

Imperialism means endless war

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

25 April 2019

Contents

World War I	3
War Today	3
Australia's Wars	3
Peace	3

World War I

On 25 April 1915, Australian soldiers, along with troops from New Zealand, Britain and France, stormed beaches on the Gallipoli Peninsula close to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The campaign was badly planned and organised from the start and was a military disaster. It ended in defeat less than a year later, at the cost of over 300,000 dead and wounded. It was a minor episode of the larger disaster that was World War I, a clash between two great imperial alliances to see who could steal whose colonies, resources and markets.

War Today

A hundred years ago, war was mostly soldiers killing other soldiers while the civil societies behind them supplied guns and ammunition. Things don't work like that any more. War is now waged directly on civilian societies themselves, so as to destroy their ability to put military forces in the field and supply them. Even when the opposing army is beaten, the war has hardly begun, because the victor intends to refashion the country in its own interests. Occupations drag on for years, generating opposition which is met by further violence. Drones wage a coward's war, raining death from the skies while the pilots sit in safety far away. Some even go home to their families after "a day at the office".

Australia's Wars

Australia today wages war in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the Gulf of Aden and in the Philippines. All deployments are part of the US-led "War on Terror" and designed to defend a world order dominated by US imperialism. No longer strong enough economically to impose order through the market, the US needs to use its military to do a job that has no end. Australia's junior imperialism helps out to ensure continued recognition of its own sphere of interest in East Timor and the South Pacific. On the battlefield the Australian military, armed to the teeth, deals out death to irregular forces and civilians, and only occasionally takes casualties in return. The "War on Terror" started in 2001 and governments no longer even talk about it ending. It is now permanent.

Peace

There will be no peace while imperialism dominates the globe. Imperialism, though, is not a policy but the set of international relationships under global capitalism. Powerful countries compete with each other for influence and markets and seek to impose a world order in their favour. To end imperialism and its endless wars, we need to end capitalism. The only road to peace is a revolution where the working class unites across national boundaries and overthrows the competing capitalist powers. We can then build a new society where we can be one humanity, sharing the earth and its fruit together. We can relegate war to the history books.

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Retrieved on 12th October 2021 from anarkismo.net

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