

Rally welcoming relaunch of WSWS

The pandemic has only accelerated the underlying contradictions of capitalism

Cheryl Crisp
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The WSWS is beginning to publish the speeches delivered by leading members of the ICFI and contributors to the WSWS at the online rally held October 25 to welcome the relaunching of the WSWS that began with the postings of October 2, 2020. The remarks below were given by Cheryl Crisp, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party of Australia.

The relaunch of the *World Socialist Web Site* on October 2 this year marks a milestone in the history of the International Committee of the Fourth International in its fight for the construction of a revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The fact it has been launched in the midst of the greatest crisis confronting capitalism since World War II is lawful.

More than 150 years ago, Marx, writing in Volume I of *Capital*, explained the relationship between the classes. “Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole.” He was describing not a policy of governments or business leaders but the result of capitalist accumulation itself. In other words, the social gulf between the wealthy capitalist elite and the working class is inherent in the very processes of production. This has not changed today.

Since the *World Socialist Web Site* was launched in 1998, it has concentrated exceptional attention and focus on inequality and the increasing polarisation of wealth between the ruling class and the working class. This is what now characterises life in the 21st century. The WSWS is a voice through which workers, young people and the poor can speak and it is the working class to whom we are turned. The WSWS

explains not just what is happening but more importantly why.

It alone has characterised the pandemic as a trigger event, which has accelerated the already underlying contradictions and crises of capitalism. COVID 19—a virus predictable, predicted and wilfully ignored by capitalist governments—has disproportionately afflicted the working class and the poor.

Workers and the poor cannot social distance. Many of those working cannot do so from home but are compelled to toil in unsafe factories and workplaces. Many have underlying health conditions and are less able to afford health care. The murderous and criminal clamour to lift restrictions and oppose lockdowns has doomed hundreds of thousands to infection and death.

But still Wall Street and the markets rise and that is the only concern for the ruling class. In January 2020, prior to the pandemic, the richest 2,153 people on the planet had more wealth than the bottom 4.6 billion people. This polarisation has only widened. The pandemic has been used as the occasion for the further transfer of trillions of dollars of wealth through bailout packages from the poor to the rich.

The turn by the ruling class and capitalist state, most starkly expressed with Trump, to fascistic measures only highlights the impossibility of peacefully maintaining a social system characterised by the vast chasm of inequality.

The virus knows no borders and neither do the conditions imposed by capitalism. The working class is an international class and increasingly the lives of American, British, European and Australian workers are becoming indistinguishable from their class brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and South America.

The revolts against the worsening social conditions span countries and continents and are primarily directed against inequality. Some of the most widely read articles on the WSWS are those which chronicle the experiences of workers and their struggles at work and the fight against inequality.

The perspective of the WSWS stands in stark contrast to that of the pseudo lefts who ignore the conditions and experiences of the broad mass of people. In the interests of a privileged, middle-class layer they promote identity politics—of race, gender and sexuality—deny that the major division in society is class and reject the revolutionary role of the working class.

The developing and growing revolutionary struggles, however, need more than just courage and determination. They require a political perspective, a socialist program and a revolutionary party to lead them in the task for the overthrow of the capitalist system. It is for that purpose that the *World Socialist Web Site* was launched and that the transformation that we are so proud tonight to mark has been developed.



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