

Public meetings in Australia and New Zealand:

Anzac Day, the glorification of militarism and the drive to World War III

6 April 2015

On April 25, the Australian and New Zealand governments will commemorate the centenary of the 1915 landing of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) troops on the beaches of Gallipoli, in modern-day Turkey. Tens of millions of dollars have been devoted to generating popular support for numerous anniversary events, which amount to nothing more than a glorification of militarism and the promotion of Australian nationalism. Even primary school children are being barraged with shameless propaganda portraying the catastrophe of World War I, and the deaths of tens of millions of people, as something to be celebrated.

Many workers and young people are repulsed by this patriotic frenzy and want nothing to do with it. What is not widely understood, however, is that the extraordinary campaign to celebrate the slaughter at Gallipoli takes place amid the growing danger of World War III.

World Wars I and II were the outcome of the intractable contradictions within the capitalist system, between the development of global economy and its division into antagonistic nation states, in which the private ownership of the means of production is rooted. Today, these same contradictions lie behind the global economic breakdown that began in 2008, and the predatory drive by all the major powers for a new division of the world and control of markets, cheap labour and resources.

American imperialism is attempting to overcome its historic economic decline and immense internal social antagonisms through conquest, intimidation and outright criminality. It has been waging continuous military operations across the Middle East for nearly 14 years, under the fraudulent banner of the “war on

terror”, and is now using the crisis in Ukraine to threaten Russia. At the same time, it is carrying out a massive military build-up in Asia, as part of its strategy to compel China to open its economy to untrammelled domination by American banks and corporations.

The coming Anzac Day “celebrations” are about the present, not the past. They are part of the conscious efforts of the media, and the corporate and political establishment to indoctrinate youth with patriotism, drown out anti-war sentiment and ideologically condition the population for new military confrontations.

In 1914, Australian and NZ imperialism dispatched a generation of youth to kill and be killed in order to maintain the country’s strategic relationship with the British Empire and seize control of German colonies in the Pacific. Today, they serve as chief allies and adjuncts of US militarism. Under both Labor and Liberal governments, Canberra has committed to the US “pivot” to Asia and its war preparations against China. Behind the backs of the population, US bases are being expanded around the country, the Australian military is being integrated with US forces in the Pacific, and troops are being sent back to the Middle East. The media, the unions, the Greens and the fake “lefts” all collaborate to suppress any public debate on the implications.

The decision by Britain, Germany and France, along with other European powers, to openly defy US opposition last month, and assert their interests in Asia by joining with China to establish the new Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, demonstrates just how rapidly international tensions are rising. All the imperialist powers are building-up their armed forces, while the German and Japanese governments are

rapidly renouncing the restraints imposed on them after World War II.

World War III, nuclear war and a global catastrophe cannot be stopped by protests or pacifist appeals to the powers-that-be. History has demonstrated that there is only one way to prevent war—through the mobilisation of the international working class to overthrow the bankrupt capitalist system and establish socialism on a world scale. The working class is the only social force whose interests are irreconcilably opposed to the private ownership of production and the nation-state system, which offer nothing but austerity, repression and war.

The 1917 Russian Revolution, led by Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party, remains the most important strategic experience of the international working class in the struggle against war. The Russian working class took power into its own hands and called on workers everywhere to do the same. The ruling elites of Europe only brought the carnage of World War I to an end for fear of the spread of socialist revolution.

The lack of leaderships comparable to the Russian Bolsheviks, and the defeat of revolutionary struggles outside Russia, created the conditions for the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the impoverished, war-torn Soviet state. It was only the struggle against Stalinism waged by Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International, represented today by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), that has ensured the continuity of Marxism and the perspective of socialist internationalism.

The SEP urges all workers and youth opposed to war and militarism to attend our meetings, which will clarify the historical and political foundations upon which a new international anti-war movement must be built.

Sydney

Sunday, April 26, 2:00 p.m.

Civic Theatre

Hurstville Entertainment Centre

16 MacMahon St, Hurstville

Six minutes from Hurstville Railway Station

Tickets: \$3/\$2 concession

Please note the earlier start time

Melbourne

Sunday, April 26, 2:30 p.m.

Arts House, Meat Market

5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne

Tickets: \$3/\$2 concession

Wellington

Sunday April 26, 2.30 p.m.

Room 4, First Floor, Russell Keown House,

Cnr. Laings Road and Queens Drive,

Lower Hutt



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact