



TPP

Resist parasitic trade plans

Bob Briton

Widespread protest has prompted federal Minister for Trade and Investment, Andrew Robb, to come out again in defence of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) – the “free” trade pact being negotiated by the governments and corporations of a dozen Pacific Rim countries. The minister used a carefully crafted opinion piece in the *Australian Financial Review* recently to insist that current top-level horse-trading is “confidential” rather than “secret”. When the TPP is finally “agreed between parties, it will be made public and also subjected to extensive scrutiny before implementing legislation is considered and voted on by the parliament,” according to Robb.

Parliament and the public can scrutinise all they like – the text cannot be changed. Parliamentarians – the majority of whom are confirmed neo-liberals in any case – will face a “take it or leave it” proposition. Most will be inclined to take it unless the movement against the promonopoly “partnership” continues to grow in influence.

Robb didn't take up the other very telling arguments against the TPP in his short newspaper intervention. The threat of an Investor-State Dispute Settlement process in which overseas investors could sue governments for the “cost” to their profits of health, environmental, workers' rights, local media content and other protective legislation was left alone. Concerns about the future of plain packaging of tobacco weren't dealt with, either. Controls over future mining and seam gas activity were skirted, too.

The cost of medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme

(PBS) has many Australians worried. In the US, politically influential pharmaceutical monopolies are pushing for an extension of the current seven year protection of a medicine's patent to 12 years before it is released to potential competitors. Every year this secrecy is maintained costs the PBS millions of dollars. The TPP would further enforce this type of sanctioned price gouging and further sideline Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration. Pressure would build for an increase in the PBS prescription medicine co-payment currently set at \$6.10 for pensioners and \$37.70 for others.

The problem for Australian governments striving to advance US corporate interests via the TPP is that the longer the negotiations drag on, the worse the “deal” looks for workers and others of modest means. It's a problem for the Obama administration in the US because US workers will be worse off, too. Obama is seeking Congressional approval to “fast track” the TPP approval process. No doubt he would like to see the agreement in place by the time he steps down in November – another service rendered to US corporations and their drive to pin down bigger markets with less resistance from target countries. He would also be aware of the strong resistance coming from the US trade union movement and the growing support for its anti-TPP campaign.

Pressure is being put on the governments of Japan and Canada to sell out more of their agricultural sectors. Canada is also being pushed to expose its health system to an assault from the “free trade” agreement. All over the region targeted by the TPP, the potential “losers” are mobilising. Naturally, so are the winners – the US and other transnationals and their servants in high places. How does



one dress up such a lousy deal for the vast majority of the people; to populations to be put into its legislative straight jacket? You sing the praises of “free” markets.

“Our aggressive approach to trade liberalisation is supported by an ongoing economic reform aimed at making us more competitive, as well as attractive to international investors,” as Andrew Robb said.

“Ongoing economic reform and a commitment to trade in Australia has helped build great resilience into our economy, demonstrated by 24 years of growth.” The Coalition and Labor read from the same page on these questions. Decades of “reform” and “growth” have come at enormous cost to workers in terms of decent, secure jobs (particularly those in manufacturing) and in terms

of economic independence and sustainability.

Privatisation, i.e. the theft of public assets, has left the community poorer and with a loss of basic services. If we don't want to see more of this sort of “success story”, workers and others set to lose out under the TPP will have to increase the already impressive level of protest and public education. ✪

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Guardian

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\$4m to perpetuate climate change? No problem!

In a shock move the Abbott government has granted \$4 million to the University of Western Australia to establish a so-called "consensus centre" think tank to be run by conservative Danish economist Dr Bjorn Lomborg. The decision has aroused bitter condemnation because of the government's brutal funding cuts in science and elsewhere.

Sarah Dunlop, head of the University's School of Animal Biology commented: "It appears that \$4 million has been awarded without undergoing independent peer review."

Professor Tim Flannery, former head of the Climate Commission (abolished by the Abbott government along with other climate authorities), says Lomborg has no academic credentials in economics or climate science.

Lomborg, known as a "climate contrarian", says most climate change mitigation measures are useless. He claims he's not a climate change denier because he admits it's taking place. However, he maintains it's not a serious problem, governments needn't take radical steps to deal with it, and funding should be transferred from climate mitigation to other policy areas.

In 2004 his Danish "consensus centre" declared that UN climate change mitigation initiatives should be allocated the lowest priority of all international programs. He believes a temporary cap should be placed on the installation of rooftop solar panels in Australia, pending the arrival of new solar technology and a government commitment to develop nuclear power.

Lomborg's views have been enthusiastically welcomed by leaders of the coal and gas industries. They know that developed nations will begin abandoning coal and gas as an energy source soon, because of public pressure and the emerging cost advantages of renewable energy.

They also know the public will no longer accept the argument that climate change is a myth, or that industrial greenhouse gas emissions have not contributed to it. Their preferred tactic now is to slow down the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources as much as possible. And Lomborg's message suits them down to the ground.

The energy demands of African and Asian countries will increase as they develop, and the coal industry knows this could provide a growing market for coal at the same time as the demand in developed nations diminishes.

Understandably, the industry leaders have rejoiced at Lomborg's claims that citizens of developing nations, "those living in energy poverty", need "reliable, low-cost fossil fuels".

Lomborg's position is tactically ideal for the Abbott government and the fossil fuel industries whose interests the government serves.

Environment Minister Greg Hunt describes Lomborg as "a deep believer of climate science and the fact of human impact on climate", and acclaims his research, which concluded that imposing a carbon tax was ineffective in mitigating climate change.

The government's policy on climate change is now extremely dangerous. Its review of Australia's renewable energy target has effectively crippled the local renewable energy industry, with virtually no recent investment in major new projects.

Australia's emissions continue to rise and the government's "direct action" mitigation plan is ineffectual and rewards polluters.

The government recently tried to block moves by the UK, France and the US to end subsidies for construction of new coal-fired power stations in developing Asian nations.

In effect it opposes the UN's proposed international pact to keep global temperature rise this century below the critical 2 degrees Celsius level. Lomborg says 3 degrees is acceptable, and according to journalist Thom Mitchell scientific modelling on which recent government papers have been based assumes a rise of nearly 3.6 degrees.

However, the International Panel on Climate Change has now highlighted new evidence that the West Antarctica ice sheet is beginning to disintegrate. A total disintegration by 2100, which is possible, would result in a five metre rise, the inundation of coastal cities and the deaths or displacement of millions of people worldwide.

Scientists are also warning of the potential spread of tropical diseases into temperate zones because of climate change. The incidence of extreme weather events is now evident in Australia and elsewhere.

For the sake of this and future generations we must replace the Abbott government with a new progressive government dedicated to taking over the national energy industry, developing a national energy plan and boosting renewable energy development, in order to mitigate climate change. And every minute counts.

PRESS FUND

Woolworths has scrapped an advertisement that sought to associate its products with the memory of thousands of Australian soldiers who died during the First World War. A brewery corporation made an equally disgusting ad that symbolically represented fallen soldiers, with the declaration that we should "raise a glass" (containing the brewery's beer of course) in their honour! Isn't capitalism wonderful? The *Guardian* seeks to honour the working people who've built the nation, not the corporations that even now seek to profit from our disastrous invasion of another country in support of British imperialism a century ago. You can assist by donating to the Press Fund, which helps us cover our operating costs, so please send us something for the next edition. Many thanks to this week's supporters, as follows:

KM \$50, Mark Mannion \$5, "Round Figure" \$15,
Kees Van Loen \$20, SS \$15

This week's total: \$105 Progressive total \$2,925

Fight for the future!

May Day 2015

Young Communists League

May Day is the day workers around the world celebrate the struggle over generations for a better life, against the exploitation and slavery of the employer class that faces them. We stand against the coercion and oppression the world of capital tries to impose on us and fight to free humanity from hunger, poverty, humiliation, brutality and war.

Yet, when we look at Australia today – and most elsewhere in the world – we see the gains of the past are gradually being lost: for the first time this and coming generations of workers can expect living standards lower than the generations before.

In Australia, in less than 15 years the share of national income that goes to wages has slipped from 65.6 percent to 59.7 percent. This has been a period where union coverage has fallen and unions' ability to organise has been constantly undermined by anti-labour laws.

At the same time, the drive for smaller government and budget surpluses and the cutting and privatisation of services and revenue raising public assets can only add to the decline in living standards and wages in relation to cost of living.

For young people in particular the attacks on penalty rates for weekend and other out-of-business-hours work will hit particularly hard.

Many young people are working to support their attendance at school, college or university. The hours

they need to work to pay their way impacts directly on their ability to complete their courses.

This is made even more difficult with cuts to funding for public schools, TAFE and universities, and the increasing cost of enrolling in courses. This next generation of workers will find it harder to get the qualifications that will skill them up and give them the chance to have well paid, quality jobs.

While undercutting the ability to work and learn, the Abbott government in Australia also aims to expand "work for the dole" and extend the time an unemployed person waits before they can get any dole payment. Choices and chances for young workers are becoming fewer and fewer!

And what capitalism has in store for humanity goes way beyond trying to suppress workers' conditions, though that is a key part of it.

Capitalism is in crisis – one of its own making!

It teeters on the edge of economic collapse even as its unaccountable billionaire elites take more and more of society's wealth for themselves. The growing social inequality, the increasing number of "losers" as winners become fewer and fewer is used to justify a growing police surveillance state, while rivalry between imperialist powers – most notably the manoeuvring of USA to remain the "first, last and only" global superpower – is dragging the world towards war. And underlying all this is the environmental catastrophe

towards which we are sliding, which capitalism cannot or will not seriously address.

Capitalism has no future. To end the crisis into which it is driving us we must end capitalism!

History shows that only strong organisation and unity of purpose has won labour any gains against the employer class.

As the workers of this generation, we too must start to develop our own understanding of the way the world works, so we can harness our collective strength and challenge the exploiting class's power and its 'right' to rule.

We must defend the gains workers have made over generations: we must oppose the ruling class's efforts to solve its crisis at our expense. These attacks are aimed at our very ability to lead a decent existence.

But in taking up such struggles we need to build organisational skills and experience, and the political insight to successfully fight the bigger battle in front of us – the struggle to overthrow the global class of exploiters and free ourselves from capitalism altogether.

Young communists understand that if we are to live in an enlightened, civilised society and aspire to "an era of peace, and happier days than the doomed generations under capitalism have known" we must fight to create that future.

We commit ourselves to that struggle and call on others to join us to help create a better world! ✪



Marching through the streets of Adelaide – May Day 2015. For a full national and international report see next week's issue of the *Guardian*. (Photo: Craig Greer)



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Press freedom in danger

Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance report

This has been a dire 12 months for the state of press freedom in Australia – for journalists, for the communities we serve and for sources that trust us to tell their stories.

On October 30 last year, Attorney-General George Brandis admitted that the controversial section 35P of the government's first tranche of national security laws was written with the aim of targeting whistleblowers. "It was primarily, in fact, to deal with a Snowden-type situation," he said. Whistleblower Edward Snowden had worked with journalists to reveal US government officials had routinely and deliberately broken the law.

On February 27 this year, the report of Parliament's Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security revealed that targeting whistleblowers was one of the aims of its metadata retention scheme. Recommendation 27 of the committee's report said journalists' metadata would be accessed "for the purpose of determining the identity of a journalist's sources".

Public interest journalism relies on whistleblowers, the confidential sources that provide crucial information to journalists – sometimes placing both at great risk.

It is a well-known ethical principle of journalism that journalists do not reveal their confidential sources. It's a principle that is vigorously defended because it is the only way many vital stories in the

public interest can ever be told. Whistleblowers turn to journalists to help expose misconduct, illegality, fraud, threats to health and safety, and corruption. Our communities are the better for their courageous efforts to ensure the public's right to know.

If the identity of whistleblowers can be revealed then that has a chilling effect on public interest journalism; sources needing anonymity cannot rely on their contact with a journalist being kept secret. When that happens, we all lose.

The politicians who ignored press freedom concerns about the raft of national security laws failed to understand how confidential sources and public interest journalism are linked.

If you are going after whistleblowers, you are going after journalism.

And even where politicians register their concerns for press freedom, their solutions failed miserably. Take the so-called "safeguard" of journalist information warrants introduced as an amendment to the data retention scheme. The journalist information warrant will operate in secret on pain of a two-year jail term. It relies on "public interest advocates" appointed by the government. It will still allow a journalist's metadata to be accessed to identify a journalist's sources, and the journalist and their media organisation will never know access was granted. Nor will they be able to argue the public

interest in protecting the identity of a whistleblower.

In short, the three tranches of national security legislation passed by the Parliament represent a colossal failure to stand up for press freedom, freedom of expression, privacy, freedom to access information and the public's right to know.

As this 2015 report into the state of press freedom in Australia shows, press freedom has been under assault in many other areas. South Australia continues to reject attempts to introduce a shield law, thus exposing journalists throughout Australia to the prospect of plaintiffs going "jurisdiction shopping".

Tasmania briefly considered breaking away from the uniform national defamation scheme to reintroduce the prospect of corporations suing for damages.

Freedom of information law reform continues to linger in limbo due to successive governments' inaction and a lack of courage in embracing sensible remedies that ensure the public can benefit from truly open government.

And while we are all delighted at the release and homecoming of Peter Grete from his Cairo prison, the retrial of Peter and his colleagues goes on. MEAA is also awaiting the fate of Australian journalist Alan Morison who faces up to seven years in a Thai jail for reprinting a paragraph from a Reuters news report.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the murder of our



If you are going after whistleblowers, you are going after journalism.

colleagues Brian Peters, Malcolm Rennie, Tony Stewart, Gary Cunningham and Greg Shackleton in Balibo and Roger East in Dili in East Timor. MEAA is disappointed that the Australian Federal Police spent five years on examining these war crimes only to abandon their investigation without seeking any co-operation from Indonesia and without any interaction with their counterparts, the Indonesian National

Police. The result is that impunity has triumphed and the killers of the Balibo Five and Roger East have literally got away with murder.

It can only be hoped that over the coming year, greater effort will be made by governments, politicians, government agencies and those who like to talk about championing press freedom to turn away from repressing freedom of expression and actually respect and promote it. ☘

Please don't deport my 9-year-old autistic son

Ma Cecilia Sevilla

My child Tyrone has spent almost his entire life here, English is the only language he hears, yet now, at 9 years of age, the government are going to deport myself and my son to the Philippines because of his autism.

I've worked for years, raising my son and studying to be a nurse. Yet all of it could be taken away because the government thinks that children with autism are going to be more of a cost to Australian

society than a benefit – but that's just not true!

In 2007, I brought Tyrone to Australia with me. He was two and a half. Six months after we arrived he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I studied nursing at TAFE and then at uni and now I'm employed at Townsville Hospital, North Queensland. I've worked for a year as a Registered Nurse and just been promoted to a clinical position. All we want to do is stay in Australia and keep working: caring for patients at work and

supporting my son at his play.

I've applied for a visa to keep working here. Now they've told me it's been refused because of Tyrone. They're saying we are going to be forced to leave, and that I only have 21 days to try and submit an appeal.

Tyrone is not a burden, he is a joy. He's non-verbal, but he still hears and still experiences the world. He is a happy child with a full of life attitude and can lighten the mood of a room with his presence. He doesn't take any medication, and he attends a special school.

The idea that he can't contribute because of his condition is just wrong. People with autism can be excellent at a whole range of things, he just needs to be given a chance!

My son has no reliable relatives in the Philippines who would be capable of caring for him on a long term basis. Tyrone's personal security, human and child rights, and dignity are at stake if he is sent there.

Please help me by asking the Minister to let my son stay on compassionate grounds. The failure to

recognise Tyrone's vulnerability is likely to result in harm and continuing hardship, not only to Tyrone but also to our Australian family unit.

Write a letter to MP Peter Dutton, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, and express your dismay at the rejection of 489 Skilled Visa application of Ma Cecilia Sevilla and Tyrone James Sevilla by the Department of Australian Immigration and ask that he intervene and reverse this decision. ☘

Pete's Corner



Sydney

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invites comrades and friends to join us for our

Port Jackson Discussion Hour

Tuesday May 19

Why you should be afraid of the TPP

Introduced by Comrade Steve

Tuesday June 2

Should Aborigines be included in the Constitution?

Introduced by Comrade Hannah

Tuesday June 16

The US military pivot revisited

Introduced by Comrade Hannah

All classes 5:30 pm
at 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills
Enquiries: Hannah 0418 668 098

The Bali 9 Duo and the Indonesian military in SE Asia

The Information Officer of the Australia East Timor Association (AETFA), SA, Andrew Alcock, has issued the following statement on the deaths of the Bali 9 Duo, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, and the nature of the regime that has been ruling Indonesia since 1965:

All people who believe in human rights, compassion and fairness are rightly appalled at the execution of the Bali 9 Duo, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran.

It is totally understandable that there is a great outpouring of grief due to the deaths of these two young men who had regretted their involvement in the drug trade and were spending their lives to help others.

The Indonesian government must be condemned for the way these executions occurred and its treatment of the Chan and Sukumaran families and the Australian government.

However, why should anybody who has followed the history of Indonesia over the past 50 years be surprised about the behaviour of this government and its military, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI)?

It could well be asked why Indonesia had not faced international political sanctions long before now.

In 1965, the CIA assisted the TNI to overthrow the democratically elected government of former president Sukarno and install the dictator, General Mohamed Suharto. In the early 1960s, the US, under former president John Kennedy, interfered with the decolonisation process being organised by the Dutch government of the day to give independence to

Suharto was the dictator of Indonesia from 1965 until 1998. During those 33 years, the TNI committed genocide and sickening human rights abuses in Indonesia, West Papua, East Timor (now Timor-Leste) and Aceh. Indonesian human rights observers say that the TNI murdered three million after the 1965 coup, which is a much higher estimate than Amnesty International's estimate of between half a million to a million.

It has also been particularly repressive against some ethnic groups in the Indonesian archipelago because they want to be free of the TNI brutality eg the people of the Maluku Province (the Moluccan Islands). The TNI is responsible for the deaths of about 400,000 West Papuans since its occupation of that country in 1962; the wiping out of a quarter to a third of the population of East Timor during its 24-year illegal occupation of that country and tens of thousands of Acehnese.

In West Papua, hardly a week goes by without reports of murders, rapes, torture and other human rights abuses being committed in West Papua. The Freeport McMoRan corporation employs the TNI to conduct security at the Grasberg mines and this has been used as an excuse by TNI officers to conduct terrorism



Suharto with US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, January 14, 1998.

The criminal actions of Indonesian governments for a period of over 50 years should have meant that it was accorded international pariah status a long time ago.

Australian leaders only have to look at their own track record in

this include lack of Indonesian cooperation and Australian government machinations.

In addition, from time to time, a number of TNI officers known to be involved in war crimes have been guests of government agencies.

little. In a few months' time, the executions will have been forgotten and the Indonesian government and the TNI will just continue their brutal methods.

We must not forget that no senior TNI officer has been brought to justice for the mass murders, barbaric human rights abuses, the repression or mayhem the Indonesian military has committed in the past 50 or so years. This is not a government that values democracy, human rights, social justice or the rule of law or doing anything effective to combat its notorious corruption or that of its military.

It seems to AETFA SA that more appropriate actions against this rogue regime would be to introduce a cessation of all military and police aid to Indonesia until it withdraws from West Papua, ceases its brutality in the region and takes actions against the war criminals and human rights abusers in the TNI. In addition, it could encourage other nations through the UN to organise international boycotts similar to the one that was instituted against the apartheid regime in South Africa and to establish an international tribunal to try the alleged war criminals in the TNI.

Because of its compliance to US, Indonesian and Israeli policies and practices, Australia is seen internationally as a nation that is not committed to international social justice, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. For many Australians who believe in a fair go, this causes great shame. We need to be doing much more to work for peace, justice and human development in our region.

This situation could be changed if our leaders devoted themselves to making Australia an independent and non-aligned nation that was firmly committed to the principles referred to above. ☺

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the people of West Papua.

The US was interested in the gold, copper and other minerals in this country and this was the reason why it used its political leverage to ensure that West Papua became part of Indonesia, even though its people are Melanesians and not Asians. Just as it had done in the case of Israel's take over of Palestinian land by force, the UN shamefully endorsed the outcome of the Act of Free Choice in West Papua of 1969 which was carried out with little effective supervision by the UN and which occurred with much TNI brutality.

The US Freeport McMoRan corporation controls the largest gold mine and the third largest copper mine in the world at Grasberg in West Papua, from which it has made huge profits over the years. The tax from the minerals taken from the mines is one of the largest inputs into the Indonesian economy.

against the local people.

However, the mainstream media and western governments that so often preach to others about democracy, the rule of law and human rights, studiously ignore what is happening there.

So while the current Australian government is rightly angry about the arrogant and callous attitude about this state murder by the Joko Widodo government, there are many more important reasons why action should have been taken by Australia and the international community against this extremely brutal government and its military before now. The TNI is described by some as the largest terrorist force in our region because of its murderous behaviour since 1965. In addition, it is also very corrupt as is Indonesia's legal system. After all, the judges in the case of the Bali 9 Duo wanted bribes not to decide on the death sentence.

its relations with Indonesia. Since 1965 they have either endorsed or been apologists for some of Indonesia's unacceptable behaviour including the murder of the Balibo 5, the five Australian-based media workers, who were savagely murdered by the TNI in 1975 during an incursion into East Timor before the full-scale invasion. These men committed no crime. They just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Australian leaders and security covered up this crime – just as they did about the massacres that occurred in East Timor throughout the TNI occupation. In 2007, a NSW coronial inquiry into the deaths found that the TNI had a case to answer and that there should be an investigation by the Australian Federal Police (AFP). After very little effective investigation by the AFP, the investigation was called off in 2014. Reasons for

Such craven appeasement over the past decades invites the arrogant responses we have seen from Indonesian leaders just recently. Like the Israeli leaders, they know that they will be protected by the US no matter what outrageous actions they perform. They know that the US considers Indonesia to be a US client state and they know that Australia almost always toe the line in relation to US policies.

When Geoffrey Robertson QC, the renowned Australian international human rights lawyer commented on the executions of Chan, Sukumaran and their fellow victims, he stated emphatically that a diplomatic response by itself will not achieve very much and that tough political action is required.

The tame response of the Abbott government to withdraw the Australian ambassador to Indonesia is extremely weak and will achieve

Victory Day 70th Anniversary

The heroic defeat of fascism

The defeat of fascism required the most destructive and monstrous war in history and its consequences are still being felt around the world. The defeat of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy Japanese militarism – the decisive contribution from the Soviet Union – was, at the same time, a defeat for imperialism everywhere.

Immediately after the Nazis seized power in Germany in 1933 the Soviet Union and communist parties worldwide warned that Nazism and fascism meant war and the destruction of all working class and progressive organisations. The Nazis violently smashed trade unions and all liberal opinion. Virulent anti-communist and anti-Jewish propaganda flooded the German people. In the German cities blackshirts and brownshirts prowled the streets terrorising all who opposed the Hitler regime, ransacking homes, offices and places of worship, arresting and torturing dissidents, and destroying books in massive public bonfires.

Hitler denounced the treaties imposed on Germany following WW1 and commenced the rearmament of Germany. He intended to take his revenge for Germany's defeat in WW1 and for the seizure of German colonies by Britain and France.

Far from opposing Nazism, however, the political leaders of Britain and France and a number of other western countries believed that they could use Hitler to destroy what they saw as a far greater danger to their power and privileges – the Bolsheviks of the Soviet Union.

The socialist USSR was an example that a new social system bringing an end to capitalist exploitation was possible. It was a hindrance to the plans of the imperialist states to re-divide the world's markets and control the resources of the colonies to their own advantage.

While the governments of the US, Britain and France wanted to unite the capitalist world against the Soviet Union by forming a compact with Hitler's Germany, the capitalists of Germany sought such a union through the subjugation of other capitalist countries.

Some imperialist politicians saw this contradiction clearly – Churchill in Britain, Barthou in France, Roosevelt in the US – but they were the minority. Most were so blinded by anti-communism that they were prepared to give the fascists a free hand.

Praised Hitler

In Australia, Robert Menzies publicly praised Hitler and helped the Japanese militarist regime arm for war with exports of strategically important resources. Barthou brought the USSR into the League of Nations and, as Germany and Japan left it, the Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov began the fight for the adoption of the principle of collective security.

However, influential leaders of the capitalist powers believed that German fascism was the only bulwark against Bolshevism. They confidently expected that a re-armed Germany would sweep to the East and destroy the centre of the Red contagion – the USSR.

Western leaders consistently rejected calls for collective security – it was intended to restrain aggressors, and could only be aimed at Hitler's Germany.



A woman passes by a banner in central Moscow on advertising Victory Day celebrations.

The resistance and the victories of the Soviet Red Army inspired the struggles of the people in the occupied countries

Instead, Germany was helped to rearm, to re-occupy the Rhineland, to force through an Anschluss with Austria (basically Germany was allowed to seize the country).

When Germany moved to occupy Czechoslovakia, which had a strong army and an advanced armament industry, the imperialists found themselves in a quandary.

The British and French public demanded that their governments support the independence of Czechoslovakia while the strategic aims of the British and French rulers called for Czechoslovakia to be given to Hitler.

A conference of the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Italy held in Munich betrayed Czechoslovakia and handed that country to Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union was not invited to attend.

The Soviet Union offered to stand by Czechoslovakia without France if necessary. But while Czech Communist MPs demanded that President Beneš request Soviet assistance, he refused.

Hypocritical

The British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned to London from Munich following the conference with Hitler to make one of the great hypocritical utterances of all time. Waving Hitler's signature on the Munich agreement he declared "It means peace in our time". It was called appeasement.

For anyone with eyes, the aims of the imperialists were now clear. Nevertheless, the Soviet government tried once again to forge a collective security agreement with Britain against the Nazis.

A British delegation went to Moscow. The Prime Minister had flown to Munich to see Hitler and betray Czechoslovakia, but only a minor Foreign Office official was sent to Moscow.

He did not fly but went by a steamer with a top speed of only 12 knots. When he finally arrived he revealed that he had no power to sign an agreement – he could only discuss one. His visit was merely a sop to British public opinion. The USSR was being left to face Germany alone.

At this juncture the contradictions between the Franco/British and German capitalists became crucial. Germany sent its Foreign Minister to Moscow to offer a non-aggression pact. The Soviet government, having failed in its efforts to forge a collective security agreement against the Nazis, agreed to sign a Soviet-German non-aggression pact.

Stupefied

The British and French imperialists were stupefied. The chickens of appeasement had come home to roost. Before long Germany invaded Poland and a distraught Chamberlain had to declare war and declared significantly at the time, "All our plans have fallen to the ground".

Except at sea, however, the declaration of war was accompanied by little military action. The reactionary leaders of Britain and France patiently waited for Germany to do as Hitler had indicated he would – attack the USSR. Instead, he invaded the Low Countries and France and commenced the bombing of Britain. He would not now invade the USSR until he had

subjugated France and severely crippled Britain.

However, when Hitler did invade the Soviet Union, he discovered that it was not isolated as the German capitalists and those who aided and abetted Hitler had anticipated. Churchill had replaced Chamberlain as British Prime Minister.

The Soviet leadership had skillfully exploited the contradictions between the blocs of capitalist states and, backed by the popular anti-fascist struggles of the people around the world, was able to forge a formidable anti-fascist coalition. And, to the horror of the capitalist class everywhere, the "Soviet rabble" fought tenaciously for their country and their socialist way of life.

Advanced

The Red Army turned out to be technologically and industrially advanced – the Soviet T34 was the finest tank of the war. In the heavily armoured close ground-support Stormovik fighter-bomber the Soviet forces had a virtual flying tank that had no counterpart in any other army. Fearsome batteries of truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers ripped hell out of the German armies.

Before the year was out the Soviet Red Army had not only stopped the German advance but had inflicted the first major defeat of the war on the hitherto "invincible" Wehrmacht in the Battle of Moscow. Workers and democratically-minded people everywhere were inspired by their resistance and rejoiced in their victories. Guerrilla resistance to German occupation grew rapidly in the occupied countries of Europe.

In England, to the alarm of

capitalists, the Red Army was viewed with something akin to awe. None-the-less, except for the ardent support of British and US factory workers, the Red Army fought largely alone for almost three years. American commentators would have you believe that the US was the mainstay of the Soviet war effort, but in fact supplies from the US and elsewhere accounted for only four percent of Soviet war supplies.

The factories created under socialism's five-year plans to industrialise the country produced the other 96 percent of Soviet war material. When winter came, it was the "efficient" German war machine that was unprepared, whose men froze, whose fuels froze, and whose planes could not get off the ground.

British and US supplies and the Russian winter are credited by anti-Soviet historians with defeating the Nazis, but both claims are false.

Winter is hardly a secret weapon, nor does it affect only one side of the front line. The German High Command failed to prepare for it, the Soviet Supreme Command – and the Soviet State – did.

Collective security and an anti-Nazi front was finally created in the crucible of the war but the failure to form such a front when it was first proposed cost the lives of millions of people.

The resistance and the victories of the Soviet Red Army inspired the struggles of the people in the occupied countries and made the Second World War a just, anti-fascist liberation struggle. The defeat of Nazism had long term consequences, a fact that is still influencing events in the world today. ☺

Planning chaos

Scott Scottdale interviews
Professor John McMurtry
for *Canadian Challenger*

John McMurtry is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and his work is published and translated from Latin America to Japan. He is the author and editor of the three-volume *Philosophy and World Problems* published by UNESCO's Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems, and his latest book is *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism/From Crisis to Cure*.

SS: You have said that "the trick of the endless US-led wars in the Middle East is to control both sides so as to ensure against sovereign states able to defend the common interests of their peoples". Please explain.

JM: Whenever any nation has an independent government with fossil fuel, financial, agricultural or strategic resources not yet subjugated to transnational corporate control, there is a US-led campaign to destroy it. Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Syria have all experienced this over many decades. It dates from the overthrow of the social-democratic president Mossadegh of Iran in 1953 to Syria's still mildly independent social state being destroyed to the roots today.

Lebanon was a civilised centre of the Middle East before warred upon by Israel in 1982 and has been civil-war divided ever since. Iraq's region-leading social state with universal health-care, free higher education, public water and electricity, local agricultural and food subsidies has been subjected to genocidal destruction and civil war imposition from 1990 to now, with Syria being destroyed by foreign-supported civil war from 2011.

Once CIA-agent and coup leader Saddam Hussein could not destroy Iraq's oil-worker-led society from within after his US-supplied war against Iran was over, Iraq was attacked on contrived pretexts – the constant excuse for non-stop war crimes in the Middle-East – and the state was irreversibly destroyed "because it was floating on a sea of oil" (Wolfowitz's phrase).

Iraq is a model example of controlling both sides of the ever-shifting Middle-East wars to seize the assets of all, and so too the NATO bombing and jihadi overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya whose socialised oil state was even more developed than Iraq's with public programs and infrastructures, including quasi-free homes for young couples.

Libya's long-time leader was first welcomed into the Western fold after 2000 and his opponents deported and renditioned by British M-15. Then jihadis were joined by massive NATO 'humanitarian bombing' in 2011 to overthrow his social state, and Libya too is now in civil war chaos. Induced civil wars are the divide-and-rule policy across borders, and especially successful social states like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya where their people are clearly better off than neighbouring peoples under US diktat.

A better example of society is always prohibited even by war criminal attacks – as in Yugoslavia and Nicaragua in the 1980s, and Ukraine today. All are orchestrated into sectarian insanity and internecine wars. At the same time vast new profits, resources, lands, price climbs, markets, agribusiness and – most of all – looting of public resources and finances by private foreign financiers and corporations proceeds more freely with stable social fabrics destroyed, not only in the victim societies but at home.

SS: How does ISIL connect to all this?

JM: The historical background is that US-financed Islamic fundamentalism coupled with royal absolutism has come to rule inside and outside governments – Saudi Arabia being the prime example. When I travelled overland through the Middle East including North Africa decades ago, secular "Arab socialism" was the rule led by Nasser and Egypt, and Islam was the background mass religion. Then a great US-led policy turn occurred in which fanatic jihadis were financed and armed across the region to ensure against "communism", the Great Satan of the US.

The massive funding and arming of jihadis as a war machine began with the

US-orchestrated civil war in the then quasi-socialist secular state of Afghanistan to bleed the Soviet Union dry.

Since the 9-11 construction, the US with local allies has increasingly sponsored jihadis of every kind to take down any remaining social state while also justifying their oil-for-weapons empires producing no life good but only death and destitution. Observe the connections today. Private armaments and military servicing corporations drain the public treasuries of the US and allied royal states trading oil for arms in the trillions, while financed jihadis provide justification for all the death machines and attack target states at the same time.

The civil war model of long-term society destruction to freely loot its resources has continued to the present day in a strategic arc of devastating civil wars from Pakistan to Iraq to Muslim Africa – not to mention now in Europe itself in Ukraine after the Chechnya civil war in Russia was ended. ISIL is a supremely atavistic instrument of the civil-war strategy.

The US-Israel sponsored split of the originally secular-socialist PLO (Palestine Liberation Army) into warring factions, where the demonised Hamas was itself sponsored by Israel to divide it. ISIL today continues it at a more diabolical extreme – originally funded and armed by the very US-led forces now dropping bombs on it in Syria.

Israel even gives ISIL terrorists hospital service on the Syrian border after Mossad and the CIA trained them as a largely ex-Saddam jihad army.

If one wonders how a desert-crawling line of Japanese open-back trucks gifted by the US filled with countless irregular fighters in plain view could ever have made it overnight to the point where Western military and political leaders are saying "the war against ISIL may be interminable", one begins to see through the game.

ISIL is a construction financed and trained by covert US and oil-king allies that ruins every place it enters, like Syria once the regime began to win the civil war. Al-Nusra/Al-Qaeda was not enough. ISIL is a step up in the US-led control of the Middle East by terror, chaos and social devastation. "The Salvador option" was the first name for the post-war death squads in Iraq, but "Islamic State" stirs much more apocalyptic passions pro and con.

Best of all, the ruling foreign war machines of the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia and NATO are now far better justified to "fight the barbaric terrorists". Saudi Arabia with US support is now even projecting the "terrorist" and sectarian "Shiite" labels on the popular uprising of the poor in Yemen against a corrupt US-Saudi puppet government.

SS: If someone were to say, this is "another conspiracy theory," how would you reply?

JM: It is the very opposite of a conspiracy theory. Civil war chaos has been instituted across agents, places and times. The underlying pattern of destroying evolved societies and their collective control of life resources is far deeper. The only diagnostic model that fits all the hallmark characteristics is a runaway cancer system at the macro level with no social immune recognition.

It is unflagged even as it keeps hollowing out more societies towards social collapse. Look for disconfirming evidence of the objective pattern – for example, a society made better rather than worse anywhere in the Middle East since 1991. The divide and rule reign of civil destruction is now deep into the US and Israel themselves, with civil war or its repression now pervasive in the Arab world.

This was not originally gamed as the outcome. US geostrategic planners are social morons by the nature of their game model, as I have explained in my *The Moral Decoding of 9-11: Beyond the US Criminal State*. But the invariable result of the civil wars they foment and manipulate still forces other societies' resources open to private corporate control and exploitation without limit until they move onto the next.

You do not even need corporate trade agreements to do it. Even if the US people themselves keep being bled dry, their common interests stripped out by military and financial claws in the trillions every year. Plundering



Whenever any nation has an independent government with fossil fuel, financial, agricultural or strategic resources there is a US-led campaign to destroy it.

public purses and resources across continents is the unseen means.

There are myriad masks of the disorder. Now Kenya and Nigeria too join the jihadi-split nations to open a state of permanent war, looting and profit with no social organisation to stop it. In Venezuela and Ukraine peoples fight back, but the same civil war method unfolds across continents with few connecting the dots.

Twenty-five years after the dismantling of Yugoslavia into atavistic nationalisms steeped in the Nazi past, the same happens again in Ukraine. One outcome has become predictable across borders. Socially organised development is reversed for a private transnational feeding frenzy on collective financial, agricultural, natural and strategic resources of the victim societies.

But Palestine, even seeking protection of international law, is openly threatened and its taxes seized by Israel with US support. When Palestine joins UNESCO by invitation, the US defunds UNESCO. This is not a conspiracy. It is a lawless rule of normalised terror, life destruction and tyrannical oppression.

SS: How does Harper/Canada fit into all this?

JM: Canada is very privileged with vast natural resources. It is not historically soaked in blood, and has evolved a civil culture without fanatic "isms". Yet after Alberta Reform swallowed the Progressive Conservative Party with money from Big Oil and the retailer Eaton's, PM Harper incarnates the divide-and-rule war method.

His CEO rule strips Canada of its social life infrastructures and public tax funds in the name of the nation, while serving only private market powers to multiply and pillage across borders. This is his program, and there is no exception to it. Now Canada is aerial bombing in Arab lands from Libya to Syria – also funded by public money – even though the target ISIL beheaders now have been trained and financed by the allied states bombing them. Up North his regime now trains and supplies a violent coup US-installed regime whose one-way aerial bombing of East-Ukraine civilians and infrastructures has driven two million people from their homes.

Whatever one's own preferences, the morality in charge means only what serves the transnational corporate system. This is the market God which now dwarfs all world religions in power to dictate and destroy and capture imagination. Its cornerstone of defence for war crimes is to blame another enemy – as with the Nazis "terrorists" are those who block or resist its rule.

The differences between Canada and Palestine or Syria are obvious at the level of

conventionalised horror and life deprivation. But the underlying value system is the same in principle. The master driver is the solely ruling compulsion to turn private money demand into maximally more private money demand without limit, border or higher purpose at all. This is called "freedom".

Not even eco-genocide can be seen through its prism. Yet few dare recognise the blind war against life itself which spreads the more its fatal disorder is denied and rationalised away.

SS: How does Islam fit into this destruction of societies by corporate globalisation?

JM: Civilising Islam long ago worked – as, for example, in architecture-rich Moorish Spain from the eighth century to 1492 when a rising European imperialism launched its genocidal seizures and destructions of other people's life bases across continents.

Degenerate versions of "Islam" from absolutist oil-kings to jihadist death squads have followed, and whatever their pretences, they serve only the underlying agenda of corporate money-sequence globalisation. They keep peoples superstitiously suggestible, and force obedience by violence and threats.

Collective life-serving programs for all – as found in Iraq and Libya before the saturation bombings – have disappeared into the Arab past almost altogether. The corporate state now rules. Even "austerity programs" have been instituted across the Middle East, with public health and free higher education, social security of the person, ecological regulation, not funded.

Islam confined to ritual repetitions and prohibitions without social life standards does not confront the corporate money-sequence idolatry. It allows submission to life-blind rules of oppression as "submission to God's will".

Mass submission, resignation, obedience, faith without organisation beyond faction, parallels the dispossessed masses of the West. The "Arab Spring" itself – which never pronounced one public policy – seems to have been a construction dividing the people into even more helpless impotence of collective self-determination. People think "well at least they got rid of Mubarak." Down the memory hole goes the fact that Mubarak was a marked man after he refused to commit Egypt to the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq which he prophetically declared "would open the gates of Hell".

SS: You emphasise the "ad adversarium fallacy" as the dominant "track-switch of people's thought" which always diverts their attention away from humanity's underlying real problems.

JM: A simple example would be accusing me of being "a communist" or "an unbeliever" or "a conspiracy theorist" for what I say above.

Indonesia at a crossroads

Nithin Coca

It is, quite possibly, the biggest political battle in Indonesia's young democratic history. On one side, the Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK), or Anti-Corruption Commission, which enjoys the backing of the Indonesian people; on the other, the National Police, cited as one of the most corrupt institutions in surveys carried out by Transparency International, seemingly bent on undermining the KPK's autonomy.

The first punch was thrown earlier this year when the KPK named police chief nominee Budi Gunawan as a bribery suspect, leading the police to retaliate by arresting and charging two KPK commissioners with what many see as trumped-up, falsified charges.

What happens next could determine the future of Indonesia's critically important fight against corruption, as well as seriously impact the democratic and economic future of all of Southeast Asia.

The rise (and fall?) of the KPK

In 2000, Indonesia was facing a crisis. With an economy in shambles and a new democracy, there were many fears that the political legacy of the three-decade-long Suharto dictatorship – namely, cronyism and corruption – could damage the country's future.

Back then, Transparency International ranked Indonesia near the bottom of its annual corruption report, with a score of 1.9 (100 pointing to very low corruption in public institutions). Indonesia's score showed that there was rampant corruption at nearly every level of government.

Donors, including the World Bank, and civil society pushed the Indonesian government to create a strong entity to fight corruption. That's how the KPK was born in 2002, embarking on its mission with a zeal unseen in Indonesian politics for decades.

Its record has been outstanding so far – 86 cases tried, 86 convictions, a 100-per-cent rate that acts as the gold standard for anti-corruption agencies.

"The KPK is clearly seen as one of the strongest anti-corruption institutions in the world, and shows recognition that this is a serious problem worth tackling," said Samantha Grant, Regional Co-ordinator for Southeast Asia at Transparency International.

"If the police win, we will find the corrupt acting with impunity."

One of the watershed moments took place in 2009, when the KPK named Aulia Pohan as a suspect and proceeded to try him. Pohan was a relative of then-President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and was sentenced to four and a half years in prison for embezzling 100 billion IDR (US\$7 million) from the Indonesian Banking Development Foundation.

The mere fact that the KPK would try a family member of the president, something unheard of in the Suharto era, went a long way in winning the hearts of many Indonesians.

"KPK, as an institution, is the only one which still holds the public's trust," said Natalia Soebagjo, Executive Director of the University of Indonesia's Centre for the Study of Governance, adding that "the police and the judiciary are acknowledged as the most corrupt institutions in the country."

The police have emerged as the old guard's strongest ally and thus the KPK's chief enemy. This should come as no surprise – fighting a government rife with corruption is no way to make friends. This is the third time the police have tried directly to attack and weaken the KPK. In the past, presidential intervention has saved it. This time, however, the police might finally succeed.

As of now, the KPK's case against Gunawan has been withdrawn, but the two arrested commissioners are still facing charges, and have been replaced with "interim" members that many in Indonesia's civil society fear are



...ces not yet subjugated to transnational corporate control,

The topic is diverted to a familiar hate-object of the audience. Corporate mass media and politicians do this as their stock in trade. It gets attention and usually sells. This blame-the-enemy diversion dominates across cultures, but is almost never named. It runs so deep into the group psyche that not even logicians, psychologists and cognitive scientists define it.

Once diverted to the hate-object of the group – say "Saddam" or "Putin" or "state socialist" or "terrorist" – most people block out disproving facts so as to remain acceptable to the surrounding group. Challenge by evidence or reason is derailed onto blaming a known enemy of the audience.

This is the underlying track-switch of thought upon which all mass-murderous wars and system oppressions depend, as well as most propaganda of daily life. It is the cornerstone of American ideology which has no common ground but animosity to the latest designated enemy. Yet not even academics will stand up to the accusation of "Putin-lover", "9-11 conspiracy theorist", "communist", or whoever the shifting enemy may be. US Republicans and branch-plant Harperism now rely on this enemy-hate for every attack ad and proclamation.

This is why evidence, public statistics, knowledge of anything outside the game, is not now safe in corporate states. Public knowledge itself is the ultimate enemy of the whole game. That which sees, documents, shares, certifies, distributes, or organises to prove and act for the public good is forbidden in a thousand ways, even in Canada – the secret behind the Harper agenda of information control – from de-funding and de-listing progressive NGOs, to gags on government ministries and scientists, to allowing only his photographer's pictures into the mass media.

In the Middle East, silencing is by drones, secret police, bombing, special forces, mind-stopping lies, and unending murder, mayhem and terror in imposed civil wars. Always the ultimate operation is to blame the enemy for all that goes wrong – even if the enemy is the endless victim, as in Palestine. In the case of Israel, the imperialist nation with its boot in the face of the people is for the first time in history proclaimed as the victim.

"Who is denying whose right to exist?" is not a question asked. "Who is throwing stones at Goliath in Israel today?" is an unspeakable thought. Total reversal, blaming the oppressed for what you are doing, endless diversions to the designated enemy, is the ultimate lie of today's human condition. But it today rules the Middle East by a more complex process of shifting wars and hates than ever before.

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Trojan horses who will destroy the KPK from within. There is no signal that the country's new president, Joko Widodo, will intervene.

Regional impacts

This is a big year for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the EU-like apparatus that brings together the diverse countries of Southeast Asia. Indonesia is its largest member, and it is seen as a model for the region, having shifted from a dictatorship to a multiparty democracy in less than two decades.

The KPK is a big part of that success, and many cite it as a reason that Indonesia's democracy has proven so resilient. The implications of a weakened KPK and the abandonment of the country's fight against corruption are huge.

The reverberations will affect not only public trust, but Indonesia's global image and ability to attract international investment. In fact, international investors are increasingly concerned about corruption, closely monitoring the situation in Indonesia.

"Corruption is becoming more and more of an issue for companies, which are always looking to reduce their risk," said Samantha Grant, adding that if the KPK is weakened, she expects that Indonesia's incoming foreign direct investment will suffer as a consequence. Moreover, with the coming of ASEAN integration, it may be not just Indonesia, but the whole region that will be impacted.

"More and more companies are looking at ASEAN as one economic block ... What one country does with regards to corruption will affect the entire region more," explained Grant.

There are wider concerns for governance, too. Southeast Asia is a region with few democracies and little free press and, apart from Singapore, it has widespread, high levels of entrenched corruption. Countries like the Philippines, with its floundering, weak anti-corruption ombudsman, have looked at Indonesia as a model for improving their own anti-corruption fights, but may now find that this model is broken.

Another country affected by Indonesia's internal strife may be Burma, which enjoys close ties with Indonesia, whom it sees as a guide for a possible transition from military dictatorship to an open, multi-ethnic democracy. At the moment, Burma is in the process of drafting its own anti-corruption legislation, and there were hopes that it could replicate its own version of the KPK ahead of critical elections later this year. That is now in jeopardy.

Recommitting to the fight

During the reign of General Suharto from 1967 to 1998, corruption was a way of life for many government officials. Even today, corruption remains a daily concern for many Indonesians, who report regularly paying bribes to police and local officials. The KPK is just one institution, with a relatively narrow focus on high-level government officials. Though it has made an impact and brought the anti-corruption fight to the mainstream, the fight is only just beginning.

"There is still a high level of entrenched corruption in Indonesia's key institutions," said Grant. The blame for the continued menace lies not with the KPK, which only has a limited mandate, but in the fact that the country has not implemented effective KPK-style institutions at regional and local levels.

Thus, what Indonesia needs is not a weaker KPK, but a strong, national recommitment to the anti-corruption fight which began in 2002, but remains crucial to the country's future today. Only then can its democratic potential be reached.

The alternative is dire, according to Natalia. "If the police win, we will find the corrupt acting with impunity, our natural resources plundered and our economy weakened due to the lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies," she said.

New Internationalist ✚

Protests for justice will grow

Margaret Baldrige

BALTIMORE: After a week of numerous peaceful, daily protests throughout Baltimore City over the police murder of 25-year-old African American Freddie Gray, something suddenly and dramatically changed on Monday last week.

News reports were showing students jumping on police vehicles and throwing rocks at police, looting and smashing windows.

And people across the city were asking each other and googling an answer to the question: "What is this 'Purge' phenomenon?" – a phenomenon which spread on social media Monday afternoon and helped to spark violence at the close of the school day.

People's World readers might Google the word "Purge" and look at the trailer to the movie *The Purge: Anarchy* to hear the incredibly inflammatory idea promoted in the movie that "all crime including murder will be legal for 12 hours."

The students in question left Douglass High School in West Baltimore at 3 pm and headed to Mondawmin Mall where they normally catch the bus to go home. Police, falsely expecting gang trouble, held up the buses. Frustrated and agitated, the students started throwing rocks at the police who by now were in riot gear, and the ensuing mayhem was looped over and over again on wrap-around news on Monday and Tuesday.

Frederick Douglass High School, established in 1883 for African Americans in Baltimore, is the oldest continuously operating public high school in the United States. In not-too-distant history the school was known in Baltimore for its premier academic and music programs, producing award-winning marching bands, nationally known musicians such as Cab Calloway and Metropolitan Opera star, Junetta Jones, as well as Supreme Court Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall.

After a recent period of decline, the school is now in its third year of a "school turnaround," making strides in various academic areas.

But in the overall context of Maryland's public education system, inequality in school funding, exacerbated by cuts to Baltimore City in this year's state budget under Republican Governor Larry Hogan, puts tremendous pressure on the city's schools. Sports, art and academic programs are often considered unaffordable "luxuries."



Repetitive images of destruction of property being shown in the mass media takes away from the real message of the protests, the need for systemic change in the police department.

For years musical instruments have remained in closets, unused, for lack of "excessed" music teachers. There was an uproar by parents and students earlier this month when it was announced that the popular and successful Advanced Placement Summer Academy, Baltimore's only summer enrichment program for academically advanced students, will be eliminated this summer.

Despite intense lobbying by the Baltimore Teachers Union and community groups in the just-ended legislative session in Annapolis, the education budget for the Baltimore City Public Schools was dramatically cut by the state. City schools CEO, Gregory Thornton, was forced to propose in mid-April a budget cut of \$17.8 million to city schools,

effectuated "through cost-cutting and departmental reorganisations and the cutting of 120 funded positions," according to the *Baltimore Sun*.

Ironically this pared-down BCPS budget was scheduled to be voted on Tuesday, April 28, the day that the Baltimore City Schools and government offices were closed down because of the civil unrest in the city.

At the precise time that the school board was scheduled to vote on its slash and cut budget Tuesday night, Baltimore youth were organising to show the world an accurate picture of Baltimore's youthful talent and potential. Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, a self-described "grass roots think tank" which had mobilised the public to engage in lobbying efforts in Annapolis in the wake of Ferguson to advance 17 police accountability bills, cancelled its "Protests to Policy" forum and put out instead a call for people to come to downtown Baltimore to discuss "sustainable solutions to end police brutality in Baltimore."

The meeting started at 6:30 pm to guarantee that people could get home before the 10 pm curfew set by Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake, which is scheduled to be in effect for a week.

Three hundred young (mostly young) and old, black, Latino, and white citizens met at the Real News Network (therealnews.com) building, one block from the barricaded City Hall, to discuss short, mid and long-term strategies proposed by Davon Love, a leader of LBS. The event was moderated by a young woman from Baltimore's Algebra Project. Discussion was informative and unifying.

At the end of the meeting I spoke with Justin Whye, president of the International Student Association of the University of Baltimore who was at the meeting with some members of

his association. Since their university was closed, they had spent the day at Pennsylvania and North Avenues, an intersection of West Baltimore where damage to buildings had taken place on Monday, helping many other citizens clean up the rubble.

There was a heartening sense of community and solidarity, even a marching band, Justin reported. He watched an older Korean woman symbolically "shoving back" a police up-armoured vehicle.

Justin said he was sickened by the repetitive images of destruction of property being shown in the mass media which takes away from the real message of the protests, the need for systemic change in the police department.

He felt that Baltimore City is at a "tipping point." Will it now address the underlying issues of racism, poverty, jobs, poor housing which the weeks of protest highlighted, or will it emerge from this week unchanged?

At first I misunderstood what Justin was saying about why the University of Baltimore was closed for the day. It was closed, Justin said, to give students the opportunity to interact with the community. "Our campus is the city," he said. "People were marching through our campus." The tee shirt Justin was wearing, designed by a friend, said "Our History is Your History" – referring to the need to understand the interconnectedness of black and white struggles in Baltimore. "You have to have allies," he said.

Just as social media apparently played a negative role in mobilising high school students to assemble at Mondawmin for a "purge," so too was Justin Whye's point of view spread through social media. "Because we're international, we have the input of people all over the world. They hold us to a higher

standard. Their energy fuels us to do our job better," he said.

On Tuesday Governor Hogan declared a "state of emergency" and actuated the Maryland National Guard, ostensibly to bring order to Baltimore City. Numerous faith-based and community groups, schools and young citizens like Justin had other creative solutions.

Two hundred students from Morgan State University in NE Baltimore, as reported in an email blast by its president, Dr David Wilson, "ventured into several neighbourhoods throughout the city to engage in a massive clean-up effort." In the afternoon neighbours from my community, Winston-Govans, held signs, "We love our community" at three busy intersections, encouraging cars to honk. Today the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra played a "run-out" open air concert at noon to bring hope and courage to the City.

This coming Friday held expectation for the people of Baltimore. It is the day we were led to believe we would be told if criminal charges would be brought against the six police officers involved in the death of Freddie Gray [six officers have been charged, from manslaughter to assault Ed]. A *Baltimore Sun* poll on Tuesday asked: Do you expect criminal charges to be brought against any of the police officers involved in the fatal arrest of Freddie Gray? 61 percent of respondents said yes.

Now we are being told that we were mistaken, that we were never promised a statement on Friday. We were also asked to believe that Freddie Gray's neck wasn't broken when police dragged him to the police van on April 12. People know what they see and hear. The protests will only continue and grow until justice is served and the people are listened to. *People's World* ☺

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Vietnam

40 years later it's mea culpa time

Ed Rampell

Last year I went to Vietnam. At Huế, site of fierce fighting during 1968's Tết Offensive, I visited the Citadel via cyclo, a rickshaw/bicycle hybrid. I asked cyclo driver Trần Văn Thảo what he did during the Tết Offensive? The short, sturdy, gray-haired cyclo-ist replied: "I was in the Viet Cong." After I told him I marched for peace when I was a teenager Thảo stuck out his hand, sincerely saying: "You're a good friend to Vietnam. Thank you."

Oh, there they were: Those magic words Uncle Sam, for 50-odd years, has still never managed to say to us. No expression of gratitude to the millions of Americans who demonstrated to save lives, for peace, against war and disastrous foreign policies that killed 58,000-plus US soldiers and millions of Indochinese.

But the Vietnamese – victims of invasion, aggression and atrocities – haven't forgotten us. Whenever I mentioned to a Vietnamese I'd opposed the war I was always politely thanked. At the Hanoi Hilton, near the display case exhibiting John McCain's aviator's uniform, is a wall of photo murals depicting Vietnam's global friends protesting for peace – including Americans.

This April 30 marks 40 years since 1975's end of the Vietnam War – the biggest foreign policy and military defeat in US history. This 40th anniversary comes as Washington's overseas policies again face serious setbacks. At an April 18 *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books panel I asked former antiwar activist and California state legislator Tom Hayden "what lessons should be learned" from this anniversary?

"Our generation was lied to," insisted the onetime Chicago 7 defendant. "Fathers, mothers didn't expect to send sons to war by a president who lied. One has to wonder: 'What was it all about?' Three million people died. Couldn't negotiations have worked? ... How many people were thrown out of think tanks for stupid ideas? They're still there. We need a collective apology and to credit people who were 20, who opposed the war. They should be honoured: They knew more than those with ribbons on their chests and medals around their necks."

In an email Hayden added, "Families of the dead are owed an apology for their sons having been sent into an unwinnable war... Those who were right – the antiwar movement – have never been credited for trying to prevent a disaster."

The point of a collective apology by the US government and military-industrial-media-think-tank-complex is not just to make "peaceniks" feel better, although that would be nice. More importantly, admission of wrongdoing and acknowledgement of colossal mistakes can help lead toward more enlightened policies that won't endlessly, heedlessly waste lives and resources, resulting in more debacles.

After 1945 America has been in a state of near-perpetual war. Since Korea, despite infinite amounts of money, weapons and warriors squandered on imperial misadventures – usually against countries that never attacked us – America has actually not decisively won most of these wars. Those mindlessly saying "support the troops" with unconditional ballyhooing of administration and Pentagon policies are parrots, not "patriots". What kind of "patriotism" and "support" sends young Americans unnecessarily afar into harm's way? How can anyone who claims to favour "small government" also believe America should be Earth's self-appointed, self-anointed global cop? Talk about budget busting big government!

Being the world's policeman is an extremely expensive proposition, in terms of both blood and treasure.

As Hayden noted: "It's unfortunate that it's politically impossible for our government officials to acknowledge they failed in Vietnam, much less say they lost.... The architects and present-day supporters of that war have paid no price, but in fact advanced their careers ... As a result of all this our political spectrum favours neocons and excludes principled opponents of the war."

Ex-*New York Times* propagandist Judith Miller exemplifies these blithe spirits. Her *Big Lies* that paved the road to hell in Iraq would make Joseph Goebbels blush. Miller's current book tour provides this fiction writer under the guise of reporting fact with more high-profile forums for spreading disinformation. Among the falsehoods the delusional Miller's perpetuating is that she reported what "everyone" else was saying about Saddam's purported WMDs. Apparently, Miller was too busy currying favour among her high level DC contacts to notice ex-UNSCOM weapons inspector Scott Ritter, IAEA's Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, UNMOVIC weapons inspectors, Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire, etc, not to mention 15 million protesters around the world who marched – in one of history's largest international

demonstrations – against invading Iraq.

It turns out those ordinary folks in the streets were correct: Iraq didn't have WMDs or pose any imminent threat. What did those everyday people know that Miller, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, Wolfowitz, Pearl, etc, didn't? Miller should have interviewed the protesters instead. While they might not have had the cachet or the status Miller's official sources had, it turned out they had something far more important: Truth.

CIA chief George Tennen was not punished by a Nuremberg-style tribunal for his "slam dunk" assurance about wildly inaccurate WMD "intelligence" – rather, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This is because US ruling circles never acknowledge foreign policy catastrophes or express gratitude to common citizens who try to change this country's devastating course. Instead, decision makers, profiteers and their academic/media lackeys receive undeserved prizes, praise, pay, perks. What matters is they do the bidding of an empire at endless war and their glib mouthpieces, or as George Orwell put it, "defend the indefensible."

Hayden and other antiwar activists gathered on May 1-2 at Washington's New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and marched past the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to the Martin Luther King, Jr Memorial. This peace movement commemoration should demand a long overdue collective apology from the US government. President Obama recently apologised for killing two Western hostages in a drone attack, but much more is needed.

By collectively apologising to and honouring Americans who opposed Vietnam War madness, we can recognise the folly of endless militarism and interventionism and begin to put our warlike nation on a peaceful path. And while we're at it, how about officially apologising to the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos? And how about saying you're sorry to the hundreds of thousands of veterans, dead and wounded servicemen/women, who were drafted and needlessly shipped far from home to fight a completely unnecessary war? If the US continues to not apologize to the Indochinese, peace advocates and vets at home, it is no better than those who, for 100 years, have covered up and denied the Armenian genocide – and will end up like the Ottoman Empire.

People's World ☪



Region Briefs

Celebrations were held across Vietnam to mark the April 30 victory in 1975 that liberated and reunified South Vietnam. The Communist Party of Vietnam General Secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong, and National Assembly Chairman, Nguyen Sinh Hung, led a delegation to attend a ceremony, laying wreaths to former leader Ho Chi Minh and heroes that lost their lives for the revolutionary cause. Vietnamese President, Truong Tan Sang, also attended another ceremony in Long An province. He praised the province's rapid development and confirmed its contribution to the victory. Similar ceremonies were held in Vietnamese embassies across the world.

The Voice of Vietnam's (VOV) General Director Nguyen Dang Tien's recently visited China. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the VOV and China National Radio (CNR), promoting friendly bilateral exchange. Both sides agreed to freely exchange news with common concerns, including using one another's news sources. Both sides also vowed to foster cooperation in sharing management experience and co-producing broadcasting programs.

Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo started his week-long visit to the US on April 26. During the visit, a joint statement of guidelines for US-Japan Defence Cooperation was renewed and released. According to the statement, "the US welcomes and supports the ongoing efforts to develop the legislation (Japan's collective self-defence right)". The statement would increase Japan and the US's military cooperation, clearly aiming to contain China's peaceful growth. Japan's collective self-defence right passed through parliament a year ago. It allows the Japanese military to fight wars on allies' territory. Abe's visit faced numerous protests because of Japan's ongoing militarisation and Abe's ambiguous attitude that refuses to apologise for Japan's invasion and crimes in the past. At Harvard University, protesters held signs saying "History can be rewritten, the Truth cannot", demanding Abe apologise for his revisionism of history. Hundreds of protesters also gathered in front of Abe's office in Tokyo, opposing the new guidelines.

All seven members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China attended a ceremony marking International Workers Day. Chinese President Xi Jinping said "we shall all carry forward the spirit of model workers ... all of society should be proud of working hard ... no one at any time should look down on ordinary workers". He called for workers' interests to be further guaranteed.

A 62-strong China's International Rescue Team, with 20 tonnes of medical aid and goods, arrived in Nepal's capital Kathmandu, to carry out a humanitarian mission after a recent devastating earthquake that hit the country. The team included 40 rescuers, 10 medical workers and 12 seismic experts. China also offered more than A\$10 million worth of aid to Nepal.

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



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Against war and injustice

It would be really worthy and wonderful to see the empathetic spirit of Australia broadened from all the thoughts and commemoration of a long past war and those who died, to stopping the present futile, unjust wars, opposing evil regimes and helping suffering people that are alive today.

We should be showing much more concern, compassion and exerting more effort, publicity, money and time into issues like those imprisoned on remote island detention camps, those living in poverty and homeless in Australia and all those who are

being dispossessed, occupied and oppressed in other lands.

It would be something to see our sympathy extended more widely and to truly remember and learn the lessons of the past, about the waste and senselessness of previous unjust wars by not participating in more such wars and offering real material help to those who are victims of current wars and gross injustice. That's what I'd really like to see. So let's get involved and show up on mass and march and rally and spend time and money on that.

Not only show up in big numbers for marches and rallies for things that happened 100 years ago. And protest when our government slashes the aid and welfare budget and mistreats the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Our efforts can make a difference and have an effect on actual events today, if we express our indignation against morally wrong policies and human rights abuses that are happening now. We need to enlarge our humanity to include becoming more conscious of and caring when some blatant atrocity or war crime happens somewhere and speak out and act.

We cannot remain indifferent

towards the rest of the world and its problems, with which we share the same common bonds, hopes and destiny on this little planet we all inhabit together.

Steven Katsineris
Vic

Vale Ray Jackson Champion of Indigenous rights

A member of the Stolen Generations and a passionate advocate, friends of Jackson said his passing would leave a space hard to fill.

Ray Jackson, President and founder of the Indigenous Social Justice Association (ISJA) Sydney was a tireless campaigner for Aboriginal Australia, particularly active in fighting against black deaths in custody.

ISJA Sydney announced the sad news on its Facebook page, saying he passed away peacefully in his sleep on April 23. He passed after attending a regular meeting of the ISJA Sydney.

Ray was a Wiradjuri man and a member of the Stolen Generations. He had a long history in advocacy,

and was previously involved in the Socialist Alliance and a number of other groups. He is well known for his advocacy on behalf of the family of death in custody victims TJ Hickey, Eddie Murray and Mark Mason.

He was a regular face at protests against black deaths in custody, attending in his characteristic black hat and bag adorned with social justice pins. He was never shy of taking the microphone to speak strongly for justice.

Ray's newsletters, media releases and letters to the editors were frequent and passionate, a reminder of how tireless he was in fighting for Aboriginal rights.

Another member of ISJA Sydney, Raul Bassi told *New Matilda* that the Wiradjuri activist had aided a number of Aboriginal families and had worked for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

But he didn't just work on issues around Aboriginal deaths in custody. Jackson was also involved in pushing momentum for justice around the Bowraville murders, protests around the NT intervention, and was on the committee for the Sydney protest

against the forced closures of Aboriginal communities in WA.

"What is clear is that the best way to remember comrade Ray Jackson who is still the first elected Aboriginal President and founder of ISJA Sydney in spirit is to put our differences aside and do what Ray Jackson would do," the ISJA Sydney Facebook page says.

"Unite to continue to help the families and the victims to organise the campaign and march on the streets to wage the fight to stop all deaths in custody and for all other social justice issues as that was one of Ray Jackson's greatest wishes for those of us who worked with him and remember him."

Mr Bassi said even in this sad time, Mr Jackson's loss marked a sad day for the Aboriginal rights movement.

"It will be hard to fill the space," he says.

See more at: newmatilda.com

Amy McQuire
New Matilda

Culture & Life

by Rob Gowland

Neo-Nazis, Trident and ancient gods



Ukraine Fascism.

The rehabilitation and glorification of Wartime Nazis and Nazi collaborators grows apace. Previously most prominent in the Baltic states and Hungary, its latest manifestation is in that hotbed of revived Fascism, Ukraine.

The country's NATO-backed parliament, the Rada, has passed a law recognising the collaborationist Nazi puppet force, the so-called "Ukrainian Insurgent Army" (UPA) as fighters for independence! The UPA, like all the other puppet armies the Nazis set up in the countries they occupied, was made up of pro-fascist elements who thought that by joining with the Hitlerites they would be on the winning side, and would share in the spoils. They were particularly hostile on those of their own people who dared to fight the Nazis, so they were used as concentration camp guards and for punitive actions against the anti-fascist Partisans.

The UPA's Ukrainian Nazis were responsible for killing between 100,000 and 130,000 Polish civilians and from 5,000 to 10,000 Ukrainian civilians in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, but in an extraordinary slap in the face, the neo-fascist regime in Kiev passed the new law only hours after Poland's President, Bronislaw Komorowski, had visited the Rada and called for reconciliation between the Polish and Ukrainian people.

Under the new law, anyone raising questions about the criminal nature of the UPA and its involvement in genocide can be punished. And these are the people Obama and West European leaders laud as champions of democracy!

Saudi Arabia's attempt to rope Pakistan

into the Saudi kingdom's proxy war with Iran in Yemen has been rebuffed by Pakistan's parliament, which voted to stay neutral on the issue. The Saudis, who are backed behind the scenes by the US, had formally requested that Pakistan provide fighter jets, warships and ground troops. However, senior political leaders in Pakistan point out that the country lost nearly 50,000 people and US\$100 billion by joining the US-led invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan, (and still suffers from US deadly drone strikes). It cannot afford to take part in another US-sponsored war. Pakistani forces have now cleared most of their tribal areas of the Taliban and other militant groups, but they are still battling armed groups in North Waziristan and Khyber tribal regions.

Protests erupted all over austerity-plagued Britain when the government decided to renew its nuclear weapons capability by replacing its existing fleet of Vanguard nuclear submarines with four new carriers for the country's Trident nuclear missile system. Each Vanguard is capable of carrying 16 Trident ballistic missiles, with eight thermonuclear warheads on each missile.

The renewal will cost about £100 billion and, in an age of near-constant conventional warfare and proxy wars, the obvious absence of any nuclear threat to Britain has made this colossal expenditure on weapons of mass destruction at a time of austerity and enforced national belt-tightening (by everyone except the rich) too much for people to swallow.

In early April, around 8,000 peace campaigners marched through the centre of Glasgow to demand the scrapping of Trident

altogether. The march was organised by the Scrap Trident Coalition, which includes Scottish CND, Stop the War, Trident Ploughshares and a number of other organisations.

In a TV interview that did not help the government's case, former UN chief weapons inspector Dr Hans Blix declared that "from a peace and security" perspective the plan to spend billions to replace Trident was "a completely pointless exercise".

Not that that has ever stopped the arms industry before, of course.

Meanwhile, in early April, one of Britain's nuclear submarines suffered around £500,000 of damage while tracking Russian vessels in the North Sea. British defence officials said the vessel had struck "a patch of floating ice" and denied that it had struck the Russian submarine it was tracking.

Russian social media commented: "The HMS *Talent* suffered damage to its tower in a collision with a patch of ice. The commander of the 'patch of ice' and her crew have been awarded."

All joking aside, the incident should remind us that the West is actively engaged in war preparations. This is no "Cold War" but part of building a hot war. With the aid of their Saudi and Turkish allies, US undercover forces initially and now the US Air Force as well unsuccessfully sought to overthrow the regime of President Assad in Syria in order to seize Russia's Mediterranean naval base. After the failure of that venture (although they're still trying), NATO moved to install a pro-western government in Ukraine, on Russia's border and straddling its pipeline routes for delivering oil and gas to Western Europe.

It did not escape Western notice, of course,

that also located in Ukraine are Russia's Black Sea naval bases. The people of Crimea thwarted that scheme by voting overwhelmingly for reunification with Russia. An act which has really got up imperialism's nose.

The destruction by the Islamic State fanatics of the ancient city of Nimrud has outraged the civilised world. The Assyrian city was already ancient when Alexander the Great passed by and the Roman Empire was still in the planning stages. Nimrud's unique archaeological treasures belong to the whole of humanity, and their wanton destruction is a crime against humanity.

As *Pravda.Ru* observes, "How can statues from ancient times, which were built before Islam existed – thousands of years before Islam existed – be considered as idolatrous?" Logic however has never been the strong suit of religious fanatics, whose simplistic beliefs thrive on ignorance and the hatreds bred by poverty.

In March, authorities in the Czech Republic took their population to task for throwing tomatoes and eggs at convoys of US troops and heavy weapons rumbling through their cities. Coming on to the street with such potential missiles would constitute disorderly conduct and render the perpetrators liable to a penalty of up to three years, people were told.

The ability of the US military to arouse antagonism wherever it is stationed is now a matter of record. It probably has something to do with the function of the military in US foreign policy. ☛



Sunday May 10 –
Saturday May 16

This week's *Sunday Best* documentary is Michael Moore's 2004 political agitation *Fahrenheit 9/11* (ABC2 Sunday May 10 at 8.30pm). Unlike so many mainstream makers of documentaries these days, Moore does not hide behind a façade of "evenhandedness" or "fairness". He has a point of view and uses his films to show that point of view. If you don't agree with him, that's your right but also your problem. Not his.

Moore is a committed film-maker who has been driven by his experience of the collapse of industry in the USA to question the nature of capitalist society. Initially in his home town of Flint, Michigan, where almost everybody worked directly or indirectly for General Motors, until GM decided to shut up shop and move to cheaper, non-unionised locations elsewhere. Subsequently, Moore turned his attention to issues such as health care, gun control and of course the lack of genuine democracy in the USA and its sorry record on democratic rights generally.

Moore begins *Fahrenheit 9/11* with George W Bush's fraudulent victory over Al Gore to become US President and the scandalous way no member of the Senate would support a complaint from the Black Caucus of the House of Representatives at the wholesale disenfranchising of blacks in Florida, where Bush's brother Jeb was Governor (Blacks predominantly supported Gore). Moore has no proof, of course, but by crickey it smells.

During the years that Saddam Hussein acted as a compliant US puppet, his regime in Iraq was supplied with arms and a blind eye was turned to his suppression of left-wingers. When Hussein began to take an independent stance, however, and began to question foreign control of his country's oil reserves, he clearly had become a liability. The US needed an excuse to get rid of him. 9/11 was that excuse.

Moore rather cleverly deals with

9/11 itself, not by using the usual shots of the planes hitting the twin towers, but by showing the shocked reactions of the spectators to the horror unfolding above them, and then the aftermath of litter eerily blowing in the street as people flee from the dust-cloud of the collapsing buildings.

He shows us Bush's reaction, both while the attack is under way and more importantly when he declares Hussein and Iraq responsible, despite the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis and Saudi money had funded Al-Qaeda.

Moore also shows the bogus nature of the much-publicised "war on terror", and its role in keeping the US people docile and reconciled to the abrogation of their democratic rights.

He shows the huge financial links between the Bush family and the Saudi royal family, and questions whether Bush was as President working for the US or for his more lucrative employers the Saudis, especially when after 9/11 every US civilian plane was grounded *except* for those carrying Saudis, including numerous members of the Bin Laden family, out of the USA. Graft and corruption, anyone?

Michael Moore makes films, and blogs and tweets etc, to assert what classic American films were wont to call "basic American values". It is a sign of the way the US has been pushed to the Right that he is derided by so many mouthpieces of the capitalist media as being "naïve" or even "dishonest". In fact, he is neither of those. He is a courageous voice for honesty, decency and above all democracy, in a country where capitalism has devalued them almost out of existence.

The film was originally to be produced and released by Miramax, a subsidiary of Disney, but Disney executives ordered Miramax to pull out of the film (at whose request, one wonders). Then when an alternative distribution deal was found, the film was slapped with an incredible R censorship rating, preventing unaccompanied young people from seeing it! Moore appealed the rating, but his lawyer, former New York governor Mario Cuomo, was not allowed to attend the hearing. The appeal was denied. Clearly the establishment did not want the US public to see this film.

In May 2004, the film won the *Palme d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival. It was the first documentary to win that award since 1956. Some conservatives in the United States, such as Jon Alvarez of *FireHollywood*, commented that such an award could be expected from the French. Moore responded: "There was only one French citizen on the jury. Four out of nine were American. [...] This



Essie Davis as Phryne Fisher – *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (ABC Fridays at 8.30pm).

is not a French award, it was given by an international jury dominated by Americans."

The film won additional awards after its release, such as the People's Choice Award for Favourite Motion Picture, an unprecedented honour for a documentary.

A friend of ours who normally likes period murder mysteries on TV, informed us a few days ago that she cannot abide *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (ABC Fridays at 8.30pm). She informed me that the plots were silly and the characters unbelievable. On the other hand, she adores *Midsomer Murders*. Say what?

Of course *Miss Fisher* is less than credible. It is essentially a period comic strip, with boldly drawn characters, simplistic motivation, multiple feats of derring-do and a minimal concern for depth of character. As such, it is carried off with panache and a refreshing sense of fun, exemplified by the dour expression maintained through thick and thin by Detective Jack Robinson (Nathan Page).

The series is set in 1929, and last week's episode ventured into left wing politics with a very confused mixture of pro-Soviet Russian emigrés (surely most of them were anti-Soviet, that's why they were emigrés), trade unionists sabotaging the air-force (as they do) and Reds trying to assassinate people (as they do).

Most episodes are mercifully free of such political nonsense. This week, for example, we are back on firmer ground with a plot involving a family of Italian restaurateurs and old grudges from the village that are stirred up when matriarch Nonna Luisa dies and the ownership of a secret Book of Recipes becomes the suspected motive.

Written by Chris Corbett, the episode is appropriately called *Murder & Mozzarella*. ☺

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The Saudi 9/11 cover-up

Roger Stone

The Bill Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation has taken millions of dollars from foreign governments attempting to buy influence with a woman who might be the next president.

The US\$2 million contribution from Saudi Arabia, however, is the most troubling. Putting aside that the Saudi's oppress women, denying them the most basic human rights, the self-styled "women's advocate" should still return that cash. Money from foreign nationals and foreign governments is illegal in US political campaigns. So the Saudis are using their petro-dollars to buy future influence.

It is worth taking a moment to examine how the Saudis have used their vast wealth to effect US foreign policy and have used their influence to hide the facts about the Saudi's actual role in the events of 9/11 from the American people. In fact, the Saudis have used their power and influence to cover-up their involvement in the greatest terrorist attack in US history and continue to do so today.

As many American's know, at least 11 members of the Bin Laden family were spirited out of the country in 24 hours after the 9/11 attacks with the assistance of the George W Bush Administration. The FBI still denies knowing about the seven aeroplanes used to move the Bin Ladens out of the country when all private, commercial and military air-travel was grounded.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, orchestrated the exodus of more than 140 Saudis scattered throughout the United States. They included members of two families: one was the royal House of Saud, the family that rules the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, perhaps the richest family in the world. The other family was the Saud's close allies, the Bin Ladens, who in addition to owning a multibillion-dollar construction company had produced the notorious terrorist Osama Bin Laden.

Family friends

Yet none of those spirited out of the country were questioned nor was a list of those leaving supplied. Dan Grossi, a former police officer recruited by the Tampa Police to escort the departing Saudis said he did not get the names of the Saudi he was escorting. "It happened so fast," Grossi says. "I just knew they were Saudis. They were well connected. One of them told me his father or his uncle was good friends with George Bush Senior."

The White House denied the flights even took place. Officially, the FBI says it had nothing to do with the repatriation of the Saudis. "I can say unequivocally that the FBI had no role in facilitating these flights one way or another," said FBI Special Agent John Lannerelli. Bandar, however, characterised the role of the FBI very differently. "With coordination with the FBI," he said on CNN, "we got them all out."

Among those hustled out of the country

were Osama's brother-in-law Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, thought by US Intelligence to be an important figure in Al-Qaeda and connected to the men behind the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing and to the October 2000 bombing of the USS *Cole*. Also in the travelling party was Khalil Bin Laden, who boarded a plane in Orlando to leave the United States and was suspected by Brazilian Intelligence for possible terrorist connections. According to the German wire service Deutsche Presse-Agentur, he had visited Belo Horizonte, Brazil which was a known centre for training terrorists. Neither was questioned before leaving the US.

The Bush and bin Laden families have long-standing business dealings. These began in the late 1970s when Sheik Mohammed bin Laden, the family patriarch and Osama's father, had, through a friend of the Bush family named James R Bath, invested US\$50,000 in Arbusto, the oil exploration company founded by George W Bush with his father's help. The "investment" was arranged by James R Bath, an aircraft broker who had emerged as an agent for the House of Saud in political and business circles.

On September 11, 2001, Shafiq Bin Laden, an "estranged" half-brother of Osama, invested an initial US\$38 million in the Carlyle Group in Washington, DC Carlyle is a US\$16 billion private equity firm that pays huge fees to "advisors" George Bush Sr and former Secretary of State James Baker.

After former president George Bush Sr, James Baker, and former prime minister John Major of Great Britain visited Saudi Arabia on behalf of Carlyle, the Saudis increased their investment in the Carlyle Group to at least US\$80 million.

It's therefore not surprising that the BBC reported that FBI agents in London were pulled off an investigation of the Bin Laden family and Saudi royals soon after George W Bush took office. In addition to Osama Bin Laden, other members of the family had terrorist connections and were under investigation by FBI.

Of the 19 9/11 hijackers, 14 were Saudi yet after the attack on American soil FBI Agent John O'Neill stated publicly he was blocked from investigating the Saudi connection for "political reasons". What political reasons are more important than the investigation of the World Trade Centre destruction and the murder of 2,000 Americans?

Terrorist ties

More recently, the *New York Times* and others have reported on an aborted investigation into Saudis who fled Florida two weeks before the 9/11 attack. The investigation into the prominent Saudi family's ties to the hijackers started on September 19, 2001, and remained active for several years. It was led by the FBI's Tampa field office but included the bureau's field offices in New York and Washington.

Incredibly, the FBI identified persons of interest, established their ties to other terrorists, sympathies with Osama bin Laden and anti-American remarks. They examined their bank



The Bush and bin Laden families have long-standing business dealings.

accounts, colleges and places of employment. They tracked at least one suspect's re-entry into the US. Yet none of this was ever shared with Congress or the 9/11 Commission.

Now it's being whitewashed again, in a newly released report by the 9/11 Review Commission, set up last year by Congress to assess "any evidence now known to the FBI that was not considered by the 9/11 Commission." Though the FBI acknowledges the Saudi family in Florida was investigated, it maintains the probe was a "dead end".

The 9/11 review panel included one local FBI report from the Florida investigation that said Abdulaziz and Anoud al-Hijji, the prominent Saudi couple who "fled" their home, had "many connections" to "individuals associated with the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001". The panel's report also doesn't explain why visitor security logs for the gated Sarasota community and photos of license tags matched vehicles driven by the hijackers, including 9/11 ringleader Mohamed Atta Former Florida Senator Bob Graham, former chairman of the US Senate Intelligence Committee has publicly accused the FBI of a "cover-up" in the Florida case. Graham said there was no evidence that the Bureau had ever disclosed the Florida investigation to his Committee or the 9/11 Commission, which delivered their report in 2004.

There are still 28 pages of the 9/11 report regarding the Saudis that remain classified and were redacted, wholesale, by President George W Bush. After reading it, Congressman Thomas Massie described the experience as "disturbing" and said, "I had to stop every two or three pages and rearrange my perception of history ... it's that fundamental".

Intelligence officials say the claims in the secret 28 pages were explored and found to be "unsubstantiated" in a later review by the national commission. If that is the case, why not release them? The Saudis have covered their trail.

Spill the beans

Both the Florida Investigation and the hidden 28 pages of the 9/11 report received more attention this year when an Al-Qaeda operative in custody described prominent members of Saudi Arabia's royal family as major donors to the terrorist network in the late 1990s. The claim by terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui, prompted a quick statement from the Saudi Embassy saying the 9/11 commission rejected allegations that Saudi officials had funded Al-Qaeda.

But Senator Graham who has seen the classified material spilled the beans: "The 28 pages primarily relate to who financed 9/11, and they point a very strong finger at Saudi Arabia as being the principal financier," he said, adding, "I am speaking of the kingdom, or government, of Saudi Arabia, not just wealthy individual Saudi donors..." This is a pervasive pattern of covering up the role of Saudi Arabia in 9/11 by all of the agencies of the federal government which have access to information that might illuminate Saudi Arabia's role in 9/11."

US Intelligence has sought to undermine the credibility of both Graham and Moussaoui, labelling Graham as a past-his-prime publicity seeker and Moussaoui as mentally unstable.

Yet the *New York Post* reported, "sources who have seen the censored 28 pages say it cites CIA and FBI case files that directly implicate officials of the Saudi Embassy in Washington and its consulate in Los Angeles in the attacks" – which, if true, would make 9/11 not just an act of terrorism, but an act of war by a foreign government. The section allegedly identifies high-level Saudi officials and intelligence agents by name, and details their financial transactions and other dealings with the San Diego hijackers. It zeroes in on the Islamic Affairs Department of the Saudi Embassy, among other Saudi entities.

If true, it would make 9/11 not just an act of terrorism, but an act of war by a foreign government.

In fact the Saudis are playing a dangerous double game, claiming to be US allies in the war on terror at the same time funding terrorist groups that espouse a violent Wahhabi Islamic ideology that is particular to Saudi Arabia. At the same time, they have used their money and influence to shield the truth from the American people. With their huge contributions to the Clintons, they hope to do it again.

Information Clearing House ★

An FBI Agent was blocked from investigating for "political reasons". What political reasons are more important than the investigation of the World Trade Centre destruction and the murder of 2,000 Americans?



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