make soon get gobbled up by the bosses in the next round of 'bargaining' or the next federal budget. The parliamentary musical chair game makes little difference as the procession of betrayals and back-downs destroys their hopes for a decent life, and spreads cynicism and despair.

A serious task for communists is to break through the cynicism and fatalism, to promote empowerment of workers, and to build confidence in their capacity to organise together to win a new socialist future. Organisation is the key - trade unions, community groups and single issue groups bring people together in struggle, but it not enough without the direction of revolutionary political consciousness and revolutionary organisation.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is building revolutionary organisation in the service of the working class. Our comrades are honest, courageous and dedicated. Our Party is not without its faults, but if you want to make a difference, get in touch - email: info@cpaml.org

company tax rate from 46% to 30%. In tandem with this has been the slashing of social services and implementation of the regressive GST, both of which hurt the working and under class.

There has also been some backsliding within the Senate parliamentary committee, with Sam Dastyari in particular being two-faced. It was reported by the *Australian Financial Review* that he withdrew a formal request for the big 4 banks (ANZ, CBA, NAB and Westpac) and the two largest financial organisations, AMP

and Macquarie, to front up before the Senate hearing. Bill Shorten and Chris Bowen Labor leadership forced the about-turn as a result of pressure from the powerful finance industry.

It is more than likely that nothing will eventuate from this corporate tax avoidance investigation. The only certainty is that the working and under class have a greater understanding of who pays and who doesn't pay taxes in Australia, and that spells trouble for all present and future capitalist governments.

Malcolm Fraser – the complexity of human beings

by Nick G.

Malcolm Fraser, 22nd Prime Minister of Australia has died. How does one make an all-round evaluation of such a complex individual?

Born into a wealthy landed family he enjoyed all the privileges of his class, developed a patrician contempt for working people, and entered politics as an avowed conservative.

Appointed to the Cabinet in 1966 as Minister for the Army under Harold Holt, he was a leading advocate of the US war of aggression against Vietnam and implemented the conscription of randomly selected 20-year old males into the army for service in Vietnam.

In 1968 he was given the education portfolio under Gorton, but late in 1969 was put back in charge of the armed forces as Minister for Defence.

That again placed him in the position of lead authority for Australian complicity in the US imperialist war against Vietnam. He later fell out with Gorton and resigned from the Cabinet.

Fraser was eventually to gain leadership of the Liberal Party.

It was at a time when the contention and rivalry between the two superpowers, US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, was at its height.

A reformist Labor government under Gough Whitlam had shown a certain independence in foreign policy and various of its decisions (support for an Indian Ocean zone of peace, ending Australian involvement in the Vietnam War, threatened takeover of the US spy base at Pine Gap) were seen by senior US policy-makers as supportive of their Soviet rival.

A US-instigated coup brought Whitlam down and government office was handed to Fraser.

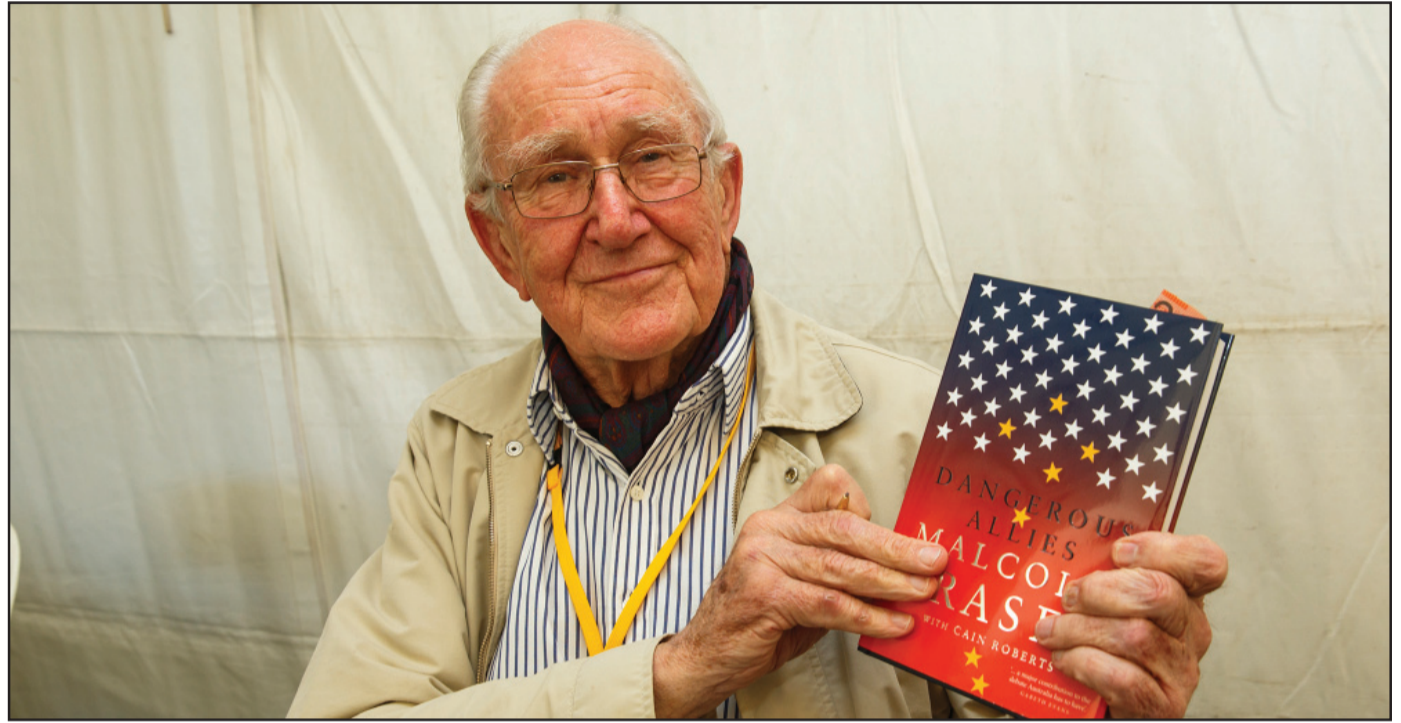
He immediately went on the attack against the working class and the unemployed.

The so-called “independent” Arbitration Commission was attacked in an effort to drive down wages and lower living standards. Attempts were made to dictate its decisions. There was an insistence on secret ballots in unions.

Attacks were also made on the “independent” broadcaster, the ABC, for its alleged “left-wing bias”.

Fraser’s government also set about to systematically dismantle Medibank, which had been established by Whitlam as a free and universal health care service. Private hospitals were encouraged to expand at the same time as funding was withdrawn from community health care centres.

In 1977 Fraser amended the Trade Practices Act so that it could be used



against unions which were now defined as corporations; he set up the Industrial Relations Bureau as its enforcer.

This laid the groundwork for later successful ruling class attacks on workers in the Dollar Sweets, Mudginberri, SEQEB and other disputes.

Unions found themselves, courtesy of Fraser, under a regime that revived the penal powers of the industrial relations system after their virtual disappearance in the wake of the O’Shea campaign.

At the same time as he attacked the working class and its unions, Fraser departed from his conservative colleagues both at home and abroad on a number of broadly humanitarian issues.

He felt a moral obligation to facilitate the escape of anti-communist Vietnamese and accepted them as refugees into Australia.

He became particularly active in Commonwealth efforts to end apartheid in South Africa, and played a leadership role in the transition from white minority rule in Zimbabwe to black rule under Robert Mugabe.

He also supported land rights for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Fraser’s government was defeated in the 1983 election. It was the worst defeat for a conservative government since Federation - a measure of the detestation felt by ordinary Australians for a man seen as an aloof and arrogant silvertail. Fraser left parliament soon after.

In retirement Fraser became increasingly critical of first, John Howard and then Tony Abbott, as conservative Prime Ministers.

He took issue with them – and Labor governments too – over the draconian measures used to prevent asylum

seekers from entering Australia.

He also began to question what he saw as counter-productive actions taken by US imperialism and supported by Australia. These included the so-called “war on terror” and the invasion of Iraq.

He was particularly scathing of the Bush Administration and called for the withdrawal of Australian troops from Iraq. For this he was attacked as a “frothing at the mouth leftie” by many in the Liberal Party.

So complete was his estrangement from the Party he had led that Fraser resigned from it in December 2009.

He tackled with renewed vigour the criticism of blind obedience to the dictates of the US imperialists and became a strong and activist advocate of an independent stance in foreign policy.

He opposed Labor’s decision to permit the export of uranium to US ally India, a country which has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and he also opposed Labor’s decision to open a US marine base outside Darwin.

In 2014 he published *Dangerous Allies*, a history of Australia’s strategic dependence on Britain and the United States.

His argument was that this was necessary and desirable up to the point at which the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed.

After that, he wrote “...our continued strategic dependence on America led us to make policy choices that ostracised us from the region, cast us as a deputy sheriff to Washington and a willing participant in US strategic aims, both in the region and around the world.”

“We must turn,” he wrote, “to an option of strategic independence to avoid complicity in America’s future

military operations and to secure a future that best serves Australia’s interests.”

To that end, he called for the closure of the US base at Pine Gap – known to be directing US drone attacks in Pakistan and the Middle East – and for the closure of the US marine base at Darwin.

He also called for an end to the integration of Australian frigates and naval personnel into the US strike force fleet in the Pacific.

Fraser called for an Australian republic and continued his advocacy for human rights, especially in relation to asylum seekers and refugees.

In the 2013 election he endorsed Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young for her championing of the rights of asylum seekers.

Whilst we can never forgive nor forget Fraser’s despicable role in the semi-fascist coup of November 1975, his role in the conscription and Vietnam War era, and his attacks on working people and unions as Prime Minister, we can and should acknowledge and celebrate his important later stand against what he said had now become a dangerous ally, the United States.

Whether a person comes sooner or later to a position of advocating Australian independence from imperialism is of course important. We would prefer it to be sooner.

But no matter how late a person enlists in the great cause of anti-imperialist independence, that commitment will always be honoured and valued.

A complex individual has passed away, but the cause to which he made such a great contribution in his final years remains for us to further develop and lead in a direction that serves the working class and the socialist future for our country.

Only women's empowerment will stem the domestic violence crime wave

by Louisa L.

There was one sign for each murdered woman. Twenty in all, one for every woman murdered in Australia since the beginning of the year. They sent a stark message to bystanders at Sydney's International Women's Day rally on March 14.

Addressing the crowd, Dr Anne Summers spoke of "a crime wave of domestic violence".

Dr Summers was one of a group of women who in 1974 established *Elsie*, the world's first refuge run for women by women.

That action was an incredible act of empowerment, for those who led and staffed it, those who sought its services, and those who were inspired by it to follow in its footsteps.

The women who set up *Elsie* didn't wait for help. They saw a desperate need, and marched in to occupy an empty Department of Housing building in inner city Glebe.

Elsie has stood as symbol of the empowerment of ordinary women for decades. For that very reason, *Elsie* and other refuges and services like it, are a threat to corporations that want all power to reside in their own hands.

So in 2014, its fortieth anniversary, *Elsie Women's Refuge* was handed to St Vincent de Paul Society following the introduction of the NSW Government's cutely named 'Going Home, Staying Home' competitive tendering policy on homelessness.

Eighty women-operated refuges defunded

According to WEL, Women's Electoral Lobby, "The NSW Government's competitive tenders have destroyed women's refuges, favouring large-scale charities over smaller, specialist women's services." Eighty women-operated refuges have been defunded.

While St Vinnies and its leaders now do many good things, they have never dared do what that group of women did.

In 1974 charity was disempowering and often humiliating. What these women did was an assertion of human rights, not charity.

Its danger to the ruling class was that it showed, in a small way, that ordinary people could build a better world when they took matters into their own hands.

WEL states, "One woman in Australia dies every week as a result of violence committed by their current or



former partner... Every week hundreds of women and children flee their home to escape domestic violence."

On February 15 Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty, spoke out. "Domestic violence services must be staffed by specialists who understand the gendered nature and complexities of domestic violence. The NSW Government reforms need to be revisited."

According to Michelle Hoogesteger, from 'No Shelter', speaking last August at a rally outside *Elsie*, *Elsie's* staff, trained in the specific issues facing

women, have been replaced by those trained in "generalist homelessness".

According to Alt Media, Ms Hoogesteger highlighted the danger of allowing men and women to be housed in the same generalist services, when many women and children using these services were doing so to escape domestic violence.

Meanwhile, the Abbott government has also cut \$240 million from community sector women's services which provided help including legal support, financial counselling,

emergency relief of food and clothing, all essential to women and children experiencing domestic violence.

"We have a voice!"

At the Women's Day rally, Natalie Lane of the Australian Services Union slammed a system run by "nice guys and experts".

She spoke of being ready to deal with "thinly veiled devastation". She made clear that once the new disempowering system was in place, it would be easy for corporations to take over.

She spoke of a system based on collaboration replaced by one allowing businesses to make profits from vulnerable women.

Rather than disappearing, the struggle is growing. "We have a voice," Ms Lane said. "Our voice is not for sale."

Further information:

<http://www.altmedia.net.au/glebe-community-rallies-as-sydneys-oldest-womens-refuge-closes/97489>

<http://www.annesummers.com.au/2014/07/nsw-government-closes-doors-to-women-fleeing-violence/>

What's behind the oil price drop?

by Josh S.

The recent drop of over 40% in oil prices only presages increasing price fluctuations in the future.

The price drop has been caused by decreased international demand due to sluggish economies, and to serious overproduction.

The production increases have been mainly due to a massive increase in oil shale drilling in the USA, which now produces over 30% of the world's oil, and is the largest producer of oil and gas.

Increased prices this century, and the development of fracking technology, have made the extraction of oil from previously unviable shale deposits profitable.

20,000 new wells have been drilled since 2010. In the Bakken field in North Dakota-Nebraska, the number of wells increased from 200 in 2005 to 78,000 in 2014. Not surprisingly, this oil rush in the Bakken is accompanied by the highest worker fatality rate in the US.

This is besides the environmental consequences; serious spills of highly saline fracking residue have occurred as recently as early January 2015, and last July.

Another spill in 2006 is still being cleaned up.

Shale oil comprised 0.5% of world production in 2008, but 3.7% in 2014. It involved 20% of world oil investment in 2013.

Shale oil wells are quick and relatively cheap to initiate. A well can be drilled in a week for as little as \$1.5 million. A field can be developed in a few weeks.

Compare this to conventional drilling: Exxon Oil and Russian company Rosneft recently took 2 months and \$700 million to drill one well north of Siberia.

Shale wells typically have a very short life: output usually falls by some 60 – 70% in the first year.

US shale oil companies carry huge debt. Shale accounted for 20% of the world investment in oil production last year. Total US debt for oil exploration and production has doubled since 2009.

Several hundred wells have already closed down in the past few months, and the number of drilling applications in the Bakken field dropped by 40% in November alone. This trend is expected to continue; many companies are likely to go bankrupt at current prices.

This situation presents a serious dilemma for US imperialism.

As world (over)production levels are maintained, as insisted on by Saudi Arabia, many US companies will go bust and US production will decline significantly.

However, the US and its allies and clients, like Saudi and the Arab oil sheikhs, want to weaken rival oil-dependent countries such as Russia and Venezuela.

Some capitalist mouth pieces, such as The Economist magazine, pronounce hopefully that shale oil, of which there are enormous deposits across the globe, will ensure stable supplies for the future and an end to price volatility.

However, given the complete anarchy of capitalist investment and production cycles, as capital desperately chases the highest returns regardless of need or rational planning, and the ease and speed of opening shale oil wells, increasing overproduction and price fluctuations are far more likely.

The oil boom – bust cycle, and the price instability, will become worse, not better. And these will have flow-on effects to the rest of the world's economies and to the pressures on people's livelihoods.

Marxism Today

Structural crisis and the outlook for capitalism

by Nick G.

A reader has sent us the following question:

Lenin has said that until capitalism is overthrown by the conscious exertions of the working class, it can recover from even the deepest crisis. I would like to know whether it will also recover from the present crisis which is regarded as structural one that socialism must replace it. What are the main reasons that capitalism cannot survive this time?

From time to time questions are raised about the ability of the capitalist system to recover from economic crisis.

Capitalism overcame the 1930s crisis through war and the re-division of the world. However, the post-Second World War years also saw the birth in many nations of independence from colonialism and the establishment of socialist states led by Communist Parties in Eastern Europe, China, South East Asia and Cuba.

These developments showed that where the workers and their allies are organised with leadership from a political party striving to apply Marxist-Leninist principles to their own countries' material conditions, progress for workers beyond capitalism's boundaries can be made.

However, capitalism fought back to destroy the Soviet Union and enmesh other independent countries back into the world imperialist economies. This gave imperialism "new life" on a world scale with new sources of cheap labour (e.g. Eastern Europe, China) and new markets for the export of capital.

This in turn though gave rise to a severe downturn in economic conditions for the working classes of the imperialist "headquarters" of the USA and western Europe.

Overproduction on a global scale soon asserted itself which limited capital rate of growth and rate of profit.

The economist David Harvey says that capitalism needs compound growth of 3% per annum to prevent stagnation and the tendency towards crises like the 1930s Depression. Since the global crisis of 2007-08, world capitalist growth and forecast growth is nowhere near the required 3%, according to Harvey.

The particular character of the 2007-08 crisis as a global financial crisis has its roots in the dominance of finance capital over industrial capital that had

become firmly established in the early 1970s.

The removal of political barriers to the free flow of finance capital, and the spur given by that to the emergence of digital technologies at its service, led to a wave of intellectual creativity that saw intricate and seemingly impenetrable financial instruments develop at an unprecedented rate.

The most obvious sign of the changes wrought by the domination of finance capital in the new era was the channelling of massive quantities of surplus value in the form of investment capital away from fixed capital assets and wages and salaries, that is, away from productive capital, and into the speculative pursuit of paper profits, that is of fictional capital, tied up in derivatives, CDOs and other financial instruments.

So profound has been that diversion of capital that the manufacturing industries of the developed capitalist countries have been decimated and the value of global derivatives is estimated by the Bank of International Settlements as hundreds of times the value of global Gross Domestic Product.

This has led to a long term decline in GDP that seems, to this point in time, to be irreversible.

The average annual growth rates of global GDP by decades over the period of financialisation, taken from World Bank sources are:

1960s	4.90%
1970s	3.93%
1980s	2.95%
1990s	2.70%
2000s	2.58%
2011-13	2.40%

We can accept that the economic changes of the early 1970s constitute a new stage in the development of capitalism in so far as there have been significant structural changes to the circulation of capital compared to the period before the early 70s.

The problem for us with certain advocates of what is called the "structural crisis of capitalism" is that they seem to deny the law of the uneven development of capitalist growth.

Reference should be made, for example, to the work of István Mészáros and his influence over people like John Bellamy Foster and the writers for the progressive US *Monthly Review*. Mészáros argues that capitalism has



moved beyond the era of cycles, and had entered a new, never-before seen phase of structural crisis characterized by a depressed continuum that would confine the previous cyclical phase to history.

Although there would be changes in the epicentres, the crisis has shown itself to be enduring, systemic, and structural. The GDP figures cited above lend a certain credence to this view of a depressed continuum no longer subject to any law of uneven development.

But we are not yet convinced that those changes have negated the cyclical nature of capitalist crisis, not its capacity to recover from crisis through a combination of inter-imperialist contestation for markets and sources of cheap labour, or even, perhaps through the application of new technologies to exploit the resources under the oceans which together comprise a larger part of the earth's surface than its land masses.

Offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling may yet unlock even greater exploitation of mineral and other resources below the seas.

It is wrong, we believe, to equate the "depressed continuum" of a "structural crisis" to an inability for capitalism to find new avenues for growth.

This is important for how we visualise the development of the revolutionary movement for the replacement of imperialist control by national independence and of capitalism by socialism. We adhere to the Leninist proposition that capitalism can only be overthrown by the conscious efforts of the working class.

By "conscious efforts" we refer to the need for an advance detachment of the working class, organised in a party armed with the theoretical knowledge and methods of Marxism-Leninism. It still remains the task of the vanguard party to organise the people for the overthrow of capitalism.

Even if we accept the "structural crisis" view of capitalism in the present era, we do not believe that socialism can or must replace it without the conscious efforts of the people as a revolutionary movement in a revolutionary situation.

To deduce from a "depressed continuum" of economic decline that a socialist alternative is inevitable runs the danger of disarming the people and

denying the historic truth, expressed in great simplicity by Chairman Mao, that "Everything reactionary is the same; if you don't hit it, it won't fall".

The political superstructure of modern day imperialism has moved very much to the Right through the neo-liberal agenda created to serve the ascendancy of finance capital.

The policy directions of neo-liberalism have aroused significant opposition from the people and must now be pursued by more openly repressive measures on the part of the state. The revival of neo-Nazi parties, most obvious in parts of Europe, is an additional threat against the growing movement of the people.

What we can be certain of is that the much-trumpeted decline of the nation state that was said to have accompanied the emergence of a globalised economy has not eventuated.

Global corporations operating beyond national boundaries and owing no particular allegiance to any one nation state were said to have made Lenin's analysis of imperialism out-of-date. However, the globalisation of imperialist finance capital, in circumstances of long-term decline and stagnation, make the imperialist nation state an even more important weapon for the struggle and competition of global corporations to push each other out of the way in the search for declining growth opportunities.

The rivalry between individual countries to outstrip each other, to muscle in on each other's territories and markets, becomes more acute under conditions of economic decline.

The predatory and bloody nature of imperialism has not changed, and local wars and persistent attempts at "regime change" are a characteristic of our age.

The danger of war between competing home bases of imperialist finance capital remains. In this respect too, the so-called "structural crisis" of capitalism has not changed any of the fundamentals of Lenin's analysis of imperialism.

From all of this it follows that we must give priority to building a revolutionary party of Marxist-Leninists in Australia. The working class needs such a party for the long struggle required to hit imperialist control of Australia.

Intergenerational Report, a 'Class Act' of theft

by Max O.

The 2015 intergenerational report (IGR) is a 'class act' of fabrication and skulduggery by the LNP government.

Using smoke and mirrors, Hockey the Federal Treasurer made the claim when presenting the IGR that the nation has to reduce spending on social services and welfare, otherwise future Australian generations will be impoverished by compound debt.

By counter-posing potential budget spending on social services and welfare against the nation's future weakening finances, Hockey labels our generation as guilty of "intergenerational theft".

Whilst the IGR ostensibly demonstrates the relationship between budget projections and population changes 40 years into the future, in actual fact it illustrates the breakdown of global capitalism and the worsening impact on countries like Australia.

However the LNP are guilty of fudging figures in arguing their prescription for budget surplus recovery.

Fudging the figures

The IGR sets out a number of doomsday scenarios of inflating debt and warns of surging spending and diminishing tax revenues over the next 40 years. The corollary of this is that productivity will bottom out unless more of the population are lured into the labour market and compelled to work longer. The document calls for more economic structural 'reform' and the uptake of technological change.

The disaster scenarios that the IGR presents about the Australia's economic future are:

Model 1 (termed previous policy): Under the former Labor government's budget policies debt would reach 122% of GDP by 2055, equivalent of \$56 trillion. This would create a government deficit of 11.7% of GDP.

Model 2 (termed currently legislated): Under the current budget measures that the LNP have been able to pass a debt of 60% of GDP by 2055 would occur, which amounts to \$26 trillion. A deficit of 6% of GDP.

Model 3 (termed proposed policy): This is the LNP's rescue scenario where Australia would be free of debt by 2032, only if all their budget cut backs are accepted by parliament. The budget surplus would reach 1.4% of GDP by 2040.

However the model 1 scenario is a fudge by the Treasurer, for it is based on the assumption that the unemployment rate over the long run, the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment (Nairu), would be 6% in the 2013 mid-year economic and fiscal outlook (Myefo). Normally a 5% Nairu is assumed in the Treasury's long-run modelling for the economy.

Hockey's chicanery becomes all too apparent when he has the IGR revert to a 5% Nairu for the models 2 and 3. This devious change accounts for the huge differences in figures between the scenarios.

By altering the Nairu from 5% to 6% the Treasurer inflated the debt to GDP ratio by approximately 45% of GDP over a 40-year horizon. So by trickery of a pea and thimble con artist, Hockey has fabricated an inherited budget position of catastrophic proportions.



Protecting Capital, not living standards

Of greater importance than the above bourgeois economics argy bargy is the fact that the structural changes demanded by IGR and other reports (like the Audit Commission) are to bankroll funds for finance houses and the banks so as to protect them in coming global financial crises; permit more corporate tax cuts so that Australia can stay an internationally competitive investment site; and the above two will guarantee the continuation of Australia's triple AAA credit rating.

The IGR and all the other structural change reports are not aimed at improving living standards. This is a furphy.

The history of structural adjustments under capitalism actually shows a

redistribution of wealth from workers to capitalists.

In 1975 the profits/capitalists share of the Australian national income was 17% of GDP and now it is 27%.

The extra 10% of GDP that capitalists now enjoy is a \$150 billion a year windfall. Whereas workers who now produce more than ever before have seen their wages fall from 61% to 54% of GDP.

The actual culprit of the nation's and government's debt is finance capital. Its survival is dependent on countries and governments drowning themselves in expanding debt.

One way to eliminate government debt would be to heavily tax the big banks, mining corporations and other multinationals who are the worst offenders when it comes to paying any tax at all.

Unfortunately this won't happen because governments under capitalism are complicit captives of the big corporations.

Their (corporate) robbery from wages, by increasing the amount of surplus value they take from what workers produce, is not enough for them.

Corporations and business institutions now pressure governments to carry out cuts to pensions and social services so that these finances can be redirected to strengthen the position of financial and corporate capital, as the global economy accelerates towards another crisis.

Hockey's performance as treasurer and the IGR are a 'class act' of theft alright - from the working class to the bourgeois class!

It is dishonest thievery of grand proportions which has the visible hands of Capital all over it.

Resistance to imperialist free trade grows

by Alice M.

April 18, was the Global Day of People's Action against the US driven imperialist "free" trade agreements forced on more than 1 billion people around the world.

Tens of thousands of people in more than 60 countries took diverse actions to show their opposition to the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership), the US-EU TTIP (TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Partnership), TISA (Trade In Services Agreement) and other free trade agreements.

The stampede of free trade agreements, led mainly by US multinational corporations and monopoly finance capital, will open up and remove domestic restrictions and

obstacles to foreign investment.

Free trade agreements aim to abolish regulations and restrictions on foreign investments - local laws on the movement of cheap labour, workers' rights and conditions, food safety, environment, mandatory food labelling, foreign land ownership, local media and arts content and more.

The most determined and aggressive push for the abolition of regulations and restrictions on foreign investments is from the financial sector.

Protests were held in Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, England, Denmark, USA, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and in many other countries and corners of the world.

The broadness of the people's

movement against imperialist free trade was evident from the diversity of people's organisations taking part in the protests - trade unions, farmers, consumers, health and medical workers, academics, environmentalists, lawyers, scientists, cultural workers, public sector workers, welfare organisations and others.

The secrecy of the free trade agreements and attacks on national sovereignty and democratic rights were the common threads running through the global protests.

The draconian ISDS (Investor State Dispute Settlement) chapter in most of the free trade agreements has outraged the people around the world.

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Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission

*On behalf of the Central Committee,
Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
February 2015*

1. The Attorney-General of Australia has referred to the Australian Law Reform Commission responsibility for a public Inquiry into the relationship between Commonwealth law and the exercise by Australian citizens of their traditional rights, freedoms and privileges.

2. It is not surprising that the A-G's terms of reference for the work of the ALRC glaringly omit special consideration of the traditional rights, freedoms and privileges of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples.

The freedom of self-determination of ATSI peoples is a special freedom which cannot be subsumed under any of the other broad freedoms (speech, association etc.) covered by the TOR.

The CPA (M-L) strongly condemns the arbitrary omission of consideration of the freedom to exercise self-determination on the part of the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

3. It is not surprising that the A-G's terms of reference contain no provision for recommendations in relation to an Australian Bill of Rights.

The ALRC notes (page 11): "Whether the introduction of a bill of rights in Australia is desirable is widely debated, but it is not the subject of this Inquiry".

This is consistent with the restriction on the 2009 National Consultation on Human Rights in Australia, the terms of reference of which read: "The options identified should preserve the sovereignty of the Parliament and not include a constitutionally entrenched bill of rights".

The CPA (M-L) strongly condemns the arbitrary rejection of proposals for a Bill of Rights as a violation of the right to advocate for a preferred political outcome relevant to this Inquiry.

4. The rights, freedoms and privileges listed in the ALRC's Terms of Reference are poorly defined and not well protected.

The Australian Constitution is out-of-date and riddled with the contradictions inherent in a document that sought to ameliorate the conflicting interests of the British, the colonial elites, and the advocates of national representation.

The ALRC correctly notes (page 14): "The Australian Constitution does not expressly or impliedly protect most of the rights, freedoms and privileges listed in the ALRC's Terms of Reference".

5. The rights, freedoms and privileges of the Australian people are not guaranteed under the principle of legality.

The "sovereignty of Parliament" which our law-makers so jealously guard against a Bill of Rights, allows the Parliament to make laws which encroach on our rights, freedoms and privileges so long as those laws encroach clearly and unambiguously.

6. The same applies to international law. International treaties, conventions and other instruments provide no guarantees for the rights, freedoms and privileges of the Australian people.

So long as the sovereign Parliament makes its encroachments clearly and unambiguously, it may thumb its nose at our international obligations.

7. The Commonwealth has a history of encroaching on the rights, freedoms and privileges of the Australian people.

The Crimes Act enabled the Commonwealth to threaten the exercise of free speech under provisions relating to sedition and treason.

Conscription denied freedom of choice over whether or not to undertake military service.

Commonwealth law prevented freedom of speech against fascism (the Egon Kisch case) and freedom of movement (the withholding of Wilfred Burchett's passport).

The law of tort is used to encroach upon the right to strike; indeed, penalties for so-called "unprotected" industrial action are severe for both individuals and their unions and likely to be made even more severe.

The application of the Trade Practices Act and corporations law to unions during the SEQEB, Dollar Sweets and Mudginberri disputes in the mid-1980s saw a high tide in the use of Commonwealth law to encroach on the right of association and the right to strike.

The Australian Building and Construction Commission and its successor, the Fair Work Building and Construction Commission deprive construction workers of even the limited rights enjoyed by other sections of the Australian workforce.

Federal intervention in the Northern Territory under the guise of the Emergency Intervention encroached on the rights, freedoms and privileges of ATSI peoples and required the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

Compulsory income management encroaches on the rights of welfare recipients.

Anti-terror legislation contains sweeping powers for law enforcement and intelligence agencies that encroach on our rights, freedoms and privileges.

8. The rights, freedoms and privileges enumerated in the Terms of Reference should not be thought of as absolutes that can only be encroached upon by the clear and unambiguous actions of the sovereign Australian Parliament.

The reality of class society is that rights, freedoms and privileges have a class content.

Freedom of speech, for example, does not mean the right of every Australian citizen to purchase mass media on the scale of a Rupert Murdoch.

The very rich and powerful can exercise rights, freedoms and privileges in ways that are denied to the majority of Australia's citizens.

To have a right that can be effectively marginalised and ignored through the unequal access to or exercise of that right is itself an encroachment.

9. As noted above, and by the ALRC, the Australian Constitution says very little about the rights, freedoms and privileges of the Australian people.

Certainly it excludes those of the ATSI people.

A new, republican and democratic Constitution proclaiming Australia as an independent, sovereign and democratic nation, and a Bill of Rights protected from the whims of Parliament by virtue of being embedded within that Constitution, are the only short-term means by which our rights, freedoms and privileges can be better protected.

10. The CPA (M-L) submits that real and enforceable human rights, freedoms and privileges for the majority of Australians will only become operative with the winning of genuine independence from imperialism and with the ending of the capitalist economic and political system.

Anti-imperialist independence and socialism are our long-term objective. In the interim, we will continue to fight for the better definition and protection of the rights, freedoms and privileges of the majority of the population.

**New Booklet available for downloading
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**Federation, the Constitution,
Taxes and our Future**



Fascist laws will not deter struggle

by Nick G.

Fascist laws like those proposed for WA are a sign of the weakness of the ruling class. They will not deter people's struggle but will compel activists to search for explanations as to the need for increased repression and penalties. They will also lead to new and stronger alliances in defence of basic rights and liberties.

The WA legislation is similar to, but in some respects even more repressive than, laws passed in recent times in Queensland (the G20 anti-protest laws), Tasmania's 2014 anti-protest laws (on-the-spot fines and mandatory jail sentences for people who trespass on workplaces), and Victoria's 2014 anti-protest law ("Impeding lawful access to premises", "causing others to have a reasonable fear of violence", and "engaging in behaviour likely to cause damage to property").

The WA laws are aimed to prevent any action that might cause "lawful" activity to stop.

They are aimed to stop union pickets and community protests, and even to prevent farmers from "locking the gates" against mining and coal seam gas extraction on their own private property.

The laws will:

- Criminalise what has been the right to peaceful protest.
- Allow peaceful protesters to be jailed for up to 2 years or fined up to \$24,000.
- Reverse the onus of proof – accused people would have to prove that they are innocent.
- Make it illegal to carry a "thing" that police may suspect could be used to stop work.
- Treat convicted persons worse than rapists, murderers and white collar criminals by requiring them to pay for police time and attendance.

The state: instrument of class repression

The new legislation will involve votes by politicians in the WA parliament, police to enforce it, and the courts to uphold it.

These are essential components of the state as an instrument of the ruling class against the people. Behind these components stand the armed forces.

They represent the monopoly that the ruling class claims as its own right to exercise against those who "protest" and challenge the system that the state upholds.

It is not as if the various instruments



of the state do not have enormous powers already.

People being forced – legally! – from their homes in remote WA communities set up a refugee camp on Perth's Matagarup (Heirisson Island) and a Nyoongar Tent Embassy.

On Friday March 13 mounted police and the dog squad – legally! – violated the Swan River island sanctuary, dismantled and seized tents and other valuables.

This is a direct continuation of the force and violence enacted by European settlers to illegally seize First Nations land in WA in the first wave of colonisation.

Why this wave of intensified legal repression?

The ruling class is worried about any further widening or intensification of

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ISDS gives immense power to foreign multinational corporations and financial institutions to sue sovereign governments when domestic laws, restrictions and practices may "harm" or slow down maximum exploitation and profiteering by corporations.

The fines could run into hundreds of millions of people's taxes and intend to deter sovereign governments from introducing laws and regulations that protect people's health, the environment, workers' rights and working conditions.

No longer will the US need to exert its pressure on sovereign governments in secrecy to comply with the economic demands of its multinational corporations.

The TPP and TTIP Agreements will legally empower the US Congress to dictate domestic laws for other countries. The US Congress will be able to directly approve, amend and draft new domestic laws and regulations for other countries to ensure they serve the interests of its corporations and finance capital.

people's struggles.

Huge demonstrations of tens of thousands of people have occurred ever since Abbott took office.

The ALP, historically the fallback provision for a ruling class in trouble, has been largely ignored and discredited as the people create their own agenda and their own direct means of pursuing it.

And the large-scale spread and early victories of the anti-coal seam gas movement have seen new alliances between quite disparate social groups.

Internationally, the casino house of cards that is the international financial order looks so shaky that some financial commentators have warned that the pikes and the tumbrils are on the horizon – a reference to the upheavals of the French Revolution.

Because of the widening and

strengthening of alliances to protect and defend basic rights and liberties, and because the ruling class fears the inability of parliamentary misleaders to restrain and control the masses, efforts are put into strengthening the powers of the police and increasing the penalties to be thrown at dissenting citizens.

While outwardly this is a sign of the strength of the state, it clearly reveals the internal weakness of the ruling class.

Any dampening of enthusiasm for lifting the level of struggle in response to these laws will only be temporary. People will adjust to them and be more daring in their challenges and their mobilisations.

Nazi-style repression will breed a sentiment for resistance.

In the end, fascist laws will not deter, but rather encourage, struggle.

The free trade agreements are a Trojan Horse for slashing workers' hard won wages and conditions, and crushing organised labour.

They're designed to remove restrictions and open doors to importing cheap overseas labour, exporting jobs, smashing unions and pushing down local wages and conditions.

Cheap local and overseas labour, widespread casualisation and contract labour is the aim of these imperialist free trade agreements.

Recently a multinational corporation sued the Egyptian government for raising the minimum wage. The corporation claimed the increase in minimum wage negatively affected its profits.

Free trade agreements provide for foreign investors to refuse to pay certain taxes to sovereign governments.

Under free trade agreements tax evasion by multinational corporations will not even be officially "illegal". Local taxes on mining super profits are already being challenged by foreign

mining corporations operating in Ecuador and Algeria.

Persistent struggle by farming and rural communities has forced state governments in NSW and Victoria to place a moratorium on coal seam gas fracking. Under the TPP foreign corporations could sue governments to cave in to their demands and remove all obstacles to CSG fracking.

The strong public opposition in Europe to TTIP has forced the EU Commission to temporarily suspend negotiations on ISDS. It is a small, but significant victory for the people of European Union.

People's global resistance to economic imperialism is growing. The US and its multinational corporations and finance capital are more than ever exposed as leading the assault on people's livelihoods, standard of living, the environment, sovereignty and democratic rights.

The interdependency between US economic and military imperialism is more than ever clear.

Imperialism creates conditions for divisive 'Reclaim Australia' rallies

by Ned K.

On Saturday 4 April, about 1,000 people gathered at Adelaide's Elder Park on the Torrens Lake for a rally organised for various right wing and racist groups including the Australia First Party. The message from the banners and placards was that Australia needs to be "re-claimed" from the evils of multiculturalism and Islam in particular.

An Australia First Party leaflet distributed at the rally was headed "Multiculturalism Means Death" and warned against the "over breeding hordes of Asia, Africa and the Third World". Some placards said "All Moslems Are Terrorists" while a person carrying the Israel state flag said that the Greens were supporters of ISIS!

More concerning than the wording on banners and placards was the make-up and mood of the crowd.

Most were white Anglo Saxon males carrying the Australian flag.

A section of the rally confronted a group of about 30 people who kept their distance from the rally but expressed views in favour of immigration and in favour of multiculturalism.

Included in this group were a few young Indigenous Australians who made the point that the Reclaim Australia supporters could not 'reclaim' what was never theirs in the first place!

At midday the Reclaim Australia rally marched to the steps of Parliament House where they directed all their vocal energy at the small group of 30 people who wanted to make a point in support of multiculturalism and against racism.

Several passers-by of Non English Speaking Background were amazed that such racist banners and placards were being displayed in the streets of Adelaide. One African passer-by likened them to white supremacist behaviour of Apartheid times in South Africa.

Countdown to Closure

On the same day the April edition of the free magazine *Adelaide Review* was on display in the cafe at Elder Park frequented by those attending the rally.

In the magazine there was a timely article, "Countdown to Closure" about the economic and social consequences of the destruction of the automobile industry in Australia, and Adelaide in particular.

The article, written by Adelaide University based researcher John Spoehr, said that Adelaide had lost



about 30,000 manufacturing jobs in the last three decades and the closure of Holden in the northern suburbs in 2017 or earlier will add to this job loss malaise.

Many of these workers feel let down and abandoned by political parties of both Liberal and Labor variety who have been unable to stem the de-industrialisation tide in Adelaide.

How many of these workers were at the Reclaim Australia rally today or how many know family members or neighbours who are victims of this de-industrialisation? While not knowing the exact number, it is reasonable to assume that there were more than a few.

Progressive people within society and especially within the trade union

movement need to develop a stronger message and education campaign that it is not multiculturalism or people of Islamic religion who are responsible for the current situation of declining living standards and destruction of industry jobs.

Build a better future

The campaign to defend and extend living standards initiated by the ACTU can build and unite working people on the same scale as the Your Rights At Work Worth Fighting For campaign against Work Choices.

The ACTU initiated campaign, "Build A Better Future, Fight For Our Living Standards" focuses on six key

demands on the current and future governments –

1. Workers' Rights
2. Medicare – universal healthcare
3. Education – highest quality for all
4. Public Services – owned by everyone for the benefit of everyone
5. A Secure Retirement
6. A Fair Go For All

Such a campaign if based on grass roots conversations within working people's suburbs, communities and workplaces can at worst neutralise and at best dismantle the right wing, racist appeal of the Reclaim Australia group within working class areas that it targets.

US military expansion tramples on Australian sovereignty

by Bill F.

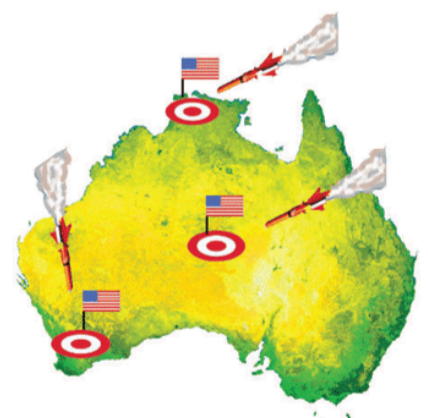
The US military 'pivot' into the East Asia-Pacific region threatens to drag Australia into a devastating imperialist war with China.

It is driven by monopoly capitalism's insatiable need for natural resources, new markets, cheap labour, and areas of new investments for capital.

There are already more than 320,000 US military stationed in the region, with bases in Japan, South Korea, Australia, Guam, New Zealand, and Thailand and access to military facilities in the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore.

The two main parliamentary political parties enthusiastically welcomed the rotational stationing of 2,500 US marines in Darwin.

However, no one is under the illusion that will be all. The decades' long struggle by the Japanese people to rid Okinawa of US troops and bases is forcing the US to relocate to a more stable country. Guam, a significant



US outpost, has no room to expand and is also subject to local opposition. It is likely that Australia' compliant governments will hand over even more of the country to the US military in future.

There are more than 20 highly secretive, so-called joint military and intelligence bases and facilities in Australia, in reality under the US command.

Some of these, like Pine Gap near

Alice Springs and North West Cape, are used exclusively by the US. There are plans to turn the Cocos Islands into a launching pad for US drones.

Australia's military and intelligence facilities have now been officially opened to US war ships, nuclear powered submarines, the US air force, intelligence gathering and spying on other countries and people.

The upgrading of existing Australian

Continued page 12

Japan heading for war, fascism and poverty

by Nick G.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe continues to push his country in the direction of war, fascism and poverty.

Senior Ministers and advisors are fuelling the entrenched xenophobia and racism of reactionary elements within the population.

All of this reflects the playing out of various contradictions embedded within Japanese capitalism, and the effect of the law of uneven development which sees the fortunes of the Japanese ruling class waxing and waning beyond the control of government policy.

External contradictions

Japan's territorial disputes with neighbouring countries are growing at the same time as Abe adopts a more militaristic posture with plans to revise the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines and reinterpret the so-called Peace Constitution adopted after World War 2. Abe wants to see Japanese forces overseas deployed in combat roles.

Troops sent to assist US wars of aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq were restricted to non-combat roles and are meant to be maintained strictly as a Self-Defence Force and placed in combat only if Japan itself is attacked.

Abe also wants to be able to breathe fresh life into *zaibatsu* – Japan's version of the military-industrial complex – by allowing them to export arms - or in Australia's case, to export submarines.

Although the Japanese and the US are strategic partners in US military domination of the East Pacific, they are economic rivals. The US has lately reasserted some of its dominance in the world of finance capital, and both sides are finding it difficult to agree on the terms of the free trade Trans Pacific Partnership.

Japan has become increasingly strident in disputes with China (Diaoyu Islands), South Korea (Tok Do Islands) and Russia (Kurile Islands). Although the first two in particular are pimples on the face of the ocean, there are rich oil and natural gas fields as well as fishing resources which are being claimed in the seas around the disputed territories.

Internal contradictions

The Japanese working class and small farmers face an implacable foe in Japanese monopoly capitalism. Abenomics, as the Japanese version of reactionary neo-liberalism, seeks to smash labour protection laws,

limit wage increases to less than the cost of living, impose restructuring and sackings to force the growth of precarious employment, and take away social security safeguards for the underprivileged and the aged.

Agricultural workers fear that the TPP will see their livelihood diminished.

In the ideological field there is conflict between a progressive and generally pacifist section of the people for a long time aligned with the Japanese Communist Party, and a reactionary, racist and militaristic outlook which holds the ruling position and is closely aligned to the monopoly capitalist class.

In recent times there has been a big push for so-called right-wing "moral" education in schools together with more and more openly racist discrimination against peoples not part of mainstream Japanese society. These include the *barakumin*, a Japanese "untouchable" caste; the relatively small Ainu minority who are Indigenous to the north of Japan and the Kurile Islands; several other minority nationalities including the Ryukyans and Nivkhs; and nearly a million citizens of Korean descent.

Laws have been passed against discrimination against the Ainu but the discrimination still occurs. Korean communities often face open hostility and neo-Nazi groups instigate violent pogroms calling for the killing of Koreans in Japan.

The historical basis for the view that the Japanese are a superior race was the religious claim that the Emperor is a direct descendent of Amaterasu, the sun goddess. This was the superstition that led to the fanatical behaviour of Japanese soldiers in WW 2, to the code of Bushido ("the way of the warrior") and *kamikaze* ("divine wind").

Although the mythological and superstitious elements of this are no longer believed, they still inform the reactionary outlook that clings to "racial purity" and "racial superiority" and against which progressive opinion faces a daily struggle.

Calls for an immigrant workforce under apartheid rule

Like many OECD countries, Japan is faced with a declining birth rate and an ageing population. Reflecting the uneven path of capitalist development, the once-strong economic superpower faces the loss of about half of its workforce by 2060 and with that, its status as an economic giant.

The former head of Tokyo's Immigration Bureau flew a significant kite on February 15 when he proposed



bringing in 10 million foreign workers over the next 50 years.

This was supported by a key confidante of, and advisor to, Shinzo Abe, the 83-year old famous novelist Ayako Sono, who used a column in the conservative Sankei Shimbun newspaper to call for apartheid-like conditions for the foreign workers.

"Ever since I learned of the situation in South Africa some 20 or 30 years ago," she wrote, "I have been convinced that it is best for the races to live apart from each other, as was the case for whites, Asians and blacks in that country."

Her comments led to protests from the South African ambassador to Japan and from progressive Japanese.

A government proposal for temporary three to five year work visas was condemned by the United Nations which likened the scheme to slave labour.

Publicity was also given to the plight of 300,000 Japanese-Brazilians who were recruited during the expansionary period of the 1980s and 1990s. They were put to work in factories where they were poorly treated and then sent home when the downturn set in. Some of those who remain say they are disadvantaged, bullied and disliked by mainstream Japanese.

Neo-Nazi links

In an attempt to cultivate a more female-friendly face for his government, Abe undertook a Cabinet reshuffle last September elevating five women to senior posts.

Barely a week later he had to deal with a crisis that erupted when Facebook photos showed two of the women, the internal affairs minister and the party's policy chief, on separate occasions in front of a Japanese flag in the company of Kazunari Yamada, the 52-year old

leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Workers Party. Yamada is notorious in Japan for having praised Hitler and the 9/11 attacks on the US World Trade Centre.

Not long after these photos emerged, the Police minister was forced to reject claims that she had been in a 15-year relationship with Yamada.

These are significant and senior posts within the Japanese government and ruling party held by associates and friends of the country's leading neo-Nazi.

It shows how easily, in the current environment, new fascist elements are situating themselves within mainstream conservative parties. It is occurring in the Ukraine, the UK and the US and is a tacit acceptance by a worried bourgeoisie of its need to have fascist elements in reserve in case of a rising level of people's struggle.

Japanese people will rise to the occasion

We have every confidence that the Japanese people will organise and lift the level of struggle against the reactionary trends in their society.

There is a broad coalition of opposition to the TPP. There is a gearing up for a spring offensive for higher wages and better job protection.

Okinawans are engaging directly with US occupation forces and struggling against US military bases; and progressive opinion is defying the militarisation of the Constitution and of society.

There is a broad range of contact between the Japanese and Australian peoples – from business relationships to school exchanges.

We must develop our ties with the Japanese working class and its allies and isolate our own and each other's reactionary bourgeoisies.

Attack on workers' shift and weekend penalty rates intensifies



by Ned K.

On 4 March 2015 most unions participated in rallies across the country as part of a campaign against the Abbott government's attacks on living standards of the majority of people living in Australia on behalf of big business.

Speakers at the rallies highlighted the attack on shift and weekend rates of pay by big business and the government.

Workers at the rallies applauded speakers who called on all union members to stand together and defend shift and weekend rates of pay. The mood of workers was one of optimism that the latest attacks would be defeated in a long campaign.

Big business and the Abbott government were on the defensive. Abbott and his offsider Abetz had to come out and say that there were no plans to reduce "penalty rates" by them. It was all up to the Fair Work Commission. They could not at that stage see a weakness in the workers' movement.

Fast forward to Tuesday 24 March. Front page of the Murdoch-owned *Australian* newspaper where it is revealed that the SA Branch of the SDA, the shop assistants' union, had done a deal with Business SA to eliminate shift rates Monday to Friday in the evening shifts, extend base week day rates to Saturday work, and slash Sunday rates from double time to time and one half.

The 'reward' for shop assistants? A measly 3% per annum pay increase and the 'choice' of not working weekends if that suited them! In other words, if a shop assistant has been relying on

weekend pay levels to feed their families or pay off a HECS fee, they would have the 'choice' of working for much less pay or not working at all!

The 'leader' of the SDA said that the new deal would only eventuate if workers agreed to it through an enterprise agreement and that it would only apply to 'small business'.

Why not big business like Coles and Woolworths?

Because the SDA has already agreed through enterprise agreements to cuts to shift and weekend rates that it now champions for the rest of the retail sector.

The timing of the announcement by the SDA about this despicable deal with Business SA could not have come at a worse time for the workers' movement as a whole, just as momentum builds for a sustained campaign to preserve and defend the very elements of workers' pay that the SDA and Business SA now intend to destroy.

SDA Leaders – Agents Of Big Business yet again

The servility of the SDA leaders to big business has a long history extending back at least to the 1950s when the SDA aligned itself with the reactionary, anti-communist National Civic Council and the Democratic Labor Party, ideologically and politically led by Bob Santamaria.

Tony Abbott, as a young Liberal Party activist, was mentored by Santamaria.

The SDA colluded with retail employers in the 1990s when Saturday morning rates of pay were reduced from time and one half to time and one

quarter, and employers were given the green light to roster workers' ordinary hours over six days of the week Monday to Saturday. It has been downhill from there.

The big retailers 'reward' the SDA by ensuring union membership remains high through the check-off system in employment packs and inductions.

Activism on the job in retail is not encouraged.

Unionism in retail is very much a fee for service, the service being a job on low pay with a few consumer discounts thrown in if you are a member.

When was the last time you heard of a strike in the retail industry over a collective agreement controlled by the

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military facilities with high tech military equipment, the establishment and maintenance of new bases and the hosting of US marines will all be paid for by the Australian people through our taxes. The objective is to deepen the integration and interoperability between US, Australia and Japan's military forces and foreign policies, with the US in command.

This is behind moves by the Australian government to award a lucrative contract to the Japanese to build Australia's next submarine fleet.

The people's movement for peace with justice, against foreign military bases and the threat of imperialist war is growing in many countries. From Jeju Islands in South Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Guam and New Zealand right through to Australia, broad opposition to the US war plans is spreading.

In Australia, the Independent and

SDA leaders and a big retailer?

We will never know if any subtle threats were made to the SDA leaders by big business if they did not give ground on shift rates or weekend rates.

Nor will we ever know what promises – like encouragement of union membership – were promised.

What collective experience for young workers?

However the real tragedy of this behaviour by the SDA leaders is deeper than the actual reduction in pay and transfer of wealth from wages to capital.

Retail and hospitality industries are for hundreds of thousands of young workers their first introduction to the world of work under capitalism.

In retail they see a barrage of media attacks that they are paid too much and driving businesses to ruin.

Then they read in the SDA magazine how lucky they are that SDA representatives have just negotiated away another part of their pay and conditions.

Is it any wonder that when these young workers move on to their preferred industry for a job they are reluctant to join a union?

What did they experience about unionism while working in retail?

Did they have the opportunity to engage in collective action to win something and share the win with co-workers?

Not likely. This is the real tragedy of deals done with the retail industry by the SDA leaders.

Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) has joined with others to hold rallies, public meetings and forums to demand the ending of the so-called US Alliance and the removal of US forces from our country.

These demands were echoed by former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (See page 4) and many academics and historians who could see the great risk to Australia by slavishly endorsing the US war plans.

The working class gains nothing from war, only death and misery. From the great struggles against conscription in the 1914 World War 1, through the waterside workers refusal in 1939 to load pig iron destined to Japan for its war preparations, to the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s, and refusing to transport and load uranium on ships, workers and unions have always been in the front lines struggling for a just and peaceful world.