

The useful dead

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

25 April 2018

Contents

1915	3
Today	3
Australian Imperialism	3
Anzac Day	3

1915

On this day, 103 years ago, Australian, New Zealand and other troops of the British Empire stormed a Turkish beach in a poorly conceived and poorly executed plan to secure a passage through the Dardanelles for the navy of the Czar of Russia. It was a sideshow in the greater crime of the war itself, where two rival imperialist alliances fought to redivide the colonies, markets and resources of the world. The war was ended by revolution, first in Russia in 1917 and then in Germany the following year. Victories for the Entente on the Western Front, while significant, were a result of the social disintegration of the Central Powers rather than being decisive factors themselves.

Today

War in politics pursued via other means. Politics under capitalism is the battle between the capitalist classes of different countries and between each capitalist class and the working class it exploits. Conflict between the most powerful capitalist classes has produced a system of imperialism. In modern globalised capitalism, wars are fought to advance the perceived interests of the capitalist classes of the belligerent powers and nationalism is propagated to enrol the workers behind the flag of their masters. In Australia, the Anzacs serve once more. Their sacrifices are useful to today's politicians to generate support for today's wars.

Australian Imperialism

Australia is a small-time imperialist power in its own right, supporting the US-dominated world order so it can dominate the South Pacific unchallenged. Australia's politicians therefore got a rude shock recently when reports started circulating that Vanuatu, a Pacific Island country that Australian capitalists rarely think about, was about to agree to establishing a Chinese military base. Naturally everybody denied anything like that was on the agenda, but Australia's political and military establishment now have something to worry about. How can they keep China out of Australia's "back yard" — even if the peoples of the South Pacific conceive of it instead as their living room?

Anzac Day

In recent years, Anzac Day celebrations in Australia have become increasingly strident and nationalistic, full of cloying militarism. And Right wing mobs in the media have taken to denouncing those who are insufficiently patriotic — particularly if they are brown and female. This is a sign that Australian nationalism is under pressure and that people considering themselves humans before they are Australians is just too dangerous a thought these days. The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group opposes Australian imperialism and militarism and therefore opposes all celebrations of it. We look forward to a workers' revolution which will usher in a world community of freedom and equality for all — and where war will be seen in museums, not the news.

END ANZAC DAY

END AUSTRALIAN IMPERIALISM
END CAPITALISM

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