



Domestic violence

Real terrorism ignored

Bob Briton

Domestic violence is at levels best described as a national epidemic. A Royal Commission into the crisis started this week in Melbourne. NSW now has a Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Pru Goward. There are plans for a register for domestic violence offenders in that state and, in Queensland, concerned people can already ask police about their partner's history of violence, thanks to Clare's Law. Students in years 7-10 in NSW will have domestic violence awareness as part of their curriculum. There are task forces, "personal safety tags" and even a smart phone app to deal with the threat of violence in the home, but still the contagion spreads.

Australian parliaments are big on symbolism and window-dressing and short on action that goes to the core of issues. Several commentators have compared the response of the federal government to the ultra-hyped threat of terrorism to the daily toll of domestic violence. Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty, whose 11-year-old son Luke was murdered by his father last year, has been on the campaign trail for proper recognition of the alarming situation. "We're spending hundreds of millions extra on the war on terrorism, but women who fear for their safety are still being turned away from services because of the lack of funds," Ms Batty said recently. She returned to the comparison with her address to the National Press Club earlier this month. "We see whenever there is the slight threat of terrorism it's amazing how funding can be found to combat that where seemingly there was no funding before," she said. The fact that Australia belongs to a military alliance dominated by the US, which has created much of the terror threat facing the peoples of the world, makes the point even more telling.

NSW Magistrate Roger Prowse deals with the growing numbers of charges and breaches of apprehended family violence orders. He wonders at a nation seemingly obsessed with



the ABC Q&A program's decision to allow Zaky Mallah to ask a question before a live TV audience. Mr Mallah was convicted of threatening to kill two ASIO officers.

"When they talk about the scourge of terrorism, the proper use of the word 'scourge' is domestic violence," Magistrate Prowse said. "Here, people intimidate a partner on a minute-by-minute basis and no one is up in arms about that."

The statistics are staggering. On average, two women per week die at the hands of their male partner in Australia. Applications for family apprehended violence orders are through the roof and breaches of them have increased threefold in five years. Escaping an abusive partner is getting harder, too. Independent women's refuges and shelters are closing and remaining ones subjected to competitive tendering. Big denominational organisations like St Vincent de Paul are the "winners" here.

In 2013-14, 423 people were turned away from homelessness agencies every night, many of them women escaping violence. That year

150,000 people were unable to get help through community legal centres. Last year, 18,632 phone calls to national hotline 1800RESPECT went unanswered. The service needs an extra \$2 million to ensure one in four calls don't go unanswered. It can't get it. "Women are making incredibly brave steps to come forward and we're not there; it's not good enough," said Karen Williams of the Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia organisation responsible for the hotline.

Campaigning organisation Fair Agenda takes a dim view of the Commonwealth's role in the issue. Last year's Budget allocated \$16.7 million for the \$30 million awareness campaign currently underway. There was nothing for crisis and counselling hotlines, men's behaviour programs, community legal centres, primary prevention initiatives, services for Aboriginal or culturally diverse communities. Fair Agenda's executive director Renee Carr said awareness campaigns are pointless if services weren't available for women fleeing violence.

Rosie Batty has backed opposition leader Bill Shorten's call for a national summit and the ACTU's push for 10 days domestic violence leave for victims. "Paid domestic violence leave, I believe, can ultimately mean the difference between someone possibly losing their job and falling into poverty, and not being able to find rental accommodation. I see this as a really critical step," she said. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is resisting the measure.

It is unlikely that the findings of the Royal Commission, various taskforces and inquiries will move doggedly neo-liberal state and federal governments to respond to the domestic violence crisis with the urgency and resources required. While 74 percent of Australians agree domestic violence is a greater threat than "terrorism", capitalist governments will press ahead with the corporate agenda based on the exploitation of labour, the objectification and exclusion of women, disregard for the environment and endless war. ✚

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Guardian

Issue 1693

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“Free lunches”

The Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption is dishing out almost daily headlines for the media. As intended, it is not making life easy for the Labor Party, its leader in particular, and the trade union movement. It has already put former Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard on the stand and Opposition leader Bill Shorten had his turn last week. Prior to that former Labor PM Kevin Rudd was subjected to the Royal Commission into insulation.

The terms of reference of Abbott’s Commission, headed by Commissioner John Dyson Heydon, focus on the financial affairs of trade unions. For more than a year now, trade unionists have been bombarded with accusations. The corporate media have filled pages doing untold damage to reputations and personal relationships.

Abbott set the Commission up to justify legislation to clobber the trade union movement and pave the way for an Abbott-led Coalition victory in the next elections.

The Commission is delivering. For over a year now, there has been a steady flow of stories of alleged trade union mismanagement of funds, leadership links with bikies, thuggery, corruption, coercion of bosses, and so on. The accusations fly, often unsubstantiated or from dubious sources. The sensational headlines hide Abbott’s political agenda from view.

Bill Shorten’s two-day appearance last week as the former Victorian and national secretary of the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU) put the political system on trial. Many eyebrows were raised when Shorten was called in. After all, his co-operation with employers and outright rejection of class struggle makes him the darling of many employers.

Counsel assisting the Commission, Jeremy Stoljar, questioned Shorten about a deal during his leadership of the AWU with Theiss John Holland. It was for work on the \$2.5 billion Eastlink Project in Victoria. The company saved as much as \$100 million. The workers suffered a massive loss of conditions with the introduction of round-the-clock work, reduced conditions around rostering and weekend work. According to the Commission, the company agreed to pay the AWU \$330,000 over three years in a side deal while the union was negotiating an enterprise agreement.

Stoljar questioned Shorten on other deals where companies paid the union hundreds of thousands more dollars for apparently “bogus” services. Some companies paid the AWU for membership of the union to cover the whole workforce. Many of the workers would not know they are or were a “member” of the AWU. In some instances, this was to shut out the militant construction and mining union (CFMEU). Nobody knows by just how much the AWU’s coffers or membership was inflated by such means.

This has serious political ramifications as the AWU is an affiliate of the ALP and its vote is proportional to its membership. But it does not stop there. The Commission revealed a deal between the AWU and the body hire company Unibilt, reportedly for over \$60,000 for Shorten’s campaign director in the lead-up to the 2007 elections.

No decent worker or trade unionist would have the stomach for such conduct.

The Liberals have always tried to pit workers against their “union bosses”, against their union as if it were a “third party” that “interferes” in the workplace and “interferes” in their relationship with the employers. Here, Abbott has hypocritically feigned concern for workers.

Shorten indignantly rejected links between the contents – loss of conditions – of agreements with employers and the payments made by employers to the AWU under his rule. He expected the Commission to believe that Unibilt did not want something in return. Outside of the Commission Shorten denied there was any conflict of interest in his conduct.

The employers who were the other parties to these dodgy deals and bogus services are not within the scope of the Commission. But they are giving “free lunches”!

The political system is rampant with corruption. There is no doubt about it. Developers, mining corporations, banks and other corporations are banking rolling the Coalition and Labor parties, with Labor still receiving the majority of its funding from trade unions.

Reforms are needed to the trade union legislation, but not what Abbot has in mind. The electoral system also needs reform and one aspect of this is to end the system of donations and limit spending by candidates to a strict amount. Meanwhile the Royal Commission should be shut down.

PRESS FUND

Did you know that the Abbott government’s obsession with secrecy even extends to arts funding? Last year the government decided to bring the arts under its control by distributing arts grants directly, rather than through the Arts Council. Other right wing regimes fear exposure or ridicule by artistic works, but much of your tax payments go to support dodgy activities across the entire range of government policies, not just in the area of arts funding. We spend a lot of time trying to find out what the government is up to, so if you agree with us that the secrecy policy isn’t right, send us a Press Fund contribution for the next issue of the *Guardian*. Many thanks to those who contributed this week, as follows:

S Langford \$5, Mark Mannion \$5, “Round Figure” \$15, R A Sharp \$10, SS \$15

This week’s total: \$50 Progressive total: \$4,020

Return to Kojarena

Richard Titelius

To advance the concept of Independence from USA Day, a group of peace and anti-war activists gathered in Geraldton over the weekend of 4-5 July, to hand out leaflets and undertake an action at the gates of the Australian-US electronic surveillance base at Kojarena, 30 kilometres east of Geraldton.

The action was a collaborative effort by a number of peace groups including People for Nuclear Disarmament, Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) and the Communist Party of Australia and drew people from all walks of life from WA and beyond. There was an activist from Byron Bay; an Aboriginal elder from Alice Springs whose land is affected by the operation of the biggest US spy base of them all on Australian soil – Pine Gap – and a woman from the Philippines whose country has once again had to reopen US bases as part of a defence agreement with that country.

The group handed out leaflets on the Saturday and had discussions and answered questions on the base which revealed that some people did not know what the Kojarena base was being used for nor how its use has changed over the years from being a Defence Communications base for Australia to a facility that was predominantly used for spying and other offensive purposes such as a satellite



Photo: Richard Titelius

communication monitoring station and as part of a drone strike control network.

The group performed theatre with the Concerned Women Activists (CWA) and displayed the banner calling for the closure of the Kojarena facility at the entrance gate which, although unmanned, have closed circuit TV monitoring movements in the surrounding area. This brought officers of the Australian Federal Police who assist the US operators of the facility with security, to greet the activists.

Further publicity and actions are planned until the facility at Kojarena and all foreign spying and military bases in Australia are closed.

A submission to the government on its 2015 Defence White Paper by the Marrickville Peace Group noted, “If Australia’s military cannot be

distinguished from that of the US, then every enemy of the US automatically becomes the enemy of Australia. From a strategic angle, Australia needs the smallest number of enemies. We should be careful of close association with the country that probably boasts more enemies than any other.”

The Communist Party of Australia calls for the closure of the spy facility at Kojarena and facilities elsewhere in the country including Pine Gap. The billions it costs to run these facilities and associated military hardware could be better spent to provide services to remote and regional Australia including the maintenance of remote Aboriginal communities on whose land these facilities are built without their consultation or consent. ☘

Melbourne

WORKERS' RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Communist Party of Australia with the support of Friends of KKE, Democritus & Greek Resistance Fighter

Dinner Dance 2015

FAIR PENSIONS BUILDS A STRONGER SOCIETY

Saturday August 15 at 7:00pm

7 Union Street, Brunswick

DJ with “Chris Earthquake” – Entry Fee: \$45 per person

Contact: CPA Victoria for Tickets on 9639 1550 or email: cpavic@cpa.org.au

APPEAL – Website and computers

The CPA is launching a special appeal to members and supporters for donations to a fund to update the Party’s website and computer systems. The CPA relies on its website and print technology, in part for producing Party documents, leaflets, booklets, the Australian Marxist Review and other material and the Party website as a means of communication and to promote the Party’s policies.

Any contributions of \$1,000 or more will be offered a 12-month subscription to the Guardian. All contributions will be acknowledged unless otherwise requested. We urge you to dig deep, for your Party and its work for a better world.

Website and Computers Appeal

Name/Organisation _____ Phone Contact: _____

Address _____ Contribution: \$ _____

Cheque/Money Order: make out to “Communist Party of Australia”.

Credit card: sign, give name on card, card number & expiry date: Visa Mastercard

Name on the card _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____

I agree / I disagree to having my name published in *The Guardian*.

Send to: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW, 2010 or phone it through on: 02 9699 8844

Thank you for your support.

"The unemployed deserve better than this!"

Young Communists campaign against Jobactive

Young communists are actively campaigning against the Abbott government's Jobactive system. Jobactive gives private contractors – dominated by two multinational corporations – \$5.1 billion over three years to manage the lives of the unemployed.

The scheme comes in at a time when more than 750,000 people are registered as out of work, a million more are underemployed, a quarter of unemployed jobseekers have been out of work for a year or more and there are 11 people seeking work for every vacancy that becomes available.

Jobactive is the government's substitute for a real jobs creation policy. It seeks to put the blame for unemployment on the unemployed, and to take the spotlight off any failure of government or the capitalist market, to create full employment.

"Jobactive is not about creating work and getting people into jobs," says Hayden Sofa, a TAFE student in western Sydney, who is coordinating

the Young Communists' campaign in Sydney. "It is about private 'employment service' operators using the unemployed to generate profits and to undercut the wages and conditions of those who do have work."

Young Communists are campaigning around the punishing aspects of Jobactive, such as its provisions for job agencies to fine jobseekers \$50 or more if they miss interviews, as well as its work for the dole provisions.

"Jobactive contractors profit by keeping job seekers in an endless process of pointless appointments, unpaid work activities, short term subsidised work and irrelevant training," Sofa told the *Guardian*. "Jobactive makes unemployment itself a full time 'job'."

"It also gives corporations unprecedented power to compel and punish job seekers to enforce this process. This and the incentive to create a series of short term, part-time jobs out of what would otherwise be one full time job, gives the system vast scope for abuse and fraud".

Young Communists have started their campaign against Jobactive with pickets outside Centrelink offices and private employment agencies in Liverpool and Campbelltown. They will target more centres throughout metropolitan Sydney over the next few weeks.

Pickers are handing out flyers, as well as engaging in conversations with job seekers and encouraging them to become active in taking up the campaign.

Young communists are particularly interested in hearing from jobseekers of their experiences with their job contractors, with their placements in subsidised work, as well as any experiences they may have with work-for-the-dole, including its "premium" Greencorps program.

"Fight the Fine" and more

They are supporting campaigns to "Fight the Fine" launched by the Unemployed Union of Australia and the Anti-Poverty Network (South

Australia) and call for this campaign to be broadened to pick up other aspects of Jobactive and the attacks being launched on this coming generation of the workforce.

"Challenging Jobactive, along with attacks on penalty work rates, high fees for vocational courses and attacks on labour rights are among our highest priorities in defending young workers, whether they are seeking work, in part-time work, studying or already in full-time jobs," says Sofa.

He says the unemployed and the broader labour movement need to unite in a strong front against neoliberal policies of austerity and punishment for workers:

"Jobactive, which includes a greatly expanded work-for-the-dole component, as well as its revolving door of short term subsidised jobs and unpaid 'work experience' directly threatens the security, conditions and pay of those with regular jobs," he says. "Already there are reports of councils in regional areas sacking their current outdoor staff so they can

replace them with work-for-the-dole conscripts."

Young workers can also be at the forefront in working with the broader labour movement and communities in pushing for genuine job creation policies.

"Society has plenty of infrastructure and social services priorities that need investment and a skilled workforce to create a better future," says Hayden. "Most urgently, we need jobs and investment to transition from a fossil fuel based consumer economy to an environmentally sustainable society!"

Young Communists call for:

- Real jobs, not work-for-the-dole!
- Stop punishing the unemployed – drop the fines!
- Take back employment services from private operators!

To contact Young Communists phone: 02 9699 8844, email info@cpa.org, or go to Young Communists League of Australia on Facebook. ✪

For an independent foreign policy

IPAN statement Brisbane National Conference Declaration – July 9, 2015

We, activist and organisational members of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), met in Brisbane on the traditional lands of the Turrbal People.

We met as 34,000 troops from the US, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and Australia rehearse war and invasion at the Talisman Sabre military exercises on the pristine wilderness and coral reef of Shoalwater Bay joining the more than 1,500 US troops already stationed at US occupied bases in Darwin and across Australia.

We reaffirmed our belief that Australia needs an independent foreign policy. Such a policy is urgently needed if we are to deescalate rather than inflame regional tensions that

are only provoked by war rehearsals, unfettered military spending and an unequivocal kowtowing to US military adventurism, all of which expose our nation to threats and treats our neighbours with disdain.

We appreciated the substantive information and engagement of Professor Kozue Akibayashi – International President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Professor Richard Tanter, Nautilus Institute and Senator Scott Ludlam.

We celebrated IPAN's second year of united and coordinated work among a broad spectrum of organisations that:

- Reflected the considered and substantive opinions of Australians to policy makers

through petitions and engagement with the Defence White Paper process;

- Published statements, open letters and articles;
- Organised many events;
- Provided tangible and practical assistance to campaigns.
- We recognised the need to bring about an independent and peaceful Australia through researching, lobbying and protesting on issues including:
- The 50th anniversary of the signing of the Pine Gap Agreement of 1965. Pine Gap makes us complicit in the crimes against humanity and drone strikes of US military actions, as well as illegal global mass electronic surveillance.

It is a key war-fighting base and makes Australia a nuclear target;

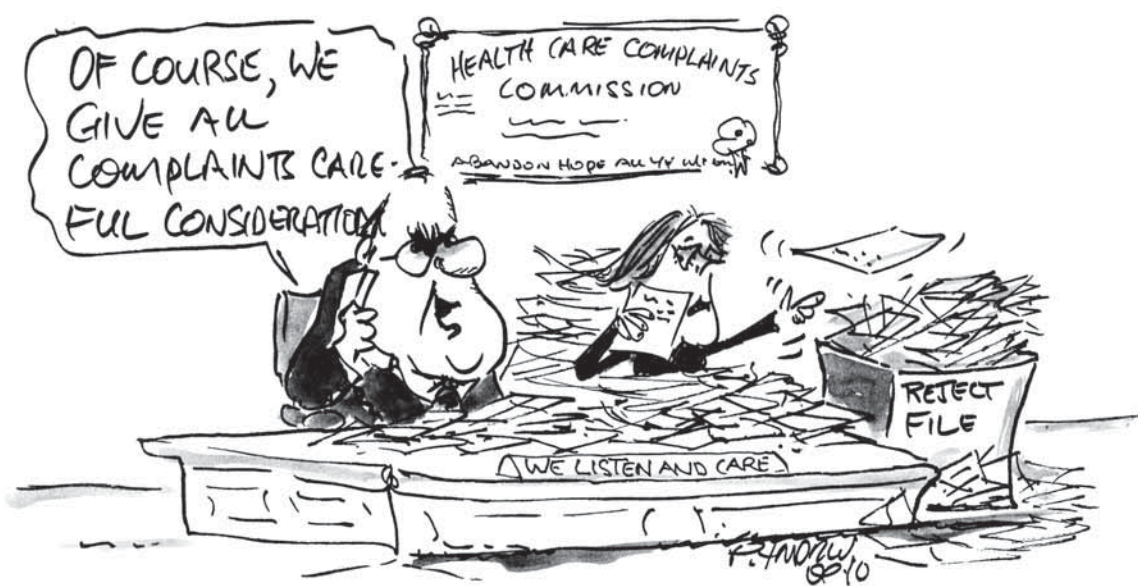
- The stationing of US marines and bombers in Darwin resulting in a loss of sovereignty and independence. This does not serve the best interests of the Australian people;
- Australia's continued entanglement in the international arms trade, exemplified through the growth of the arms trade fair component of the Avalon Airshow. This arms bazaar, next scheduled for 2017, has grown in recent years to be one of the largest of its kind in the region;
- Australia's military spending of over \$87 million per day and

ranking as 6th largest importer of military equipment in the world while homelessness, domestic violence shelters, education, climate change action, Aboriginal communities and health spending are cut;

- A Defence White Paper that commits taxpayer funds to purchasing submarines worth up to \$50 billion and aircraft that cannot fly for \$15 billion, and ignores the overwhelming security threat of climate change.

We concluded our meeting determined to expand our movement and share our many stories of success. We have won many campaigns, we have shut down arms fairs and bases and will do so again. ✪

Pete's Corner



Sydney

CPA Port Jackson Branch invites comrades and friends to join us for our

Port Jackson Discussion Hour

Tuesday July 21 [5.30 – 8pm please note extended time]
The political and personal importance of solidarity – Screening of PRIDE

Tuesday August 4
The public housing crisis

Tuesday August 18
Defending workers' rights

Tuesday September 1
What's causing the environmental crisis?

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

Calls for more action to address the rise of ice

Focus on targeting "scourge"

Rudi Maxwell

Aboriginal leaders, communities and health workers are calling for more to be done to stem the tide of "ice" misuse by Indigenous people and to help with rehabilitation. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is proposing to organise a national ice roundtable in Canberra in the next few months.

Associate Professor Ted Wilkes, a Nyungar Elder who works with the National Drug Institute at Curtin University in Perth, told the *Koori Mail* that there needs to be a concerted effort to help address issues surrounding ice.

"We're not prepared as well as we should be and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation methods need to be developed quickly," he said.

"I believe governments are a long way behind the eight ball in the way we Aboriginal Australians need to be supported to prevent what is a scourge, really.

"There is a lot of aggression and behaviour surrounding this drug that has the potential to traumatise our people. As far as rehabilitation goes, we're not seeing an appropriate effort to address the needs of Aboriginal people, or the broader community."

So what exactly is ice and why are people so concerned?

Ice, also known as crystal meth, meth, crystal or shabu, is the purest form of methamphetamine (which also includes speed) readily available in Australia. It is a stimulant, which speeds up the function of the brain, heart and nervous system.

Ice usually looks like clear or white crystals, but impurities can cause it to be other colours and it can come in powdered form. It is usually smoked in a pipe or injected

(although it can be snorted or swallowed) because those methods give users a quicker rush.

The NSW Health Department says that because of its purity, ice is more powerful than speed and when used puts a greater strain on the body. Its use can, therefore, be much more dangerous.

It has stronger side effects than other amphetamines and a worse comedown. During a comedown, the user may feel physically and emotionally drained. Some users may experience a "crash" – negative feelings associated with coming down.

Some of the more worrying side effects include becoming hostile or aggressive, risk taking, and psychosis (a severe acute mental disorder in which thoughts and emotions become so impaired that contact with reality is lost).

Because ice is a stimulant, it can keep people from sleeping, sometimes for days at a time.

Long-term use of ice can cause mental health problems including psychotic episodes. It can also exacerbate existing mental health problems. People use crystal meth because it gives a huge rush and can make them feel excited, powerful and confident.

Repeated use can and does – lead to addiction. If used when pregnant it can cause complications with the birth, miscarriage, and health problems for the baby.

According to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2012-2013, amphetamines are the third most common type of illicit drug used by Indigenous people, after marijuana and sedatives (not including opiates, like heroin).

There have been reports that the use of ice in remote Aboriginal



communities is increasing and with it the potential for devastation on small populations.

The federal government's National Ice Taskforce has been visiting regions across the country and there's no doubt that the use and misuse of crystal meth is growing.

Last week, Queensland police arrested 16 people alleged to have been involved with a multi-million-dollar ice trafficking operation in far north Queensland.

Apunipima Cape York Health Council public health medical adviser Dr Mark Wenitong said his organisation was taking a pre-emptive approach to try to halt the spread of ice in Aboriginal communities.

"We really do need to activate our young people, because those aged 15-30 are the ones who would be our main target group," he said.

"We have fantastic young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, we have the smartest kids around, and need them to mobilise so they can take control of these issues further."

While the federal government has started a fear campaign regarding ice, Apunipima decided to sit down with local young people and talk to them about what messaging they believed would be effective.

It has used social media and local Indigenous celebrities to talk about ice use, including North Queensland Cowboys star Johnathan Thurston, former Cairns Taipans basketball player Kerry Williams and hip hop band The Last Kinection, which just happens to include Dr Wenitong's children Naomi and Joel Wenitong.

"We know the message is getting out there because we got about 28,000 hits in the first two weeks," Dr Wenitong said. "Around 70 per cent of people who use recreationally don't become ice addicts, but you can't tell who is going to go down that path."

"Our messaging has centred around encouraging people to be the strongest person they can, focussing on family and cultural values. We know from previous research done in Cape York that the main reason people give up marijuana is for family. So we're building on that, using role models to support families."

"We're saying, 'You be the best Aboriginal person you can, culturally, socially, academically and in sports – and if you want to be like JT (Thurston), you want to get to the top, then you need to focus on

What is ice and what does it do?

- Crystal methamphetamine is a stimulant also known as ice, crystal, meth, crystal meth or shabu.
- Short-term effects can include speeding up the nervous system, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, feelings of power and confidence, aggression, difficulty sleeping, feeling energised and psychosis.
- Long-term effects can include higher tolerance and dependence, anxiety, decreased memory and concentration, and psychosis.
- Use while pregnant can damage the foetus, cause miscarriage, birth problems and dependence symptoms in babies.
- Overdose can occur even from small amounts if someone has a reaction, and can cause heart attacks, bleeding in the brain and fever.

achieving excellence and you can't do that if you're using ice."

"I think we often treat young, drug-taking people as if they're stupid and they're not. Some people will get dragged into trying ice once, recreationally, and have a good time. We just want them to be able to think through: 'Is this worth it or not?'"

"And then there are people who've had a hard time and using makes them feel good – why wouldn't you use something to stop feeling bad? We also need to ramp up our social and emotional programs and do things in our communities to help people believe in themselves more, to get through hard times without having to use anything else."

Associate-Prof Wilkes also believes that for any drug strategy to be effective in Indigenous communities you have to look at underlying social factors and trauma. "There are a lot of young fellas trying to get educated and get a job and a lot of old fellas who are lost," he said.

"There are two reasons Aboriginal people misuse and use drugs: to recreate and medicate. And when we use to medicate we leave ourselves vulnerable and some of us overdo it."

"We all need to own this issue and make sure we come together."

Associate-Prof Wilkes said that for ice strategies to be effective for Indigenous people, Aboriginal people needed to have control and there needed to be an understanding of all the issues and trauma that affect

communities. He said it was important to follow the three pillars of drug strategy: minimise harm, minimise and diminish demand, and diminish supply.

"I don't think it's in our interests to create fear in our communities; this is a drug that needs to be put in a place where we can look after ourselves," he said, adding that the upcoming NACCHO summit was a perfect opportunity to develop direction and strategy.

"This is a health issue, not a criminal issue; something which we use to medicate and consequently health suffers. Obviously if people commit crime while on ice they need to be accountable to society, but there should be efforts not to unnecessarily increase the incarceration rate of our people."

"Lots of our people need an appropriate compassion coming through our leaders to be able to make a meaningful life, and we're not getting that."

"Ice is one of lots of other drugs, but alcohol and tobacco are still our biggest killers, so we need to put all in context."

"Ice is a bit scary, but let's not fear it. Let's get in there and all work together."

For more information on drug use and misuse and treatments, contact your local Aboriginal medical service or doctor.

Koori Mail ☪

70 YEARS
70th anniversary of the
bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki



THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2015

Candlelight procession 6pm

Assemble Cnr Elizabeth & William Streets 6pm

Walk to public meeting at 33 Mary Street, Surry Hills 7pm

Organised by the Hiroshima Committee
www.hiroshimacommittee.org

Taking Indigenous rights struggle to the world

We're back from a tour of five countries in which we met many international banks, and made contact with First Nations people fighting similar fights to our own.

It's been three months since the Wangan and Jagalingou launched our campaign to stop Adani from devastating our ancestral lands with their Carmichael mega mine.*

When we first asked you to stand with us back in late March, we were overwhelmed by the flood of support we received. Tens of thousands of Australians and their friends and families stood with us to support our rights as Traditional Owners. Since then our fight to preserve our culture has literally taken us around the world.

Our three-week world tour included parts of North America, Europe, and Asia. Our main purpose was to visit some of the world's biggest investment banks, and urge them to rule out providing the billions of dollars that Adani still requires to fund the project.

Senior executives from Goldman Sachs, Citi, Bank of America, US EXIM, Standard Chartered, UBS and Credit Suisse all met with us to hear our story and learn of our struggle. We explained who Wangan and Jagalingou are, and what we risk losing from Adani's mine. We shared a little of our culture with them, explaining how Adani's mine will tear through our song lines and poison our water – the lifeblood of our country.

We appealed to their sense of decency and their responsibilities as signatories to the Equator Principles. We made it very clear we have never given our free, prior and informed consent to Adani's mine. And never will. We will not allow this mine to

destroy our environment and our heritage, or stay quiet in the face of a gross violation of our rights as Indigenous people.

All the meetings were positive, respectful, and at times, emotional. Our stories of our grandparents and their ancestors on country, the way we grew up knowing who we are and where we come from, what's at stake for the future of our people – and the importance of our land and especially water to the transmission of our culture and the ability to pass on our ancient legacy to our children – showed the human side of the banks' investment decisions.

Now that all these banks have heard our side of the story, Adani's chances of financing Australia's biggest coal mine are looking increasingly remote.

In between lobbying financiers, we had the opportunity to meet with other First Nation's people fighting to protect their ancestral lands from environmentally-destructive projects. They expressed solidarity with us and reminded us that our fight is a universal one "because we're all Indigenous to Mother Earth".

It was especially gut-wrenching to share time with the Athabasca Chipewyan in Alberta, Canada. Their country is being devastated by tar sands production on a scale and a rate that we could similarly confront if Adani mining has their way. We were inspired by their strong resistance and heartfelt desire to protect their lands and uplift their people.

We were able to do all this thanks to the generous support of thousands of people who recognise, as we do, that some things are more valuable than money. People who recognise that the destruction of our land would

essentially mean the destruction of us as a people. Our land is where our culture and our laws and customs reside. It represents the legacy of our ancestors, and the future of our children.

Thank you for being one of those who stood up for our rights.

Our fight is far from over, Adani are still deploying their massive wealth and legal power against us. But we'll tell them again as we have told them before – No means No. Right now we are taking them on in the courts.

Hearings have commenced in the Federal Court as we push to overturn the decision of the Native Title Tribunal, in favour of Adani, to allow the state to issue mining leases against our expressed opposition. If you can give any further support to our legal fighting fund it would be greatly appreciated.

The more people who stand with us, the closer we get to achieving our goal of preserving our ancestral land, and the laws, culture and traditional wisdom that resides in that land.

People all around the globe now who Wangan and Jagalingou are now, and support our struggle. That means the world to us.

Sincerely,
Adrian Burragubba and Murrawah Johnson, on behalf of the Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Council.

***The Indian mining giant wants to develop a massive coal deposit in the Galilee Basin in Carmichael, central Queensland. Hundreds of millions of dollars of Queensland taxpayers' money was earmarked by the former Newman government. ✪**



Representatives of the Wangan and Jagalingou people present a Declaration of Defence of Country to Queensland Speaker Peter Wellington outside parliament in Brisbane earlier this year. (Photo: Dan Peled)



Residential care for at-risk young people in Tasmania was provided by the Salvation Army in the south and Anglicare in the north. Both organisations lost their funding at the end of June. While Anglicare had paid redundancies to their workers, the Salvation Army claimed it was under no obligation to do so under the Fair Work Act. This attitude did not impress the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) which was prepared to support about 45 workers who had lost their jobs. "These workers had been employed for many years on contracts, but the Salvation Army are claiming they have no requirement to pay redundancies," said Mr Moore, HACSU assistant secretary. "As a result of the Salvation Army refusing to pay redundancies, HACSU will pursue justice for these workers through the Fair Work Commission," he said.

Sometimes you come across a story and don't really know if somebody is playing a joke on you. But it seems to be genuine so here goes. The City of Greater Geelong found itself in quite an embarrassing situation when it had recommended in its council newsletter that its staff smear dog poo on itchy and swollen insect bites. This advice came under the heading "Health and Safety Facts". How it is healthy and safe to smear dog poo into a bite is really not clear. The newsletter was pinned on notice boards and available to city services staff in common areas but was quickly withdrawn by red-faced officials. The newsletter was no laughing matter for the Australian Services Union (ASU) which took phone calls from a number of concerned staff members.

Prison unrest continues in Victoria. Since state-wide smoking bans were introduced earlier in the month, mass riots started in protest. The Ravenhall Prison was the first to experience riots, followed by Port Phillip prison and Dame Phyllis Frost women's prison. There are calls for the cigarette bans to be postponed until a proper transition program is in place.

The NSW government needed the support of MP Fred Nile (Christian Democratic Party) to pass its electricity privatisation legislation last month. Mr Nile is well-known for his fundamentalist attitude to social issues. He strongly opposes ethics classes in schools and it is believed that the deal he had made with the NSW Premier resulted in changes made for enrolment into the classes. Providers of ethics classes in NSW primary schools are outraged with a change to the school enrolment form which removes a clear choice between ethics and scriptures. "We are really disappointed," said Bruce Hogan, the chairman of the charity and ethics class provider Primary Ethics. "In my view, the Christian lobby group has successfully lobbied Premier Mike Baird. His own personal beliefs and his need to keep Fred Nile on side for the next four years has overridden the rights of parents." The previous form provided a box that could be ticked by parents who wanted their children to be enrolled in ethics classes.

White Paper whitewash for Indigenous workers

Northern Australian businesses will be able to exploit free Indigenous labour as a result of the Abbott government's strategy to boost Indigenous workforce participation in remote communities.

The government's *White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* outlines changes to the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) forcing Indigenous job seekers to participate in Work for the Dole for a minimum of six months.

Workers will not receive a training/apprenticeship wage but the government will pay businesses for keeping Indigenous workers at the end of their placement.

Australian unions believe Work

for the Dole is a punitive scheme that targets vulnerable workers and forces them into labour for below the minimum wage.

Unions are calling to end discriminatory employment practices for Indigenous workers and ensure workers are paid the legal minimum wages and benefits, such as superannuation and annual leave.

Unions will lobby the Abbott government to genuinely consult with Indigenous organisations and unions to develop equitable job programs which are self-determined and meet Australian industrial relations standards.

Only then economic growth will develop for Northern Australia.

Key facts:

- 2,399 Indigenous workers were moved onto welfare after the Abbott government scrapped the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program which paid job seekers minimum wages and conditions
- The Abbott government made \$534 million in budget cuts to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services forcing many Indigenous workers onto welfare.

"The Abbott government's White Paper is a whitewash and typical of its disgraceful attitude towards the Indigenous community," said ACTU President Ged Kearney. "Instead of working with Indigenous communities, the government continues to punish them with a program that has failed to create long term, sustainable jobs.

"All work must be paid minimum wages, as well as the benefits of work, such as annual leave and superannuation. Employment initiatives must be based on real consultation, self-determination and an understanding of the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities." ✪

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Contact Maria 0431275434



"Injustice is why we are Marxists"

On May 27, 2015 Maria Hilario*, interviewed Francisco Molina Martinez from IU (United Left); Maria has previously interviewed him for the *Guardian* (#1584, March 6, 2013).

M: What has changed in Spain since the last interview?

FMM: Many things have happened since the last interview in early 2013. In Spain the social situation is still very bad since then; but the political situation has changed, everyone was talking that something has to happen (big demonstrations from all over Spain converging in Madrid demanding, a roof over their heads, bread and work) and a new political party "Podemos" appeared; with this comes out a strong surge and interest in political participation and in the affairs that affects the people.

We have been working hard all these years in Zamora, and now we are going to win the Mayorship of Zamora City Council.

M: I saw the results on the night of the election on May 24 and the support for IU was near 30 percent. How did the party managed to get this support?

FMM: Yes, in the City of Zamora we have got an incredible high amount of votes and we are not many in the IU party; what happened was we had been working hard and well during many years since 1985; the work has been going deeper and deeper. It is giving us the fruit, like trees and now they are high, though the growth was slow. The structure of the group, because we are not many, we are like the Mexican Pancho Villa's forces, very free, we meet every week, it's open to everyone – like you experienced yesterday in the meeting.

Yesterday, there were lots of people at the meeting; before there weren't so many. Everyone can express their opinion or tell us about their ideas and if there was a need to have vote we would have put it to the people there; so this openness makes the people feel part of the party and they trust the party because it is not secretive or hermetic. Every day it is with the people and their problems.

We dedicate many, many hours to our work, we are on the streets with any group of people who have problems, "los desahucios" – people losing their houses to the banks – factories that close down, the ecological and environmental issues ... any problem.

We do listen to anyone with a problem as long as it is a result of policies. I can give you an example, someone comes with problems that the tribunal could only resolve but because no one support this person, IU gives a voice to his complaint or protest so it may reach the media and the person will be listened to and it may not have to go to court at the end.

We have three ways of providing help. One, on the street, another helping people navigate through the institutions and the last is to listen to everyone and for this reason people respect us and think of us highly; they value us and they like us and it is not only that they are saying that we are good at administering things, they appreciate us and have affection for us.

What happened with the corruption? In Spain there are more than 1,000 politicians and public employees waiting to go to court because of corruption and they still keep their jobs and the public salaries.

We are in an economic crisis and the politicians in the government, the PP (Popular Party) with the help of the PSOE (Socialist Party of Spain), decided to change one article in the constitution, it said something like this: if there is only one Euro left in the Spanish Bank it has to go to pay the debt, and you can not use that Euro for the people.

In these situations, with so many people really struggling, when they saw the decision of the government that decided to sacrifice the people and they could see the rich getting richer and doing more investments to get richer and that they don't care for suffering of the people.

We have discovered that one of the first areas when corruption started was here, in Zamora; during the '80s and '90s the ex-president Jose Ma Aznar was implicated and it was

here in this Provincial Government House, the ex president used to give the construction projects to his friends in exchange for big sums of money. One of his wealthy builder friends confessed that during the '80s and the beginning of the '90s at least three wealthy business men from Zamora, each of them paid a cheque of one million to Jose Ma Aznar and at that time he was the president of the Junta in Castilla-Leon.

This whistle blower, an ex-crony of Aznar, a wealthy builder, when he went public the answer that Aznar gave him was, "You will get in return much more than you gave me".

In reality the number of corrupt politicians are many more than 1,000 because many won't come out; it is the whole structure and in some cases it also implicates people from the PSOE.

When people are worse off and they discover that the government is corrupt – in the case of the PP they were all corrupt – their treasurer told us they have a parallel system for their finances to record the bribe money; this includes money for the present Primer Minister. Everything continues the same because they never resign. This is the outrage that makes people indignant. This is why they began to protest; in Zamora like in other parts of Spain these indignant people were attracted to various political parties like IU.

This is why the situation has changed in Spain, the crisis got worse and the corruption skyrocketed and the people have had enough. People are very nice because they have been putting up with this for long but it came to a point when they said "you are sacrificing me, my children and I have to migrate to find work. There are no more scholarships and affordable education, my husband is without work and if I find some work they'll pay me half of what I used to get and on top of all this you are thieving."

M: There are people who compare Spain today with the Spain of 1931. Do you think that it is possible that history might repeat itself because the past has not been resolved?

FMM: Yes, the past has not being resolved and social injustice is the reason why we are Marxists. Because we are Marxists we don't accept that there has to be a wealthy ruling class exploiting the rest. What happened during the Spanish Republic in 1931, there was a democratically elected government and the coup d'état got rid of democracy. Now there is a democracy, not perfect because the law is truncated so the powerful will have more advantages. I think what is in common with then is that everyone is united to resolve the problems ... "agrupemonos todos en la lucha final"... the Internationale unites the human race.

M: When was the last time that Zamora had an IU Mayor?

FMM: Never, in Zamora, never and in the other capitals of provinces only in Cordoba with Julio Anguita; this is the second capital in Spain that will have a Mayor from IU.

The program that we have is to reclaim the public services by the City Council; it is important that the City Council takes back control of the services because what serves the people has to belong to the people. The same for the health system and education and the justice system; you save money this way; even if you did not save money it must be in public hands.

The Justice System in Spain has been badly treated on purpose; so the trials will last eight or ten years, by this time the corrupt come out well because by the time the trial begins they get rid of the evidence and the witness will disappear. This is one of the cunning ways of the powerful, that the justice system keeps functioning badly.

In particular, there are very few judges and the resources are even less; district attorneys and prosecutors, administrative justice personnel, they are all in high demand. If you enter a



Francisco Molina Martinez.

Because we are Marxists we don't accept that there has to be a wealthy ruling class exploiting the rest.

court, you probably don't believe it as it lacks any computer system and you can see piles and bundles of papers.

At the municipal level, it is important that water, the collection of rubbish and all of the other services are run by the Municipality or the City Council.

In Spain 10% are wealthy people and for that minority to be able to control the majority 90% they have to rely on lies and a false culture. It is one of the reasons they say, we will keep services that are profitable and that if a private company runs the service it is cheaper. This is another lie, but people are generally good and they believe what they see on TV. There is a saying here: "we don't learn about bad times from other peoples experiences but when it is happening to us, we do learn."

People learnt very fast. Here you see the results in Zamora, a very conservative city this is no longer the case. People were telling us they need someone who can look after our interest and could manage the administration with honesty because the others with their corruption and mismanagement have affected us badly. The corruption has accelerated these results in Zamora's City Council and in Regional elections where the PP no longer has majority. **Note: Maria attended the first IU meeting after a convincing victory. On election night IU got eight members and with the support of some PSOE members they will have the first ever left wing leader in Zamora. Fancisco Guarido will become Mayor on June 13, 2015.**

*Maria is a CPA member ★

Colombia

Army killed civilians to boost body count

Dan Kovalik

The US-backed Colombian government has presided over what now appears to be one of the worst cases ever of mass atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilian populations. According to new reports as many as 6,000 civilians may have been killed under the orders of generals and colonels seeking to boost their reputations as rebel-killers.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) just issued a report citing “extensive previously unpublished evidence [which] implicates many Colombian army generals and colonels in widespread and systematic extrajudicial killings of civilians between 2002 and 2008 ...”

HRW notes that Colombian “prosecutors are investigating at least 3,000 of these cases, in which army troops, under pressure to boost body counts in their war against armed guerrilla groups, killed civilians, and reported them as combat fatalities.” There are reports by other groups, such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which put the number of victims of this slaughter at closer to 6,000.

Jose Miguel Vivanco, executive Americas director of HRW, described these killings, known as the “false positive” killings, as “one of the worst episodes of mass atrocity in the Western Hemisphere in recent years.”

There is mounting evidence that many senior army officers bear responsibility. Yet the army officials in charge at the time of the killings have escaped justice and even ascended to the top of the military command, including the current heads of the army and armed forces, according to Vivanco.

While HRW rightly calls upon the US to suspend military aid to the Colombian military in light of these crimes and the impunity for them, what HRW fails to mention is how the US has had a direct hand in the commission of these crimes.

Thus, a damning report released by FOR demonstrates how there is a direct correlation between US military funding and training, particularly at the School of the Americas (aka WHINSEC), and the incidence of human rights abuses, including “false positive” killings.

To wit, the report concluded that “of the 25 Colombian WHINSEC instructors and graduates for which any subsequent information was available, 12 of them – 48 percent – had either been charged with a serious crime or commanded units whose members had reportedly committed multiple extrajudicial killings.”

Moreover, FOR reports that “some of the officers with the largest number of civilian killings committed under their command (Generals Lasprilla Villamizar, Rodriguez Clavijo, and Montoya, and Colonel Mejia) received significantly more US training, on average, than other officers” during the high water mark of the “false positive” scandal.

For its part, HRW notes that at least 44 alleged extrajudicial killings were carried out by the Fourth Brigade under the leadership of General Montoya (who then later became the army’s top commander), while at least 48 alleged false positive killings were carried out by the Ninth Brigade under the leadership of General Lasprilla Villamizar.

However, the most salient aspect of the “false positive” scandal for Americans – and the one which HRW as well as the press ignore – is that the Colombian military has been encouraging the high body count, and therefore murdering civilians to acquire it, in order to justify continued military aid from the United States which, since 2000, has given that military over \$9 billion and counting to wage its counter-insurgency war.

In other words, it is the United States which is truly behind the “body count syndrome” at the heart of the “false positive scandal.” And, it cannot be said that the US has somehow been



The US backed Colombian security forces engage in death squad tactics.

encouraging body counts unwittingly, for it has been very aware of this phenomenon for many years.

As an illuminating account by Michael Evans at the National Security Archive explains, recently de-classified US documents show that “the CIA and senior US diplomats were aware as early as 1994 that US-backed Colombian security forces engaged in ‘death squad tactics,’ cooperated with drug-running paramilitary groups, and encouraged a ‘body count syndrome ...’”

Yet, despite long-standing knowledge of such crimes, the US not only continued, but indeed massively increased its military aid to Colombia under the 2000 program known as Plan Colombia – the Colombians refer to that program as “Plan Washington,” for it was in the US government where it truly originated.

As Michael Evans explains, the US has been quite aware of Colombia’s policy of creating “false positives” for decades:

“The earliest record in the Archive’s collection referring specifically to the phenomenon dates back to 1990. That document, a cable approved by US Ambassador Thomas McNamara, reported a disturbing increase in abuses attributed to the Colombian Army. In one case, McNamara disputed the military’s claim that it had killed nine guerrillas in El Ramal, Santander, on June 7 of that year.

“The investigation by Instruccion Criminal and the Procuraduria strongly suggests ... that the nine were executed by the Army and then dressed in military fatigues. A military judge who arrived on the scene apparently realised that there were no bullet holes in the military

uniforms to match the wounds in the victims’ bodies...”

Similar tendencies were highlighted four years later in a cable cleared by US Ambassador Myles Frechette. He found that “body count mentalities” persisted among Colombian Army officers seeking promotions. The Embassy’s Defence Attaché Office (DAO) had reported that, “Field officers who cannot show track records of aggressive anti-guerrilla activity (wherein the majority of the military’s human rights abuses occur) disadvantage themselves at promotion time ...”

A CIA intelligence report, also from 1994, went even further, finding that the Colombian security forces continued to “employ death squad tactics in their counterinsurgency campaign”.

Just over ten years ago, another US intelligence report, previously published by the National Security Archive, and based on a conversation with a Colombian Army colonel, suggested that the steep rise in paramilitarism during that era was related to a “body count syndrome” in the Colombian Army.

“This mindset tends to fuel human rights abuses by well-meaning soldiers trying to get their quota to impress superiors. It could also lead to a cavalier, or at least passive, approach when it comes to allowing the paramilitaries to serve as proxies for the COLAR [Colombian Army] in contributing to the guerrilla body count.” The 4th Brigade, a traditional launching point for officers seeking to move up the military chain-of-command, has long been accused of collusion with local paramilitary groups. The Los Angeles Times reported in 2007 on a classified CIA report linking General Montoya to joint military-paramilitary operations in Medellín while he served as brigade commander in 2002.

“In no case were the 4th Brigade’s paramilitary ties more evident than in a February 2000 false positives operation in which both the ACCU paramilitaries and the Colombian Army almost simultaneously claimed credit for having killed two long-demobilised guerrillas near Medellín. A declassified US Embassy cable on the matter, signed by Ambassador Curtis Kamman, reported the case with shocked disbelief.

“The ACCU (which witnesses say kidnapped the two) claims its forces executed them, while the Army’s Fourth Brigade (which released the bodies the next day) presented the dead as ELN guerrillas killed in combat with the Army. After these competing claims sparked localised fear and confusion, armed men stole the cadavers from the morgue...”

“Kamman called the killings ‘a clear case of Army-paramilitary complicity’ that would ‘further increase the already high-level of international NGO interest in the issue of 4th Brigade ties to paramilitaries’.”

Of course, the “false positive” scandal is but the tip of the iceberg of Colombia’s human rights nightmare. Thus, as a result of the Colombian military-paramilitary assault on the population, Colombia now has around six million internally displaced peoples, and has suffered well over 50,000 (and quite possibly 250,000) forced disappearances.

Indeed, the situation confronting Colombia can only be described as catastrophic, and this catastrophe would have been impossible without the massive military funding of the US which continues to this day.

As HRW correctly concludes, this military funding must cease.

People’s World ✪

Greece

Bailout reform deception

Michel Chossudovsky

After having launched a Referendum to refute and refuse the debt bailout agreement put together by the Troika, Prime Minister Tsipras together with his newly instated Finance Minister, comes up four days later with an austerity package broadly similar to the one which was turned down by the Greek government in June.

This about-turn had been carefully engineered. The Greek people were misled and deceived.

Tsipras had made a deal with the creditors. He was in favour of accepting the demands of the creditors all along. Tsipras led the "NO" campaign while having already decided that in the wake of the Referendum, he would say YES to the creditors and cave in to their demands. This is tantamount to an act of treason.

On Monday morning, the day following the Referendum, Yanis Varoufakis who had led the negotiations with the Troika resigned as Finance minister. Did he resign or was he dismissed to facilitate an agreement with the Troika?

Creditors are known to influence appointments to key ministerial positions. (e.g. South Korea, December 1997 at the height of the Asian Crisis, the finance minister and the Head of the Central Bank are dismissed on the orders of Washington).

Varoufakis was hastily replaced by Euclid Tsakalotos, who took office on the Monday morning. His appointment as Finance Minister and chief negotiator (which must have been known well in advance) was broadly welcomed by the EU political and financial establishment.

Prime Minister Tsipras together with his new finance minister then held meetings throughout Monday both with Syriza and the opposition. And by the end of the day, a "joint statement" was speedily signed "by almost the entire political spectrum backing his efforts to seek a new deal from the country's creditors."

Tsipras later told Parliament that his government had been forced to cave in to the demands of the creditors. He also said that the referendum did not authorise the government to envisage the Grexit, namely an exit from the eurozone.

By Thursday, a document of 13-pages containing concrete reforms and austerity measures was sent to the Troika. The initiative was intended, according to media reports "to act as a foundation to free up a new three-year, 53.5-billion euro bailout package to save the nation from bankruptcy".

These proposals outlined in the 13 page document spell disaster for Greece.

They involve massive tax hikes, a drastic reduction in public sector wages, cuts in pensions including an increase in the retirement age to 67, the privatisation of state assets, including public utilities and infrastructure: "The government will look at selling off state assets and will get the ball rolling on privatising the electricity grid company, regional airports and ports including Piraeus and Thessaloniki."

Below are some of the highlights of these proposals:

The proposals include a slew of tax hikes including a 23 percent value added tax on restaurants and catering, a reduced 13 percent tax on basic foodstuffs, energy hotels and water and a so-called "super reduced" rate of 6 percent on such things as pharmaceuticals, books and theatre – perhaps appropriate for a country that pioneered drama. The new tax levels will kick into gear this October. [These tax hikes will kill the tourist industry and trigger bankruptcies of local restaurants and hotels]

Moreover, special tax breaks for the country's islands – popular tourist magnets – will be scrapped. Only the most remote islands will get to keep the coveted tax breaks.

Military spending will be slashed by 100 million euros this year and double that in 2016. Corporate tax will increase from 26 to 28 percent and farmers will lose preferential tax treatment and fuel subsidies. [This will trigger bankruptcy of farmers]

The government is looking at reforms that would bring permanent savings of 1/4 - 1/2 percent of gross domestic product in 2015 and 1 percent of GDP in 2016 and beyond. Measures aimed at achieving those numbers include discouraging early retirement and standardising the retirement age to 67 by 2022 – except for those performing "arduous jobs" and mothers raising kids with a disability.

Social pensions will be better targeted, while supplementary pension funds will be financed by employees' own contributions. Perks such as a solidarity fund will be gradually phased out and health contributions for pensioners will jump from 4 to 6 percent on average. More reforms will kick in to make the pension system more sustainable, including an overhaul of pension contributions for all self-employed. [Drastic reduction in social benefits will trigger mass poverty]

Authorities will shape up public sector wages to ensure that they're on



Austerity protests in Greece. Reforms and austerity measures involve massive tax hikes, a drastic reduction in public sector wages, cuts in pensions including an increase in the retirement age to 67, the privatisation of state assets, including public utilities and infrastructure.

a downward trajectory by 2019 and that they fit "the skill, performance and responsibility" of staff [Destruction of the public sector]

Gains such as paid leave and travel allowances will be streamlined to conform with EU norms. A plan to make it easier to reassign public sector workers to different posts wherever they're needed will also be introduced. A new strategic plan to fight corruption will be drawn up by the end of this month while new laws will make political party finances more transparent and protect financial crime investigations from political interference.

The government will set up an autonomous tax revenue agency and enact reforms, streamline tax collection, track down tax cheats and combat fuel smuggling.

Amendments on insolvency laws will aim to get debtors to pay up loans, while consultants will help on how to deal with bad loans. Steps will also be taken to get foreign investors to pour their money into Greek banks.

The government will open restricted professions such as engineers, notaries and court bailiffs. It will draw up laws aimed at getting rid of red tape and making it easier to get business licenses, while reforming the gas market.

The government will look at selling off state assets and will get the ball rolling on privatizing the

electricity grid company, regional airports and ports including Piraeus and Thessaloniki. [A piece of cake for foreign investors, who will acquire the country's public utilities and infrastructure]

Who are the main actors?

The Troika is acting on behalf of the creditor institutions. They do not call the shots. The ECB is integrated by individuals who are in close liaison with major banking interests including JP Morgan Chase, Deutsche Bank and Goldman Sachs.

Similarly, the Washington-based IMF (which essentially is a debt collecting bureaucracy) is part of what is called the Washington consensus, with links to the US Treasury, Washington's economic think tanks and of course Wall Street.

There were divisions within the Tsipras government's negotiating team. What has to be emphasised is the fact that no concessions were granted by the creditors at any stage of the negotiations.

These reforms will exacerbate the economic and social crisis. Unemployment according to official statistics is currently of the order of 26 percent. Youth unemployment is at 50 percent. The real rate of unemployment is significantly larger than the figure published by the government.

Debt conditionalities

What must be understood is that creditors are not necessarily strung on outright reimbursement of sovereign debt. Quite the opposite. Their objective is to make the debt go up through so-called debt rescheduling, which essentially allows them to lend more money to the debtor. This new money then facilitates the process of debt servicing. "We will lend you the money and with the money we lend you, you will pay us back." New loans to pay back old debts.

This procedure has been routinely applied as part of the IMF-World Bank structural adjustment program (SAP) for more than 30 years. The debt burden goes up. The country is increasingly in a straightjacket. The

creditors call the shots on macro-economic reform.

In this regard Tsipras' new request is for the granting of a package of 53.5 billion euros, most of which will be used to service its debt. Most of the money will not enter the country. This money will be granted by Greece's creditors in exchange for a dramatic reform package.

Debt and the real economy

What has to be addressed is the relationship of debt in monetary terms and the real economy.

The creditors will use Greece's multibillion debt obligations as means to impose deadly macro-economic reforms which will serve to destabilise the national economy and further impoverish the population. These are referred to by the IMF as "policy conditionalities", which enable the creditors to essentially dictate economic and social policy.

The creditors are largely interested in acquiring real wealth within the national economy, namely the acquisition of Greece's national banking institutions, its public enterprises, its agricultural land, etc.

The Tsipras 13 page document spells disaster: a further process of impoverishment, the take over of the country's public assets and infrastructure, bankruptcy of farmers and small businesses, the influx of foreign investors who will buy up the country's wealth at rock bottom prices.

The substance of the Tsipras proposal was endorsed on July 10 by the Greek parliament in a vote of 251 in favour, 32 against and 8 abstentions.

What is at stake in the proposed reform package is an engineered process of impoverishment and a de facto bankruptcy program intended to spearhead national and regional level enterprises in the bankruptcy.

Greece's acceptance of the creditors' demands is tantamount to foregoing its sovereignty as a nation state.

The economic and social consequences are likely to be devastating. globalresearch.ca ☺



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UK unethical arms sales to Israel

The UK government approved £4 million (AUS\$8.3) worth of arms sales to Israel in the immediate months following the Israeli government's military bombardment of Gaza last summer, new research reveals.

Detailed analysis indicates that the related arms licences cover military hardware likely to be deployed if violence in the besieged coastal strip resumes.

Among the arms sales Britain presided over were special components for military helicopters and a range of hi-tech parts for guidance and navigation systems used by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF).

The former Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government also approved arms licences for a slew of

third-party states that sell weapons to Israel. These particular licenses covered the sale of components for military communications equipment, helicopters used in combat and ground-to-ground missiles.

The controversial revelations formed part of a report authored by David Wearing, a researcher at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS). A member of Campaign Against the Arms Trade's (CAAT) steering committee, Wearing's work focuses on domestic and international politics.

The research, "Arming Apartheid: UK Complicity in Israel's Crimes Against the Palestinian People," analyses how Britain's arming of Israel renders it complicit in grievous human rights violations.



"More than 2,000 people died in Israel's bombardment of Gaza, and yet in the months immediately following the conflict it was business as usual for the UK government and the arms companies they support," he said.

Smith said that Britain continues to sell arms to Israel, despite the Israeli administration's continued violation of international law.

"The continuation of arms sales represents a form of political as well as material support from the UK to

Israel despite the construction of the 'apartheid wall' in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements there and the ongoing blockade of Gaza," he said.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign director Sarah Colborne argued Palestinians will not be freed from Israeli occupation, discrimination, and bloodshed until sanctions are imposed on Israel.

Ryvka Barnard, a senior campaigner on militarism and security at War on Want, said the Arming

Apartheid study highlights Britain's complicity in "Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people."

She argued that the global campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) on Israel has become more vital than ever.

"Only a full two-way arms embargo can ensure the UK will no longer be complicit in Israeli state crimes and abuses," he said.

Britain has a history of unethical arms sales to Israel.

Russia Today (rt.com) ☺

CP of South Sudan "Negotiate to end civil war"

Gary Bond

The new nation of South Sudan has become embroiled in a civil war. While many have heard of the conflicts in the notorious Darfur region in the North, the post-independence conflict in the South has been less widely covered.

In an interview conducted in Cyprus in early June, Luciano Dojack, secretary for external relations of the Communist Party of South Sudan, spoke about the creation of the new state and the civil war.

South Sudan was founded in 2011 as a consequence of the division of Sudan between North and South.

Before the split, Sudan was the third largest country in Africa. Its communist party, the Communist Party of Sudan, has a storied history. Founded in 1946, it quickly became, along with the Iraqi Communist Party, one of the major communist parties in that part of the world. In the early 1970s, however, it suffered severe repression at the hands of Sudan's military dictator Gaffar Nimeiry, viewed by many as an imperialist agent, and many of the party's leaders were executed.

The Communist Party of Sudan initially did not support the secession of South Sudan, but divisive Islamism in the North and separatist moves in the South impeding efforts to maintain the unified state, in the end the party acceded to the creation of a separate state in the South. Its members there became the Communist Party of South Sudan, which

works cooperatively with the Communist Party of Sudan.

Dojack said that, basically, the current civil war in South Sudan is between factions within the ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). This is the party that had originally championed the independence movement. The original leader of the SPLM was Dr John Garang. Garang was very progressive, a Marxist, but he died in a plane crash in 2005. His vice president, Salva Kiir, took over and is now president.

Under Kiir the country has moved more and more to the right, Dojack said, and Kiir himself has become more and more dictatorial. In 2013, Kiir's vice president, Dr Riek Machar, announced that he would run in the 2015 election for president against Kiir. According to Dojack, Kiir became incensed, dismissed Machar and began to arrest Machar's supporters, accusing them of planning a coup. These allegations, however, were "nothing but an excuse" to suppress the opposition, the Communist leader said.

The civil war has grown out of this, Dojack said, with the general population originally lining up behind either Kiir or Machar. Now there is another grouping, he said: former detainees, people who had been arrested by Kiir but are now free. Although at one time they were considered to be Machar supporters these former detainees are now leading a third faction in the civil war.

The war has taken on ethnic dimensions. South Sudan, with a population of 8 million to 10

million, is made up of a number of ethnic groups. The two biggest are the Dinka, about 15 percent of the population, and the Nuer, about 10 percent. The regular army, primarily composed of Nuer people, is supporting Machar. The Republican Guard is made up of Nuer and Dinka people and has split, with the Nuer supporting Machar and the Dinka supporting Kiir. Kiir, however, has the support of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was originally the military wing of the SPLM but has now become, essentially, a pro-Kiir militia and is accused of carrying out atrocities against Kiir's opponents and the general population. A third important ethnic group, the Shilluk people, had been neutral but have been attacked by Kiir supporters who have perpetrated atrocities against them. Reports say both government and opposition forces have committed atrocities such as burning villages and killing civilians because of their ethnicity.

Dojack said that all parties to the conflict give lip service to reuniting the SPLM but this is likely futile at this point. The last talks between the sides were in March and, although it was agreed to continue talking, there have been no meetings since and no new talks are scheduled.

The Communist Party of South Sudan is calling for inclusive negotiations which bring together all parties, factions and groups affected by this civil war.

People's World ☺

Met says sorry for Cuba t-shirt gaffe

Will Stone

The Met has issued a "sincere and unreserved apology" for staging a police terror training exercise in which one of the "terrorists" was wearing a Cuban flag T-shirt. More than 1,000 Metropolitan Police officers were involved in the simulated armed terror attack exercise dubbed Operation Strong Tower on June 30.

But in images seen on TV news reports, three officers acting as terrorists donned balaclavas, wore black and carried weapons while one of them sported a T-shirt emblazoned with the Cuban flag.

Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) responded angrily to the incident and argued that the exercise associated the proud socialist nation with terrorism.

The Met's deputy assistant commissioner Maxine de Brunner has written to the campaign group offering "a sincere and unreserved apology on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Service."

She said: "This was clearly a regrettable error, which I take full responsibility for. This has been investigated and the role actor has been spoken to. He genuinely did not think of the significance and implications of wearing a T-shirt with a national flag on it.

"The impact has been explained, he is genuinely sorry

and states there was no intention to cause offence or associate the Cuban people with terrorism."

Ms de Brunner added that the officer in question has been given "advice" regarding his actions and ensured that "the learning from this will be incorporated into future exercises."

CSC director Rob Miller welcomed the apology but added that the incident should never have happened.

He said that the association with terrorism was a "cruel irony" for Cuban people as they had been victims of numerous terrorist attacks from US-based groups over the last 55 years, leaving 3,478 dead and 2,099 disabled.

"Too often, the small island of Cuba has suffered misrepresentation and misinformation from the anti-Cuban mass media," Mr Miller said.

"This incident could further perpetuate such dominant anti-Cuba smears. Rather than support terrorism, Cuba continues to be an inspiration with its exemplary health and education systems and its internationalism."

On the same day as Operation Strong Tower, the World Health Organisation announced that Cuba had become the first country in the world to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

Morning Star ☺

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Letters to the Editor
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Advances for communities

What a massive two days for communities and nature affected by coal and coal seam gas in NSW! The government announced it would buy-back three giant coal seam gas exploration licences covering over 15,000 square kilometres of NSW. The licences stretched from the southern highlands, through the Illawarra and Sydney's drinking water catchment, up to the Central Coast and through parts of the wine-growing region of the Hunter Valley.

Then Planning Minister Rob Stokes announced he would right a past wrong and restore some balance to mining approvals. Minister Stokes

is scrapping an unfair policy in the planning system that puts economic factors first when assessing mining projects, ignoring the environment and communities.

These are well-overdue decisions and they wouldn't have happened without pressure from thousands across NSW.

This decision could be a game changer for the community of Bulga in the Hunter Valley, which has fought Rio Tinto's mega mine expansion for over six years.

But there's a catch. The change announced by Minister Stokes is only a draft and now there's a two-week consultation period. We know the mining lobby will be pushing hard to make submissions. We have two weeks to show there are more of us who support nature and communities than coal mining profits.

As well as Rio Tinto's mine, Wollongong Coal has applied to expand its Russell Vale coal mine under Sydney's drinking water catchment. If Minister Stokes' decision becomes policy it means our water catchment will no longer be considered less important than the profits of a mining company.

This decision isn't all that needs

to be done to fix our broken mining system, but it is a major first step and it wouldn't have happened without you.

Congratulations, these two decisions are a powerful sign that our collective action is making a huge difference for our natural world and our communities.

**Daisy Barham
Nature Conservation Council
of NSW**

Capitalism cannot be civilised

After reading the article about NSW Labor leader Luke Foley urging his party to abolish its historic commitment to socialism and attachment to state ownership I am left wondering who is outdated and swimming against the tide of history.

In 2008 the whole world experienced a major financial upheaval as capitalism underwent only the most recent of its many ongoing corrections. Greece teeters towards its exit from the Eurozone and threatens to bring down the Eurozone itself and China in less than two weeks has

undergone a nearly \$4 trillion correction of its bourse (with its concomitant effect on the Australian economy). There is still someone bold or naïve enough (apart from the captains of industry whose duty it is to go down with the ship) to embrace competitive markets and individual freedom and opportunity.

Mr Foley needs to reread Karl Marx as capitalism cannot be civilised; it can however be transcended by socialism or producing to meet the need values of humankind and not the exchange values of capital which time and time again have run away from us through the speculative volatility of its markets.

It would be a mistake for Labor on behalf of the working class which it has a historic duty to defend, to embrace the ideology of the capital-owning class which is experiencing ever more frequent and deeper crises.

**Richard Titelius
WA**

Reprehensible

The act of paying money to poor fishing people transporting refugees by boat is not half as

reprehensible as frustrating the hopes of very likely genuine refugees in seeking asylum.

It is time we stopped behaving like the neighbourhood thug, and acted like a responsible international citizen. We are a rich country and should take a good number of refugees. It is shameful and damaging that we allow our governments to act immorally towards "boat people".

We, the undersigned, demand an end to asylum seeker detention anywhere, and for a royal commission into the past and present treatment of refugees.

Yours sincerely
Nineteen signatures supplied

*Something
to say?
Write to
the Editor!*

email:
tpearson@cpa.org.au

Culture & Life

by
Rob Gowland

Resist the corporate takeover!

Mussolini dreamed of "the corporate state", the complete integration of business and politics. Poor old Musso was ahead of his time, but today – even as more and more countries all over the world are moving to sever their dependence on and subservience to the big capitalist corporations – those same corporations are moving to establish their total control over society, trade and government. In short, over everything.

Their means to achieve this is by way of innocuously-named free trade agreements. Agreements that place governments in subservient positions to corporations, unable to legislate to protect their environment or their people's health without opening themselves up to being sued for huge sums in "compensation" for supposedly lost profits.

If a capitalist can make money by screwing up the environment or by selling people a dangerous drug and a government legislates to prevent that, in the eyes of the capitalist he has been unfairly cheated out of his chance to make a profit. And since it is capitalists who are drafting these free trade agreements, they are incorporating into them legally binding provisions giving corporations power to over-rule governments.

Martin Kirk, on the *Common Dreams* website, commented: "In the public imagination, nation states are the main actors, when actually corporate interests – which are not connected to the public world and whose primary purpose is to maximise profit – are now given equal weight."

That is a development that suits corporations, and the politicians they control, but it does not suit anyone else. Certainly not the poor, the hungry or the sick.

All over the world, corporations are eagerly eyeing essential services that if they can get control of them, will assure those corporations of guaranteed profits for years to come: health services, food, water, sewerage. Looking further afield, they are also eyeing education, prisons, firefighting and police. Already, some of these services are being provided by private companies for profit.

In some parts of the USA, the fire brigades are owned by insurance companies and unless you have a current policy they won't put out your fire. With the proliferation of private security companies and the use of private security contractors in overseas locations like Iraq, the contracting out of police services in US cities cannot be far away. Other countries will quickly follow suit.

In Britain, the reactionary Cameron government is trying to dismantle the nation's much admired National Health Service (NHS) in favour of a for-profit fee-for-service health care system modelled on that in the USA (where almost half the population don't go to the doctor or get their prescriptions filled because they cannot afford it!)

In Australia, the equally reactionary Abbott government is trying to dismantle the Medicare scheme with the same aim: to provide another avenue for boosting corporate profits while forcing the poor and the sick to rely on charity.



And Abbott and his mates have the gall to pose as concerned Christians!

Almost a year ago, in August, 2014, a report by the Global Policy Forum (GPF) looking at food security warned of the most powerful capitalist governments promoting "a political process designed to reserve corporate actors a seat at the table," where business is given a role "almost equal to governments." In fact, business now wants a more powerful role than that of governments.

The US government alone has committed at least US\$2 billion dollars for promoting just one example of this effort, the so-called New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which is aimed at placing Africa's farmers squarely under (foreign) corporate control. But although the New Alliance is concerned specifically with food and Africa, it is in fact, as the GPF report ominously said, "an excellent example of a form of governance that is increasingly gaining importance on a global scale."

Capitalism can certainly dream big, and it is not inhibited by worries about possible negative effects on people's health or welfare. A future world in which agribusiness and chemical companies – like the notorious Monsanto – have monopoly control over food and water everywhere is exactly what capitalism desires. And that is precisely what they intend to bring about.

Small-scale farmers currently produce about 70 percent of the food in Africa. Capitalism's vision for the future is to dispossess

virtually all of them, turn them into labourers only too glad to work in the commercial plantations that the transnational companies envisage occupying Africa's fertile regions.

And if they think they will make more money from those plantations if they grow coffee instead of food, then coffee is what they will grow. Already, millions of people around the world go hungry every night. How many more have to suffer before we say "Enough! Capitalism's greed for profits before anything else has to stop!"

Backed by social justice organisations in various countries, Africa's multitude of small-scale farmers are beginning to resist the push by the corporations. As Dan Iles says: "What small scale farmers need is investment in infrastructure that links them more locally and regionally ... Where control and ownership over the means of farming, buying and selling food and the culture of food is held by farmers (and people) – not outside elites."

Such rational thinking does not offer capitalism much in the way of profits, however, so won't get much support from imperialist governments.

Resisting the corporate state is going to require a massive effort by the working class and its allies – by all people concerned for democratic rights and a life free from oppression and coercion. The people must speak out and demand that their governments oppose this corporate takeover – while they still have the power to do so. ☺



Rob Gowland
previews
ABC & SBS
Public Television

Sunday July 19–
Saturday July 25

The last time I was in Newcastle, I encountered a use for shipping containers that I had not previously come across: with a large hole cut out of each end, a line of containers makes a very safe pedestrian tunnel along the footpath adjacent to building sites. Ingenious, easily assembled and very effective. Elsewhere, however, shipping containers being used for purposes other than shipping remain a blight on the landscape.

Which makes Patrick Bradley, a young farmer and architect, an unusual subject for this week's *Grand Designs* (ABC Sunday, July 19 at 7.40pm), for Bradley's £100k house is built of four shipping containers, welded together to form a giant cross and cantilevered over the top of a stream.

Bradley was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater house, but his family is less than impressed. Shipping containers are hardly famous for blending into the landscape, and Bradley has located his "house" on "the most magical spot" on the family's Northern Ireland farm. As the trucks, cranes and huge metal containers arrive on site, the pressure is immediately on Patrick's minuscule budget – and his measurements.

With such a huge proportion of the US population incarcerated behind bars, the nation's social life is significantly affected. The opportunities for documentary filmmakers are correspondingly so

much greater. We have had a surprising number of programs featuring interviews with inmates on death row, others showing life behind bars in hideous maximum-security prisons. Very few seem concerned with exposing the profit-making use of prison labour so rampant today in the US. Still less are concerned with rehabilitation or preventing recidivism.

Most prison-based documentaries from the USA take a purely voyeuristic approach, regarding prisons as merely some sort of exotic locale. *Married Behind Bars* (ABC2 Monday July 20 at 9.40pm), although about the USA, was actually made for Channel 4 in the UK, but it displays the same approach. Being about US prisons, the groom is handcuffed and wearing prison overalls and the bride is forbidden to wear tight or revealing clothing or a short skirt. Even the bride and groom's first kiss as man and wife has to be through protective glass.

The program ranges across a varied array of couples, from the types who think marrying a prisoner is romantic to a woman who has been waiting 17 years to be alone with her husband for the first time.

Railways had their beginnings as track-ways for coal carts in the early 18th century. Initially they were all private, but the exigencies of trade and commerce quickly made it necessary for the state to take over the construction and provision of rail services. The railways became the backbone of public transport across Britain especially after the 1830s when the railways arrived in London and linked the capital to the important manufacturing centres of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester.

As Dan Snow reveals in Episode Two of *Dan Snow's History Of Railways* (SBS Wednesday July 22 at 7.30pm), this was the start of a truly national network – and one of the greatest civil engineering projects in history. The spread of the railways triggered a revolution in the way people lived and gave 19th century Britain an incredible rail network that was systematically dismantled in the



Dan Snow's *History Of Railways* (SBS Wednesday July 22 at 7.30pm).

20th century in favour of private cars and "economy".

SBS' offshoot, NITV, through Sits Regional, Remote and Emerging Initiative, called *Our Stories, Our Way, Every Day*, engages regional and remote producers from across Australia to create 15-minute documentaries about Aboriginal culture, history, elders and youth. These are being shown all this week at 6.30pm on NITV.

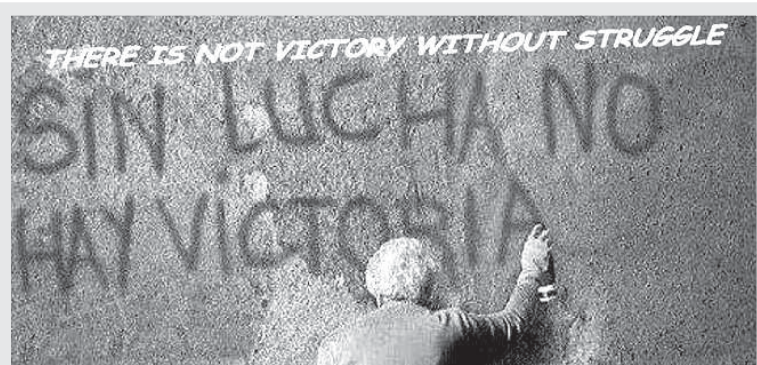
Doctor Gemma Hayman (NITV Monday 20 July, 6.30pm) looks at Gemma Hayman as she begins her first year as a Doctor at Logan Hospital, preparing to become a Forensic Psychiatrist, two decades after her dad became Queensland's first Aboriginal Doctor.

Fight Fire with Fire (NITV Tuesday July 21, 6.30pm) celebrates the 30 years since Warlpiri media changed the landscape of broadcasting for Indigenous communities back in August 1983.

Charlie Chambers (NITV Wednesday July 22, 6.30pm) is the story of Uncle Charlie Chambers who was born in Cherbourg Aboriginal settlement in 1936. As a teenager all he wanted to be was a drover, but to do that he only had one option, which was to break the law and escape Cherbourg.

Yambuk (On Country) (NITV Thursday July 23, 6.30pm) follows Suzanne Thompson as she heads back to her Inangai kuntri to follow her family legacy.

Sieairra Bai'yaman nar (NITV Friday July 24, 6.30pm) In a monumental decision, the Federal Court has passed down a native title determination recognising the Badjala people as traditional owners of Fraser Island (K'gari). In *Sieairra Bai'yaman nar*, Sieairra returns to Fraser with her family to celebrate the hand over that means so much to her people. ☺



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POLITICS

IN THE PUB

July 16

THE BAIRD GOVERNMENT'S DESTRUCTION OF TAFE: SERVING PUBLIC GOOD BY COMMERCIALY RUN "TRAINING COURSES" SERVING BIG MONEY
Pat Ford, Federal TAFE Secretary, Australian Education Union; Damien Oliver, Dr, Research Analyst, University Sydney Business School;

July 23

BIG PHARMA DRIVING OVER DIAGNOSIS AND OVER MEDICATION – A TOXIC INFLUENCE ON MEDICAL PRACTICE
Yola Lucire, Dr, Forensic and Medico-Legal Psychiatry, Sydney; Barbara Mintze, Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada;

Every Thursday 6:30 pm 'til 8:15 pm
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Book review by Rick Nagin

JFK and the unspeakable

There have been many books written about the assassination of President Kennedy, so many, generating so much bewildering debate, in fact, that many people have given up trying to understand the event and its significance. But despite all that, I want to recommend without reservation this book by a Catholic theologian and peace activist, which is unique in many respects and provides an education that all supporters of peace and progress need as we struggle to overcome the danger of right-wing extremism.

This is the only book on the assassination recommended by the Kennedy family: "It has distilled all the best available research into a very well-documented and convincing portrait of president Kennedy's transforming turn to peace, at the cost of his life. ... I urge all Americans to read this book," writes Robert F Kennedy, Jr.

It is also strongly endorsed by Daniel Ellsberg, Marcus Raskin, Oliver Stone, and Gaeton Fonzie, staff investigator for the US House Committee on Assassinations, who stated it is "by far the most important book yet written on the subject."

Simply put, the book demonstrates beyond doubt that Kennedy was killed by the CIA with the help of right-wing Cuban émigrés and the support of extremist forces in the Pentagon, the State Department and possibly other elements of US corporate power, who recognised that Kennedy was moving towards a radical break with the fundamental principles and policies of the Cold War. He was seen as a traitor, who had to be stopped before he could implement his plans.

This book not only documents in fascinating detail how Kennedy was killed but, more importantly, it describes the historical and political context, the reasons why he was murdered.

It is a devastating indictment of the Cold War and exposes the insane drive of its perpetrators in the CIA and the Pentagon for a first strike nuclear attack on Cuba and the USSR.

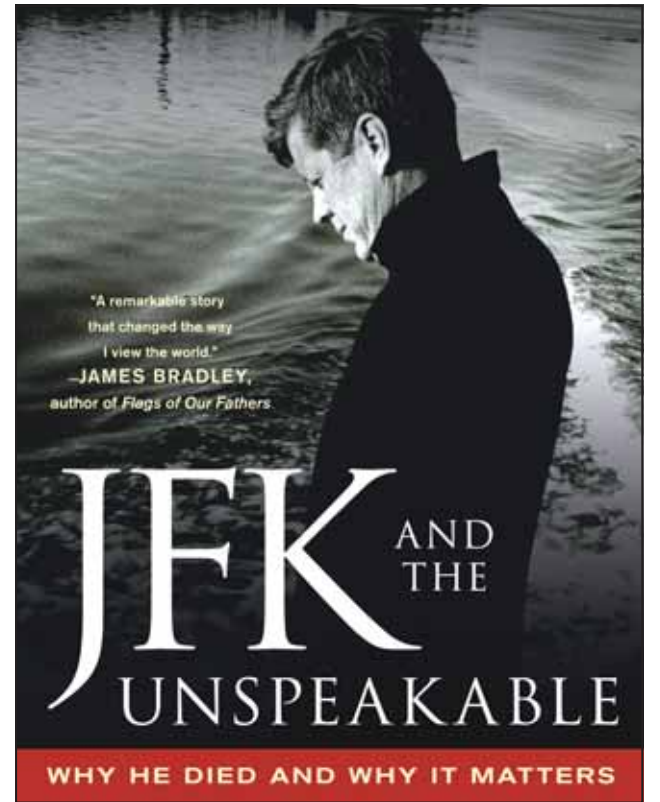
The book also exposes the massive cover-up of the truth as the FBI, the corporate media, and various public officials promoted the official story of the Warren Commission that the President was killed by a lone assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, allegedly motivated by Communist

loyalties and possibly even abetted by Cuba and the Soviet Union.

The Kennedy family never believed this tale and sent a letter to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev saying they recognised it was not Communists, but a right-wing conspiracy who were responsible. Douglass shows that FBI Director J Edgar Hoover and President Lyndon Johnson also dismissed this story as a CIA fabrication, but nonetheless cooperated with the cover-up because they were deeply committed to continue the Cold War.

For the millions subsequently slaughtered in Vietnam, Indonesia, and elsewhere, the militarist policies of the CIA and the Pentagon were anything but cold. Douglass shows how this orgy of mass murder was unleashed by the assassination and gives a sense for us today of the dangerous forces still embedded in the foreign policy establishment of US imperialism, which is why this book is so important.

JFK and the Unspeakable, Why He Died and Why It Matters, James W Douglass, Orbis Books
People's World ★



Capitalism the culprit in the Sixth Extinction

Patrick J Foote

The journal *Science Advances* has published an article in which they state that the Earth's population of mammal species is dying off at 20 to 100 times their average rate. No space rock or massive volcano to blame, the culprit is much closer to home.

The culprit is capitalism.

Dubbed "the Holocene extinction," scientists have found that 477 species have gone extinct in the last 100 years whereas, under normal conditions derived from study of the fossil record, that number of species should have been two.

The Holocene extinction, sometimes called the Sixth Extinction, is a name proposed to describe the currently ongoing extinction event of species during the present Holocene epoch (since around 10,000 BC) mainly due to human activity.

Scientists blame these developments on the results of human productive activity, which, at this stage, is guided by the profit motive. How many times have we read about industrial plants dumping whatever useless and toxic by-product they produce into green spaces or

waterways to save money?

It's a trope any child would be familiar with: every cartoon having an episode where some moustachioed evildoer is sacrificing natural beauty for unnatural profit.

Energy lobbies fight tirelessly to maintain their ability to flout regulation and the entrenched car companies work to pass state level legislation to prevent clean transport alternatives like Tesla [electric car] from taking steps to make their product affordable.

Credit where credit is due, the people's movements have been able to move the Obama administration to implement rules at the EPA that have done things like double car mileage standards and tighten up restrictions on CO2 emissions. That being said, when the regulations on something like coal plants can be undone like they were recently at the Supreme Court because they fail to take into consideration costs (read: lost profits) we know that we face a deep seated structural problem.

When the court establishes that precedent, the legislative and executive branches can only do so much in their current form. With capitalism at the roots of all three

branches of government, how can we expect them to? The passage of fast track for the environmentally irresponsible Trans-Pacific Partnership via some deft manoeuvring in the face of a popular uproar led by the trade union movement we're once again reminded that the US government works on behalf of the owning class.

With the 15 largest container ships producing as much nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide into the air as the earth's 760 million cars, expanding trade with Pacific Rim countries without regard to serious environmental regulation is a long term loss for the planet.

Any internal change within capitalism toward a trajectory aligned with our higher ideals, as President Obama said during his interview on WTF with Marc Maron, can only be implemented "by degrees." Maron, the former liberal radio show host, described the US president's position as "middle management" and correctly so in this respect.

Can we wrest control? Humans are capable of great things, but we're a young species. We're hurtling toward catastrophe, but it's exciting! We're pulling resources out of the ground refining

them in a crude fashion, stocking our shelves with frivolities, come what may!

Our current stage of ethical consumerism is a trend in production responding to the harsh objective truths of climate change. It's equivalent to those first signs that it may be time to "get help" as a species, like experiencing your first hangover that lasts all day and swearing to drink only on the weekends.

It may take rock bottom, but if life on earth is to survive then we must reorient the means by which we survive currently toward keeping a balance with nature.

Some organisations believe that change by degrees is fundamentally impossible. Though few in number, there are those that recommend total de-industrialisation but I cannot square that with considerations for quality of life. Keeping with the alcoholism metaphor, withdrawals can be lethal.

The reason alcoholics enter treatment is because treatment imposes structure. Treatment led by professionals plans out the patient's day and addresses the root of the problem, often trauma in the patient's past. It's an unpleasant process for a while, but it is

ultimately liberating. We are experiencing the anarchy of capitalist production, sloppily stumbling and spilling our waste around the planet. Only a socialism that places nature at the centre of its plan can turn us around from our self-destructive course.

One of the defined attributes of addiction is continued use regardless of consequences. Rock bottom for individuals manifests in many ways, but the most tragic way is when a person under the influence is responsible for the taking of another life. Our addiction to free market anarchy has cost the lives of 477 whole species in the last 100 years and we haven't truly reckoned with the implications as a society.

"People and nature before profits" is a slogan for the age of the Holocene extinction, but it must be more than that. Any groups organising around social justice should do their best to incorporate an environmental component. The solidarity between unions and environmental groups especially should be strengthened. A global society must have global responsibilities and it's up to the people's movements to lead.

People's World ★



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