



For a working class solution



As workers and their unions prepare to take to the streets in defence of their rights at work, the Communist Party of Australia joins with them in the call for the provision of all crucial basic services and public assets - health services, public education, social security – and against privatisation. The following basic human rights and demands look to the future to set a new direction for policy development in Australia, one which neither Liberal nor Labor will deliver:

Workers' rights

A new industrial relations system based on protecting the rights of workers and their trade unions. In particular, the right to strike, the right to be in a union, the right of entry for trade union officials, strong occupational health and safety measures, and the protection of workers' jobs and entitlements. This includes the abolition of the anti-worker building industry police force the Australian Building and Construction Commission. (See article page 5)

Migrant and refugee rights

A humanitarian policy with fast processing of asylum seekers forced to flee their country and support for genuine refugees to build a new life here as part of our community. Implementation of refugee rights set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights. A migration policy that gives priority to humanitarian and family reunion considerations, rather than financial considerations. End off-shore processing and mandatory detention of asylum seekers.

Indigenous rights

An immediate end to the racist, criminal intervention in the Northern Territory and quarantining of welfare payments. Proper funding and provision of basic services, including housing, education, health and water along with job creation in Indigenous communities. Genuine recognition of land rights.

Women's rights

Equal pay for work of equal value and an end to discrimination against women, in particular migrant and Indigenous women, in employment and other areas of society. Recognition of the right of women to control their own bodies, including legalisation of abortion.

Health

A nationalised public health system with high quality, free and accessible medical, dental and mental health treatment for all Australians. Team-based primary care services with salaried GPs and specialists (as in hospitals). Expansion of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme with free prescriptions for age pensioners, the unemployed and other welfare recipients and substantial reductions in the price presently charged for prescriptions. In the immediate term, defence of Medicare and its provision of primary care. NO co-payment. (See article page 4)

Education

A fully funded, free, secular public education system available to all Australians from pre-school through to TAFE and university. Abolition of use of diagnostic and other testing to rank schools. Abolition of the huge subsidies to private schools,

with funds diverted to state schools. Restore compulsory student unionism to universities and student services. NO to the Abbott government's deregulation push in tertiary education. (See article page 4)

Secure income

An immediate increase in welfare benefits for pensioners, carers, unemployed, people with disabilities, and other welfare recipients. National, public superannuation scheme which guarantees workers a specified income throughout their retirement years.

Sustainable future

A national energy plan with legislated timetables and mandatory targets, for transition to an ecologically sustainable energy system. The transfer of subsidies and government support from fossil and nuclear fuel sectors to energy efficiency and renewable energy, including research and development and conversion programs which protect the rights of affected workers and communities. The expansion of public transport.

Democratic rights

The right to express political views in public and the right to dissent, set out in the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights, must be protected.

Peace and security

An immediate cut of 10 percent in military spending, freeing up billions of dollars per annum for health, education, social welfare and public infrastructure. ✳

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Reviving Tonkin Gulf

Guardian

Issue 1675

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Political agendas and the treatment of Gillian Triggs

The ongoing furore about the Abbott government's "loss of confidence" in Human Rights Commission (HRC) President Gillian Triggs carries political warnings for the Australian people. Accusations of bias and serious lapses in judgement on Triggs' part fail to mask the intention of the federal government to shut down what remains of independent scrutiny and to appoint people much more agreeable to their reactionary program.

Professor Triggs took up her appointment in 2012 after a distinguished legal career. In July 2013 there were 1,992 children in mandatory asylum seeker detention, an appalling statistic that prompted the investigation and report entitled *The Forgotten Children – National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention*. The HRC President delayed the inquiry while the 2013 federal election was imminent to avoid accusations of politicising the issue and to see results of any change of policy flowing from a change of government. This act of discretion is now being sold to the Australian public by PM Tony Abbott and his ministerial gang as a "political stitch up".

In slippery statements on the issue, Coalition ministers avoid some stubborn facts. The numbers of asylum seekers in detention in Australia and on Nauru and Manus Islands did not fall off a cliff when the Abbott government took office. On September 30, 2014, a year after its election, there were 5,514 people in immigration detention. There were well over 1,000 children in detention in February 2014 and "they were being held for longer periods than in the past, with no pathway to resettlement," as stated in the report.

The report of the suffering of asylum seeker children held in woefully inadequate circumstances reviewed the failures of both Labor and the Coalition but it was Abbott, Attorney General George Brandis and Immigration Minister Peter Dutton who launched a campaign inside and outside parliament to trash the reputation of Triggs. They were joined in the media by *The Australian* newspaper, in particular, in an edifying display of real bias and attempted public humiliation. The position regarding the Commissioner has been elevated to the level of editorial policy. Triggs had to go.

Unfortunately for the politicians seeking to shoot the messenger, the government let it be known via the secretary of the Attorney General's Department that Triggs would be offered a "suitable" legal post by way of compensation. She described it as a "disgraceful proposition" that would destroy the reputation for independence of the HRC. Other critics have called it an "inducement" or a bribe. The initial denials of the offer and later unconvincing attempts to explain events away have put renewed pressure on the government and the troubled prime ministership of Tony Abbott. The ALP and the Greens have both referred the matter to the Australian Federal Police.

Readers of the Guardian needn't get carried away with the claims of institutions like the HRC to Solomon-like impartiality or, more broadly, the grandeur of bourgeois democracy and its system of "checks and balances". Governments have always sought to stack the boards of institutions with its supporters and to duck and weave around the occasional rebuke coming from them. If the criticism strays too close to home, governments will question the methodology or the political "balance" of the inquisitors. But in the case of the current President of the Human Rights Commission, who appears to have overseen an inquiry with integrity, the Abbott government has swapped from politically-motivated defensiveness to outright attack.

A new type of commitment to shut down criticism is on display. Nothing is to be allowed to seriously question the Coalitions "good news" story – the claim to have "stopped the boats". Asylum seekers must continue to suffer in silence as "non-persons". The real attitude of the Abbott government to institutions like the Human Rights Commission was evident with its appointment of Tim Wilson, the former director of the reactionary Institute of Public Affairs as Human Rights Commissioner in 2013, is an reflection of the level of cynicism confronting the Australian people today.

PRESS FUND

Last week, when Qantas announced a profit for 2014, after having made a record loss the year before, Tony Abbott crowed triumphantly that the company's fortunes had turned around because it was no longer paying the carbon tax. He seemed to forget his election promise that companies would use the tax savings to reduce their prices. Qantas certainly didn't do so, and Abbott obviously thought the company's interests were more important than those of its customers. Talking of priorities, ours are to get the most incisive coverage of the news behind the news. But to do that we really need your contributions to the Press Fund, so please, if you possibly can, send us something for the next edition. Many thanks to this week's contributors, as follows:

Mark Mannion \$5, Michael Simmons \$50, "Round Figure" \$11

This week's total \$66 Progressive total: \$1,390

Hugo Chávez lives on!

Commemorating the second anniversary of his death

The Communist Party of Australia expresses its most deeply felt thoughts of sorrow to the people of Venezuela, the Bolivarian Revolution and its President Nicolas Maduro on the occasion of the second anniversary of the physical departure of the "Comandante amigo" Commander Hugo Chávez whose spirit we know still lives on in the revolutionary people of Venezuela and the world.

On March 5 we commemorate and celebrate the life and legacy of Hugo Chávez, former President of Venezuela and leader of the Bolivarian Revolution.

The Bolivarian Revolution is currently under extreme pressure from the United States with its policies of regime change stimulating right wing violent internal opposition. The fall in oil prices has affected the country's revenue. The right wing opposition and unscrupulous business that provoke shortages of food and other basic products in the war against the Bolivarian revolution must and will be defeated.

The Communist Party of Australia stands by the actions of President Maduro who together with UNASUR and CELAC is implementing actions in defence of the Bolivarian Revolution.

Viva Venezuela,
Long live the Bolivarian Revolution!
Chávez lives on!

Vinnie Molina
CPA National President



Vale Comrade Daniel

Bishop Dawid Daniel Landy-Ariel of the Anglican Catholic Church of Australia and New Zealand died suddenly of a heart attack last month. Daniel, a member of the Sydney Central Branch of the Communist Party of Australia, suffered an unexpected heart attack on Wednesday February 18. Life support was turned off on Sunday February 22.

Daniel's was a very muscular Christianity, full not only of compassion for the poor and the oppressed, but also of anger at those who would resort to oppression and exploitation for their own profit. It was his recognition of the commonality of interests between his type of Christianity and Marxism-Leninism that persuaded him to join the CPA.

This may seem strange to some, for philosophically we are poles apart. But Jesus was one of the most humane people who ever spoke out on behalf of the downtrodden in society and in condemnation of those whose greed caused their misery. Communists and Christians of Daniel's type have near identical goals: putting an end to the scourges of poverty, exploitation and war.

Daniel knew that these things would not come about as a gift from the rich and powerful but only as a result of the mass action of the people themselves. He regularly attended meetings of his Party Branch as well as marches and rallies.

His Church supported orphanages in some of the poorest countries in the world. Last year, he travelled to India to visit one of them and while there to be consecrated a Bishop. Before going, he sought a letter of introduction from the CPA to the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the larger of India's two big Communist parties, known as the CPM for short. When he informed his church hosts in India that he wished to meet the local leaders of the CPM, they informed him that their parents had been foundation members of the CPM!

Not only was a meeting readily arranged, but Daniel was accompanied to it by his Archbishop and another bishop who took photographs! The meeting between the representatives of the Church and the CPM was felt to have been not only positive and rewarding for both sides, but also a process that would be continued in future. Daniel was understandably chuffed by this result of his initiative.

Daniel endeavoured in every way to put his faith into practice. Lip service was definitely not for him. His recognition of the left-wing nature of the professed aims of Christianity, aims too often honoured in the breach rather than the observance, was not unique to him, or even new. We think of the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, and Martin Luther King who for many years had a Communist Party member on his team.

In fact there is a whole movement called Christian Socialism that began in the 19th century and probably

reached its peak in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. In Wikipedia's rather quaint description, "Christian Socialism is a form of religious socialism based on the teachings of Jesus. Many Christian socialists believe capitalism to be idolatrous and rooted in greed. ... Christian socialists identify the cause of inequality to be the greed that they associate with capitalism." And they're not wrong there.

The American poet Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn was a proponent of Christian Socialist values. Her poetry illustrates progressive political and social principles. Her first volume of poetry, *Portraits and Protests* was published in 1917 (a momentous year for socialists) and her second, *Peace and Freedom* in 1945 (another momentous year). One of her poems, *Comrade Jesus*, expressly notes the commonality of interests between Communism and Christianity.

Thanks to St Matthew, who had been
At mass meetings in Palestine,
We know whose side was spoken for
When Comrade Jesus had the floor.

"Where sore they toil, and hard they lie,
Among the great unwashed dwell I –
The tramp, the convict, I am he,
Cold-shoulder him, cold-shoulder me."

By Dives door, with thoughtful eye,
He did tomorrow prophesy: –
"The Kingdom's gate is low and small;
The rich can scarce wedge through at all."

"A dangerous man", said Caiaphas;
"An ignorant demagogue, alas!
Friend of low women, it is he
Slanders the upright Pharisee."

For "law and order" it was plain,
For holy church he must be slain.
The troops were there to awe the crowd
Mob violence was not allowed.

Then clumsy force with force to foil,
His strong clean hands he would not soil.
He saw their childishness quite plain
Between the lightning of his pain.

Between the twilights of his end,
He made his fellow-felon friend;
With swollen tongue and blinded eyes,
Invited him to Paradise.

Ah, let no local* him refuse!
Comrade Jesus hath paid his dues.
Whatever other be debarred,
Comrade Jesus has his red card.

* US trade union branch

Native Title meeting stirs Noongar activism

Richard Titelius

After the first two Native Title Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) Authorisation Meetings in Bunbury and Busselton which recorded big wins for the Yes vote, the case for the No vote had its last chance in Katanning to challenge the overall claim.

As reported in the *Guardian* (February 4, 2015), the Liberal government of Premier Colin Barnett had made its final offer of settlement to the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALC) in 2014 in an attempt to settle long running disputes covering the south west of WA from approximately north of Jurien Bay to Merredin in the east and Ravenswood/Hopetoun in the south east.

In each of the first two meetings attended by about 300 and 200 people respectively, SWALC had been able to sell the benefits of the Land Use Agreement which would see the Noongar claimants forgo their Native Title rights into the future for the agreed settlement amount of \$1.3 billion over 12 years. The money would be allocated into two streams with \$10 million per year going to the six claim groups and \$50 million going into a Future Fund.

The meeting of February 21, 2015, which covered the Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar Native Title group, was held in the Katanning Leisure Centre and over 400 Noongar claimants and their families were in attendance making it by far the biggest authorisation meeting to date. Many Noongar people who had grown up in the Katanning area were also former inhabitants of the Marribank (Carrolup) Mission and did not have fond memories of the mission experience and the associated Aborigines Act of 1905, which forced them together from around the countryside against their will for the pastoral interests which took over their finest hunting and gathering lands.

SWALC knew they might have

a difficult time so once again they brought their legal counsel Tony Neal QC, who had assisted on the original Native Title claim for which the decision was delivered in 2006, to talk about the decision and what was left of Native Title.

It was subsequently appealed in 2008, yet while Justice Willcox's original decision did not stand, there continued to be Native Title over the claim area. However, while the right to receive compensation has been extinguished over a majority of the claim area, there are still significant areas where there has only been partial extinguishment and areas where Noongar people have rights to enjoyment of the land which fall just short of the right to sell the land.

Yet if the Noongar people were successful in restarting the court action or the government simply conceded the settlement which the Noongar people ultimately sought, then they would enjoy the legal right to their land so long as they practised their culture.

While SWALC CEO Glen Kelly would like everybody to accept his argument that the ILUA would not be giving away rights but creating rights of access to land, it was an argument that was not being accepted by many in the auditorium.

There were several speakers who described not only their experiences of being marginalised and disrespected by government but also the importance of their connection to their land and culture and respect for their Elders.

Well known Noongar activist Marianne Mackay spoke dressed in the colours of the Aboriginal flag on the issues of Aboriginal sovereignty and a treaty which much of the discussion to date had avoided and which an ILUA would end.

Another Noongar activist, Mervyn Eades, also said, "The ILUAs have failed our people and these information sessions have failed to inform our people." Eades also accused SWALC of acting for the Barnett government, a claim



Noongar Elders, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council Directors and Staff at Kings Park - South West Native Title Settlement (Noongar Native Title Settlement)

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which Glen Kelly denied and added, "There are factions in the (Liberal) government that do not want this agreement to go through as this faction thinks they can roll the Noongar people in the courts for a whole lot less than the Noongar ILUA."

The outcome of the voting was a narrow victory to the Yes vote 207-200 which though a little

disappointing for those hoping for a victory over what many see as a sell-out of Noongar sovereignty and culture, will embolden and empower those Noongar people in the remaining three Authorisation Meetings that their land and culture is defensible and winnable.

The three further meetings are on March 7 in Gingin for the Yued area

of the Noongar claim area, March 14 in Northam for the Ballardong area and the final one for the Whadjuk claim area on March 28 at Cannington, a south eastern suburb of Perth. All people intending to vote must register at 8am and each meeting commences at 10am in the three locations. ☘

Pete's Corner



Our koalas need you

We need you to get out your pen and paper for the koalas in Ballina. A critical colony of over 200 koalas is at risk of extinction if Stage 10 of the Pacific Highway goes ahead. There's a group of koalas we call the Ballina 200 because they are a special, source population in this area. But they are facing local extinction, thanks to the bulldozers that will be moving in to clear their habitat for the Pacific Highway upgrade.

Please help us get 10,000 signatures on a petition to the NSW Parliament to trigger an urgent parliamentary debate. The NSW government recently gave the green light to the route, despite the fact that it runs straight through the Blackwall Range Wildlife Corridor. This corridor is a wildlife hotspot, home to many endangered species, including this nationally significant colony of over 200 koalas, known to be a "linchpin" colony and vital for the survival of coastal koalas. We need to tell the government

to find an alternative route for the highway. The area of the highway upgrade is also home to a population of about 100 rare long-nosed potoroos, a small bandicoot-like creature, as well as many other vulnerable native species.

The route will also impact an important Indigenous area, decimating sites of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage, including historic scar trees that bear the marks of bark being cut out to make canoes, containers and shields.

Despite 50,000 voices demanding a new route and new population models revealing that the upgrade will cause the extinction of koalas in the region, the government is still ploughing ahead with their preferred route.

There is still a chance to save the Ballina 200, but we need your help. If we generate 10,000 signatures on a petition, then we can force the NSW Parliament to re-examine their fate. We need to

collect 10,000 hard copy signatures by March 31 for the issue to be debated in the new NSW Parliament following the election in March.

Even if you don't live in NSW, you can still sign the petition. You don't have to live in NSW to sign. But we do need handwritten signatures so please go to ifaw.org and do a search for "Ballina 200" to download the petition. Collect as many signatures as you can and send them back to IFAW by March 31, 2015. (Address is on the petition printout). Then please ask all your friends, family and neighbours to sign too. Gather as many signatures as you can and send them back to IFAW as soon as possible. Please act now and tell as many people as you can about the Ballina 200.

I know that we can do this together. Just 10,000 signatures stand between them and extinction. Thank you so much for your support.

International Fund for Animal ☘

Hands off Medicare

The Abbott government is determined to introduce a co-payment, in one form or another. Its aim is to destroy bulk billing. The co-payment might start at \$5, already beyond the reach of many people on low incomes, but would gradually rise just as uni fees and the PBS charges for prescriptions have. It may commence in the form of means testing, with eligibility requirements gradually becoming tougher. The aim of the proposed reduction in the rebate paid by Medicare to doctors is to force them to charge fees and create a gap between what is paid by the patient and what Medicare refunds.

It will be a burden for all Australians, but a nightmare especially for those currently having difficulty to access GP services and who have little choice but to call the ambulance and go to the hospital for basic care needs – the frail elderly, mentally ill, the dying and those with a chronic illness – unless they can afford expensive private health insurance in a future privatised system.

The only winners would be the private health insurance funds who could then step in to take over Medicare/primary health care, initially to cover the gap and eventually a totally privatised and Americanised health system.

The Communist Party of Australia supports the expansion of Medicare, in particular primary health care as the basis of the health system. This would not only result in better health outcomes but save considerable amount of money by preventing disease and addressing problems at an earlier stage.

The CPA supports a national health system with high quality and “free” at point of delivery care, according to need rather than ability to pay.

The CPA stands for a health care system that first and foremost meets the needs of working class Australians and marginalised and disadvantaged groups, especially Indigenous Australians, in their local communities, local health clinics and local hospitals. We strongly oppose



Photo: Anna Pha

the introduction of a co-payment or means testing of access to Medicare or free public hospital treatment.

Our health policy is for a nationalised health system with local control with the following features:

- Accessible quality medical and dental treatment for all Australians, bulkbilled under Medicare, centrally funded through progressive forms of taxation and focused on the needs of working Australians and their families, the elderly and the sick.
- A public health scheme providing a quality primary care system with GPs, nurses, allied and community health working together, must become our frontline for maintaining people's well-being with emphasis on preventing disease, including early detection of illness.
- Team based care focused on early intervention and providing care in the community and in the home.

- Priority on preventative medical services including campaigns by governments to educate people about healthy lifestyles, the importance of vaccinations, regular tests and check-ups. Preventive medicine should also encompass restrictions on corporate advertising and on the production and sale of unhealthy products.
- End to the privatisation of Australia's health system and, in the meantime, an immediate end to the wasteful private health insurance rebate which is driving further privatisation of Australia's health system and which will lead to rationing of health care for those who need it and means-testing of public hospitals.

The CPA supports an expanded Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) so that all effective medications remain affordable for all Australians. PBS scripts should be free

for all unemployed, pensioners and other card holders and the cost for others reduced. We support the development of our own publicly owned pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. Australia should withdraw from agreements which prohibit such production and not sign new ones, in particular the Trans Pacific Partnership.

We cannot wait for a nationalised health system to improve primary health care. Our public hospitals are under extreme pressure right now. As a minimum the federal government must immediately increase its share of public hospital budgets to the 50 percent which existed prior to the Howard government.

Improvement of the public system in outer suburban, rural and remote areas with measures put in place to ensure the health system caters first and foremost for working families and the sick and the elderly in these communities.

We support a system of generous workers' compensation benefits for all injured workers and their families and strong health and safety rules in the workplace to prevent worker injury in the first place.

A system of expanded and well-funded aged care, including adequate numbers of properly trained nurses in aged care. Support services must be in place to assist those elderly who choose to remain at home or those with chronic illness or terminal cancer who want to die at home.

Workers and local communities should have a say on where their health facilities are placed and how they are managed - including having a voice on local hospital boards.

Mental health services require urgent expansion.

Funding increases for people with disability should be brought forward and services provided by the public sector. ✪

Education – Where we stand

The *Guardian* has traced the education policy trajectory of successive state and federal governments as they work to achieve their neo-liberal dream. Put simply, they want a voucher-based school system in which sub-standard, under-resourced public institutions are left for those who simply can't afford the high fees charged in the dominant private sector. Universities will be corporations training for the benefit of other corporations. Hideously expensive qualifications will be for sale to the children of the wealthy. The rest will be saddled with a debt the size of the mortgage on a home. TAFE will struggle in a marketplace flooded with fly-by-night operators.

Relentless “culture wars” have been waged to remove the history of struggle and collectivism from course content and constant testing and measuring have reinforced antiquated rote learning approaches. Australians will pay a high social price for this nasty experiment in turning back the clock. But, if the

Communist Party of Australia had control of policy in this area, what would it do? Haven't authorities been forced to their current position by the financial pressures of an aging population and the use of more expensive technologies?

A look around the world will show that not all countries, even capitalist ones, have adopted the approach now being applied so disastrously in Australia. While they are subject to the same pressures from the international capitalist ruling class, the people of countries such as Finland and Denmark have held out for high quality public education and see it as an investment in their countries' future, not a “drain” on the budget.

Socialist Cuba, blockaded and hampered at every turn by US imperialism, embodies the sorts of values that the CPA would like to see applied throughout the education system in this country. People suffering in the aftermath of natural disasters and in circumstances of poverty have benefited enormously from the efforts of Cuba's selfless

doctors and teachers. The doctors of Cuba's Henry Reeve Medical Brigade have been nominated for the 2015 Nobel Prize. There are currently 256 Cuban health professionals (more than any other country) working in West Africa to overcome the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.

Australia will host more of the Cuban “Yes I Can” literacy campaigns on Aboriginal communities after very successful programs at Wilcannia in NSW in 2012 and 2013. The popular education model is an inspiration for us and the influence can be seen in the CPA's education policy, which is reproduced below:

“The Communist Party of Australia supports an education system which promotes collective and democratic values, co-operation not individualism, equality not discrimination, multiculturalism not racism, and the ideals of peace and progress.

“The guiding principle and aim of the education system must be the provision of free, universal

and secular public education for all children from pre-school right through to post-secondary, to produce a highly educated and cultured society. Education involves much more than passing numeracy and literacy tests. It is about the full development of human potential, equipping people for life as well as preparing them for further studies or work.

“Education is a basic human right not a privilege for those who can afford it. Australia has the wealth to be able to provide every child with a quality education. This applies to all levels of education and to lifelong access to education and re-education such as workers attempting to upgrade or develop new skills The CPA puts forward following policy measures:

- Increased funding for teaching and non-teaching staff, for the building and maintenance of classrooms and other school facilities, and the purchase of resources.
- Phasing out of state aid to non-government schools.

- Removal of the MySchool website.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed centrally by education departments on a permanent basis for ongoing work. The education system needs democratisation not privatisation.
- No voucher system, the CPA believes there is no place for class-based choice or competition in education.
- The CPA calls for the abolition of fees in public educational institutions at all levels.
- Public education and apprenticeship programs must be properly funded and subsidies to private institutions phased out.
- Universal student unionism and former student services restored, in particular, subsidised childcare.”

Supporters of private education will argue that it's too late for such a program; that the neo-liberal genie is out of its bottle. It's true that it won't change without a mighty struggle but it can be done. ✪

Workers' rights

The Abbott government, Murdoch and Fairfax media and big business have launched an all out war on the trade union movement in Australia. The government's offensive includes the Heydon Royal Commission, Productivity Commission inquiry, anti-union legislation, increasing the powers of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), as well as a massive smear campaign aimed at criminalising and demonising legitimate trade union activity and militant unionists.

The constant and pervasive barrage of anti-union propaganda, the repeated description of militant unionists as thugs, criminals, corrupt, etc, is having an impact. If the union movement is to survive the current offensive then it will require maximum unity of all trade unions and strong relations with and support from the community.

Trade unions are not some "third party" that interferes in the "employer-employee" relationship. They are the employees, the workers, acting in unity with one voice in defence of their members' and other workers' interests. It is through this unity in action that workers gain their power. Without trade unions workers can be picked off one by one by unscrupulous profit-hungry bosses.

The CPA supports this struggle for unity and the rights of workers to form trade unions, their independence to determine their policies

and actions using their democratic structures without interference or restrictions.

In particular, the CPA calls for the repeal and replacement of all repressive and anti-union legislation by new laws which enable trade unions and their members to recruit, organise and defend their members. These provisions include:

- The right to take industrial action including strike action and solidarity action
- Collective bargaining as an absolute right for all workers through their unions, with enterprise agreements to be negotiated between trade unions and employer organisations with rank and file involvement
- Individual contracts to be abolished and replaced by collectively bargained union agreements
- Collective agreements/awards to cover all workers in an industry with NO restrictions on pattern bargaining
- Union officials to have right of entry to workplaces to recruit members, represent workers and to organise the workforce in appropriate forms
- Full inspection rights to workplaces and wages and time books for union officials
- OH&S officers elected by unions, to receive paid training and have the power to halt work where there is a risk to the health or safety of workers

- Labour shortages to be overcome by skills training of Australian workers as the priority
- Rights for workplace union representatives to be able to carry out their job
- The use of guest workers to be arranged through international cooperation and international agreements between trade unions and by agreement between Australia trade unions, employer organisations, and the federal government. Guest workers to be guaranteed established Australian rates of pay and conditions

Penalty rates and the minimum wage are under threat. The CPA is calling for an immediate increase in the minimum wage and for penalty rates to be retained at their present rates or restored if they have already been reduced. The CPA also calls for shorter working hours without a reduction in wages.

The CPA strongly objects to workers paying for their own wage rises through trading off hard won conditions.

Trade union representation on industry super boards should be maintained as is or increased.

The CPA believes we need to continue to campaign around industrial relations issues to eventually see legislation enacted which provides working people with the best opportunity to take on the forces of corporate greed prevalent in society today. ☘

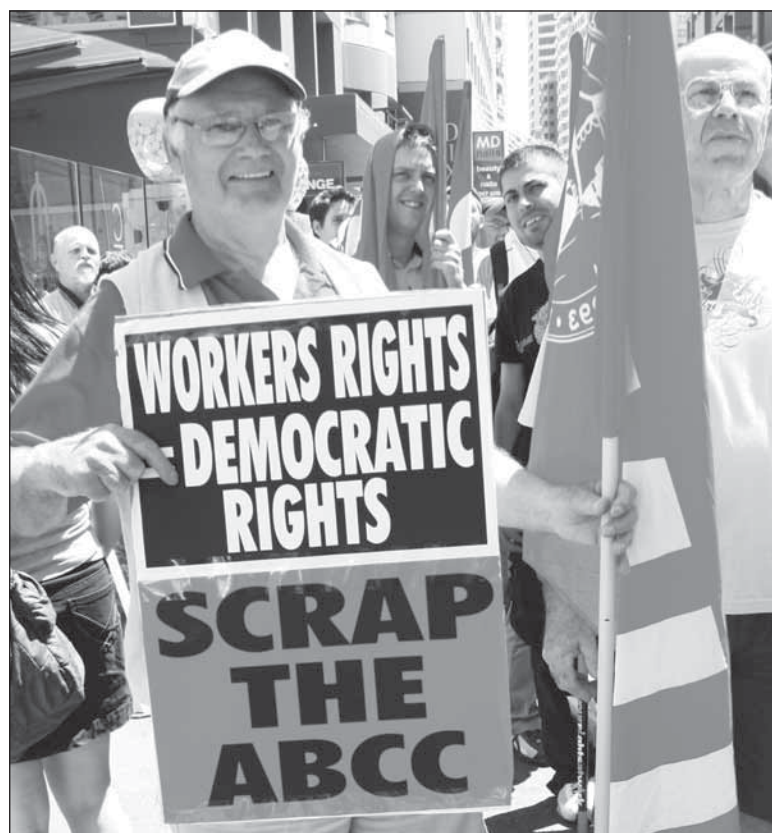


Photo: Anna Pha

Govt pushes ahead with welfare card

Rudi Maxwell

The Abbott government is working towards implementing 26 of the 27 recommendations made by billionaire miner Andrew Forrest in his report *Creating Parity*, including the controversial cashless welfare card – despite evidence from its own departments that compulsory income management is ineffective and can be harmful.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion said the government agreed with the "general thrust" of the Forrest Review and was working through the report, recommendation by recommendation. "We are already implementing some of the themes of the report, for example, ending the decades-old cycle of training for training's sake and refocusing training towards guaranteed jobs," he said.

"Already, about 1,000 people have been trained into jobs guaranteed through Vocational Training and Education Centres (VTEC) and we are on track to exceed our target of 5,000 by December this year.

"The report will inform policy across a range of areas."

Other contentious recommendations made by Mr Forrest include devolving the land council structure to more easily allow traditional owners to convert their land to 99-year leases with the federal government; stopping "distractions to education" by ensuring cultural ceremonies are only attended outside school hours, and penalising parents whose children don't attend school

by fining them or reducing their Family Tax Benefit.

The only recommendation the government has rejected is that tax-free status be granted to Indigenous businesses.

National Congress of Australia's First Peoples co-chair Kirstie Parker questioned the government's method of communicating its policies.

"We've seen this virtual bombshell dropped in a mainstream newspaper (*The Australian*) and with no conversations that I am aware of with our community leadership," she said.

"Assurances"

"I would have thought that would be the first thing the government would do, especially given assurances by the Prime Minister when the *Creating Parity* report was released that the government was not interested in the most punitive measure contained in the report: the 'healthy welfare' card.

"This continues an approach of shifting sands beneath our communities which began when the scope of the Forrest Report broadened to every aspect of our communities' lives. The report went way beyond its original scope of looking at employment and economic development, with no opportunity for our people to have input beyond those very defined themes."

A report released by the Department of Social Services in December found that compulsory income management is ineffective and, in some cases, harmful.

"There was no evidence of changes in spending patterns, including food and alcohol sales, other than a slight possible improvement in the incidence of running out of money for food by those on Voluntary Income Management, but no change for those on compulsory income management. The data show that spending on BasicsCard on fruit and vegetables is very low," the Government-commissioned study says.

Towards the end of last year, Congress and 30 other peak organisations, including the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, and the Australian Council of Social Services, called on the government to reject any expansion of income management.

"Congress and indeed the great swathe of peak organisations from our communities have said clearly that punitive measures and one-size-fits-all responses haven't worked," Ms Parker said.

"Combined with evidence provided directly to the government on these issues begs the question why would the government pursue and ramp up what is essentially a failed approach?"

"If there was one thing the Forrest Report rightfully highlighted it was the need for a cradle-to-the-grave approach, but it is the nature of that approach that will determine whether there is any success.

"Black lives depend on this."

Koori Mail ☘



One of the main issues in the coming NSW elections is the privatisation of the state's assets. The good people of Queensland were smart enough to reject the privatisation of their electricity. Victoria is a good example of why privatising public services hurts the public. Victoria's privatised energy market has the highest rate of disconnections in Australia. In the last five years the rate of electricity disconnections per 100 customers more than doubled. There were 13,486 disconnections in 2009-10 compared to 34,448 in 2013-14. The rate of gas disconnections also increased. So 58,000 Victorians are going without gas and electricity because they can't afford their bills. The same "argument" is being used over and over again – private utilities will create competition and will bring the prices down. Never happened anywhere. The only winners are those parasites on executive salaries with fat bonuses. The rest are just there to take an advantage of.

The federal government's detention centre on Manus Island is not only a bad place for asylum seekers but for the staff as well. The clean-up of asbestos was poorly managed there and put the health of the workers at risk. In a rush to complete staff accommodation blocks, the asbestos found on the site was removed by a 20-tonne excavator running over the asbestos with the dust blowing everywhere. One of the contractors had enough sense to pull 35 workers from the job on the day asbestos was discovered. The contractor was issued with a breach of contract notice for stopping work – instead of being praised for taking proper health and safety measures. "They told us not to be concerned about the asbestos and demanded our workers return to site immediately," said Brad Ashley, chief executive of Ark Modular Structures. One source said the asbestos was removed by Papua New Guinea workers without much protection – just disposable face masks. They just picked it up and put it into plastic bags. Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said Manus Island had been a "mismanaged disaster from the start" – can't disagree there.

The federal government has turned into shonky second-hand car dealers in trying to "sell" their doomed budget. They are pretty desperate because a new budget is around the corner and their previous one is not getting anywhere. So what do they do? They are spending more money on an advertising campaign in a futile attempt to make people "buy" it. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money will be wasted on trying to keep a bunch of economic vandals in power while social services are cut and people denied access to health services, accommodation services, child services and education. No matter how much you polish your budget, it is still what it is. No amount of advertising will help it.

Joe Hill (1879-1915)

"Don't waste time mourning, organise!"

A songwriter, itinerant labourer, and union organiser, Joe Hill became famous around the world after a Utah court convicted him of murder. Even before the international campaign to have his conviction reversed, Joe Hill was well known in hobo jungles, on picket lines and at workers' rallies as the author of popular labour songs and as an Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) agitator. Thanks in large part to his songs and to his stirring, well-publicised call to his fellow workers on the eve of his execution – "Don't waste time mourning, organise!" – Hill became, and he has remained, the best-known IWW martyr and labour folk hero.

Born Joel Hägglund on October 7, 1879, the future "troubadour of discontent" grew up the fourth of six surviving children in a devoutly religious Lutheran family in Gävle, Sweden, where his father, Olaf, worked as a railroad conductor. Both his parents enjoyed music and often led the family in song. As a young man, Hill composed songs about members of his family, attended concerts at the workers' association hall in Gävle and played piano in a local café.

In 1887, Hill's father died from an occupational injury and the children were forced to quit school to support themselves. The nine-year-old Joe worked in a rope factory and later as a fireman on a steam-powered crane. Stricken with skin and joint tuberculosis in 1900, Hill moved to Stockholm in search of a cure and worked odd jobs while receiving radiation treatment and enduring a series of disfiguring operations on his face and neck.

Two years later, his mother, Margareta Katarina Hägglund, died after also undergoing a series of operations to cure a persistent back ailment. With her death, the six surviving Hägglund children sold the family home and ventured out on their own. Four of them settled elsewhere in Sweden, but the future Joe Hill and his younger brother, Paul, booked passage to the United States in 1902.

Little is known of Hill's doings or whereabouts for the next 12 years. He reportedly worked at various odd jobs in New York before striking out for Chicago, where he worked in a machine shop, got fired and was blacklisted for trying to organise a union.

The record finds him in Cleveland in 1905, in San Francisco during the April 1906 Great Earthquake and in San Pedro, California, in 1910. There he joined the IWW, served for several years as the Secretary for the San Pedro local and wrote many of his most famous songs, including "The Preacher and the Slave" and "Casey Jones – A Union Scab". His songs, appearing in the IWW's *Little Red Song Book*, addressed the experience of virtually every major IWW group, from immigrant factory

workers to homeless migratory workers to railway shop craft workers.

In 1911, he was in Tijuana, Mexico, part of an army of several hundred wandering hoboes and radicals who sought to overthrow the Mexican dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, seize Baja California, emancipate the working class and declare industrial freedom. (The invasion lasted six months before internal dissension and a large detachment of better-trained Mexican troops drove the last 100 rebels back across the border.)

In 1912, Hill apparently was active in a "Free Speech" coalition of Wobblies (IWWs), socialists, single-taxers, suffragists and AFL (federation of labour organisations) members in San Diego that protested a police decision to close the downtown area to street meetings. He also put in an appearance at a railroad construction crew strike in British Columbia, writing several songs before returning to San Pedro, where he lent musical support to a strike of Italian dockworkers.

The San Pedro dockworkers' strike led to Hill's first recorded encounter with the police, who arrested him in June 1913 and held him for 30 days on a charge of vagrancy because, he said later, he was "a little too active to suit the chief of the burg" during the strike. On January 10, 1914, Hill knocked on the door of a Salt Lake City doctor at 11:30pm asking to be treated for a gunshot wound he said was inflicted by an angry husband who had accused Hill of insulting his wife.

Earlier that evening, in another part of town, a grocer and his son had been killed. One of the assailants was wounded in the chest by the younger victim before he died. Hill's injury therefore tied him to the incident. The uncertain testimony of two eyewitnesses and the lack of any corroboration of Hill's alibi convinced a local jury of Hill's guilt, even though neither witness was able to identify Hill conclusively and the gun used in the murders was never recovered.

The campaign to exonerate Hill began two months before the trial and continued up to and even beyond his execution by firing squad on November 19, 1915. His supporters included the socially prominent daughter of a former Mormon Church President, labour radicals, activists and sympathisers including AFL President Samuel Gompers, the Swedish Ambassador to the United States and even President Woodrow Wilson.

The Utah Supreme Court, however, refused to overturn the verdict and the Utah Board of Pardons refused to commute Hill's sentence. The board declared its willingness to hear testimony from the woman's husband in a closed session, but Hill refused to identify his alleged assailant, insisting that to do so would harm the reputation of the lady.



Died like a rebel

Hill became more famous in death than he had been in life. To Bill Haywood, the former President of the Western Federation of Miners and the best-known leader of the IWW, Hill wrote: "Goodbye Bill: I die like a true rebel. Don't waste any time mourning, organise! It is a hundred miles from here to Wyoming. Could you arrange to have my body hauled to the state line to be buried? I don't want to be found dead in Utah." He did die like a rebel. A member of the firing squad at his execution claimed that the command to "Fire!" had come from Hill himself.

After a brief service in Salt Lake City, Hill's body was sent to Chicago, where thousands of mourners heard Hill's *Rebel Girl* sung for the first time, listened to hours of speeches and then walked behind his casket to Graceland Cemetery, where the body was cremated and the ashes mailed to IWW locals in every state but Utah, as well as to supporters in every inhabited continent on the globe.

After the ceremony, which was attended by 30,000 people, one local paper reported:

"The entire city is still wondering what kind of people they [the IWW members] are who mourn in brilliant crimson instead of sombre black and who march to a final resting place of a fallen fellow worker singing battle songs instead of dirges and lamentations."

According to one of Hill's Wobbly-songwriter colleagues, Ralph Chaplin (who wrote the words to *Solidarity Forever*, among other songs), all the envelopes were opened on May 1, 1916, and their contents scattered to the winds, in accordance with Hill's last wishes, expressed in a poem written on the eve of his death:

My body? Ah, if I could choose,
I would to ashes it reduce,
And let the merry breezes blow
My dust to where some fading flowers grow.
Perhaps some fading flowers then
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my last and final will.
Good luck to you. ✪

After the ceremony, which was attended by 30,000 people, one local paper reported: "The entire city is still wondering what kind of people they [the IWW members] are who mourn in brilliant crimson instead of sombre black and who march to a final resting place of a fallen fellow worker singing battle songs instead of dirges and lamentations."

American Sniper vs Baghdad Sniper

Pepe Escobar

Chris Kyle's story is now enshrined in celluloid, taking over US\$300 million at the box office, but the Islamic Army in Iraq also had its legend, "Juba" – the Baghdad Sniper.

A Texas jury found former Marine Eddie Ray Routh guilty of capital murder; in 2013 he shot to death former Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, the man behind *American Sniper* – the book later turned into a blockbuster movie directed by Hollywood icon Clint Eastwood. Texas Governor Greg Abbott also made his mark, post-verdict, by tweeting "JUSTICE!"

It didn't matter that Routh's attorneys – and his family – insisted he suffered from psychosis, caused by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Texas prosecutors easily brushed it off – "proving" Routh's episodes of PTSD were provoked by alcohol and marijuana.

American Sniper – the movie – could not but become a pop culture phenomenon in the US. Kyle, played by Bradley Cooper, is Dirty Harry in combat gear – a specialist in dehumanising the faceless "enemy" as he eviscerates them one by one. The "enemy" happened to be defending the homeland against an invading/occupying force.

Poetic justice does intervene, and the Ultimate Sniper also becomes dehumanised himself. He is diagnosed with PTSD.

In a cruel twist of fate, he ends up eviscerated back home, on a firing range, by someone he was trying to help; a serviceman with – you guessed it – PTSD.

For every US soldier killed in 2014, no less than 25 veterans committed suicide. For the second year in a row, the Pentagon has lost more troops to suicide than to combat. Ah, but in Texas, this stuff is for sissies.

Kyle, according to his own version, made more than 300 kills as a sniper for SEAL Team 3. After he left the military, his atonement was to help with war veterans facing PTSD, usually taking them – where else – shooting.

Clint Eastwood is way more nuanced than he is given credit for – as his deceptively shallow interviews over the years may imply. It just might be that, appealing for the basest instincts, he may have enshrined yet another American hero to better deliver an anti-war movie.

Which brings us to the American Sniper's ultimate opposite number: Juba.

Aiming for that lone shot

"Juba" was the nickname given by the invading/occupying US forces to an Iraqi pop phenomenon; a sniper who became legendary for his kills in southern Baghdad. He was a ghost. Nobody knew his name, what he looked like, even whether he was Iraqi or not.

Juba became a legend across the Arab world because he only targeted "coalition" soldiers – as in the invading/occupying troops, all



American Sniper – the movie – could not but become a pop culture phenomenon in the US. Kyle, played by Bradley Cooper, is Dirty Harry in combat gear – a specialist in dehumanising the faceless "enemy" as he eviscerates them one by one.

heavily protected by armoured vehicles, body armour and helmets. Translation; he only killed Americans who were led to believe – by the Pentagon and the corporate media machine – they were "liberating" Iraq from Saddam, who was allied with Al-Qaeda and "attacked us on 9/11". I heard this straight from many a soldiery mouth – no irony intended.

Juba scored kills from up to 200 metres away – something that American Sniper would be hard pressed to accomplish.

Juba was infinitely patient, and devastatingly accurate. He would fire only one shot – and then change his position. He never fired a second shot. He aimed for the tiniest gap in the soldiers' body armour, and target their lower spine, ribs or above the chest. No US specialist sniper team was ever able to track him.

That explains, in a nutshell, why Juba became an urban legend in Baghdad, the Sunni triangle, and beyond. What is virtually certain is that he was a member of the Islamic Army in Iraq (jaysh al islāmi fi'l-irāq). A hero of the resistance against the invaders, of course, but far from a Salafi-jihadi.

The Islamic Army in Iraq, by the mid-2000s, was the number one resistance group against the Americans, as promoted by former Iraqi vice-president Tariq al-Hashemi. They were all former Ba'athists – Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds working together. And so was Juba – who was thought to be Sunni. But that was never totally confirmed.

By the mid-2000s, the resistance could not but be popular – with the "liberation" entailing over 50% of Iraqis being undernourished; at

least 1 out of 3 literally starving; and at least 50% of the whole population living in abject poverty.

By the end of 2005 the Islamic Army in Iraq released a 15-minute video of Juba's Greatest Kills. By mid-2006 all sorts of figures were circulating about his real tally. That included feats such as Juba eviscerating a four-strong marine scout sniper team in Ramadi, in the "triangle of death", all of them with a single shot to the head.

US snipers were always deployed in teams of at least two, a shooter and a spotter. A spotter had to be extremely experienced, using very complex calculus to factor, for instance, wind variations and drag coefficients. Juba, instead, was a loner.

Rebel with a Dragunov

The Islamic Army of Iraq liked to boast that Juba – and other snipers – were trained essentially by the book 'The Ultimate Sniper: An Advanced Training Manual for Military and Police Snipers' (Paladin Press, 1993; expanded edition in 2006), written by retired US sniper John Plaster.

What a fabulous post-Cold War tale; tactics may have been borrowed from the (American) invader; but the weapon of choice was Russian.

Juba's usual "nest" – where he holed up before a kill – was invariably decorated by an assortment of bed mattresses, which muffled the sound of his Dragunov sniper rifle, also known as SVD; a semi-automatic designed by Evgeniy Dragunov in the former USSR in the late 1950s. The SVD has always been highly

regarded as the world's first purpose-built military precision marksman's rifle. So considering the close relations between the USSR and Saddam's Iraq, no wonder the Ba'athist military was familiar with the Dragunov.

Juba's trademark "souvenir" also became as legendary as his Invisible Man persona; a lone bullet casing, and a few words jotted down in Arabic: "What has been taken in blood cannot be regained except by blood. The Baghdad Sniper."

There was a time in late 2005, early 2006, when I was following the Iraqi resistance closely even when I was not on the ground, that I flirted with the idea of writing a screenplay about Juba. He was a sort of Camus-style hero for a great deal of Iraqis; an existential rebel, but with a Dragunov. In the end I discarded the idea, considering that only an Iraqi would be able to fully examine the psychology of the Baghdad sniper.

Today, the Baghdad sniper may survive only as the ghost of a faded urban legend. Baghdad itself changed its status from mostly Sunni to mostly Shi'ite – and its new fears centre on the fake ISIS/ISIL/Daesh Caliphate. *American Sniper*, on the other hand, is touring the planet as a digital celebrity hero, even as US right-wingers loudly complained neither Clint Eastwood's movie nor Bradley Cooper got any Oscars. It only goes to show – once again – that since Vietnam, the only place the Empire of Chaos wins its wars is in Hollywood.

Information Clearing House ✪

Tax evasion and class society

Michael Meacher

There could hardly be a more poignant vignette of Britain today than the hidden truths revealed by the HSBC Swiss bank. Five years after this colossal tax evasion and avoidance scam was known to the British authorities, there has been one prosecution.

At the same time, in just one of those five years (2013), no less than 1,046,398 sanctions – deprivation of all income for weeks or months on end – were imposed on unemployed people claiming jobseeker's allowance, often for trivial or even incorrect reasons.

Also in that year nearly 200,000 people were prosecuted because they didn't have a TV licence. The culture of rewards and punishments in Britain today is based unambiguously on the ideology of class power

dominated as never before by a small clique with overwhelming control of wealth and power.

It was coincidental, but deeply meaningful, that at the same time that news of the HSBC Swiss scandal broke, the Tories held their Black and White Ball to raise funds for the party.

More than 500 extraordinarily rich Tory donors took part in a pricey bash at the Grosvenor House hotel in central London, forking out £15,000 a head for dinner, though that's a tiny addendum to the vast sums that these plutocrats have already, and will continue to, cascade into Tory party coffers before May 7.

The wealth of last year's guests added up to £22 billion. It was probably more this year, though the Tories imposed a news lockdown to prevent the rest of us finding out.

For the rich scroungers the rewards are phenomenal and the risks negligible.

Even if they're caught, which must be one chance in hundreds of thousands, there's no naming or shaming, let alone the indignity of prosecutions.

Even if the worst comes to the worst, HMRC (Revenue and Customs) only demands the tax owed plus interest, plus a 10 percent rap across the knuckles, not a penalty of five times the tax owed or – perish the thought – confiscation.

If the ultra-rich use top lawyers and accountants to resist, as unquestionably they do, the matter is often resolved by a negotiated "agreement," and no further action is taken.

Even the *Financial Times* recently argued that "no-one who commits a crime should be able to bargain for a pardon." It's a thoroughly

bad culture. Suppose a burglar caught red-handed with the swag bargained to give back some or all of it and was then allowed to walk away free. It would create a furor.

Prosecutions are essential to puncture this complacency for the super-rich.

That would cast a chill over other would-be offenders which would be more effective than all the money raised at present.

Add in two other ingredients – an incentive for whistleblowers by allowing them to keep, say, 30 percent of the money their revelations raise, plus an office of tax responsibility to keep a public and transparent check on government revenues matching the Office for Budget Responsibility checking on government expenditure – and the ideology of class power would take a decisive hit.

Morning Star ✪

NATO finds Arab backdoor to arm Kiev

Finian Cunningham

The announcement this week that the Kiev regime struck a major deal with the United Arab Emirates for armaments raises strong suspicions that the US-led NATO alliance has found a new backdoor into Ukraine. We say "new" because it is believed that the US and its NATO allies, Poland and Lithuania, are already covertly supplying weapons to the Kiev regime.

Kiev President Petro Poroshenko hailed the new strategic partnership with the Persian Gulf kingdom while attending the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi. Poroshenko, who was royally received by UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al Nayhan, declared himself a "president of peace" but that Ukraine, or rather the rump state that his regime commands, needed strong defence because of its "Russian enemy".

A giveaway to the real significance of the surprise development is that Poroshenko and his Arab hosts also reportedly held discreet meetings with Pentagon officials and US weapons manufacturing executives during the weapons exhibition. That indicates that Washington is coordinating the expected arms transfers.

Although the Kiev-UAE partnership lacked any public detail, one can safely assume that the Arab supply of weapons to Ukraine is simply a conduit for American and NATO military support to the Western-backed junta, which seized power in Ukraine last year in an illegal coup. Its war of aggression on the separatist eastern Ukraine has inflicted at least 6,000 deaths, mainly among the ethnic Russian civilian population.

Earlier this month it soon became clear that Washington and its NATO allies would pay a heavy political price for an audacious move to openly increase their military involvement in the Ukraine conflict. When Washington announced that it intended to go ahead with Congressional provisions to send "lethal aid" to Kiev there was much international consternation over such a reckless move.

Moscow warned Washington that any further military support to the reactionary, anti-Russian Kiev regime on its western border would

constitute a "disastrous escalation". US President Barack Obama then appeared to back off from the proposal to supply lethal munitions.

America's normally servile European allies also balked at the Washington arms move. Germany, France and even Britain indicated disapproval by stating that they would not be following suite by sending arms to Ukraine. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel was perhaps the most forthright in her reservations. While on an official visit to Washington she reiterated her "no weapons" position to US media while being received in the White House by Obama.

Disgruntled public

No doubt a disgruntled European public reeling from economic austerity, unemployment and seething contempt for unaccountable EU leaders had a concentrating effect on the various political capitals to not throw more fuel on an already raging Ukrainian fire. The idea of going along with incendiary American militarism in Ukraine and further antagonising Russia would provoke a political storm across Europe. Hence the usually trusty European "yes men" had to defy Washington's recklessness.

That incipient divergence between the US and EU appeared to unnerve Washington, with the latter fearing that its anti-Russian axis and sanctions tactics might be unravelling. President Obama and his Secretary of State John Kerry were at pains to emphasise American-European "unity" over Ukraine and alleged "Russian aggression" – in spite of the fact that European leaders were, publicly at least, repudiating Washington's weapons policy.

So, rather than risking an open split in the NATO ranks, Washington and its allies seem to have found an ingenious way around that problem – by getting the UAE to be the front end for weapons supplied to the Kiev regime.

Several media reports have talked up a "new defence industry" in the UAE. But whatever new industry there may be in the oil-rich kingdom, it is largely a value-adding or marketing platform for established Western manufacturers. The UAE defence sector is dominated by US military imports and American



Kiev President Petro Poroshenko (centre) hailed the new strategic partnership with the Persian Gulf kingdom while attending the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi.

The UAE weapons sales deal is just a backdoor for NATO to embark on further warmongering in Ukraine and toward Russia.

weapons giants, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. The Emirati "partner" operations are a way for the royal rulers to claim kudos for diversifying the kingdom away from its economic dependence on oil exports by seemingly creating hi-tech sectors. For the Western weapons firms, the Arab retail image can provide a convenient public relations cover for global arms-dealing. American and European weapons can thus be sold to parts of the world where it might otherwise be viewed as unethical – thanks to these sales being booked as originating from the UAE.

Arms importer

The fact remains, however, that the United Arab Emirates is the world's fourth biggest arms

importer, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). That is an astounding record considering that the UAE population is some nine million, with only one million of those being Arab nationals, and the rest being expatriate cheap-labour workers from Asia and Africa. Expressed on a per capita basis, the UAE is by far the world's biggest weapons importer. And this is a country that has never been at war since its founding in 1971 after Britain granted formal independence.

In its latest global trends report, SIPRI notes that the Persian Gulf Arab states have doubled their imports of weapons in recent years, from an already high base. Saudi Arabia is now the fifth biggest importer globally. Qatar, Bahrain and Oman are also major sales destinations for the Western arms industry.

The Arab Gulf weapons market is dominated by the US, with some 40 percent of all sales. Other major exporters to the region are Germany, France and Britain. Russia has also a strong presence in the market. But the lion's share goes to US and its NATO allies. Germany in particular has stepped up its arms exports to the Persian Gulf, which has caused political problems among the German population for the Merkel government as it is being seen to prop up autocratic and repressive regimes. Leopard tanks and armoured

personnel carriers are lucrative German exports.

The Persian Gulf Arab regimes are thus in effect NATO arsenals. And the tiny UAE with its US\$13 billion military budget is a NATO arsenal par excellence.

The Kiev regime's new contract with the UAE for weapons supply is thus a front for NATO supplying weapons to Ukraine. Conveniently for Western governments, the arrangement tends to obscure a NATO link in the eyes of their public, but only superficially.

That bodes badly for the shaky ceasefire that Russia's President Vladimir Putin helped broker early last month. Putin has already deprecated the continuing hostile attitude of Poroshenko and other Kiev leaders, who routinely accuse Russia of aggression and talk with bravado of fighting a "total war". Washington and the EU are indulging this inflammatory rhetoric with renewed sanctions on Moscow and laying the blame for the conflict on Russia.

While Western taxpayers bail out the Kiev regime with a US\$40 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, the junta is evidently using the money to go on a weapons spree and to crank up its NATO-supplied war machine. The UAE weapons sales deal is just a backdoor for NATO to embark on further warmongering in Ukraine and toward Russia.

Information Clearing House ☛

Employer jailed for maid's abuse

A Hong Kong employer has been jailed for six years for beating and starving her Indonesian maid and keeping her prisoner.

Law Wantung, who had faced a maximum sentence of seven years, "showed no compassion" to her maid Erwiana Sulistyansih and other domestic staff, said Judge Amanda Woodcock in handing down the sentence.

Ms Law saw her staff as "people that are beneath her" said Judge Woodcock.

"It is regrettable that this conduct is not rare and, sadly, is often dealt with in the criminal courts," she added. After the verdict, Ms Sulistyansih said that she was happy and "appreciated" the judgement, but still felt that six years was not long enough.

"I'm still not satisfied with six years' imprisonment, because of what she has done to me," she said.

The judge called for action over laws which leave

domestic workers exposed to abuse by stipulating they must live with their employer.

She also called for an investigation by Hong Kong and Indonesian authorities into employment agencies that charge domestic workers huge fees which are then deducted from their salaries.

Ms Law was eventually convicted on 18 of the 20 charges laid against her, including grievous bodily harm, assault, criminal intimidation and failure to pay wages.

But activists remained reserved over whether the case would bring change.

"It could send a message to other employers who are doing similar things," said Aaron Cerado of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants.

"But whether it will be effective still remains to be seen."

Morning Star ☛



Sydney

International Women's Day

Rally Sydney Town Hall

11am

Saturday March 14

Canada

Opposition to repressive legislation

Tim Pelzer

Vancouver: After initially wavering on the issue, the official opposition in Parliament, the centre left New Democratic Party (NDP) has now vowed to fight Bill C-51, Conservative legislation that will give intelligence and police agencies new legal powers to crack down on dissidents.

"Terrorism is a real threat, and public safety must be the priority for any government," according to NDP leader Tom Mulcair. "But we cannot protect our freedoms by sacrificing them. We have a responsibility to stand up for our values and to never allow these cowardly attackers to change our way of life.

"The NDP has identified several serious problems in C-51, including that the bill will give broad powers to CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) without enhancing oversight, that it includes provisions that could impact legitimate dissent, and that the government has not produced any plan to counter radicalisation in Canadian communities. This legislation is sweeping, dangerously vague, and likely ineffective. The Conservatives have played politics and intimidated the Liberals into giving them a blank cheque to pass any law, even one like C-51 that goes too far," added Mr Mulcair. "Canadians can count on New Democrats to take a principled stand for our rights and freedoms."

When the rightwing Conservative government of Stephen Harper first introduced Bill C-51 on January 30, the NDP's initial reservation about the bill was the lack of parliamentary oversight over intelligence agencies. Only the Green and Communist Parties came out strongly against the legislation. The Liberal Party, which has also expressed reservations about the bill, has said that it will vote for the legislation, despite its defects.

A Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) report, obtained by Greenpeace recently, hints at whom the Harper Conservatives might go after if C-51 is passed by Parliament. Dated January 24, 2014, the police report states: "There is a growing, highly organised and well-financed

anti-Canada petroleum movement that consists of peaceful activists, militants and violent extremists who are opposed to society's reliance on fossil fuels," states the report which is stamped "protected/Canadian eyes only."

"If violent environmentalist extremists engage in unlawful activity, it jeopardises the health and safety of its participants, the general public, and the natural environment." The report emphasises the importance that the oil and gas industry play in the Canadian economy.

"NGOs such as Greenpeace, Tides Canada and Sierra Club Canada, to name a few, assert climate change is now the most serious global threat, and that climate change is a direct consequence of elevated anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions which, they believe, are directly linked to the continued use of fossil fuels ... Research and analysis done in support of ongoing RCMP criminal investigations show that those involved in the anti-Canadian petroleum industry have an interest in drawing public attention to, and building recognition of the perceived environmental threat from the continued use of fossil fuels. The publicising of these concerns has led to significant, and often negative, media coverage surrounding the Canadian petroleum industry."

Bill C-51 defines terrorism as: "interference with the capability of the government of Canada in relation to intelligence, defence, border operations, public safety, administration of justice, diplomatic or consular relations, or the economic or financial stability of Canada; changing or unduly influencing a government in Canada by force or unlawful means; interference with critical infrastructure; interference with global information infrastructure; an activity that causes serious harm to a person or their property ... an activity that takes place in Canada and undermines the security of another state."

The "violent" extremists mentioned by the RCMP can only refer to environmentalists who have used acts of peaceful civil disobedience such as sit-ins and blockades to stop the expansion of pipelines to transport bitumen from the oil sands, because

there have been no bomb attacks or other acts of sabotage against the industry. Civil liberty organisations fear that C-51 will allow the RCMP and CSIS (Canada's version of the CIA) to infiltrate and criminalise the environmental movement because it interferes with economic stability and infrastructure.

The Harper government, which is closely aligned with the gas and oil industry, has long viewed the environmental movement as a threat.

In response to the RCMP report, John Bennet, national director of the Sierra Club Canada Foundation, said the Sierra Club, Greenpeace and other environmental groups have no plans to launch unlawful actions against the oil industry, and accused the RCMP of having "a one-sided view" of climate change.

"In policing terms, there is a lot more to be concerned about when it comes to climate change. It's not just protesters the RCMP needs to be thinking about. The RCMP is an institution we will depend on as climate change causes more frequent and more severe storms. Only last week the RCMP was criticised for not having a clear plan for seizing unsecured firearms during the 2013 Alberta floods.

"Climate change is something we know – not something we 'assert.' This understanding is based on science and not on anything else. It's a real threat – not 'perceived' – and the threat is, in fact, getting more significant every day. Clearly the RCMP has not kept up and does not understand what is coming their way."

Bennet said that instead of getting angry, he wrote to the RCMP offering to provide workshops on climate change to the police force "so they can understand why so many of us are exercising our rights to free speech and assembly."

On January 30, Harper introduced C-51 to ensure that security agencies can uncover and halt jihadi terrorist attacks. However, critics assert that the number of people who have met a violent end from terrorist attacks in Canada over the last decade can be counted on one hand.

People's World ☪



The Harper government legislation is sweeping, dangerously vague, and likely ineffective.



Region Briefs

Fifteen Malaysian policemen from Dang Wangi police station last week stormed the office of Socialist Party of Malaysia and arrested the Party General Secretary S Arutchelvan (Arul). According to the police, Arul was arrested for violating the country's Sedition Act that restrains working people to print, publish and reproduce seditious publications. Arul had earlier published a statement criticising the Federal Court's interdependence with domestic political forces. Criticism arose as people condemned the Act enacted by past colonialists aimed at suppressing people's rights.

An annual military exercise will be held in South Korea from March 2 to March 13, involving 10,000 South Korean soldiers and 8,600 US troops. The commander of the exercise, Curtis Scaparrotti, said "Exercising our multi-national force is an important component of readiness and is fundamental to sustaining and strengthening the alliance". The Democratic People's Republic of Korea denounced the exercise as a rehearsal for future invasion.

At a recent UN Security Council meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi introduced China's core policy in international relations. He stated, "Any unilateral move (of any country) that bypasses the Security Council is illegal and illegitimate," and that "the Security Council needs to take more precautionary measures to forestall conflict and act in a timely manner to stop warfare so as to restore peace and promote reconstruction as early as possible". He continued that China opposed confrontation, hegemony, and the zero-sum approach in developing international relations. He called on all countries to abandon the mindset of confrontation, and instead cooperate to resolve problems to ensure world peace. He stressed that all countries' sovereignty and independence should be respected no matter their size and wealth, no country has the right to impose its own will on others.

In an interview, Elly Twineyo, African author and economist, compared western countries' aid to Africa that focused on human resources, government building and policy with Chinese aid with its emphasis on infrastructure such as building railways and hydroelectric dams, saying this aid would have a long-term impact benefiting the people. He argued Chinese aid was the type of aid Africa really needed, as it was critical to Africa's industrialisation and development.

The Japanese government's new economic policy failed to make gains in 2014, according to The Japanese Economy 2014-15 released by the Cabinet Office. The country's GDP growth in 2014 remained at zero percent and personal consumption expenditures fell by 1.2 percent (the largest drop in the past 20 years), but the consumption tax increased by 8 percent whilst workers' wages decreased by 1 percent in 2014 (workers' wages have kept falling for the past 18 months). The Japanese Communist Party Secretariat Head, Yamashita Yoshiaki, criticised the government, saying it had failed to stimulate the economy by increasing the consumption tax. He asked the government to raise incomes for workers in order to boost consumer spending.

Cuba

Call for the 10th International May Day Brigade



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For full program see
www.cpa.org.au/whats-on

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010



email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

Privateers' dreams

The corporate world that would benefit from realisation of the privateers' dreams is influencing the state and federal governments in areas other than electricity generation.

For example, in a chilling reference to the future of government institutions for the sick and disabled, economics professor Gary Sturgess commented:

"The future of public services lies in social benefit bonds for out-of-home care and drawing on the commitment and creativity of the community sector, and in Disability

Care, a massive voucher scheme that will empower the disabled to choose their own service providers. It does not lie in preserving the industrial monoliths of another age".

And the Baird government's election campaign won't be helped by its latest proposal to issue compulsory orders to homeowners who refused to sell their homes to a big developer for the WestConnex tollway, Australia's biggest urban road project, after everybody else has done so, and to then flog the property to the developer. Implementing this policy would set a precedent for the government to seize any property in the state. Voters are unlikely to be impressed.

Mati English
Sydney

Open slather for food imports

Though there have been numerous inquiries into Australia's food labelling regulations, with many sound recommendations but little action as the powerful

transnational corporations that have a virtual monopoly of the food and soft drink sectors are given easy passage by compliant governments.

There is constant pressure on government to weaken quarantine laws. For example, Chilean and US corporations want the right to freely import uncooked chicken into Australia. This is not permitted so as to protect both local commercial poultry and native birds from disease and consumers from certain food safety hazards.

There is a conflict of interest between the drive by corporations to maximise profits and the health and safety of people as well as the environment and a government that is pro-big business.

Australia's existing labelling laws are not always adhered to. For example, oranges from Israel were being sold as Australian by a major supermarket chain to get around the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel.

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Culture & Life

by

Rob Gowland

Reviving the Tonkin Gulf incident



The US sprayed the vegetation (and the people) with a toxic defoliant, Agent Orange, which causes cruel genetic mutations generation after generation.

I see that they're rewriting history again. Or, more accurately, not so much rewriting it as perpetuating a long-discredited lie. The US Pentagon has a website "commemorating" the outbreak of the Vietnam War, which according to the site, began with "the North Vietnamese attack on USS Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964". But it has been known for many years that that attack (the so-called Gulf of Tonkin incident) never actually happened.

The Johnson Administration was looking for an excuse that would enable it to expand the scope of the war in Indo-China, a war that was not going too successfully for the US. The bogus attack on the Maddox provided the pretext for what the Pentagon calls "the beginning of the [US] Navy's air and surface bombardment against North Vietnam." But that wasn't the beginning of the war. The US had been fighting the Indo-Chinese national liberation movement for years before that. They even began spraying the notorious Agent Orange as early as 1961. For the Vietnamese, the war began a lot earlier, as, led by Ho Chi Minh, they fought the attempt by Japanese imperialism to add the country to its new Asian empire.

Having seen off Japan's would-be overlords, they were promptly invaded by their former French colonial masters, eager to re-establish their empire. Years of bitter fighting ensued, while the US tried to "roll back Communism" in Europe, China and of course Korea. With the defeat of the French at Dien

Bien Phu, and the expulsion of US forces from North Korea, it looked like peace might break out. But, as France withdrew in defeat from Indo-China, the US stepped in to take its place in thwarting the hopes of the people for national liberation.

After years of unsuccessful but increasingly bloody and destructive warfare, the "Gulf of Tonkin incident" provided the Johnson Administration with the pretext for expanding the war with an unprecedented aerial bombardment of North Vietnam. The US dropped a greater weight of bombs on little Vietnam than had been dropped in the whole of WW2.

B-52s flying at 10,000 metres, flew to "targets" they could not see – identified by radar co-ordinates only – and dropped interminable strings of bombs, some 15 million tons of them. An estimated three million Vietnamese civilians were killed by the US during a decade of war.

Today, half a century later, Vietnamese are still being killed and maimed by these bombs as a huge amount of unexploded ordnance lies scattered throughout the country's fields and gardens, waiting for unsuspecting farmers or children to disturb them with dreadful results. Vietnamese authorities estimate that unexploded bombs in Vietnam have wounded around 65,000 people and killed 34,000.

And, as if that wasn't enough, the US didn't just drop an unimaginable quantity of bombs. It also sprayed the vegetation (and the people) with a toxic defoliant, Agent Orange, which causes cruel genetic mutations generation after

generation, grotesquely similar to those caused by thalidomide.

In fact, more than 70 million litres of herbicides were sprayed over 2 million hectares of land. It poisoned not just the crops but the soil, the waterways and the animals living there. American soldiers affected by contact with Agent Orange got scant help from their government, so what chance have the Vietnamese? President Ronald Reagan's Veterans Affairs director Robert P Nimmo dismissed Agent Orange as causing no more than a little "teenage acne".

The Vietnamese Red Cross, however, foresees a formidable continuing toll of cancers, birth defects and other chronic diseases linked to Agent Orange. In the US, activists are concerned that the companies that made a fortune from the production of Agent Orange are still at it: "The US population," says one of them, "should pay special attention to this matter of Agent Orange and its parents – Monsanto and Dow Chemical. Generation after generation of Vietnamese and America's Vietnam Veterans have suffered genetic mutations from exposure to that killer. Now Monsanto has produced GMO agriculture with its 'Round-Up resistant' crops and genetically-modified crops; and the corporations promise us that they're safe to eat.

"Many countries in the world have banned the production of GMO crops and/or require food to be labelled to disclose if they contain GMO foods. But not here in the US. We're still passively accepting whatever they put on our plates. I should say most people accept them

without question ... but not me and a lot of other people like me. Now, the military industrial complex can't even wait a generation between wars. Now, we have to live in a state of perpetual war and the world of Homeland Security and being fed a lot of poison for food."

Similarly angry American veterans of the Vietnam War are taking on the Pentagon over its bogus delineation of the war. "We will not leave it to the government and war hawks to tell a one-sided tale of guts and glory," blasts the Veterans For Peace organisation in a campaign it's calling Full Disclosure. "The Department Of Defence commemoration of our war is a farce," said Chuck Palazzo, a former US combat veteran who now lives in Vietnam. The commemoration will cost US taxpayers millions of dollars, which Palazzo rightly sees as "A waste of money and a feeble attempt to brainwash the younger generation as well as the rest of us, that what we did was right – it was, of course so wrong!"

As US soldiers have been sent to fight ever more wars since the Twin Towers catastrophe, surveys of US veterans show that many of those who were made to take part now question the validity and purpose of those wars. A third of US veterans of these conflicts are of the opinion that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq for example "were not worth fighting for".

As the old saying goes, you can fool some of the people all the time and most of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all of the time. ☺



Rob Gowland
previews
ABC & SBS
Public Television

Sunday March 8 –
Saturday March 14

The second episode of *Life On The Reef* (ABC Sunday March 8, 2015 at 7.40pm) is as interesting and as multi-faceted as the first. The theme is supposedly sex and reproduction but ranges over everything from the spawning of billions of coral polyps to catching rare fish for aquaria.

The health of the Great Barrier Reef, probably this country's greatest tourist attraction, is periodically seriously threatened by devastating explosions in the population of crown of thorns starfish which kill the coral and leave the reef lifeless and drab. Almost incidentally the program tells us that these outbreaks are caused by uncontrolled run-off of fertiliser from the cane-fields and other crops along the coast. This chemical pollution is apparently too difficult to prevent so scientists have had to seek out a way of killing the starfish – one at a time!

Some other disturbing facts emerge: over-fishing of the tuna stocks far out in the Pacific has resulted in a 40 percent reduction in the population of sheer-waters nesting on the islands of the Reef. Also disturbing as far as I am concerned was the depiction of the catching

of rare fish for both public and private aquaria. This smacked of the now thankfully discarded practice of catching wild birds and mammals to stock zoos.

We all know that drinking, drugs and fast food are bad for you, but ask young people what effects these can have on you and they will usually point to relatively non-threatening things like obesity or embarrassing behaviour. But in developed countries around the world, researchers and health professionals are finding that these days a life of excess isn't just leaving young people hung-over, it's accelerating their age – hit by chronic conditions usually the preserve of pensioners, their young bodies and minds are prematurely ready for retirement.

English TV reporter Cherry Healey's new three part documentary series, *Cherry Healey: Old Before My Time* (ABC2 Wednesdays from March 11 at 9.30pm) investigates the alarming rise in the number of young people in the UK suffering from illnesses associated with much older people – due to alcohol, drugs and obesity.

The first episode deals with alcohol and it becomes clear very quickly that in the UK (as here) a great many young people cannot conceive of a "good time" except in terms of getting stinking drunk. One young man she talks to has already had two attacks of extremely painful pancreatitis, but despite his glib assurances that he will cut down his drinking, it is obvious that he will do nothing of the sort. Getting pissed with his mates is effectively his only form of entertainment.

Cherry meets medical experts treating young recovering alcoholics and she has a poignant meeting with the mother and sister of a young man who died from alcohol-induced organ failure. The program probably won't make many people decide to curtail



Life On The Reef (ABC Sunday March 8, 2015 at 7.40pm).

their drinking: the booze industry is supported by massive direct and indirect advertising campaigns. But it should.

In the final episode of *Simon Reeve's Sacred Rivers* (SBS ONE Monday March 9 at 8.35pm) Reeve travels along the Yangtze and discovers a "revival of religious faith" in China, based on a startlingly small and superficial sample of its one billion-plus population. "Simon follows the river to Dazu where he sees 50,000 ancient and exquisite rock carvings, some of the only religious artefacts not to have been destroyed under Communist rule. ... Simon's journey ends in Shanghai, a shining symbol of China's new economic might but also a city where

many are rediscovering religious faith."

Wishful thinking, Simon, wishful thinking.

The first generation of skyscrapers were built using traditional methods: they were held up essentially by their walls. The Empire State Building in New York and the very handsome "wedding cake" towers in Moscow were built in this manner. In the 1940s, when a bomber flew into the side of the Empire State Building it was more a curiosity than a catastrophe, and business in the building went on as usual.

The later generation of skyscrapers were built with their floors suspended from a central concrete core that incorporated the lifts and stairwell. The external walls were largely of glass and hung on the edge of each floor. This allowed greater height to be achieved at less expense.

The builders of the World Trade Centre twin towers used a "revolutionary" method of construction in which the exterior of the building was effectively "banded" rather than held up by the earlier methods. It allowed the building to be erected three floors at a time, and in record time at that. It was tested for various potential calamities, but not for withstanding the heat a burning planeload of jet fuel might produce.

When the top floors of the Twin Towers finally succumbed and

collapsed down into the burning floors – and then carried on down inexorably floor by floor to the ground – startled onlookers, unaware of the building's curious (and largely untried) method of construction, assumed that the collapse had to be the result of demolition using explosives and that could only mean an additional government conspiracy.

9/11 was undoubtedly a conspiracy, but it took place at the very beginning, at the stage of US agents finding some Islamist fanatics prepared to carry out suicide attacks against American icons. After that things would just take their course, until the US had its excuse for escalating the war in Iraq and Afghanistan (and internally in the form of "counter terrorism" laws).

The various conspiracy theories about the Twin Towers being blown up successively by explosives planted on every floor, or the plane that hit the Pentagon having actually been a cruise missile, or even that no planes were hijacked at all, are in fact all part of the elaborate "deep cover" of the cover-up.

The second episode of *The Missing Evidence* (SBS ONE Wednesday March 11 at 8.30pm), a six-part series that reveals such things as "the identity of Jack the Ripper; the untold story behind the sightings in Loch Ness; the complex truth about Big Foot", pushes the hidden explosives line. Ah, me. ☘

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POLITICS

IN THE PUB

March 5

THE RUSSELL TRIBUNAL ON PALESTINE: PREVENTING THE CRIME OF SILENCE

Peter Slezak, Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW;
Cathy Peters, Australians 4BDS and former Marrickville Councillor;

March 12

DEREGULATION OF UNIVERSITIES: A RECIPE FOR PERPETUATING INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA?

Nick Riemer, Dr, Department of English, Sydney University;
Richard Hill, Dr, Honorary Research Fellow, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University;

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Rape as a weapon of war – Made in the USA?

Felicity Arbuthnot

“It’s really 19th century behaviour in the 21st century; you just don’t invade another country on phoney pretexts in order to assert your interests.”

(Secretary of State, John Kerry, *Meet the Press*, March 2, 2014.)

Various professional psychology sites state succinctly: “Projection is a defence mechanism which involves taking our own unacceptable qualities or feelings and ascribing them to other people.”

Further: “Projection tends to come to the fore in normal people at times of crisis, personal or political, but is more commonly found in the neurotic or psychotic – in personalities functioning at a primitive level as in narcissistic personality disorder or borderline personality disorder”, opines Wiki.

With that in mind it is worth returning to the assault on Libya and the allegation by Susan Rice, then US Ambassador to the UN, in April 2011, that the Libyan government was issuing Viagra to its troops, instructing them to use rape as a weapon of terror.

However, *Antiwar.com* MSNBC was told “by US military and intelligence officials that there is no basis for Rice’s claims. While rape has been reported as a ‘weapon’ in many conflicts, the US officials (said) they’ve seen no such reports out of Libya.”

Several diplomats also questioned Rice’s lack of evidence suspecting she was attempting “to persuade doubters the conflict in Libya was not just a standard civil war but a much nastier fight in which Gaddafi is not afraid to order his troops to commit heinous acts.”

The story was reminiscent of the pack of lies which arguably sealed the 1991 US-led Iraq onslaught – of Iraqi troops leaving premature babies to die after stealing their incubators. The story of course, was dreamt up by global public relations company, Hill and Knowlton Strate-



Demonstrators in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2011, show placards to protest against the military intervention in Libya by the US.

democracy and respect for human rights, the universal rights that all human beings deserve in Syria and around the world.” (UK *Guardian*, April 29 2011.)

Looking across the world at the apocalyptic ruins of lives and nations resultant from America’s continuance in uninvited “standing up” for “democracy”, “human rights” and “universal rights” there are surely few who could not only silently weep.

Amnesty, perhaps “once bitten” not only questioned the Libya Viagra nonsense but denied it in categorical terms. According to Donatella Rovera, their Senior Crisis Response Advisor, who spent three months in Libya from

information that there was a policy to rape in Libya those that were against the government. Apparently [Colonel Gaddafi] used it to punish people.” A bit of a blow for the impartiality and meticulous evidence of the ICC it might be thought.

A week after the bombing of Libya started in March 2011, Eman al-Obeidy burst in to a Tripoli hotel telling the international journalists there she had been raped. She was removed by Libyan security. Government spokespeople claimed she had mental health problems, was drunk, a thief, a prostitute and would be charged with slander. The world sneered.

By June 2011 Ms al-Obeidy had ended up

military forces frolics had risen to an astonishing US\$504,816 of taxpayers’ moneys. An additional US\$17,000-plus was spent on two further erectile enhancing magic potions.

The *Washington Free Beacon* helpfully estimated: “that the amount of Viagra bought by the Pentagon last year could have supplied 80,770 hours, 33 minutes, and 36 seconds of sexual enhancement, assuming that erections don’t last longer than the 4 hour maximum advised by doctors.”

Surely coincidentally, on February 14, St Valentine’s Day, Joachim Hagopian released an article: “Sexual Assault in the US Military – More Rapists Attend the Air Force Academy Than Any Other College in America.”

In a survey taken in 2012 “an unprecedented number” of over “26,000 incidents of unwanted sexual contact was reported by service men and women.” Further, weekly “another high profile officer often in charge of reducing assaults was being investigated and charged himself.”

The US Air Force at Colorado Springs, writes Hagopian: “has more rapists on campus than any other college in the country.”

But then the US military planners would seem to be sex and bodily function obsessed. In 1994 they contemplated releasing pheromones (a hormonal stimulus) against enemy troops “to turn enemy soldiers into flaming love puppets whose objects of affection would be each other.”

“While enemy troops were preoccupied with making love instead of war ...” America’s finest could blow them to bits. This bit of military dementia was dubbed the “gay bomb”.

Also dreamt up have been halitosis, flatulence and vomit inducing chemicals to unleash on foes. Body function obsession clearly rules in the armed forces, officially and unofficially.

Projection “... is more commonly found ... in personalities functioning at a primitive level.” Indeed. And to think both Saddam Hussein and Colonel Gaddafi were labelled mad by such as these.

Pravda.ru ❖

Looking across the world at the apocalyptic ruins of lives and nations resultant from America’s continuance in uninvited “standing up” for “democracy”, “human rights” and “universal rights” there are surely few who could not only silently weep.

gies, Inc, then described as the world’s largest PR company which had been retained by the Kuwait government.

A tearful hospital “volunteer”, Nayirah gave “testimony” which reverberated around an appalled world. It transpired she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Washington and was neither a “volunteer”, “witness”, nor in Kuwait. Amnesty International obligingly backed up the fictional nonsense suffering lasting credibility damage. However, as Libya two decades later, Iraq’s fate was sealed.

The US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice and Foreign Affairs advisor, Samantha Power are credited with helping persuade President Obama to intervene in Libya. By the end of April 2011, Rice was also pushing for intervention in Syria, claiming that President Assad was: “seeking Iranian assistance in repressing Syria’s citizens ...” In the light of all, she vowed: “The United States will continue to stand up for

the start of the crisis: “We have not found any evidence or a single victim of rape or a doctor who knew about somebody being raped.”

Liesel Gerntholtz, heading Womens Rights at Human Rights Watch which also investigated the mass rape allegations stated: “We have not been able to find evidence.”

The then Secretary of State, Hillary “We came, we saw, he died” Clinton, was “deeply concerned” stating: “Rape, physical intimidation, sexual harassment and even so-called ‘virginity tests’ “were taking place not only in Libya, but “throughout the region.” Presumably leaving the way open for further plundering throughout Africa in the guise of bestowing “democracy”, “human rights” etc.

Credibility

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court obediently weighed in telling a press conference of “...

in Boulder, Colorado, US, granted asylum with remarkable speed, with the help of Hillary Clinton, according to US news outlets.

In November 2014 al-Obeidy, now known as Eman Ali, was arrested “violating conditions of her bail bond and probation”. It was her third arrest. Prosecutors allege that she tested positive for opiates and alcohol. The probation and bail bond relate to an alleged assault case in a Boulder bar with Ms al-Obeidy-Ali accused of pouring drink over a customer and then lobbing a glass at her. The trial is scheduled for February 17 with the possibility of her asylum status being rescinded.

However, back to projection. It transpires that the Pentagon has been supplying Viagra to US troops since 1998. That year it spent US\$50 million, to keep troops, well, stiffened up: “The cost, roughly, of two Marine Corps Harrier jets or 45 Tomahawk cruise missiles ...”

By 2014 the cost of extra-curricular



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