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RED FLAG

RED FLAG is published by the Marxist Workers' Party of Australia in order to expose the nature of imperialism and modern revisionism that has destroyed the countries of the socialist world and helped restore capitalism there. Its first issue was in May 1983.

RED FLAG uses its pages to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Marxism in a period of the demise of imperialism and the eve of socialism.

RED FLAG promotes proletarian internationalism and supports the heroic struggles for national liberation from imperialist oppression. It endorses the campaigns for national independence and supports the fight for socialism wherever it is fought on every continent in the world.

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The following article was printed in one of the first Red Flags, over 25 years ago, and its content is as fresh and relevant today as it was then.

IS SOCIALISM RELEVANT TODAY? By Vida Little

Has capitalism resolved the problem of economic crisis, unemployment and war? Is capitalism a more just society than 70 years ago, when the founders of the Communist Party, of Australia wrote that it 'accepts the scientific theory that the capitalist system of production and distribution has outlived its usefulness and has become reactionary and destructive of humanity? Recognising this contradiction, The Party sets itself to abolish the system, to overthrow this class monopoly and abolish the private ownership of the means of production. Its aim is to establish a system of social ownership of the means of production, thereby making the ownership coincide with the social process of production". These views reflect the scientific analysis of capitalism made by the brilliant scientific and social thinkers, Marx and Engels. Views which history has confirmed without doubt.

ANTI-DÜHRING 1878

Frederick Engels, in Anti-Dühring 1878, in the chapter headed 'Theoretical made it clear", 'that in every society which has appeared in history, the distribution of the products and with it the division of society into classes or estates is determined by what is produced and how it is produced and how the product is exchanged."

"According to this conception, the ultimate cause of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in the minds of men". But in changes in the mode of production and exchange, they are to be sought in the economics of the epoch concerned.

Engels made the point that the mode of production of the rising capitalist class within feudalism was incompatible with the class relations that existed within feudalism. That the privileges and class relations which existed within feudalism were a fetter on the capitalist system of production, so the capitalist class 'shattered the feudal system and on its ruins established the bourgeois social order". This enabled capitalism to develop freely and an unprecedented growth in production and wealth took place.

Engels then goes on to point out that as technology of production developed within capitalism "it comes into conflict with the barriers within which the capitalist mode of production is confined. The new forces of production have already outgrown the bourgeois form of using them".

"Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this actual conflict, the ideal in the minds first of the class which is directly suffering under it, the working class".

SOCIAL MEANS OF PRODUCTION

As Engel says, the capitalist means of production are huge, unlike the small instruments used by individuals in feudalism to produce goods, and requires large numbers of workers in large factories to produce capitalist commodities, 'they are social means of production and can only be used by a body of men as a whole'. No individual can say of products produced within the huge enterprises of capitalism 'I made it, that is my product', in contrast to feudal society where the maker of the products owned the means of production and unquestionably owned the products produced.

Under capitalism, the system of production is social while the means of production are privately owned and the 'owner of the instruments of labour, the capitalist, appropriates the product produced by social labour, although it is not his product but exclusively the product of others labour.'

This contradiction is the basis of the antagonism between the working class and the capitalist class. It is the contradiction which gives rise to the crisis of over production of capitalism regularly and which is now a feature of capitalism, it is this contradiction which causes the struggle for markets and ultimately war.

IN A SOCIALIST SYSTEM

In the 75 years since the Communist Party of Australia was established capitalism has developed very impressive new techniques of production. Greater quantities of commodities can be produced in shorter time by fewer and fewer workers who are working longer hours.

In a socialist system, this would mean higher standards of living, cheaper commodities, shorter hours of work, better education for everyone, better health care, better housing and wider community access to the services and goods which make life more satisfying. It would mean no unemployment, crime would be almost unknown, and a planned economy would ensure that the wealth of society would be used without waste to the benefit of all. All forms of cultural activity would be accessible to all. It would mean greater advances in the development of the country as a whole, such as industrial development, better facilities and the wider use of scientific advances in agriculture, solving problems of drought, flood and other advances in the battle to control nature, better infrastructure and greater participation by all people in the fields of science, art, culture and administration. As Marx said, the development of the economy under socialism toward communism would end the division between mental and physical labour. It would mean the most democratic society yet experienced by mankind in which the exploitation of man by man would be abolished.

These advances were demonstrated in the Soviet Union until capitalism began to be reintroduced and in the People's Republic of China until capitalism was reintroduced. The introduction of capitalism in these socialist countries brought with it all the crisis and contradictions of a capitalist system in deadly decline.

That capitalism is incapable of handling the tremendously powerful and productive means of production is evident in the economic crisis of capitalism which gave rise to the First World War and the Second World War and which is now a feature of capitalism. Every advance in technology, instead of freeing working people from long hours of labour, increases the hours of labour for fewer workers.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH

In Australia today, many workers are working 12 hour shifts while the number of unemployed grow and stay unemployed for longer periods of time and the mass of the people living in poverty around the world reaches many millions. As Engels said, 'thus it comes about that the excessive labor of some becomes the necessary conditions for the lack of employment of others and that large scale industry which hunts all over the world for new consumers, restricts the consumption of the masses at home to a starvation minimum and thereby undermines its own internal market'. 'Accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore at the same time accumulation of misery, agony, toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality and mental degradation at the opposite pole.'

Economic rationalism is the theory of capitalism in deep crisis, at the end of its historical era. It calls for competition for overseas markets while in every country it is restricting the home market by reduced wages, increased exploitation, longer hours for fewer workers, unemployment and worsening conditions of labour. Such competition is really a competition between the giants of industry and agriculture to seize the monopoly of existing markets at the expense of other giants of industry and agriculture. Competition is sharper, more devastating and destructive, than ever before.

As Engels points out the capacity of industrial production grows much faster than the market, which is unable to absorb the increased amount of commodities thrown onto the market. Production under capitalism is anarchic, unlike the planned economy of socialist countries.

The contradictions of capitalist production and private appropriation of the products are much sharper today than in 1920. Since the end of the Second World War there have been constant wars for domination, for markets, for spheres of influence, and wars for liberation from oppression.

ECONOMIC RATIONALISM

Economic rationalism's 'deregulation', 'competition', 'best practice', 'market forces', privatisation of public utilities, lowering the value of labour power, intensify the contradictions of capitalism and sharpen the crisis. Economic rationalism is a theory produced by a system at the end of its tether and in deep uncontrollable crisis. We live in an era in which socialism is well and truly on the agenda. It depends on communist guidance.

As Engels said, "Thus on one hand the capitalist mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity any longer to control these productive forces, and on the other hand these productive forces themselves press forward with increasing force to put an end to the contradictions, to rid themselves of their character as capital, to actual recognition of their character as social productive forces."

"It therefore presupposes that the development of production has reached a level at which the appropriation of the means of production of and of products, and with these of political supremacy, the monopoly of education and leadership by a special class of society has become not only superfluous but also economically, politically and intellectually a hindrance to development."

These conclusions of Engels were further developed and consolidated by Lenin in his analysis of imperialism, an analysis confirmed with every action of imperialism, the World Bank and the IMF.

Engels wrote this material over 100 years ago, and the founders of the Australian Communist Party were guided by these scientific theories 75 years ago and they have stood the test of history.

A TRIBUTE TO THE WORKERS OF THE PAST

Great tribute must be paid to the founders of the Communist Party of Australia in their battle to introduce scientific theories to the working class. Socialism in practice in the Soviet Union, the first Socialist state was only three years old, suffering from the devastation of the First World War and the Wars of Intervention, and the greatest achievements of socialist society were yet to be revealed, but the conviction of the founders of the Communist Party and their determination and courage was unbounded and firmly based and their influence on the working class and other democratic sections of the community made a great impact on the direction of Australian politics and the lives of the Australian people.

The later development of other socialist countries further confirmed the truth of the great scientific thinkers, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse Tung.

CAPITALISTS REGARD HOUSING AS A PROFITABLE COMMODITY COMMUNISTS REGARD IT AS AN ESSENTIAL NEED

A few facts:

Census reveals a rise in the rate of homelessness in Australia.

'The rate of homelessness in Australia has increased 14 per cent over the last five years, according to new data from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. The latest estimates reveal more than 116,000 people were experiencing homelessness in Australia on Census night, representing 50 homeless persons for every 10,000 people. This means, no bed, no roof, no shelter. It means that 116,000 people cannot participate in society. Affordable housing is a right not a privilege

Numbers on public housing waiting lists across Australia vary, the estimate is 200,000. Time lines for housing them vary from one year to ten years depending on need and availability of properties.

- Home ownership is falling rapidly. Home ownership declined, from 68.6pc in 1991 to 65.5p in 2016.
- Fewer people own their home outright, with 34.5pc of owners still paying off a mortgage. Renting has risen from 26.9pc to 30.9pc of households.
- Investment in housing - number negatively gearing rose from 500,000 in 1994 to 1,257,301 in 2014.

How much should I spend on rent? The www.the-rent.com.au Rental Affordability Survey of more than 2,000 renters across Australia in April revealed that 53 per cent of tenants reported spending one-third to a half of their weekly income on rent. Rental stress occurs when a person pays more than a third of their income on rent. More worrying is that, according to the survey, 30 per cent of tenants are experiencing extreme rental stress by paying more than half of their weekly income on rent. Some tenants (23 per cent) said they had previously been late in paying rent due to financial strain. While there's no definite rule on how much to spend on rent, spending more than 30% of your income on rent indicates housing stress.

Capitalist priorities are not people's priorities, as indicated by the recommendation by Brendan Nelson to improve the Australian War Memorial, Canberra to the tune of \$500 million dollars Age 8th April. 2018. We can 'honour' the dead to the tune of half a billion dollars, the dead that gave their lives in a capitalist trade war, that killed millions, but we can't afford to assist the living, those who are unable to feed themselves or their families because they are living below the poverty line, and don't have a secure roof over their heads.

Housing Australia asks, 'How can we reduce poverty in Australia? Poverty is everyone's responsibility! Governments must be encouraged to implement policies and strategies that reduce social inequality. We must ensure that Australia's welfare system provides a sufficient income for every citizen. There also needs to be investment in housing. More than 250,000 Australians are sitting on public housing wait lists, so a sustained ongoing investment by the Government to provide for those not provided for in the housing market is required.'

This is a question that is constantly asked by NGO's whose work however altruistic props up capitalism, The real answer to the question how to reduce poverty in Australia is that poverty will never be resolved under capitalism, never has and never will.

In Victoria, there are over 35,000 on waiting lists for public housing according to government figures. This doesn't include those who simply haven't filled in the necessary forms, or have given up, or those who are homeless. Over 24,000 Victorians and 116,000 Australians are homeless on any given night (They include; families with children, young people, older people, single adults, people with disabilities, people in regional and rural Victoria and people in urban neighbourhoods. The right to secure, affordable, suitable housing should be the primary concern of any government that collects our taxes to provide essential services, but in fact public housing is way down on the list of both sides of government. Both governments have drastically cut funding to public housing, and the current policy, enthusiastically adopted by the States including Victoria, to sell off huge areas of public housing land and estates, will benefit wealthy developers who are salivating at the prospect of grabbing land in inner city, forcing tenants to relocate further and further out. Capitalism has consistently and clearly demonstrated its commitment to the rich and ask us to support the trickle down process which they claim will enrich us all. Only a socialist society will provide for the needs of the people, only a society that ends profiteering and creates wealth to suit the majority can achieve this.

FIGHT AGAINST THE TURNBULL GOVERNMENT ANTI-PEOPLE, ANTI-WORKER, ANTI-UNION LAWS.

Throughout Australia's history succeeding state and federal governments have introduced wide ranging anti-people, anti-worker and anti-union laws, acts and regulations.

1854 EUREKA STOCKADE

In November 1854, at a meeting of 4000 goldminers, it was resolved that the gold license fee was an imposition and an unjustifiable tax on free labourers.

This meeting pledged itself to abolish it at once by burning all their licenses.

This act of defiance by the Ballarat miners led to the Eureka Stockade and the winning of major gains.

1878 NED KELLY AN AUSTRALIAN HERO

1878, Witnessed the Victorian Government's declaration of war on the Kelly family with the 'Felons Apprehension Act' under which it becomes legal for civilians to shoot outlaws on sight, and for Kelly sympathisers to be arrested on suspicion alone.

The Kelly's had the support of the people at the time because they stood up against the wealthy squatters and the savage persecution against the working people of the north eastern districts of Victoria.

1931 WAGE CUTS BY THE SCULLIN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal Labor Prime Minister James Scullin, together with four state premiers, signed the notorious 'Premiers' Plan' which involved cuts to wages and a heavy reduction to pensions and social services.

The Premiers Plan was based on the principle that property comes before human life.

In fact Robert Menzies, who later became Australia's Prime Minister for over sixteen years, said "Rather than that Australia should fail to pay her honest debts to her bondholders, I would prefer to see every man, woman and child in Australia die of starvation in the next six months."

It must be remembered that Robert Gordon. Menzies is a hero of Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

1969 ABOLISH THE PENAL POWERS CAMPAIGN

The campaign calling for the abolition of the Australian Arbitration Commission's Penal Powers culminated with the arrest and jailing of Tramway Secretary Clarrie O'Shea on May 15th, 1969 for his refusal to pay anti-union fines under the penal provisions of the Arbitration Act.

O'Shea was released six days later following a nationwide campaign by a broad cross section of people.

Ever since its formation in 1904, the Australian Compulsory Arbitration system contained anti-union penal provisions.

The original legislation in 1904 banned strikes and provided for penalties of £2000 on the union and £20 on individuals. Onus of proof of innocence was on the party charged.

OTHER ANTI-PEOPLES LEGISLATION

Over the past fifty years the Australian people have been hit with a long list of legislation. Some of these include amendments to the Crimes Act, Essential Services legislation and the Trade Practices Act.

THE CURRENT ATTACKES ON WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS

Today, there is a concerted and sustained attack on trade union organisations and workers' rights, which in essence is also an attack on human rights.

For the first time the 'Industrial Relations Legislation' outlaws picketing. This legislation extends beyond the normal employer-employee relationship, beyond union solidarity actions, to ordinary civilians who may wish to demonstrate support in a particular dispute.

BREACH OF UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION CONVENTIONS (ILO)

The current spate of government legislation currently being used or being put in place to attack unions have been found by the ILO to repeatedly and unequivocally breach Australia's obligations as a member of state and as a signatory to specific conventions including:

1. The Freedom of Association and The Right to Organise Convention, 1947.
2. The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949, and the
3. Labour Inspection Convention.

AUSTRALIA IS A SIGNATORY TO ALL THESE CONVENTIONS. THEY ARE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.

At the present time the Turnbull Government has five more Bills before the federal parliament to add to its existing list of union busting legislation.

WHY ATTACKS ON THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE

The real purpose for the continued government legislation of anti-peoples laws and regulations is to try and prevent actions being taken to protect living standards and social conditions of working people and provide an intimidating

and political environment which will allow the bosses to maximise their rate of profit.

HISTORY OF WORKERS' STRUGGLE

The history of the peoples struggle clearly demonstrates that despite savage and restrictive government legislation it does not stop people from taking a militant part in actions that protect and improve their general standard of living.

Anti-government legislation and oppressive Acts can and have been defeated by united campaigns.

In the current situation it is essential that workers, unions and people in the community work collectively to defeat the Turnbull Government oppressive attacks on union and peoples organisations.

The cannibalism of capitalism and business interests is inherent in the capitalist system, this system must be overthrown and replaced by another social system – the system of socialism that will meet the needs and protect the interests of the world's people.

DEFEND WORKERS' RIGHTS!

DEMAND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE!

FIGHT AGAINST ATTACKS ON THE UNION MOVEMENT!

FIGHT ZIONISM - US IMPERIALISM AND ALL INVADERS OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

The latest atrocities by the Israeli Government in shooting down unarmed Palestinians protesting the destruction of their homeland and the takeover of it by Israel, is being opposed by everyone who supports justice both in Australia and around the world. These demonstrations must show their support for the Palestinian people because what is happening in their country is a deliberate and massive destruction of their land, land that Palestinians have lived in for 5000 years. A country which the British colonialists ceded to Zionism in May 1947 to suit their imperialist ends. This is how the dispossession of the Palestinian people began.

More than 50% of Palestinian people have been driven from their land as a result of British colonialism and Israeli Zionism, and have been forced to find refuge in other countries. Those remaining are forced to live on less than 15% of the original Land of Palestine and this area continue to diminish as a result of the deliberate policies of US imperialism in conjunction with Israeli Zionism.

Palestinian have consistently and with great courage fought an inspirational struggle against Zionist occupation, Zionist brutality and Zionist theft of Palestinian land, seven decades of that struggle and they have earned the support of freedom loving people across the world. Within Israel itself, a tide of revulsion is growing against US imperialism and Zionism.

Today, Palestinian men, women and children are being shot, killed, injured simply for demonstrating their demands for their own land and for opposing the provocative actions of the Trump Government to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, calling it the 'capital of Israel' when Jerusalem is and always will be the capital of Palestine.

The battle of Palestinians, for their land, for their right to a free and dignified life in their own land must be supported and will be won. The current demonstrations are planned to continue until 15th May, which is the date Palestinian call 'Return Day', the day when US imperialists, British Colonialism and others ensured that Zionism could begin the occupation of the Palestinian homeland.

An oppressed and dispossessed people have no alternative but to fight. Their fight is our fight, it is the fight of people all around the world facing oppression and poverty, and it must be the fight of everyone who believes in democracy, justice and human right.

The Palestinian people must be supported and will be supported until their land is returned to them.

US IMPERIALISM — PERPETUAL WAR

U.S. wars are based on lies and provocations.

Don't forget the lies of weapons of mass destruction used to overthrow Iraq leader Saddam Hussein.

Don't forget the lies about the 'Gulf of Tonkin' which were used as an excuse to invade Vietnam during the American war in Vietnam.

U.S. imperialism has set out to 'remodel' the Middle East in order to guarantee its control of the oil and other resources and the strategic value of the region.

It has overthrown the Government of Libya, it has overthrown the Government of Iraq, it is helping make war against Yemen, it has threatened to overthrow the Government of Iran and it is supporting the Zionist rulers of Israel who are slaughtering Palestinian people in cold blooded murder in their own land of Palestine to ensure the further expansionist ambitions of the Zionist leadership of Israel are realised.

Currently the U.S. is continuing its aggression in Afghanistan and is preparing to go to war with Syria and the Russian Government, to help its ambition of controlling the Middle East.

To prepare the ground for its aggression against Syria it is claiming that al-Assad and the Russians are gassing the people of Syria without any evidence produced and any investigation of the facts.

Where did the information alleging the gas attack by the Syrian Government come from - from the terrorist groups and other pro U.S. forces that the U.S. has been supporting in Syria to overthrow the Syrian Government.

These new lies cannot be allowed to fuel yet another war of aggression.

HANDS OFF SYRIA!

**THE SYRIAN PEOPLE SHOULD DECIDE WHO GOVERNS SYRIA,
NOT THE U.S., FRANCE, BRITAIN, ETC.**

END ALL AID TO ZIONISM!

**SUPPORT FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE
FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!**

