

RED FIRE

ISSUE #4

\$2

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!



Above: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro along with supporters. Photo from www.upsidedownworld.org

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE ELECTORAL SETBACK IN VENEZUELA

BY STANSFIELD SMITH

The most important lesson for solidarity activists and opponents of the US Empire is the crucial role of our international solidarity in defending Third World countries under threat. The constant corporate media disinformation war on target countries such as Venezuela is as much a weapon of aggression and a tool for regime change as missiles and bombers. This disinformation propaganda

against the Chavistas – e.g., dictatorship, drug running, political prisoners, police violence – is not simply widely echoed and often believed inside Venezuela. This media war is also directed at us, the US people, against our broad anti-war sentiment. Some of us may mistakenly feel like we are ants up against the elephant of the US Empire, but the corporate rulers understand its media must confuse

us about Venezuela. It must sow disenchantment with Venezuela, make us question our support for the Bolivarian government and process.

If the Empire can make us feel that Venezuela, or any other US target, is not worth our active defense, then they have already won much of the war. The Empire is aware it faces major obstacles if it cannot neutralize domestic opposition to its interventionist plans. It learned this lesson in Vietnam, then again in the 1980s Central American interventions, and again in the 2003 war on Iraq.



Above: The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela launched a series of “missions” to benefit the majority of Venezuelans, who otherwise have no means to provide for themselves. “Mission Robinson” taught over 2 million Venezuelans basic literacy skills. Pictured are some graduates of this program. Photo from www.avn.info.ve

A second lesson is that socialism cannot be built using the state inherited in an election, seeking to grow it over into a socialist state. Socialism was built in Russia, China, Cuba, for instance, after the old state was destroyed and a new one constructed, representing the working people. And then, socialist nationalizations of large capitalist enterprises and large landholdings occurred only in response to sabotage and counterrevolutionary actions by their foreign and domestic owners.

Chavez did recognize that to fulfill the goals of the Bolivarian process the old constitution must be scrapped and a new one created, which more fully represented the people. He sought to build local community councils and regional communes to replace the old state structures still in place. He also saw the need to build peoples cooperatives to produce goods and to take control of distributing essential products in order to counter the oligarchy’s economic control. Similarly Chavez recognized the need to build a new people’s police force to replace the one they inherited. However, all these projects remained only partially realized. These new cooperative-communal economic and governmental powers the Chavistas initiated can only be realized through an active and continuous struggle of the people to replace the inherited economic and government system run in the interests of the ruling capitalist elite.

The old bourgeois state’s continued existence, along with all the old personnel, is no foundation to build a new socialist society on, but an obstacle that must be removed to advance.

A third lesson is that 21st century socialism cannot be counterposed to what those like Michael Lebowitz and Marta Harnecker call the “state socialism” of the 20th century. Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador are not socialist countries, but anti-neoliberal capitalist countries with anti-imperialist governments. They cannot be pointed to as new, more democratic models of socialism. It is no democracy, no socialism, when the native oligarchy retains decisive power to disrupt the nation’s economic life. It is no democracy when the US and Venezuela oligarchies can manipulate the election through an economic and media war and so pressure the people to vote in a pro-US, neo-colonial, neoliberal National Assembly that does not represent their interests. It is no democracy when the Venezuelan rightwing is allowed the legal space to organize to overthrow the democratic and humanitarian gains made by the Venezuelan people, and return the country to complete oligarchic control, by use of brutal force, death squads and torture if need be.

21st century Venezuela socialism, claimed by Harnecker, Lebowitz and others to be superior to the 20th century version, ironically suffers from

some of the same problems that plagued the Soviet Union: a government disconnected from the people, inattention to moral-political-socialist education, a bureaucracy administering the state that provides few solutions to increasing economic war. These problems were generated in part by relying on the old state structures and personnel to move the country towards socialism.

The Venezuela's elections, 20 in just 17 years, are both an example of democracy and its opposite. They can serve to undermine popular control. The PSUV has felt the need to postpone necessary economic measures in order to win the next election. These bourgeois elections offer a tool for US interference, and on December 6 the US effectively played the electorate and seized a victory for the right wing. Cuba's electoral system, where no parties participate, and where the people not only vote on candidates to represent them, but actually nominate them from their own neighborhoods and workplaces, and where expensive campaign marketing is not permitted, leaves the US scant room for manipulation.

In spite of the recent setback, the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela remains the largest party in the country, the people remain loyal to the goals of Hugo Chavez. The Bolivarian process has brought countless benefits to the people of Venezuela. The people are not defeated or demoralized, and remain organized in their popular structures, ready to fight to defend their gains won during the Chavista era.

We, US opponents of the Empire, have not made good use of Bolivarian Venezuela's example. For instance, Venezuela has been in the vanguard banning the use of GMOs. Venezuela has sent several shipments of aid to the Palestinian victims of the US-Israeli war and has provided homes and scholarships to those bearing the brunt of this brutality.

While enduring the US economic war, Venezuela has still provided a million homes to people in need in that country, while we in the US face the outrageous situation of having 6 vacant homes for every homeless person.

Extreme poverty in Venezuela fell from 16.6% of the population in 1998 to 5.4% by 2015.

In the US, since Bill Clinton's welfare cuts, those living on less than \$2 a day has doubled, to 1.5 million.

Venezuela provides free health care, adult and university education to all, unlike in the richest country in the world, where the US government prefers to spend over half the budget on its war machine.

Venezuela is an example, like Cuba, Ecuador and Bolivia, that we can use in our own social movements to explain that a new world is possible, and is already being built. To defend Venezuela is to defend our own struggles, and to defend Venezuela is to oppose the same enemy we face at home.

Stansfield Smith, Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee, recently returned from a SOA Watch, Task Force on the Americas delegation to Venezuela. This article first appeared on January 6, 2016 at www.counterpunch.org

RED FIRE is the publication of the Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG).

Capitalism generates numerous crises – war, poverty, racism, environmental desecration, to name a few. Socialism has the potential to end such crises and open the way to a truly human society.

The MLG seeks to build a party which can serve as a basis to propel forward the struggle for socialism. For those who agree that the cause of the working class is essential to the movement for a better world, we urge you to apply to join us.

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NO TO CASHLESS WELFARE!

FOR A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL CITIZENS!



Left: The basics card, a similar card to that to be used for the proposed “trial” of cashless welfare cards for those on unemployment benefits, the disability support pension and some other payments. Any attempt to control the spending of welfare benefits by governments represents yet another affront to the dignity of those who are unable to work. The current benefits are in any case well below any reasonable poverty line, and those on them live in an ongoing precarious state.

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Marxist-Leninist Group at a national day of action against cashless welfare called by the Australian Unemployment Union.

21-11-2015 – In yet another attack of the living standards and dignity of those reliant on welfare benefits, the Federal Government is planning to introduce “trials” of a “cashless welfare debit card”. Such a card will contain up to 80% of a person’s welfare payments, which can be used only for prescribed items, and only at prescribed stores. The government’s stated intention is to prevent welfare recipients spending on alcohol and drugs, and guide them towards consuming “basics” such as food. Far from it. This is yet another assault on the most vulnerable people, who deserve the most amounts of assistance and protection, instead of being blamed for the economic and political failure of a system designed to enrich the elite at the expense of the overwhelming majority.

Despite Australia having one of the highest *per capita* incomes, unemployment benefits are notoriously low, at around \$167 **below** the recognised poverty line.¹ In economic circumstances where housing is extremely expensive even for those with full time work, and where the cost of living continues to climb, it is amazing that those on welfare can sustain

themselves. The fact that the cashless welfare card is the brainchild of billionaire mining magnate Andrew “Twiggy” Forest,² shows just how craven to big business the Liberal and Labor parties have become while attempting to administer the for profit system. While the Greens have criticised the cashless welfare card, it was the Greens who helped pass cuts to the aged pension, and they were partners with the ALP when it drastically cut the single parent payment, driving mostly single mothers further into poverty.

The Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG) applauds the work of the Australian Unemployment Union (AUU) in organising today’s national rallies against cashless welfare and further cuts to welfare benefits. The MLG pledges to work alongside the AUU in all campaigns to protect and extend the rights and entitlements of those who for whatever reason cannot work, as well as those who are without work due to the economic recession, now into its seventh year. We maintain, however, that groups such as the AUU should not be left to fight alone. In particular, the AUU and its work should have the full organisational and political backing of the entire Trade Union movement, from the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to the respective state based Union peak bodies, to the Trade Unions themselves. It is in the direct interests of the Union movement to *actually fight* against unemployment

¹ http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/01/16/dole-around-the-world-how-does-australia-stack-up/?wpmp_switcher=mobile

² <http://theaimn.com/cashless-welfare-card-an-insult-to-all-australians/>

and to fight for a living wage for those unable to work. For unemployment is the key whip which the capitalist class holds against the workers, constantly threatening them with the sack if they do not accept whatever harsh or unsafe working conditions they supply. The potential of losing one's income in economic circumstances where jobs are difficult to find, is a huge barrier both to workers joining Unions and also encouraging them to organise on the job. In the main, it is this type of workplace organisation, officially backed by the Union leaderships, which can assist in ensuring livable wages and decent working conditions. A strengthened Union movement should then also be in a position to take up the cause of ensuring decent welfare and living conditions for those unable to work. In this scenario, it is much more difficult for employers to keep winning what has been a one-sided class war for the last thirty-five years in this country.

Yet, here lies the rub. With a few exceptions, pro-capitalist Union bureaucrats around Australia have actively collaborated with the employers at the expense of their own members, to ensure the profitability of the big business class. Three examples will illustrate this. In Queensland in 2012, the Liberal National Party moved to sack 20 000 public servants, the largest attack on the right to work in Queensland history. The Together (formerly QPSU) Union leadership, in response, did not call for, or organise, **one minute** of industrial action! In South Australia, the SDA (Shop, Distributive and Allied Services Union) leadership **agreed** to a plan with Business SA to abolish Saturday penalty rates and halve Sunday penalty rates! Further, recently waterfront workers at Hutchison Ports in Sydney and Brisbane were sacked by text message and email overnight, in a planned move towards both de-Unionising and automating their workforce. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) leadership did move straight into action in setting up picket lines. However, they also set about undermining this action by pushing the dispute into the courts, when what was needed was a fight for the right not to be terminated. In the end, the MUA leadership obtained "**voluntary**" **separation packages** for its members, and claimed this was a win because they hadn't been sacked! Combine these dire sell-outs with the fact that the Union movement has not seriously campaigned against unemployment for

decades, and we can see the effect this has on the rights of those who need welfare benefits to survive. If organised workers can be pushed around by employers, in cahoots with unscrupulous Union officials, unemployed workers and those on welfare can and will be open prey for pro-corporate governments.



Photo by www.demotix.com

While the MLG will contribute to whatever current campaigns for the rights of unemployed and welfare recipients ensue, we have no illusions in any capitalist state, especially "our own". Currently, Australia, the US, Europe and Japan are all devastated by the ongoing recession, which shows little or no sign of abating. Contrast this with China, whose powerhouse socialist economy is still producing economic growth despite the dim conditions elsewhere. Similarly, permanent rights to a job, a house, healthcare, education and culture can only be secured with the overthrow of capitalism via the seizure of state power by the working class, and the founding of a socialist republic. In such conditions, unemployment will be avoided at all costs, as all available hands will be needed to build a socialist economy so as to ease the workload of all, and allow time to pursue arts, science, music, sport or whatever workers' personality is suited to. Also, those unable to work through disability or illness will be relatively easily catered for, and will be seen as equal partners in the socialist project. In the meantime, it is necessary to mobilise workers and Unions to demand decent treatment of those without work or unable to work. **No to cashless welfare! For a living wage for all citizens!**

CHANGE THE NAME! CHANGE THE DATE!

TREATIES NOT “RECOGNISE”!



Above: Brisbane Invasion Day protest, January 29 2016. Photo by Amy Mitchell-Whittington from www.brisbanetimes.com.au

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG) at the Invasion Day protest in Brisbane.

26-01-16 – As we surge deeper into the 21st Century, the Australian political establishment has not yet dealt with its 18th Century history – the founding of white Australia by the invading British colonialists and the resulting genocidal war against the Aboriginal people. This war lasted 150 years and formed the basis of “Australia” as we know it today. The exact numbers of Aboriginal people who perished in this war as well as from the deadly impacts of colonisation are not known, but some estimates are as high as one million. January 26, 1788, and the landing of the first colonialists in what is now New South Wales, was essentially the first shot fired in a horrific slaughter which scarcely speaks its name. Yet January 26 is the day which the Australian capitalist class marks as “Australia Day”. Australia is one of the only countries in the world to have its national day marking a hostile invasion. Zionist Israel is another.

It is miraculous that some Aboriginal people survived, and continued to survive to this day. From children stolen by government forces, to being expelled from ancestral lands, to being herded into missions, to being unjustly incarcerated, to deaths in custody, the abuses from Australia’s rulers have continued, almost unabated. The theft and removal of Aboriginal children from their families was government policy for 60 years.³ Between 1990 and 2008, an average of 14 Aboriginal people died in custody **each year**.⁴ Despite every injustice imaginable being perpetrated against the oldest living culture on earth, the Australian rulers insist that the day which marked the start of all of the injustices be marked, even celebrated, as the national day. This grotesque practice cannot be anymore insulting to the Aboriginal people, and to

³ <http://www.australianstogether.org.au/stories/detail/the-stolen-generations> (09-01-22016)

⁴ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Deaths%20in%20custody~73>

all those with a shred of humanity. Working people should join with Aboriginal people in placing the simple demand that, at the very least, “Australia Day” must be moved to another day – any of the other 364 days of the year would suffice.



Above: Symbol of the Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy. Image from www.brisbaneblacks.com

In 2008, former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered an “apology” to the stolen generations. At the time it united many indigenous people and their supporters. Now, many have turned against it, as it became obvious that in essence it was lip service with nothing material behind it. In fact, Rudd went on immediately to continue the former Howard government’s military intervention in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities, rule out any form of compensation, and refuse to countenance moving Australia’s national day from January 26. In a similar way, the “Recognise” campaign – a move to recognise Aboriginal people within Australia’s national constitution – appears to be another attempt to forever sideline the movement for basic rights to somehow offset the oppression of Australia’s traditional owners. The Recognise campaign has been tasked to Reconciliation Australia – a body with an even handed sounding name, but with sinister backers. Its website proudly announces that its “supporters” include: the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (!), and corporate vandals such as BHP Biliton, Lend Lease, QANTAS, Rio Tinto, Woodside and the

Commonwealth Bank.⁵ With backers such as these, a who’s who of the capitalist elite, Reconciliation Australia is hardly going to break any establishment norms. With the appalling disparity in life outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous people in this country, be it in health, education or employment, “Constitutional Recognition” will do little but justify continued inaction on an intolerable situation. As renowned Aboriginal rights advocate Chris Graham wrote: “Constitutional Recognition is a poor man’s treaty. It is another national apology, without compensation.”⁶

Ironically, perhaps the only way to properly “recognise” Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants and custodians of the land is with the concluding of a national treaty, or a series of treaties. The act of concluding such treaties places the current Australian government, the modern day representative of the colonial power which established it, in the position of acknowledging that what we now know as Australia could not have been founded without the violent dispossession of the original owners. It is not automatic, but it would establish a precedent which would go far beyond the Mabo and Wik High Court decisions.

The Aboriginal people themselves, despite their often heroic political resistance which is demonstrated around the country, will be hard pressed to win such a demand on their own. The indigenous people must be joined by the organised Australian working class, the body which, if sufficiently organised and politically led, has the power to lend significant weight to all battles against the millionaire class. The Trade Unions have the resources, and the interest, to assist the Aboriginal people win their liberation as part of the struggle in leading workers against the onslaught of capital. On occasion in the past, some Unions have assisted the Aboriginal struggle. For example, it was marching Unionists in August 1996 which came to the aid of Aboriginal fellow demonstrators marching on the Federal Parliament. It was the MUA which primarily came to the defence of Palm Island hero Lex Wotton, who was charged with “riot” for justifiably rising up against yet another black death in custody. Yet these instances have been few and far between, not least due to the

⁵ <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/> (13-01-2016)

⁶ <http://chrisgrahamatlarge.com/2013/04/01/a-poor-mans-treaty-the-con-in-constitutional-reform/> (13-01-2016)

conservative and self-serving Union officials which preside over almost all Unions today.



Above: The continual denial of Aboriginal sovereignty by the Australian government has led to some groups such as the Aboriginal Provisional Government issuing their own Aboriginal passports. A delegation of Aboriginal activists was denied entry into Canada with such passports in August 2015. Photo from www.intercontinentalcry.org

While workers should give scant regard to the constitution of a capitalist state with regard to indigenous peoples (e.g. Australia), it is another story entirely when it comes to the constitution of socialist state. Indeed, socialist states in our region accord equal status and even special support for the maintenance and development of the culture of indigenous peoples, regardless of how small their numbers may be. For example, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam recognises 53 indigenous peoples within Vietnam, and its constitution states that all indigenous peoples (referred to as “ethnicities”) have the right to speak and write in their language, and to promote their culture.⁷ The People’s Republic of China unites 55 indigenous peoples outside the majority Han people. Under its constitution, all minority nationalities are entitled to appropriate representation on the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, the

⁷ <http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/250222/the-constitution-of-the-socialist-republic-of-viet-nam.html> (16-01-2016)

highest organ of state power in the world’s most populous nation.⁸ The recognition and promotion of indigenous peoples and cultures in these cases has only been possible out of the waging of a successful workers’ revolution which has established a socialist republic. A socialist republic – the collective rule of the working class – has no material interest in the suppression of indigenous peoples. In fact, they are needed as equal partners. Not so for Australian capitalism, which has been built and maintained via the continual denial of their prior custodianship of the land. The oppression of the indigenous peoples can thus be finally ended by the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of indigenous/non-indigenous workers’ power.

TREATIES NOT “RECOGNISE”! FOR A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF AUSTRALIA!



Above: The “Recognise” campaign, which aims to hold a referendum to recognise the Aboriginal people in Australia’s constitution has been rejected by many Aboriginal groups around Australia. They point out that even if such constitutional recognition occurred, sovereignty for the Aboriginal people would still be denied, and the enormous disparity with non-indigenous people in employment, education and health outcomes would continue. Image from www.nationalunitygovernment.org

⁸ http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372965.htm (16-01-2016)

RESIST THE DRIFT TOWARDS FASCISM!

COUNTER NATIONALISM WITH INTERNATIONALISM!



Above: Fascist Party for Freedom members at the Sydney November 22 rally organised by Reclaim Australia. Prominent is their demand for “No Sharia Law”, which is partially a distorted reflection of the Western imperialist war being waged with proxy jihadist forces against the sovereign Syrian Arab Republic. Photo from www.theguardian.com

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG) at counter-demonstrations against “Reclaim Australia” on November 22, 2015.

22-11-2015 – For the third time this year, ultra-nationalists and fascists have once again organised national mobilisations, most of them in public city squares. With actual Nazis at the core of the organising, the Reclaim Australia crew with its United Patriots Front split off (RA/UPF) are of the view that they are onto a winner with their formula of hatred, ostensibly directed at anyone associated with the Islamic religion, but also with what they regard as “communism”. While RA/UPF have not

yet become accepted into the political mainstream, this is yet a danger, with the founding of the Australian Liberty Alliance (ALA). Geert Wilders, the Dutch fascist known for his extreme anti-Islamic views, recently visited Perth to help launch the ALA. The “Slackbastard” anti-fascist online blog describes the ALA as “Islamophobia for the (upper) middle class”, given that one of the founders is a millionaire surgeon, along with his partner who heads the Q Society. The Q Society appears to be an attempt to give a cultural spin to anti-Islamic vitriol.

The at times inarticulate and ludicrous claims of RA/UPF, such as the claim that Australia is in danger of implementing Sharia Law, often leads to RA/UPF attracting and mobilising layers of the most

politically backward, the most politically disenfranchised and the most disadvantaged. However, their ultra-nationalism also allows them to draw in small sections of disillusioned workers, and unfortunately some Union members. These workers and some Union members see no one standing up for “Australians”, feel betrayed by all politicians participating in or profiting from the breakdown of the economy while the banks reel in billions of dollars, which relentlessly drives up the cost of living. Along comes the RA/UPF waving the Australian flag, blaming “Islam” for everything under the sun, and everything (for them) falls into place.

Below: A familiar broadcasted photo of an ISIS beheading. Although such images may well be fake, other beheadings and other atrocities have been carried out by all wings of ISIS and other jihadist mercenaries in Iraq and Syria. Fascist groups such as Reclaim Australia ignore Western backing for the mercenaries, blaming it all on “Islam”. Unfortunately, some left parties also deny the extent of US/Saudi/Turkish/Israeli backing for the jihadists, and laud them as “revolutionaries”. Hence Reclaim Australia concludes that the “left” backs murderous fanatic barbarians. In fact, others on the left have steadfastly defended Syria from imperialist assault, and have never extended support to jihadists. Photo from the 4th Media



Despite the irrationality of RA/UPF, there is unfortunately a material reason why such an incipient fascist movement sprung into existence at this particular time. Along with the general breakdown of the capitalist economy, which has been in recession since 2008, 2014 saw the widespread exposure of the role of ISIS (the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), and its promotion by the Western corporate media. The grotesque brutality of beheadings filmed and posted on social media by ISIS, is part of what caused automatic revulsion across the world. Yet this is exactly what it was meant to do. ISIS is almost entirely a creation of the US led war on Syria, and to a large extent is armed, funded and trained by the US and its allies, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and coordinated with Israel and Turkey. Their aim is the overthrow of Syria in the manner of Libya, which may then soften the ground for an assault against Iran. Russia and China remain the biggest targets of the crazed US imperialists. But the beheadings of ISIS were used by the US and their allies to rally their domestic populations behind yet another war, where the blame could be placed squarely on “Islam”. If “Islam” is founding a “state” and waging a brutal war to establish a “state” which could expand across previously recognised borders, then surely “we” have to go to war against it.

Such a ruse worked for the US for a short period of time. In recent months, however, the game has changed with the intervention of Russia militarily supporting the Syrian government, by actually taking out ISIS targets. It was a tactical masterstroke, as President Vladimir Putin called for an international coalition, like the coalition against Hitler and the Nazis, to defeat ISIS. The US could not then intervene to save its creation ISIS, without totally exposing itself. For now, Russia and their allies Syria, Iran and Hezbollah have struck damaging blows against US imperialism and its plans. One wonders what the Australian troops currently in Iraq and Syria are actually doing. As pro-US as their leadership may be, they would hardly dare take on the might of Russia.

The political mistake of RA/UPF, apart from their disposition towards fascism, is that they appear not

recognise the extent to which ISIS was a creation of the US state, along with the UK and France and backed by Canberra. For RA/UPF, ISIS was ISIS because they were “Islamic”. Hence, in their minds “Islam” is the enemy which needs to be vanquished. However, there was an echo on the left of the non-recognition of the US state’s role in the creation of ISIS. Some left parties, fresh from their backing of Al-Qaeda linked groups in Libya under the guise of opposing Colonel Gaddafi as a “dictator”, shifted to back some of the same groups in Syria, again under the guise of opposing President Assad as a “dictator”. More than this, they hailed the NATO armed and funded jihadists fighting to overthrow Libya and Syria as “revolutionaries”. That is, they bestowed on barbaric mercenaries the highest honour and title that the left awards. Whether they realise their role in justifying yet another US led war on sovereign countries is immaterial. The fact is, in a small way, such left parties have both done the bidding of the imperialists they claim to oppose, while also contributing to the emergence of RA/UPF, against which they now have to organise counter-rallies.

Below: Satirical take on the logo of “Reclaim Australia”. Like most far-right groups, they attempt to deny their racist positions. Image from www.slackbastard.anarchobase.com



For example, take this statement from the Socialist Alliance (SAll), the publishers of the newspaper *Green Left Weekly*, dated June 19, 2014. Ostensibly released in opposition to the suggestion of Australia sending troops to Iraq to counter ISIS, SA comes behind an “uprising” against the then Iraqi President Nuri Al-Maliki, ***even if such an “uprising” includes ISIS***. It states:

“..... ISIL [or ISIS] is only one element in a broader Sunni tribal rebellion against the brutal repression and discrimination inflicted on the local population in Iraq's north by the US-backed Maliki regime in Baghdad. Horrific images of what appear to be mass extra-judicial killings by the Sunni insurgents must be seen in the context of the Maliki regime's repression that preceded it.”⁹

It's there in black and white. SAll has few qualms in backing ISIS, seeing them as only one part of a “Sunni tribal rebellion” against the then Iraqi President Maliki, who was in fact at that point *losing* US support, rather than being “US backed”, for moving too close to US foe Iran. US pressure did in fact force Maliki to step down, aided in a small part by SAll. But the clincher is the part where SAll asks us to see “mass extra-judicial killings”, i.e. beheadings by “insurgents” of which ISIS form a part, “in the context” of a legitimate uprising. If we should back an “uprising” by Sunni fundamentalists which includes ISIS in Iraq, it's a small step to back an “uprising” by Sunni fundamentalists which includes ISIS in Syria. Although SAll of course has no written position backing ISIS, the fact is they advocate and share the same aims of ISIS – “regime change” in the secular Syrian Arab Republic.

The left group Socialist Alternative (SAIt) has been the most vocal in opposing the “Assad regime”, while continuing to deny that the US aim in the war is regime change. They have also repeatedly denied the extent of material US support for all mercenary groups in Syria, referring to them as “rebels” and the “opposition”. An article in SAIt's newspaper *Red Flag* in June this year states:

⁹ <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/news/socialist-alliance-no-more-military-intervention-iraq> (08-11-2015)

“The new flow of arms to the rebels [i.e. from Saudi Arabia and Turkey], and the dramatic shift that has resulted on the battlefield, in fact gives the lie to the claim that the opposition have been armed by outside powers all along. If they had been, Assad would be long gone. What we are now seeing is what happens when both sides of the conflict have substantial outside backing: the rebels make stunning gains, and the regime is isolated and faces growing dissent among its own supporters.”¹⁰



Above: Socialist Alternative banner at counter-rally against Reclaim Australia rally. By focusing on the defence of Muslims, instead of the right of all to observe whichever religion they choose, the impression can be that the left defends Islam, or even Islamic fundamentalism. By doing this, Socialist Alternative seek to absolve themselves of blame for effectively promoting a US imperialist war for regime change in Syria. In this conflict, Socialist Alternative themselves have no qualms about political support for Islamic fundamentalist forces, which in the case of Syria means a swathe of Western armed jihadists. All “opposition” groups in Syria are armed and funded by the US or its allies such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar, Bahrain, as well as France and the UK. Photo from www.brisbanetimes.com.au

As referred to previously, the balance of power has since decisively shifted against the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and their proxy “rebel” mercenaries, with the intervention of the Russian military. Yet SAlt has been steadfast in their demands for military support for the Syrian “opposition”, regardless of whether they carry out beheadings, or mass “scorched earth” practices against Syrian civilians, as long as they oppose the “Assad regime”. This is blatant backing of US imperialism. In fact, SAlt had been previously known for flying a banner emblazoned with “Smash US Imperialism” in oversized letters. Needless to say, this banner has not been seen in SAlt contingents for the duration of this war.

It is an open secret that the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel have either armed, funded, trained or actively supported ALL terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria.¹¹ Ground breaking US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh also exposed the “rat line” of US backed weapons flowing from Libyan mercenaries to Syrian mercenaries, as well as the staged chemical attack on the town of Ghouta on August 21, 2013.¹² But for left parties such as SA and SAlt, none of this is occurring. What is occurring, according to them, is a mass popular revolutionary movement in Syria. Not even the US ruling class believes this – they had to import the mercenaries, 80% of whom originate from 83 different non-Syrian countries.¹³

Thus, the appearance of the “left” openly backing “Islamic” military groups in Syria has fuelled the formation of RA/UPF. In fact, other left parties, and solidarity groups such as Hands Off Syria, have steadfastly defended Syria against US/Israeli/Saudi/Turkish assault, and have extended no political support to any Wahabist, Salafist or other branches of fundamentalist Islam. Syria today is in fact secular and multi-religious, and moreover,

¹¹ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-isis-islamic-terrorists-are-supported-by-the-us-israel-and-saudi-arabia/5396171> (08-11-2015)

¹² <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n08/seymour-m-hersh/the-red-line-and-the-rat-line> (08-11-2015)

¹³ <http://tass.ru/en/world/757410> (08-11-2015)

¹⁰ <https://redflag.org.au/node/4673> (08-11-2015)

independent of the US dominated world order. This is a major reason why it has been targeted.

It is true that the formation of RA/UPF can't be reduced entirely to the war on Syria. It is also a response to the years, indeed decades, of assault on the living conditions of working people. This crucial factor was already in abundance before the US led war on Syria broke out. Yet, it is apparent that the As repulsive as the virulent racism and vitriolic hatred which spews forth from RA/UPF is, it cannot be reduced to a lack of reasoning or rational thought on their behalf - though for this there is much evidence. Ultra-nationalism, and its attendant fascism, is a distorted expression of capitalism - private production for private profit - in rapid decay, *combined with* the distinct lack of a strong left wing political leadership. The fantastic and lurid claims of RA/UPF, such as that Australia is at risk of implementing Sharia Law, have emerged in no small part due to the lack of a left-wing class struggle movement, not to speak of the lack of an effective trade union movement AND the lack of an effective socialist party. The mainstream political parties have long abandoned workers, and trade union leaders have invariably done the same. Into this political vacuum steps "Reclaim Australia".

Therefore, the tasks to defeat the scourge of RA/UPF led fascism are threefold. Firstly, any attempted mobilisation of a racist/fascist/ultra-nationalist character must be met by a loud and determined united-front counter mobilisation of all progressive political shades in society. While anti-fascist mobilisations should aim to draw in those from a social-democratic background, the political action and outlook must not be subordinated to liberal opposition. The aim should be to confront and, if possible, remove, all fascist groups from all public space. The presence of fascists publicly organising poses a physical threat to workers, migrants, Muslims, people of colour, leftists, Trade Unionists, gays and lesbians and others. The recent example of Greece, where migrants and anti-fascists have been beaten by gangs of Golden Dawn thugs is a stark reminder. This is why they cannot be ignored with the hope that they will disappear.

current multi-theatre wars (Syria, Ukraine) are also a result of the paralysing economic crisis capitalism finds itself in, and is a major driving factor. After all, all attempts at restarting production in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia have essentially failed. As crazy as it seems to working people, the imperialists are willing to go to war to address falling rates of profit.

Secondly, workers must seek to mobilise Unions in opposition to the rise of fascism. Unions are likely to be the first target of a victorious fascist movement, as was the case in Nazi Germany. It is not just for the moral issue - Unions will not even be able to defend themselves as organisations if they do not contribute to the defeat of fascism. Indeed, politically active Unions will be crucial for this battle. An obstacle that will be encountered is the overt nationalism of most Union leaders and officials. Their material interests lead them to defend "Australia" - by which they mean their own overpaid positions. Workers and supporters of Unions can position such officials, however, to drag them into the struggle against the far-right.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, workers and leftists need to counter the ultra-nationalism of the fascists by using international solidarity with the workers and the oppressed of the world, in a concrete way by opposing the very real imperialism of the Australian ruling class, which ties itself by a thousand threads to US imperialism. This means using all means necessary to oppose US/AUS led wars, in Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere. This will then also undermine imperialist armed proxy forces such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, and thus undermine the basis for the wild Islamophobia of the ultra-nationalists. To permanently defeat fascism, workers will need to carry out their historic task of overthrowing the rule of capital by establishing a socialist republic comprised of workers' councils, politically led by those most committed to our class. ***For workers' victory over fascism!***

FOLLOW THE LEAD OF RED CHINA!

FOR THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY!



Above: The remains of a burnt out car from the Christmas Day Bushfires in 2015 which swept through the Wye River community in coastal Victoria, along the iconic Great Ocean Road. Many homes were destroyed, in yet another example of extreme conditions linked to increasing temperatures as part of global warming. Photo from www.staitstimes.com

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Marxist-Leninist Group at the "People's Climate March" on November 28, 2015.

28-11-2015 – As the world careens towards climate catastrophe, world leaders are meeting in Paris for the COP21 talks, ostensibly to thrash out a plan to curb global carbon emission levels far enough to ensure a safe climate. Today's rallies around the country have set themselves the goal of being the biggest ever. Perhaps they will be. Even if they are, it would be folly to expect the leaders of the world's most powerful capitalist economies to be

committed to anything other than amassing yet more private profits for the world's most powerful corporations, many of which make huge profits from selling fossil fuels.

There is an exception to the rule, however. The People's Republic of China (PRC), the world's largest country and most powerful socialist state, is making the most genuine attempt to seriously reduce carbon emissions. Of the countries which have submitted a target to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), China's are by far the most ambitious.

China has pledged to reduce carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 60-65% below 2005 levels.¹⁴ In addition, China has also pledged to peak emissions by 2030, and aim to achieve this even earlier. Further, China will aim to achieve 20% of its energy share clean (zero carbon sources) by 2030, as well as increase forest cover in the country by 4.5 billion cubic meters compared to 2005 levels.¹⁵ Australia and the US have made no such moves.



Above: Photo of construction being carried out for the Taishan nuclear power plant in the southern Guangdong province. The central Chinese government is set to vastly expand zero-carbon nuclear power by 2030, for several reasons. China's expanding economy and the raising of living standards requires extra energy generation. At the same time, the Chinese government is concerned about both the low efficiency of coal-fired energy generation, as well as the devastating impact on the natural environment. Photo from www.russiancouncil.ru.

How is China able to take climate change seriously? The key is that it is not capitalism that rules the Chinese economy. China's economy in large part is still state owned, as a legacy of its socialist revolution which established the PRC in 1949. The economy is planned, and can be largely controlled

by the government. Unlike Australia and the US, the Chinese government can to a large degree, direct its economy, and direct investment in certain sectors such as zero carbon energy. Nothing like this exists in the capitalist West. They are subordinate to the privately owned corporations, whom, one might argue, effectively form part of the government.

Moreover, Red China has another ace up its sleeve. It is not afraid to implement zero carbon nuclear power. The People's Climate March doesn't appear to have any demands, but buried in the fine print is a plea for a transition to 100% renewable energy. We don't agree. And neither do 75 of the world's leading academic experts on climate change. In an "Open Letter to Environmentalists on Nuclear Energy", the authors argue that all zero carbon electricity sources will need to be used if we are to have a chance at ending the burning of fossil fuels. The signatories "....provide strong evidence for the need to accept a substantial role for advanced nuclear power systems with complete fuel recycling – as part of a range of sustainable energy technologies that also includes appropriate use of renewables, energy storage and energy efficiency."

¹⁶ They emphasise that while renewable energy can play a role, we cannot afford to rigidly stick to renewable energy sources only, because they might be the favourites of large sections of the environmentalist movement. There are any number of practical problems with a transition to 100% renewable energy. One is how to store energy from wind and solar at times when there are periods with low wind and little or no sunlight. Storing energy for a day is certainly possible, but storing energy for several weeks at a time is another story entirely. Another issue is the capacity factor. That is, the amount of energy produced in comparison to the amount of energy the system is capable of producing. Zero carbon nuclear power can have a capacity factor of up to 91%, whereas wind and solar can, at best, only make less than half this capacity.¹⁷ The discussion of which combination of zero-carbon energy sources has the best chance of real success is important, and one which all concerned about global warming need to be across.

¹⁴

<http://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/knowledge/publications/130545/australia-is-latest-country-to-submit-climate-targets-to-un>

¹⁵ <http://www.6pumpcourt.co.uk/2015/07/china-increases-its-ambition-for-cop21-but-will-it-be-enough/>

¹⁶ <http://bravenewclimate.com/2014/12/15/an-open-letter-to-environmentalists-on-nuclear-energy/>

¹⁷ <http://www.citylab.com/weather/2015/07/the-environmentalist-case-against-100-renewable-energy-plans/398906/>

[illegible]

Despite advocating awareness about the virtues of wind, solar, hydro and nuclear power, and their practical applications, we have no illusions that any combination of zero-carbon energy sources can be successfully implemented while capital rules the economy. China's key advantage in undertaking the advances it has made is that in an economy which is collectively owned and planned, there is no overall imperative to make private profits. China's gigantic state owned corporations can run at very low profit margins, sometimes less than 1%, *because they are gains of the 1949 revolution*. China's Communist Party leadership, despite oversights in other areas, can direct these state owned corporations to serve social goals – such as providing employment, or, helping to solve environmental problems. There are some limitations to this, both political and practical, but the fact is this is still light years ahead of anything conceivable in the recession ravaged capitalist West. In addition, China's booming state run economy means China can pour billions of dollars into scientific and industrial research, which means China actually leads the world in a number of areas of scientific endeavour. Compare this to the perilous lack of funding for research and

A socialist state, or anything approaching it, however, is the last thing on the minds of some of the groups which dominate the environmental movement, and which have largely organised the “People’s Climate March”. For example, the group Avaaz can trace its funding back to George Soros’ “Open Society” group of NGOs, which have been a part of numerous “colour revolutions” at the behest of the US Empire around the globe.¹⁸ Here, the group GetUp! has its exorbitant funding linked to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and pro-ALP Union leaderships such as that of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU).¹⁹ Similarly, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) has as one of its major donors the multi-millionaire Robert Purves, chair of the Orwellian titled “Sustainable Business Australia”.²⁰

Some left parties have also uncritically endorsed today's march. The Socialist Alliance, publishers of the newspaper *Green Left Weekly* (GLW), have GLW's name posted alongside counterrevolutionary groups such as Avaaz, GetUp!, and anti-communist Tibetan "solidarity" groups on the list of endorsees!²¹ Such groups no doubt endorse the "from here on in, we're all in" slogan. It scarcely needs emphasising that if working people are lumped "all in" with openly pro-capitalist forces, the movement will be defeated before it begins. Mobilising alongside those who aim to *profit* from "sustainable energy" inevitably subordinates the overall politics to such forces. There needs to be a climate emergency movement, but one which is pro-worker, one which rejects "energy austerity" or using less power – especially for less-industrialised countries, and one which is for the full application of science and technology to the vital issue of decarbonising the planet.

²¹ <http://www.peoplesclimate.org.au/endorse>

NO TO THE ASSAULT OF THE TPP!

DEFEND RED CHINA!

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES



Above: Map showing the participating countries of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In essence it is a “free trade” deal, but it goes much further than previous free trade agreements. Led by the US, the TPP is in effect the economic arm of their war against Red China. Image from www.triskelogi.com

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Marxist-Leninist Group at an action opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in Brisbane.

18-10-2015 – Thanks once again to Wikileaks, the draft text of the notorious Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) has been released into the public domain.¹ The draft text contains a vigorous assault on the general conditions and standard of living of working people throughout the Asia-Pacific, as well as yet more potential destruction of civil liberties and pathways to yet more desecration of the natural environment. The TPP has been in discussion for six years, led by the world’s foremost imperialist power – the US. The TPP contains a litany of attacks on working people, courtesy of “free trade”. The TPP, if fully enacted, could:

1. Undermine the ability of governments to spend money on public health services.

2. Undermine any environmental protections put in place.
3. Increase the off-shoring of jobs by reducing barriers to relocating workplaces overseas.
4. Further empower internet service providers to police content posted by users.
5. Dramatically increase the cost of pharmaceuticals and essential medicines.
6. Reduce the ability to put in place regulations of the financial and banking sector.
7. Reduce the quality of food safety standards of imported food.
8. Allow corporations to effectively sue governments for restraint of trade.²

All of these things, and much more, are possible under this mega free trade deal. However, this is not just another free trade deal as such. The countries that make up the TPP give the game away. The TPP is an agreement between the governments of the United States, Australia, Brunei,

Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam – all countries of the “Pacific Rim”. All countries that is, except China. How can there be a Pacific Rim without China? **When it is the target.** The US “pivot to Asia” is the military wing of the escalating confrontation with China, whereas the TPP is the economic wing. An economic war, combined with a propaganda war can only presage a shooting war.

Why does Washington, and therefore Canberra, recklessly pursue war with China? It’s not so much China which is their concern – it’s Red China, i.e. socialist China. Virtually to a man and woman, bourgeois academics, the corporate media and social democrats label China as “capitalist”. The US and Western ruling classes are happy to go along with this charade, in order to disorient “their own” working classes. But it’s certainly not the way they act. They are aware, much as they don’t like to admit it publicly, that Red China is indeed Red, and that Red China’s powerhouse economy is propelling it to the status of world’s number one superpower. China’s incredible economic growth over a 30 year period has left the entire capitalist West in its wake. And even during the “global” financial crisis, China’s economy continued to grow at least three times the rate of the capitalist West, despite a marginal slowdown. You wouldn’t know this if you read the West’s media – they try to paint the Chinese economy as if it is on the verge of collapse. They wish!

The US rulers are desperate. They know that the longer they allow Red China to continue to power along, with its gigantic socialist state led economy lifting its own people out of poverty AND effectively preventing a capitalist world from sliding deeper into recession, the less chance they will have to reassert what dominance they may once have had. China recently establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank was another example of the increasing rise of Chinese superiority along with waning US influence over the globe. In order to stop, or even slow down, this process, the US rulers may be prepared to resort to full scale war. This time, the US realises that it cannot wage a war (even economic, let alone a shooting war) against China alone. So it ropes in its lackey allies into a “free trade” agreement, while goading other toady countries to claim islands in the South and East China Seas. It also sails its navy through both these

seas, claiming to stand for “navigational rights”. These hostile military moves are coupled with an intense anti-China propaganda campaign, whether over spurious claims for Tibetans and Uighurs, “labour rights”, “human rights”, or just straightforward anti-communism.

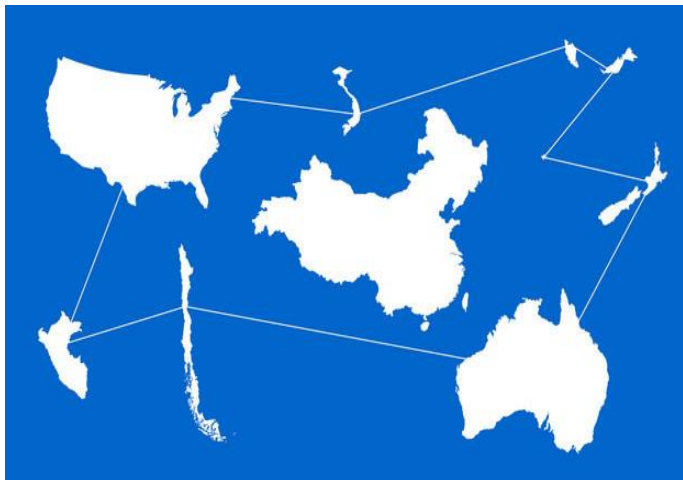
Working people here and internationally need to not only resist the anti-China moves of their respective rulers, but to act in solidarity with Red China. This does not mean agreeing with all policies of the central government in Beijing. However, it does mean defending China against all economic, military and propaganda provocations. It is needless to say that a shooting war with China may very easily escalate into a global conflagration, which will cause immense suffering.



Above: Protestors holding banner against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), highlighting the restriction of the rights of national parliaments to pass laws to be enacted within in its nation state. With the exception of Vietnam, the parliaments of the other 11 TPP participating countries represent the respective capitalist classes of that nation. Such parliaments rarely enact legislation or laws which benefit working people. The left needs to expose such gross violations of capitalist democracy, but not with the intention of defending or reforming it. Photo from www.global.exchange.org

Many progressive minded Australians have pointed out the potential damage to the interests of working people that the TPP can do if fully implemented. Others decry the loss of decision

making power for the Australian parliament that the TPP engenders, and state that we must act to ensure it is safeguarded. But since when has the Australian parliament safeguarded the interests of working people? If anything, this parliament has become ever more beholden to the very corporations we are concerned about even before the TPP came into being! In addition, “our” politicians are already in the process of abolishing democratic rights and civil liberties, privatising health care, education, public transport, water and electricity even without the TPP. Hence, all politicians, whether Labor, Liberal, Green or National, need to be positioned such that it becomes politically impossible for them to extend any support whatsoever for the TPP.



www.bloombergview.com

It should be noted that the demand “Stop the TPP” falls short of the mark. It implies that capitalism can be regulated to such an extent that it will provide a human existence for all – but this is a fantasy. In order to actually stop the TPP, or stop any of its effects, we have to take action which will directly counter the system. We can do this by demanding not the regulation of the capitalist system, but that which working people are entitled to. Such things include, but are not limited to: **permanent jobs for all workers, a 35 hour work week, publicly funded health care, education and basic services.** If the top end of town respond by saying this is impossible under our system, we should reply that we, the workers, will replace it with a system which will. We can do this while defending Red China against the barrage of “our own” imperialism. The struggle for a socially just society can only succeed by allying ourselves with, not against, Red China. The TPP is an attempt to reassert the predominance of global

capitalism, with all of the horrors this incurs for working people. It is our task to ensure this attempt fails. For socialism in our time!

¹ <https://wikileaks.org/Second-release-of-secret-Trans.html>

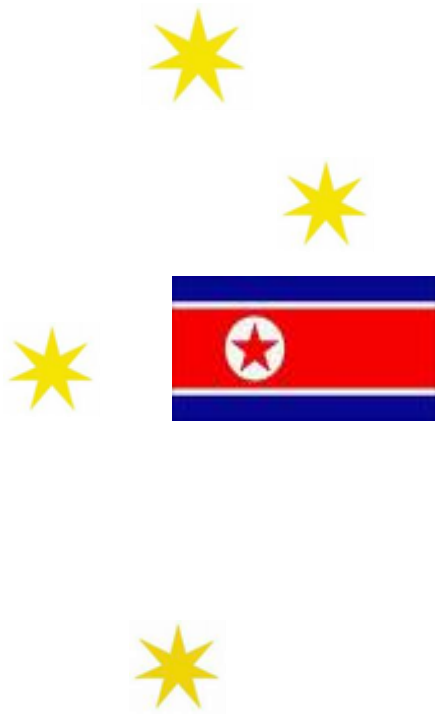
² <http://www.exposethetpp.org/TPPImpactsYou.html>



www.thedailycall.org



www.boingboing.net



Australia - DPRK

*Friendship and
Cultural Society*

Press Release

9th February 2016

(World imperialism is once again targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), for having the temerity to defend its socialist system against the very real threat of invasion from the US government and its allies. We reprint below a statement responding the recent launching of an observation satellite by the DPRK.)

The Australia-DPRK Friendship and Cultural Society is a society formed on the basis of creating, developing and improving relations between Australia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such relations are vital for the Asia-Pacific region, especially in order to avoid unnecessary animosity. The group organises solidarity tours to the DPRK usually at least once a year. For more information, email: info@australia-dprk.org

As to be expected, and led by the U.S there has been mass condemnation by major powers of the recent satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The satellite launched on Sunday the 7th of February 2016 was done so in accordance with international law and under the UN convention of the right for any country to explore space in a peaceful manner. As part of the launch preparation, the DPRK alerted a number of international organisations including the Geneva based International Telecommunication Union.

Shooting from the hip and as a further appeasement to the U.S, our Foreign Minister Julie Bishop also joined this chorus of condemnation by threatening further sanctions against the DPRK, targeting both individuals and organisations.

The UN convention on the right of every country to explore space for peaceful purposes has to be based on equality, not for powerful ones to dictate to smaller ones. Many other countries including U.S, Russia, China, India and South Korea have all launched satellites of different types. It is also well known that U.S has also launched military satellites to spy on other countries including the DPRK.

By launching its earth communication satellite, the DPRK is accused of test firing a ballistic missile - all satellites are launched by ballistic rockets - however there is a huge difference between a satellite carrier and a missile.

In terms of UN convention, all countries are considered to be equal with the same international rights. It is sheer hypocrisy on the part of the US to condemn any country for exercising the same rights that they take for granted and then demanding that the country be subjected to all forms of recriminations.

As an independent nation, Australia's foreign policy and reputation would be better served on the international stage if we developed a more independent position based on equality, mutual respect and understanding between other countries instead of acting as the U.S deputy sheriff.

Neil Fitzgerald National President

Raymond Ferguson National Secretary



In Defence of North Korea

(We reprint below an article by the US Workers World Party, posted on their website – www.workers.org – on February 9, 2016. Where applicable, spelling has been altered to reflect Australian usage.)



U.S. Marine Corps aircraft and jets over the aircraft carrier USS George Washington in the East Sea of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea achieved another scientific-technological breakthrough on Feb. 7, lofting a space satellite into orbit. It was propelled by a powerful rocket and, predictably, the U.S. government reacted as though sending up a satellite were an act of war.

Washington has been trying to line up support for more sanctions against the DPRK because of its satellite launch. When that hasn't worked, it just ratchets up the accusations and insults against the people of socialist Korea, especially their leaders.

Now, forgive us for not forgetting history, but which country is it that stations its troops right on the other's borders and carries out huge military exercises there every year? And which country has flown nuclear-capable bombers close to the other in recent months? And which country invaded the other soon after World War II, killing millions and bragging that its bombers reduced all the cities and towns to rubble?

Oh, right. It was the United States that invaded the north of Korea, and not the other way around. It is the U.S. that has had its troops in Korea since 1945, and not the other way around. It is Washington that refuses to sit down and negotiate a peace treaty to end the 1950-53 war against the DPRK, and not the other way around.

It is only because of the vile and fantastic character of U.S. anti-Korean propaganda that many people here are confused. They see melodramatic movies about Korea invading the U.S. Talk about turning reality on its head! The Hollywood garbage machine worked overtime on that one. But it's not just Hollywood, it's the entire web of the capitalist-owned press and electronic media that marches in lockstep, assuming that everyone will automatically believe their endless hostility against the DPRK. The propaganda mill never says a word about the terrible war crimes committed against the people of Korea when some 6 million U.S. military personnel were ordered to participate in the war against the DPRK.

Like all the rest of the world, socialist Korea has the right to develop its scientific-technological capabilities, which includes utilizing space satellites for communications, weather observation, mapping and defence. That this small country has progressed so far despite all the threats and sanctions imposed on it, all the efforts to cut it off from the rest of the world, all the attempts to starve its economy, is a testament to the ingenuity, creativity and unity of its people.

Since the beginning of their revolution against Japanese colonialism, the Koreans have shown the greatest determination to follow their own path to development, not by following the dictates of a capitalist class dependent on foreign imperialism, as existed during the 35 years of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, but by applying socialist principles to the growth of the economy while guarding their sovereignty and independence.

It's time for all who are sick and tired of predatory imperialism and capitalism to speak up in defence of the DPRK.

(We reprint below a statement from the government of the DPRK on the launching of an observation satellite on February 6, 2016. Text from www.militaryvideos.com)

Kim Jong Un Issues Order on Launching Earth Observation Satellite Kwangmyongsong-

Kim Jong Un, supreme leader of the Workers' Party of Korea, the state and the army, issued an autograph order on launching earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4 on Feb. 6, Juche 105 (2016).

The National Aerospace Development Administration of the DPRK will publish a report on the successful launch of earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4 under the direct guidance of Kim Jong Un.

DPRK National Aerospace Development Administration Releases Report on Satellite Launch

The DPRK National Aerospace Development Administration on Sunday issued a report on the

successful launch of earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4.

The report said:

Scientists and technicians of the DPRK National Aerospace Development Administration succeeded in putting the newly developed earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4 into its orbit according to the 2016 plan of the 5-year program for national aerospace development.

Carrier rocket Kwangmyongsong blasted off from the Sohae Space Center in Cholsan County, North Phyongan Province at 09:00 on February 7, Juche 105(2016). The satellite entered its preset orbit at 09:09:46, 9 minutes and 46 seconds after the lift-off.

The satellite is going round the polar orbit at 494.6 km perigee altitude and 500 km apogee altitude at the angle of inclination of 97.4 degrees. Its cycle is 94 minutes and 24 seconds.

Installed in Kwangmyongsong-4 are measuring apparatuses and telecommunications apparatuses needed for observing the earth.}

The complete success made in the Kwangmyongsong-4 lift-off is the proud fruition of the great Workers' Party of Korea's policy on attaching importance to science and technology and an epochal event in developing the country's science, technology, economy and defense capability by legitimately exercising the right to use space for independent and peaceful purposes.

The fascinating vapor of Juche satellite trailing in the clear and blue sky in spring of February on the threshold of the Day of the Shining Star, the greatest national holiday of Kim Il Sung's Korea, is a gift of most intense loyalty presented by our space scientists and technicians to the great Comrade Kim Jong Un, our dignified party, state and people.

The National Aerospace Development Administration of the DPRK will in the future, too, launch more satellites of Juche into the space, true to the great Workers' Party of Korea's policy of attaching importance to science and technology.

MOBILISE UNIONS TO DEMAND: FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL CITIZENS!



(This is the text of a leaflet distributed in the lead up to the national day of action against the Federal Government's cuts to Medicare)

20-02-2016 – Step by step, cut by cut, Australia's health care system is being ripped from the hands of working people. Federal Health Minister Susan Ley announced a \$650 million cut to Medicare incentive payments as a "Merry Christmas" gift at the end of last year. It will likely lead to up-front costs for pathology tests, blood and urine tests, pap smears, imaging and ultrasound services.¹ This comes on top of 23 medical procedures slated for "review" – read: cut – from Medicare. But these 23 are just the first of a projected **5700** items in the line of the razor.² Make no mistake; the aim is not just the abolition of bulk billing, but the complete dismantling of Medicare, or anything resembling public health care in this country. To say that the end result will be a user-pays US style "health" system is no understatement.

Working people should be under no illusions – the real cause of the savage attacks on basic public services such as healthcare is not the ideological predilections of the Liberal Party, for the Labor Party (ALP) and the Greens are offering scant resistance. ***The real cause is the deep and ongoing economic crisis of the capitalist system***, which has ravaged the US and Europe since 2008. If Australia

has avoided a Greece or Spain type economic catastrophe, it is due in no small part to extensive trade links with the still growing socialist led Chinese economy. Red China's enormous economy props up, and feeds, sparks of growth in the faltering "free enterprise" of the West. Yet even China's vast resources will not be enough to significantly re-start production on these shores. Consequently, Australia's capitalist class and their political servants deem it natural that ANY social spending which is not directly related to assistance for the accumulation of private profit for the corporate elite shall be cut, and cut mercilessly. As has been the case with previous cuts, the latest health care cuts will disproportionately affect women, pensioners, all those on lower incomes and their children. It is no less than economic warfare.

There needs to be an immediate, robust and unrelenting offensive movement, not just to "defend Medicare", ***but for an entirely free and universal health care system***. Such a system must come primarily at the expense of the profits of the banks, mining companies and other corporate conglomerates, many of which currently escape paying any tax at all. This movement needs to be led by those with the social power and class interest to do so – the Trade Unions, which can then draw in unorganised labour, pro-working class students, pensioners and others. Yet sitting atop the Unions

we find an overpaid and self-satisfied labour bureaucracy – officials who build their careers and handy superannuation nest eggs by suppressing, not enabling, workers' struggle. As ever, the crisis of the labour movement is the crisis of its leadership – with barely one official even raising a murmur against the rapidly deteriorating health care system. For example, take the Queensland Nurses Union Secretary Beth Mohle. Speaking in relation to a report about the poor performance of Queensland hospitals in relation to waiting times, Mohle stated that she believed the Australian public “would be prepared to pay higher taxes to continue with the high quality health and education services that we have now.”³ Like hell !! With the amount of tax working people already pay, *free* health care and education is already justified. This complete lack of perspective of class struggle gels with a wealthy Union official's complete distance from the hardships of the life of working people.

The indifference of the Union officials, however, only exists as far as working people allow it – inside and outside the respective Unions. Unions, unlike the governments and parliaments of the rich, are based on the working class – the funds and organisation of workers themselves. This is why Union leaderships can be pressured into taking action, given sufficient organisation. The federal, state and local governments, on the other hand, are but committees for managing the affairs of the ruling class, to quote a famous figure. They are not accountable to working people, no matter how many demands are laid at their feet. Focusing on lobbying them can only lead to paralysis before the campaign has even begun.

A huge danger for the campaign against the cuts is that is that it will be railroaded into an effort to elect an ALP/Greens Federal government, with elections due this year. In fact, indications are that this perspective has already become dominant. National rallies against the Medicare cuts have been called for February 20 – a Saturday. Make no mistake, rallies and demonstrations are necessary. However, a rally on a Saturday or Sunday means there can be virtually no workplaces that take industrial action and walk out to join the demonstration. It is the weight of the workers which will be decisive in this struggle – as in many others. The ruling class can sustain any number of rallies on a weekend, which involve no industrial

action, in which any number of people attend. Even a rally of millions on a weekend has no discernible impact on the financial aristocracy, because such an action is aimed at pleading, even begging, with the government. ***What is urgently required is a national campaign of industrial action, up to and including general strikes.*** If this was to occur, it would be the workers who would be bargaining from a position of strength. Plaintive appeals of “stop the cuts” – to those who are already carrying them out – is profoundly disempowering.

Below: Queensland Nurses Union Secretary Beth Mohle, who suggested that the Australian public would be prepared to pay higher taxes to continue with health and education services. This stunning statement sums up the approach of a highly paid Union official, who has little conception of the difficulties of workers and the unemployed. Photo from www.thecouriermail.com.au



In practice, unfortunately, the latter strategy is the one often imposed on actions by representatives of the ALP, the Greens and Union officialdom. They are supported in this perspective by some left parties who help organise “These cuts are killing us” actions. Such left groups would argue that it is necessary to build a “broad”, “inclusive” movement which can mobilise the most numbers. They would claim - the more numbers, the more “broad” the political forces, the more “unity”, the more likelihood of success. Yet this is profoundly mistaken. Politics does not work by numbers alone, and positively malfunctions where there is “unity” between progressive and conservative elements. What is decisive are the two basic classes of capitalist society – labour and capital. If working people are mobilised alongside, and march side by side with political forces which do not share their aims – in this case, the ALP, the Greens and the

Union bureaucracy – the movement can only bolster the fortunes of those pushing to privatise health care. In this case, such a movement will be used by the more conservative political forces for their aims – the election of an ALP/Greens government.

Needless to say, an ALP/Greens government will NOT deliver free health care, or anything approaching it. Therefore, the campaign for free health care must not be politically subordinated to those parties, or its allies in the Union bureaucracy. Working people need to demand free health care without qualification. They need to demand their Unions mobilise workers independently of all parliamentary parties and those that serve them. Such a campaign would link up with the already overstretched nurses and doctors who are still in what remains of public healthcare. Based on the mobilisation of labour, it could draw in supporters who rely on, and would politically support a universal healthcare system – students, pensioners, retirees and others. Such a movement would then also be in a position to demand public spending on other vital services such as education and public transport.

In the course of this struggle, we would do well to recognise the two countries which have the best free and universal health care systems in the world – the Republic of Cuba, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Cuba's free healthcare system has long been recognised the world over, and Cuba is renowned for sending doctors and medical teams overseas to aid impoverished countries. Less well known, but just as effective, is the universal and free health care system in the DPRK. Yet these universal healthcare systems come courtesy of their respective socialist revolutions which overthrew capitalism and consigned it to the dustbin of history. The victory of socialism will be the ultimate guarantee of free healthcare.

FOR UNIVERSAL AND FREE HEALTHCARE FOR ALL CITIZENS!

MARXIST-LENINIST GROUP (MLG)

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¹ <http://www.mamamia.com.au/health-minister-pap-smear/> (28-01-2016)

² <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/dec/28/sussan-ley-lists-23-medicare-items-for-review-as-funding-overhaul-begins> (28-01-2016)

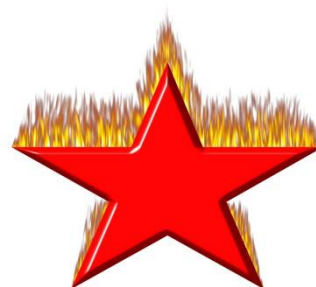
³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-28/queensland-public-hospitals-fail-national-targets-ama-report-card/7119684> (ibid)



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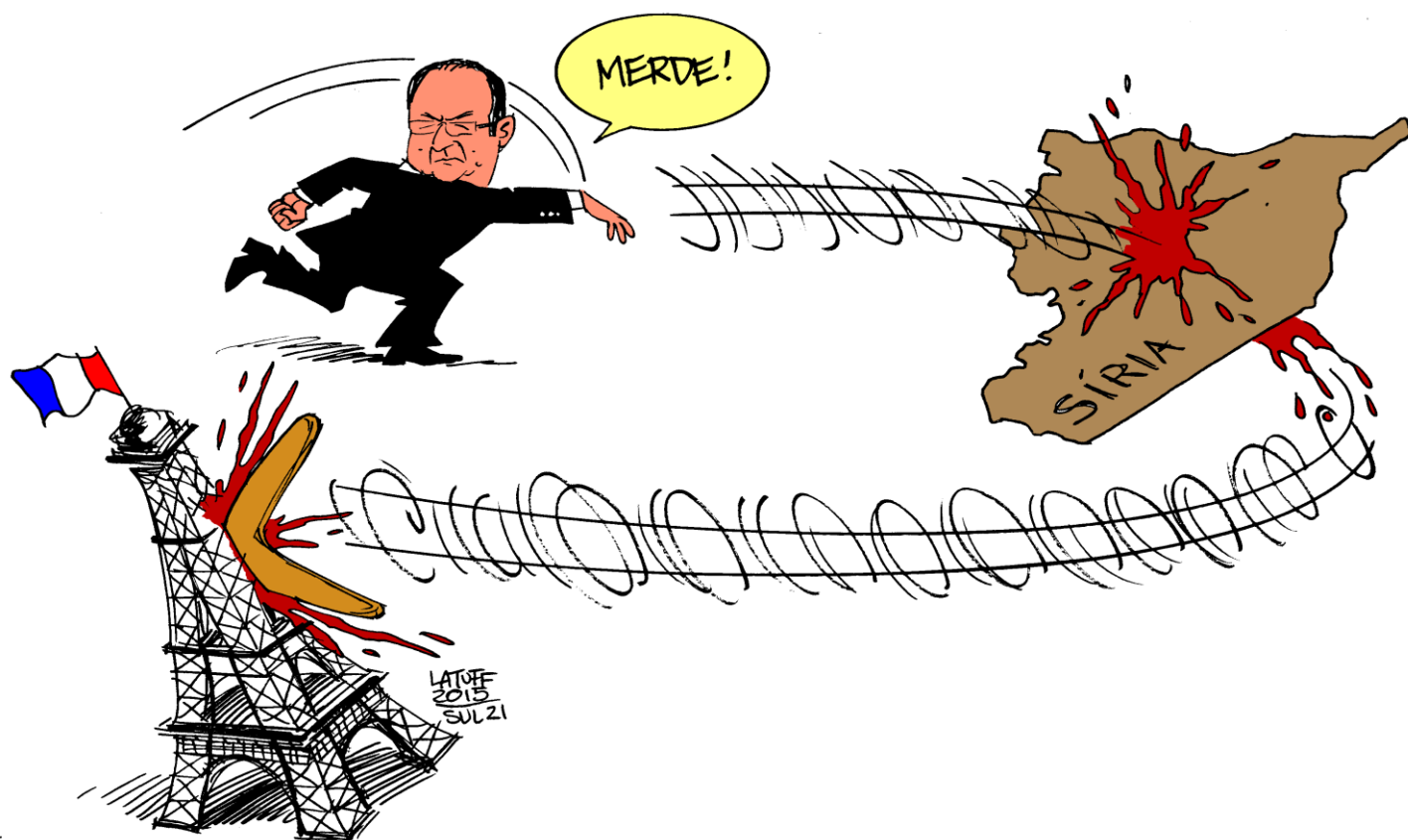
FOR SOCIALISM IN
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JOIN THE MARXIST-
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STOP THE WAR ON SYRIA/YEMEN!

AUST/US TROOPS: OUT NOW!



Above: Cartoon by Carlos Latuff, satirising the fact that the French state has been fuelling the war on Syria by arming all “opposition” jihadist groups in Syria, along with the UK, US, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. www.latuffcartoons.wordpress.com

(We reprint a leaflet issued in the wake of the November 13, 2015 incidents in Paris. Some of the material is now dated, specifically the fact that a ceasefire between the West and Syria and Russia could be concluded, given that the West’s proxy jihadist forces are being comprehensively defeated by the Syrian, Russian, Iranian and Hezbollah forces. A key factor in the defeat of the Western armed jihadists was that they had little or no domestic support amongst the Syrian people, given their murderous and barbaric acts.)

05-12-2015 – In the weeks following the events in Paris on November 13, the imperialist powers have sought to again escalate their lawless and criminal war on the Syrian Republic, citing “war on terror”

language eerily reminiscent of the atmosphere following the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York. At the same time, the same imperialist powers are virtually silent about their ongoing scorched earth war against the people of Yemen, who had the gall to throw out a US backed stooge. Also, in Mali, a suspect attack on the Radisson Blue Hotel in Bamako assassinated three Chinese State Rail managers and six Russians associated with a cargo plane company. Ongoing US provocations against China continue in the South China Sea, and NATO backed Nazis in Ukraine continue to threaten anti-fascist resistance fighters protecting civilians. If the world seems on the brink of war, that’s probably

because it is. Capitalism knows no other way out of the perilous economic crisis it has itself procured.

The events in Paris on November 13 have been used as a catalyst for the “free world” to once again hypocritically wring its hands at the barbarity of the alleged work of “ISIS”, and once again declare ISIS as pure evil. The imperialist powers should know – it is the creation of their weapons, training and money. It is an open secret that all mercenary jihadist groups operating in Syria have been brought into existence with the material backing of NATO powers the US, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, with support from Israel, Qatar and others.¹ Yet these extensive plans to outsource an entire war to overthrow the secular state of Syria were thrown into chaos with the intervention of Russia on September 30, at the invitation of the Syrian government. The military might of Russia had immediate effect militarily in taking out many ISIS barbarians and their positions, but also politically. The actions of Russia, in taking out more ISIS positions in four days than the US had in one whole year,² exposed the fake anti-ISIS campaign of the US and its allies, and also undermined the whole campaign of ISIS as a universal proxy that the “international community” has to wage perpetual war on. It is akin to the taking out of Osama Bin Laden. Once Bin Laden was gone, the US quickly produced another bogeyman to justify its relentless wars. For a brief moment, it seemed that Russia was going to send ISIS to an early grave, saving the world in the process. Russia, and Putin himself, was suddenly becoming popular, even in areas most associated with pro-US reaction. For example in the UK, one poll had two out of three Britons supporting Putin’s assault on ISIS.³

Whipped into a frenzy at the prospect of Russia gaining the sympathy, if not open support, of the world’s masses, the US imperialist behemoth struck out viciously, taking yet more innocent lives. Its proxies carried out a terror bombing in Beirut, targeting Hezbollah, in retaliation for its fighters siding with Russia and Syria and against the West’s terror. Soon after came the 13 November events in Paris, the timing of which are extremely suspect, to say the least. There are many aspects to the mainstream media coverage of the Paris attacks which simply don’t add up. For an event in which supposedly 120 Parisians perished in an alleged “bloodbath”, there was not one picture of any

wounds, let alone any cadavers, and no footage of the suicide bombers which are supposed to have attacked the national French football stadium hosting a France v Germany football match. While we extend our sympathies for those who may have perished, we have to be aware of being manipulated. As Stephen Lendman wrote soon after: “Friday’s Paris attacks were either blowback for Western wars on Islam, or a state-sponsored false flag. Odds strongly favour the latter. Western history of false flags for subsequent planned events suggest it.”⁴



Above: French President Francois Hollande visits the Masmak Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2013. This visit was based around trade, however both the French state and Saudi Arabia have been major backers of the mercenary jihadists waging a brutal war of regime change in Syria. Photo from www.arabnews.com

As if on cue, imperialist Germany and now the United Kingdom have joined the “war against ISIS”, which is transparently a war for regime change in Syria. In the UK, yet another example of the bankruptcy of attempting to reform capitalism through a “left” reformist project was exposed. Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, the former chair of the UK Stop the War Coalition (which has nevertheless not actually opposed recent wars), and a self-claimed “socialist”, rolled over and allowed a “free vote” on the question of the UK fighter jets joining bombing raids on Syria.⁵ This action guaranteed the Conservatives would win the vote,

with some Labour MP support, and begin yet another phase of the criminal war on Syria.

At the same time as the war on Syria escalates, the US backed Saudi Arabian war on Yemen rages, virtually unmentioned in the corporate mass media. The Ansarullah forces, a coalition of Zaidi Shia, socialist former South Yemen independence fighters, and secular youth, also known as the Houthis, marched into the capital Sanaa in January and seized power, re-establishing the popular committees which had forced out the former US/Saudi backed Mansour Hadi. In response, Saudi Arabia, with the full backing of the United States, launched a horrific war against the people of Yemen. Everyday since January, Saudi missiles have struck hospitals, schools and homes, reducing them to rubble and murdering at least 7000.⁶ The Yemenis only crime was to defend themselves with arms against the Saudi/US and Al Qaeda forces ravaging their country. Just as the US cannot tolerate an independent Syria, the US backed Saudis cannot tolerate an independent Yemen. While not extending full political support to the Houthi forces, workers of the world should unequivocally back the military victory of those forces committed to resistance against US and Saudi backed terror.

Canberra has backed the US, as is usual, at every step in the criminal war against Syria, and currently admits to around 600 troops in Iraq, alongside six FA-18 Hornet jets, which is "second only to the United States" in size.⁷ The proposition that Australian and US troops are in Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS is manifestly absurd. Russia's actions have thoroughly exposed this ruse. Canberra has joined Washington, London, Paris, Riyadh and Tel Aviv and their jihadist proxies in a war for the overthrow of Syria, and by extension, opening a salvo on the larger targets of Russia and China. The economic failure of capitalism is driving this war, which, with each day, contains the seeds of a global conflagration. Working people must not allow it. **No To War! AUST/US Troops: Out Now!**

¹ <http://landdestroyer.blogspot.com.au/2015/11/why-west-wont-hit-isis-where-it-hurts.html>

² <http://journal-neo.org/2015/10/15/putin-is-defeating-more-than-isis-in-syria/>

³ <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/619227/Jihadi-John-ISIS-Vladimir-Putin-Russia-killed-airstrikes-Syria>

⁴ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/paris-terror-attacks-blowback-or-false-flag-france-declares-a-state-of-emergency/5488973>

⁵ <https://www.rt.com/uk/323949-labour-airstrikes-shadow-cabinet/>

⁶ <http://journal-neo.org/2015/11/13/yemen-why-is-us-media-ignoring-a-massive-war/>

⁷ <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2015-11-24/national-security-statement>



Above: Australian and New Zealand troops at the Taji Military Complex in Iraq. The Australian government claims that Australian troops in Iraq are there to fight against ISIS, which is demonstrably false. Australia is there to support the illegitimate US led war for regime change in the Syrian Arab Republic. Australian forces are subordinate to the US military in this theatre, where the US is making a show of opposing ISIS and all "opposition" groups, under the guise of arming, training and funding them. As it stands, the Australian government is not willing to send Australian troops from Iraq into Syria, perhaps because it is aware that it would be sending them into certain death. Also, since the Russian intervention on the side of Syria since September 30, 2015, the Australian government has made sure that the six Australian fighter jets steer well clear of the technically superior Russian SU-35 fighters. Photo from www.smh.com.au

FOR SOCIALISM IN OUR TIME – RAISE THE BANNER OF MARXIST-LENINISM !



(The following is the text of a leaflet distributed at a forum titled “Talking Turkey: Alternatives to the G20” in Brisbane in November 2015)

Marxist-Leninism can be described as simply the theory (Marxism) and practice (Leninism) of socialism. The Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG) seeks to use the science of Marxist-Leninism to aid and advance the concrete class struggles of working people against the assault of a rapacious capitalism in a state of decline. Today, MLG campaigns include the following perspectives:

INTERNATIONALISM – A priority for working people internationally should be a vigorous defence of the existing socialist states – the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), the Laos People’s Democratic Republic (LPDR) and the Republic of Cuba. This should not be in the form of simply solidarity for socialism overseas, but used actively to build a movement for a socialist republic. For at least three decades, working people in Australia have suffered relentless attacks on their living standards, working conditions, civil liberties, and even the right to live in a safe climate, especially since the last severe capitalist economic crisis began in 2008. Many mistakenly believe that these conditions are global,

and therefore little can be done about them. In fact, although there are not uniform conditions for all, overall working people in the socialist states are not facing parlous living conditions, and are not yearning for a return to the “old days”. Largely, they are looking forward to better times. This is almost solely due to the fact that they have experienced successful socialist revolutions which have resulted in the formation of a socialist republic. While we should not extend automatic political support to the respective leaderships of the socialist republics, we need to ally with them in a struggle for socialism here.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM – In 2015, even conservative commentators have noted the similarity between the economic contradictions today and the lead up to the first inter-imperialist war which broke out in 1914. One difference is that one of the global blocs that has emerged is not imperialist, and asserts its right to an independent path of development in such a way as to aid the anti-imperialist struggle. On the one hand, representing imperialism, we have the United States of America, and all its imperialist allies, including Australia, the UK, France, Canada, Germany and Japan. They are allied with other regional reactionary states such as Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Monarchies. On the other hand, acting as a counterweight, we have the

anti-imperialist bloc which includes Russia, China, Iran, Syria, Belarus, the DPRK, Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, as well as the nationalist Hezbollah. These alliances are demonstrated most clearly in the US led war against Syria. The imperialist bloc gave material support to a proxy mercenary force (and, as we go to press the US has now sent in the first contingent of its own troops) which had the aim of the overthrow of Syria. The anti-imperialist bloc, led by Russia, came to the aid of Syria, resulting in a setback for the US Empire and its allies. The interests of the world's workers and the anti-imperialist bloc have temporarily coincided. While not extending full political support to the respective wings of the anti-imperialist bloc, workers should back any defeat suffered by US imperialism.

TRADE UNIONS – Unions are the basic elementary defence mechanisms for working people under capitalism. They need to be systematically built and defended from all anti-worker forces. They become especially important in a period of economic and social crisis. However, with a few notable exceptions, most Union leaderships in this country are subordinated politically to either the Australian Labor Party or to the self-serving Union bureaucracy – both of which remain dedicated to maintaining capitalist rule at the expense of their own members and workers generally. Conservative Union leaderships need to be challenged, and where necessary, replaced, with a class struggle leadership, which puts the interests of the workers and the overall benefit of society first. The working class needs to be organised to protect itself from the ravages of capitalism, and for this task, we need democratically run Unions.

CLIMATE DISTORTION – The burning of fossil fuels since the industrial revolution, combined with the vast waste incurred during “normal” business operations is threatening to terminate safe climatic conditions for human civilisation on planet earth. Carbon emissions, which have been rapidly increasing since 1950, need to be halted and reversed if we are to stand a chance of stabilising a habitable climate for humans and other animal species. While we harbour no illusions that this situation can be adequately addressed while capitalism rules large parts of the globe, a large role in reducing carbon emissions will need to be played by nuclear power – the earth's most dense zero carbon energy source. Wind and solar can play a

role, but both these “renewable” sources face problems of scaling and efficiency. Environmental and pro-worker forces should advocate the unlimited application of science and technology in efforts to avert a climate catastrophe.

REFUGEES – The abominable abuse of refugees and asylum seekers by the Australian government has gained international notoriety. Many have toiled away for years to reverse this horrific practice. However, rarely has the argument been made that it is in our interests as workers to oppose the abuse of those seeking a safe place to live. For it is largely to divide workers amongst themselves that the rulers see advantage in persecuting “foreign” nationals. We call for an end to the detention of those seeking a safe place to live. Moreover, in recent times, we have seen Western governments using feigned concern for refugees in order to drum up support for an imperialist war, e.g. Syria. Some leaders of the refugee rights movement have subordinated it to the interests of liberal parties such as the Greens and also the prerogative of imperialist war. The refugee rights movement needs an anti-war, pro-working class perspective.

The MLG seeks to build an organisation which can contribute towards the forging of vanguard party. Such a party would have the perspective of organising the workers into a force capable of establishing a socialist republic. If you agree with this basic framework, *join us!*

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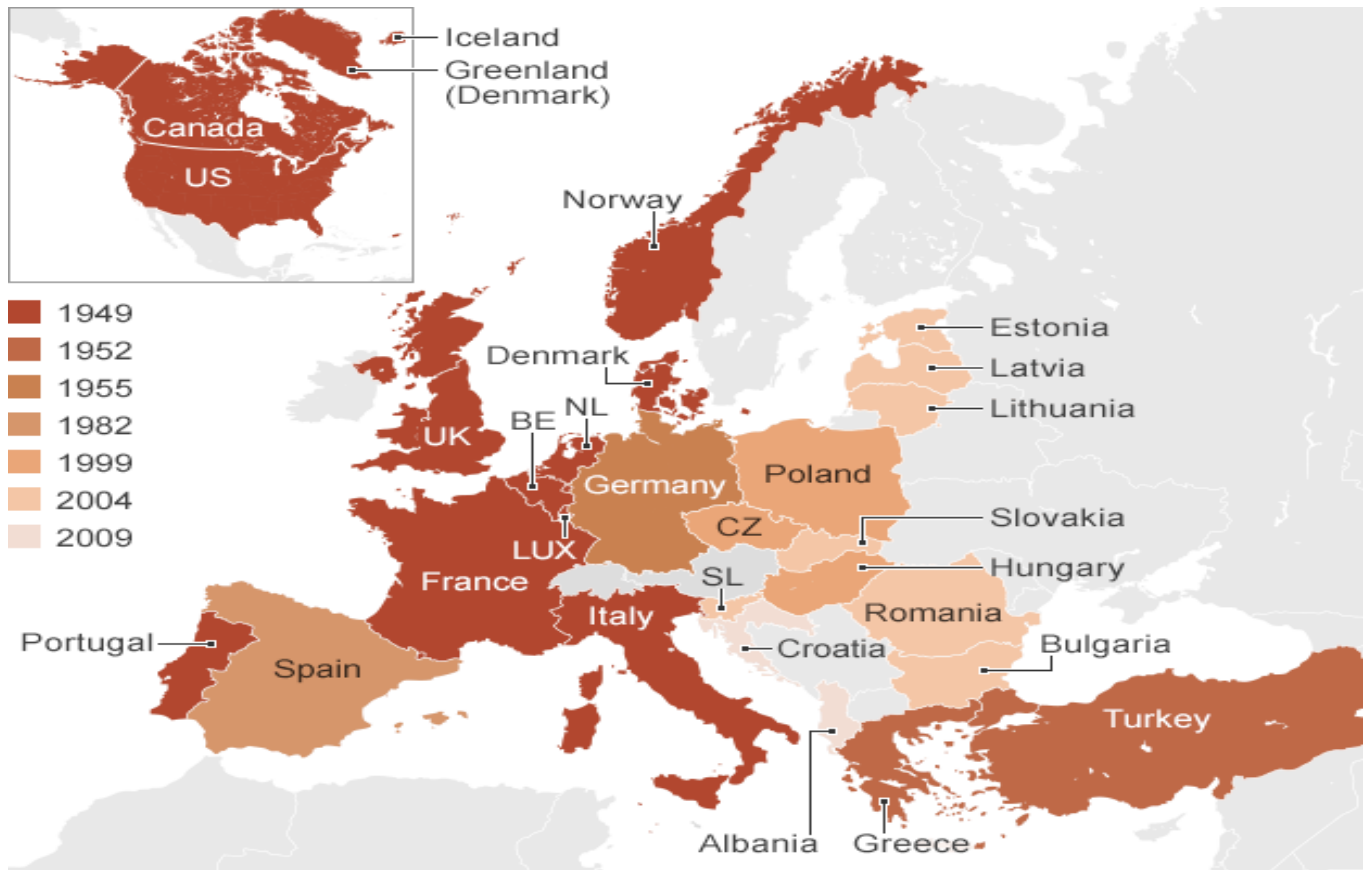
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Operation Barbarossa 2:

The Baltic Gambit



Above: Map of Europe showing NATO's expansion from 1949 to 2009. With the addition of the Baltic states, Russia is now almost surrounded by pro-US states, many already hosting NATO troops and weapons. Graphic from www.bbc.com

By Christopher Black

(This article is reprinted from New Eastern Outlook)

On Friday, February 26, just a day before the limited ceasefire in Syria was to take effect, the Atlantic Council, the preeminent NATO think tank, issued a report on the state of readiness of the NATO alliance to fight and win a war with Russia. The focus of the report is on the Baltic states.

The report, entitled "Alliance at Risk" has the sub-heading "Strengthening European Defence in an Age of Turbulence and Competition." Layers of distortions, half-truths, lies and fantasies of course

obscure the fact that it is the NATO countries that have caused the turbulence from the Middle East to Ukraine. NATO is responsible for nothing in this report, except "protecting the peace." Russia is the supreme aggressor state, intent on undermining the security of Europe, even intent on attacking Europe, an "existential threat" that NATO must prepare to repel.

An interesting image that appears just below the title page is the logo of the Airbus Group, in letters

as large as the title and a statement that the publication is a product of the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, in partnership with Airbus. There you have it, the logo of big business, intertwined with the US military machine; portraying one of the principle characteristics of fascism in the west, the interdependence and shared power of the western corporate and military complex.



Above: When the Generals talk – NATO's Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, General Philip Breedlove (right), in discussion with the Czech Republic's NATO-EU representative Major-General Miroslav Zizka, in early February 2016. Photo from AP, sourced from www.smh.com.au

The Scowcroft Center is named after American Army general Brent Scowcroft, who, among other things, was national security advisor to Presidents Ford and Bush, lately advisor to President Obama and a long associate of Henry Kissinger. General Scowcroft is interesting for another reason for on September 11, 2001 Scowcroft was on board a US Air Force E-4B aircraft, known as the National Airborne Operations Command Center.

The E-4B is a militarized version of a Boeing 747. Its purpose is to provide the American president, vice president, and Joint Chiefs of Staff with an airborne command center that could be used to execute war plans and coordinate government operations during a national emergency.

The plane was sitting on the tarmac at Andrews Air Force Base, just outside Washington, D.C. waiting to take off for Offutt Air Base in Nebraska, the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command when the first plane hit the World Trade Center in New York.

Supposedly the E-4B was to take part in a previously scheduled military exercise called Global Guardian involving a mock nuclear war, but just a few minutes after take-off the Pentagon was hit by some type of airborne craft and the E-4B immediately withdrew from the purported scheduled exercise and became the actual American government command and control center. It then continued to Offutt Air Base in Nebraska where it delivered Scowcroft and his staff to the National Command Center, their original destination, where he was joined later that day by President Bush and his staff.

Scowcroft was then head of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and an adviser to and friend of President Bush. He was not a member of the armed forces, having been retired. He was a civilian. It was Scowcroft who later advised against the USA attacking Iraq alone and who called for the building of a "coalition" to invade instead to give the US cover, which is what finally transpired. Neither his presence on board the E-4B that day nor why it was prepared to be put into action just prior to the attack on the World Trade Center for an alleged military exercise involving a possible nuclear war, has never been adequately explained.

I digress, but I am sure you cannot blame me, since it is my argument that the NATO alliance will stage a series of actions in the Baltic states using hybrid warfare methods, or will simply manufacture images that will be used to create a new myth to justify war, the myth that Russia is trying to seize the Baltic region.

The report is designed essentially to provide the European governments concerned, that is, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Norway, with propaganda they can feed to the people through the media channels, most of which they control, to justify increased military spending and increased military forces in order to face a "threat" from Russia.

It states at page 6 that

“The Russian invasion of Crimea, its support for separatists, and its invasion of eastern Ukraine have effectively ripped up the post-Cold War settlement of Europe. President Vladimir Putin has shattered any thoughts of a strategic partnership with NATO; instead, Russia is now a de facto strategic adversary. Even more dangerously, the threat is potentially existential, because Putin has constructed an international dynamic that could put Russia on a collision course with NATO. At the center of this collision would be the significant Russian-speaking populations in the Baltic states, whose interests are used by the Kremlin to justify Russia’s aggressive actions in the region. Under Article 5 of NATO’s Washington Treaty, any military move by Putin on the Baltic states would trigger war, potentially on a nuclear scale, because the Russians integrate nuclear weapons into every aspect of their military thinking.”

This supports warnings that have been made all last year of a move by NATO in the Baltic states which will be justified by false flag hybrid war operations conducted by NATO, as I have stated several times in other essays. This is emphasized by the recommendation in the report that “to deter any Russian encroachment into the Baltic states, NATO should establish a permanent presence in the region... to prevent a Russian coup de main operation ...”

Throughout the report the imagined enemy is Russia. Each segment written by an expert in military analysis from each of the countries concerned in the report contains the standard propaganda about Russia and that Europe is vulnerable and about to fall to the Russian hordes.

The level of intelligence they expect the public to have must be very low if they really think such a fantastic document could be taken seriously as a description of reality or that their intentions could be understood as anything less than criminal. Any intelligent person handed such a document would automatically throw it in the garbage for the trash it is but then he would immediately retrieve it to take a second look, because they are telling us what they are going to do, what they preparing for. I wrote in my last essay that the increased build-up of NATO

forces, in eastern Europe especially, has some similarity to the Nazi build-up for the invasion of Russia in 1941 Operation Barbarossa, is in fact a Barbarossa 2.



Above: President Obama speaks on “security” ties with Estonia, a main Baltic state bordering Russia. Historically, Estonia was one of the most anti-Soviet states during the time of the USSR, and some of this antagonism is now directed toward Russia, with the urging of NATO, and above all, the US. Image from PBS News Hour via www.youtube.com

This new report adds support to the expectation of dangerous actions in the Baltic states that will be blamed on Russia. It is probably not a coincidence that the report was released just as the Syrian cease-fire was to come into effect. The United States, clearly outwitted, out played and out fought, by the Syrians, Russians, Iranians and their allies in Syria has been forced to accede to a Russian proposed ceasefire for now. But already the Americans have talked about their Plan B, the carving up of Syria, their intention all along. We can expect them to do all they can to undermine it, engaging in a fight and talk strategy, keeping Russia occupied; in Syria, in constant tension in the Donbass, harassing their allies China and Iran, and now we can expect a new front to be opened in the Baltic states. What gambit NATO will use to create that front and a direct confrontation with Russia, who can say, but there will be one – the Baltic Gambit.

Of course, it goes almost without saying but I shall say it once again, that this is all illegal under

international law, under the United Nations Charter that prescribes the only acceptable means of settling international disputes. Under the Rome Statute this document could be used in evidence against the people that wrote it and applaud it in a trial on the charge of conspiracy to commit war crimes. But I doubt the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court will ask for a copy to read to draft an indictment. The prosecutor of the Court will do absolutely nothing as all this goes on right in front of her eyes and involving countries over which she has jurisdiction.

The final disturbing aspect of the document is that it calls for nuclear “modernization” meaning rearmament and increased building of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, a call for more nuclear arms from the same countries which for months have been attacking North Korea for having the same weapons. You have to give it to them; they’ve got a lot of nerve. Trouble is, they’ve got too much and it really seems that they’re insane.

So what can Russia do? Well, they called the American bluff in Syria, so why not do it again. This world cannot have peace unless peace is the only way that things can be done. The only way that can happen is to eliminate nuclear weapons so that no nation can threaten the existence of any other. The French section of the report happily reports that the nuclear disarmament groups in France no longer even bother to mention the matter much anymore so little resistance can be expected from that quarter. That applies around the world. But if Russia were to throw down the glove and call for mutual disarmament, a rejection by the Americans would at least underline the importance to mankind of nuclear disarmament and would make clear to the world who is the aggressor state. Otherwise it’s the Balkan Gambit and all that will follow.

Christopher Black is an international criminal lawyer based in Toronto, he is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada and he is known for a number of high-profile cases involving human rights and war crimes, especially for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.

<http://journal-neo.org/2016/02/29/operation-barbarossa-2-the-baltic-gambit/>



Above: Meme showing the proximity of NATO’s military bases to Russia, and also China. Russia and China have the right to defend themselves, and in the process stave off possible war with the West.



Above: Cartoon showing NATO’s expansion into the Balkan country of Montenegro, over the express wishes of the Montenegrin people. NATO’s expansion into the Balkan states is the one wing of the encirclement of Russia, while the expansion into the Baltic states is another. Graphic from www.sputniknews.com

The Russian-American Agreement on Syria?



Above: The new face of Russian diplomacy – the advanced SU-35 fighter jet. This aircraft almost single-handedly destroyed the Western backed mercenary jihadists sent into Syria. www.defenceindustrydaily.com

(This article is reprinted from “The Saker”, dated February 24, 2016 and sourced from www.unz.com)

The recent agreement between the USA and Russia really solves nothing, it does not even end the war, and both sides are expressing a great deal of caution about its future implementation. And yet, this is a huge victory for Russia. While it is too early to say that “the Russian won in Syria”, I think that it is now fair to say that **the Russian position on Syria has won**. Here is why:

First: nobody is suggesting anymore that Assad will be ousted or Damascus taken. That, in turn, means that **everybody has now recognized that Syrian Arab Republic, backed by Russia, has successfully repelled the aggression of the huge coalition the AngloZionists built to overthrow Assad**.

Second: Russia has forced the UNSC and the USA to admit that the vast majority of those who fight Assad today are terrorists. Of course, this is not how this was declared, but if you look at the organizations which the UNSC has already declared as ‘terrorists’ then you already have an absolute majority of the anti-Assad forces. This means that **the moral and legal legitimacy of the anti-Assad forces lies in tatters**.

Third: regardless of what Erdogan does actually try to do next, there are now clear signs that neither NATO, nor the EU nor even the Turkish high military command want a war with Russia. And that means that **Erdogan’s gamble has not paid off and that his entire Syria policy is now comprehensively dead**. Keep in mind that following the treacherous attack on the Russian Su-24 the Kremlin made it a policy goal to “Saakashvilize” Erdogan. This goal is now

almost reached and Erdogan's future looks very, very bleak: everybody (except maybe the Saudis) is sick and tired of this maniac. The best thing which could happen to Turkey now would be for the military to get rid of Erdogan and to replace him with somebody willing to repair all the damage he did.

Fourth: **all the threats to impose a no-fly zone or to occupy Syria have now been invalidated** by an agreement which basically declares that anybody not respecting the cease-fire is a legitimate target for engagement and destruction.

Fifth: **the USA had to accept the humiliation of having to agree to all of the Russian terms for the current ceasefire.** Yes, of course, the USA can, and probably will, try renege on part, or all, of this agreement, but the *precedent has been set* and it will be very hard, if not impossible, for the USA to openly return to the pre-2016 policies.

Sixth: does anybody still remember the rhetoric of Hillary Clinton about Syria and Russia? Her position was crystal clear: Assad must go and those who support him "punished". Even after the Russian military offensive began, the US refused to tell the Russians where the "good terrorists" were and where the "bad terrorists" were. No exchange of information with Russians was acceptable. Now the Americans had to agree to work with the Russians on a map of Syria designating where the participants of the ceasefire and where those who were not included in the ceasefire were deployed. In other words, **the US will now have to share with Russia all the info it previously refused to share and work with the Russians on a daily basis.**

Seventh: **Russia has basically co-opted the so-called "Free Syrian Army".** How? By basically forcing every single faction in Syria to choose between one of two possible statuses: being a 'terrorist' (and a fair target for destruction) or being a participant in a political process *entirely designed by Russia*. The Russians are now even opening a "Truce Center" at the Khmeimin airbase near Latakia which will now "render assistance" to all the parties to the ceasefire.

This, for the time being, mainly a diplomatic victory, of course, but a Russian diplomatic victory made possible by a Russian military victory. A tiny Russian

military contingent has basically completely neutralized the plans of an entire worldwide Empire. That, in itself, is an amazing achievement.

The other big winner here are, in my opinion, the Kurds who, according to British officials, appear to be coordinating their military operations with the Syrian army and the Russian Aerospace Forces and who now might well even achieve their dreams of joining the Iraqi and Syria regions of Kurdistan. Which is just about the worst nightmare for the Turks come true, hence the still remaining risk of a Turkish military operation ostensibly to create a 'buffer zone' but really to save face. That kind of intervention will remain a possibility for as long as the Turks can continue to hope to commit aggression against their neighbors under the protection of NATO and the USA. And that ain't gonna change anytime in the future.

And then there are the Saudis. They are very, very angry. They are angry to the point of making not so subtle threats about using nuclear weapons to deal with their adversaries. Actually, since Pakistan got The Bomb, I would not dismiss any Saudi claims of having a number of nuclear devices. But what does that really mean?

Absolutely nothing.

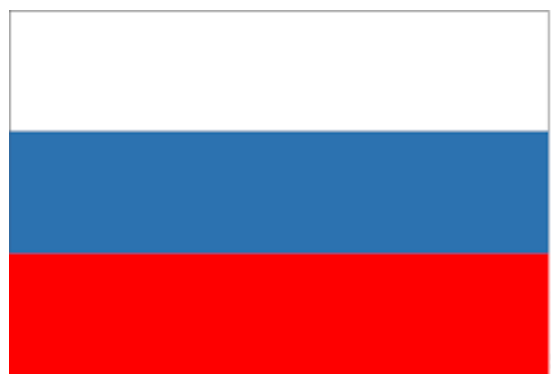
It is quite possible that the Saudis have the know how for a nuclear device. And it is quite possible that they even got their hands on enough nuclear materials for a few bombs. They might even have succeeded in purchasing a few nuclear devices from the Pakistanis or Israelis. But even if that is true, the reality is that the Saudis don't even have the military capability to deal with the poorest Arab country on the planet (Yemen) and that they most definitely don't have the military capability to engage their nuclear devices in a way which would allow them to achieve any kind of military advantage. After all, what are we talking about here? Using nuclear weapons against the Syrian military? Against Iran? Against Russia? This is absolutely ridiculous. The reality is that whatever nuclear capabilities the Saudis might or might not have, the fact that they would make nuclear threats is just a sign of weakness and fear, not a sign of strength. This is why nobody is impressed by these

statement, least of all the intended targets of such threats.

While it is quite true that the latest agreement between the USA and Russia does not mark the end of the war in Syria, it is a turning point, a kind of a Minsk-2 Agreement which nobody really wants to comply with, but which seals the defeat of the AngloZionist plans in Syria as much as Minsk-2 meant the defeat of the Ukronazi dream.

Time is now on the Russian/Syrian side. With each passing day the Russian task force in Syria will become more powerful, as will the Syrian Armed Forces. That, by itself, will not be enough to defeat Daesh, and we can expect a stiff resistance from the Takfiri crazies, but the writing is on the wall for all to see: the more the Russians and the Americans become directly and jointly involved, the less Turkey and Saudi Arabia will be able to determine the outcome of the war. In other words, while this is far from being the end of Daesh, it is the beginning of the end for Daesh in Syria.

Yet again the nay-sayers and Putin-haters have been proven wrong. To be honest, so have I: I would never have guessed that the Russians could have achieved so much with so little and yet they did pull off this extremely dangerous gamble and they won. Only an extremely skillful combination of military, economic, diplomatic and political means could have yielded such a remarkable result but Putin, apparently, found this perfect mix. The path ahead remains extremely dangerous, for sure, but the outcome of the 20 week Russian military intervention in Syria is nothing short of remarkable.



At left: Map of Syria, showing it bordered by Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and Iraq.

Above: The flags of Syria, Russia and Iran. Russia's decisive intervention at the invitation of the Syrian government has proved spectacularly successful, in terms of militarily defeating the NATO backed mercenaries, such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra and the misnamed "Free Syrian Army". All sectarian armed groups now must pretend to be some kind of "moderate" opposition, or risk being bombed by Russia, with assistance from the Syrian Arab Army, Iran's forces, as well as Hezbollah militia.