

# WAR IS HELL

## ***Gallipoli, 1915***

On 25 April, 1915, Australian, British and other imperialist troops landed on a Turkish beach. It was the beginning of a horrendous waste of human life in the Gallipoli campaign, which was itself a minor part of the larger waste of human life during World War I. Both sides in this war were reactionary imperialist alliances, fighting to re-divide the world in the struggle for colonies, resources and markets. It was ended, not by enlightened statesmanship, or by military victory on the field, but by revolutions - first in Russia in 1917 and then in Germany in 1918. The new German government realised that to fight on was to risk a repeat of what had happened in Russia the previous year.

## ***Afghanistan, 2012***

United States, Australian and other imperialist troops are fighting an unwinnable war in Afghanistan. The President, a long-time US stooge, retained office in the 2009 election by means of massive fraud. His authority, though, scarcely runs further than the capital. Outside Kabul, the country is ruled by warlords (nominally allies of the President) or by the Taliban. Both are brutal religious zealots, the former somewhat more brutal and the latter somewhat more zealous. The population hate the occupation - they have never submitted to a strong central government and aren't about to start now. Everyone knows it is only a matter of time till the imperialists leave, so further military operations are pointless cruelty.

## ***War Today***

A century ago, war was largely fought between armies, on rural battlefields. In World War I, 95% of casualties were military personnel. The rest of society in the belligerent countries was mobilised to boost the war effort. Today, however, Clausewitz's principle of total war has been taken much further. War is now waged directly on the society and the economy of the enemy in order to subjugate or destroy it. A country's military forces are now mere obstacles to that destruction. The "pacification" program in Vietnam, the destruction of the Iraqi economy from the air, the night raids on Afghan villages and the drone strikes in Pakistan are all examples of how the US realises that it makes war, not on the military forces of the enemy, but on the enemy society itself. Nuclear weapons, of course, are the ultimate example of war on society.

## ***Tomorrow***

There are two possible futures. In one of them, the conflicts between the imperialist countries, and between them and China, will grow until some miscalculation leads to a

nuclear war which could destroy humanity. The other possibility, the only means of avoiding that fate, is a workers' revolution to abolish capitalism and eliminate the causes of war. We can do it and we start by building the labour movement and taking a stand against militarism today. Instead of idolising the Anzacs, we should mourn them, and instead of glorifying the military, we should oppose its very existence.

## **NOT A PERSON, NOT A PENNY FOR IMPERIALIST WAR**

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