

## Handouts to polluters but peanuts for renewable energy

Bob Briton

The Federal Government last week announced a \$2.2 billion plan going by the laughable name "Securing Australia's Energy Future". The scheme does nothing of the sort. While public relations firms will do their best to dress the package up as "pro-environment" – and thereby neutralise some of the benefit Labor may have got from the recruitment of the increasingly flexible Peter Garrett – it seeks to reassure Australia's biggest polluters and threatens to kill off much of the country's renewable energy sector.

Speaking at the National Press Club in Canberra, the Prime Minister set out its main thrust and its main camouflage:

"The essential argument of this paper ... is that whatever may be the merits of renewables, the reality is older fuels – of which we have large supplies – are going to contribute the bulk of our energy needs, and what we have to do is make them cleaner."

An overhaul of the fuel excise and diesel rebate system will cost an estimated \$1.5 billion of foregone revenue by 2012. It will slash fuel costs for the mining, transport, farming, forestry and the fishing industries by removing all excise on all off-road business uses (power generation, grain drying etc.). The diesel fuel rebate will be extended to include large trucks of all fuel types – not just diesels, as is the case at present.

The Government's last "reform" of fuel excise in 2001 reduced the levy by 1.5 cents per litre and scrapped CPI-related indexation. The cost so far of this incentive for the use of fossil fuels has been put at \$4.6 billion. The latest changes – the most expensive items in the

package – could not possibly have any positive environmental impact. The move is also a transparent piece of pork barrelling aimed at marginal rural electorates in the upcoming Federal Elections

Australian Conservation Foundation executive director Don Henry summed up the reaction of those concerned for the environment: "In a world where we're trying to tackle climate change, I don't think it's smart to cut the price of fuel."

Howard also promised a new "Resource Exploration Strategy" to facilitate land access and encourage exploration for oil and gas reserves.

The other big winner in the Federal Government's plan is that other big source of climate changing greenhouse gases – the coal industry. The PM has thrown his weight behind the "cleaner coal" lobby and the bulk of a pool of \$500 million for the development of "greenhouse technologies" is expected to go to geosequestration research.

Geosequestration is a controversial and unproven technology that involves pumping the gases produced from the burning of coal deep underground where, presumably, they can do no harm. Overseas research has so far only demonstrated that the idea has a long way to go.

The Government is reported to be heavily influenced in favour of geosequestration by the Commonwealth's Chief Scientist, Dr Robin Batterham. This Howard appointee was previously the Chief Technologist at Rio Tinto Limited which – surprise, surprise – has major coal interests among its other mining operations worldwide. Rio Tinto is set to announce a profit increase of 50 per cent this year with coal playing a very big part in its "success".

continued page 2



## Howard beats war drums

Prime Minister Howard's address to the ultra-conservative Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)\* last Friday was an occasion for him to attempt to strike fear into the Australian public and to demand adherence to the US alliance. His speech was peppered with fear-mongering remarks: "the terrible threats of the 21st century", "critical dangers", "grave threats", "horrendous prospects", "terrible dilemmas".

To justify this fear-mongering he identifies the "danger of terrorism and weapons proliferation" and

gives it an identity by referring to "Islamic extremists".

The response of the Howard Government is almost entirely limited to beefing up the military. He told his listeners that "Additional investments have been made to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of the Army; to improve air defence protection to deploying forces; to enhance the lift capability for deployment; and to position the ADF [Australian Defence Forces] to exploit current and emerging network-centric warfare advantages".

To this is added "better laws [meaning the steady fascisation of the so-called anti-terror legislation], stronger terrorism-fighting agencies and enhanced international cooperation [meaning the Australia-US alliance].

In a clear indication that the Howard Government sees its role not merely as a Pacific policeman but as a global cop, he said, "Australia needs to use all available means to promote global and regional security".

continued page 5

**A self-regulating honour system is the cornerstone of the government's "vision" for the environment.**

Govt ignores report of racist abuse - p3

Staff cuts and closures for Sydney stations - p4

Book Review *Socialism Betrayed* - p6

Book Review *People vs Profits* - p7

The real Ronald Reagan - p8

# The Guardian

No 1188

June 23, 2004

## Bush's credibility on the line

The US commission investigating the events of 9/11 has brought down a damning report of what happened and has totally discredited the claim that the regime of Saddam Hussein had connections with al-Qaida. The intended implication of this charge was that Iraq had some involvement in the destruction of the World Trade Centre.

However, the commission found no evidence of any such connection. This did not stop President Bush from claiming that because there had been some connection there must have been a connection. His manipulation of words is breathtaking but it is in accord with every other justification that has been advanced for the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

As to the events on the day itself, the commission revealed that the airforce's handling of the task to intercept the hi-jacked planes was chaotic. But was it chaos or was it internal sabotage by high officials? It appears that the commission has taken good care not to ask or seek answers to such awkward questions.

Bush, who was taking a reading lesson at a school at the time, was unmoved when informed of the hi-jacking and the planes hitting the World Trade Centre yet in an article on the commission's findings in the *Weekend Australian* of June 19-20, it is asserted that amid the confusion "Bush was clear". It is claimed that the "White House ordered the military to shoot down planes but the pilots were not told."

If such a command was given, when was it given? Was it after the hi-jacked planes had been flown into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon? What is known is that Bush continued to listen to children during a reading lesson for about 20-30 minutes after being informed of what had happened.

The whole treatment of these vital questions suggests that despite its findings of incredible irresponsibility and incompetence among those responsible for acting in the event of hi-jackings, it is still prepared to let those who are really responsible off the hook.

The same game is being played with the indisputably false "intelligence" that was used by Bush, Powell, Blair and Howard to stampe the world into the illegal and monstrous war against Iraq. The game now is to blame the intelligence communities whereas the invasion of Iraq was planned well before the events of 9/11 took place.

Despite the limitations of the commission's findings they are so sensitive and unfavourable to Bush that an offensive to discredit the commission has been launched in the United States. The commission is claimed to be biased. This is a normal response of the guilty to unfavourable reports coming from inquiries into their actions and responsibilities.

No less than 27 former diplomats and military commanders have branded Bush's foreign policies as "overbearing" "insensitive" and "disdainful". Words that they fail to use include "lying", "irresponsible", and "extremely dangerous" for the rest of the world.

### Governor-General, "All the way with the USA"

The Governor-General, Michael Jeffery, has faced strong criticism for his statement backing US President Bush's criticism of Mark Latham's announcement that an ALP Government would bring Australian troops in Iraq home by Christmas.

Bush described the ALP's decision as "disastrous" and his remark was regarded by many as interference in Australia's internal affairs. The G-G tried to pass off Bush's remark by saying that it was a straight answer to a straight question.

The Governor-General's remark was in turn regarded as over-stepping the requirement that a Governor-General should stay out of an internal political debate.

While the inappropriate remark of the Governor-General is one aspect of his comments, another is the fact that his very conservative political stand has once again become apparent. The G-G has become something of a front-man when it comes to the promotion of militarism in Australia. By coming to the defence of President Bush he shows his "All the way with the USA" outlook.

But that, after all, is why Howard appointed him to the position of Governor-General.

### PRESS FUND

The mass media rarely points out that al-Qaida, like other anti-government forces in countries whose governments the US detested, originally received special training in guerilla warfare from the CIA and generous funding from government sources. *The Guardian* has never received any such financial assistance! And unlike the mass media, *The Guardian* carries unpaid advertising for left and progressive activities and is almost entirely dependent on its readers and supporters to cover the cost of its production. So if you think *The Guardian* makes interesting reading, then send us a contribution for the next issue. Our sincere thanks go to the following for their valuable support this week:

MH \$50, L Newcombe \$2, R A Reed \$20, "Round Figure" \$8, Gary Speirs \$20, Mark Window \$10.

This week total: \$90. Progressive total: \$5410.

# Howard's latest terror laws: Labor rolls over... again

**The Howard Government has stepped up its attack on civil liberties with new "anti-terror" laws introduced last week, and being rushed through Parliament this week.**

The new laws include changes that severely restrict the right to bail, introduce mandatory sentencing and create new powers of detention of suspected terrorists by police.

Attorney General Phillip Ruddock outlines the new provisions for granting bail to suspected a terrorist offence: "The amendments will mean that persons charged with, or convicted of, federal terrorism and related offences would face a presumption against bail unless a bail authority is satisfied that exceptional circumstances justify the granting of bail."

The Federal legislation mimics laws passed through the NSW Parliament three weeks ago.

On that occasion the NSW Council for Civil Liberties said: "The new bail laws mean that, rather than the Crown having to argue why a person should not be granted bail, anyone charged with a federal terrorist offence will have to argue

before a Magistrate why they should be granted bail.

"In our society everyone is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. This move introduces a presumption of guilt when it comes people accused of terrorist offences – long before they have their day in court."

## The Federal legislation mimics laws passed through the NSW Parliament three weeks ago.

The *Anti-Terrorism No. 2 (2004)* Bill allows police to further detain people without charge on top of the seven days they may have already been held by ASIO.

The legislation also introduces mandatory non-parole periods for custodial sentences. Attorney General Ruddock explained that sentences must "reflect community concern" about terrorism and that current judicial discretion "has the potential to undermine confidence in the criminal justice system..."

There are also new penalties for

"intentionally meeting and communicating" with members of a terrorist organisation".

It must be remembered in this context that organisations are proscribed as terrorist by the Attorney General himself.

Greens Senator Kerry Nettle described the new laws as

"McCarthyite". "Changes to bail and sentencing laws have been pushed through with no public discussion or Parliamentary inquiry".

"The laws passed by Labor and the government attack the independence of the judiciary and breach international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights", Senator Nettle said.

"We have had over two years of new terror laws in every sitting of Parliament and Labor rolls over every time." ☺

# Handouts to polluters but peanuts for renewable energy

continued from page 1

Support for renewable energy technologies is way down the list of funding priorities. In fact the \$134 million being provided to make renewables more cost efficient includes an amount of \$50 million already set aside under the Industry Department's "Commercial Ready" program. A paltry \$75 million is earmarked for trial "solar city" developments in Sydney and Adelaide where smart electricity metres will be used.

However, the biggest setback to the hopes of the community for renewable energy sources comes from a decision not to extend the Mandated Renewable Energy Target (MRET) scheme. The target for energy to come from renewable sources and sold by electricity retailers is currently set at one per cent. It was expected that this would be increased to five per cent in the near future but Howard's plan would effectively "cap" the target at

a very unambitious two per cent by 2020.

In its typical fashion, the Government claims that a MRET of five per cent would cost the economy \$11 billion and 15,000 jobs. However, a report by Allens Consulting Group for the NSW Sustainable Energy Development Authority says that a 3.5 per cent target would actually create a net 530 jobs in NSW and 1,630 across Australia. An MRET of five per cent would have a benign effect on the economy, especially when the benefits to the \$16 billion environment sector are considered.

The first casualties of this sector will be the companies that have invested in renewable energy on the understanding that the demand for their services would be increasing. Karl Mallon of the Australian Wind Energy Association expects \$5 billion worth of proposed investments to go elsewhere. Danish firm Vesta was considering setting up a plant in Tasmania, employing

250 people to manufacture blades for wind farm turbines prior to the announcement of the Federal Government's plan.

Of course, the plan confirms Howard's intention to continue the boycott of the Kyoto Protocols. The country's big energy users will only be obliged to audit their own energy use and take part in a "Greenhouse Challenge Program". There will be no carbon use charges of the sort that our trading partners are introducing. A self-regulating honour system is the cornerstone of the government's "vision" for the environment.

This is consistent with the "free market" approach of the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement which promotes "voluntary, market-based mechanisms to protect the environment". In effect it means total abdication by the government of its responsibilities for environmental protection and a free hand for the private profiteers whose interests lie in the production of greenhouse gases.

The Australian Coal Association, the Australian Aluminium Council and the Minerals Council all love the Howard plan. Hugh Morgan of the Australian Business Council said that it "strikes an appropriate balance". They would all agree with the editorial of *The Australian Financial Review* last week that "technology-neutral, market based solutions are nearly always better than governments trying to pick winners".

No examples are produced to support this expression of faith in the bosses' ideology. In fact, no reasons are offered as to why capitalist markets – attuned to returning maximum profits – should suddenly expand their focus to include the environment. "Securing Australia's Energy Future" is the Government's latest gift to big business, especially the big polluters. It is another major reason why Howard's time is up. ☺

## Clarification

In last week's *Guardian* (issue 1187) the article *Turning Tasmania's national parks into a commodity* stated: "... it was actually a Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, who acted to block the worst act of proposed government vandalism, the damming of the Franklin River in the 1970s, even though the project was the brainchild of a Tasmanian Liberal Government".

The Franklin Dam project was commenced in the late 1979 by the Tasmanian State Labor Government under Premier Doug Lowe. By 1981 Lowe was personally opposed to the Dam and requested Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser to intervene in its construction. Mr Lowe was dumped by his Tasmanian Labor colleagues in November 1981 and the Liberal

Party won the subsequent state election in May 1982.

Mr Fraser publicly committed to halt the dam and applied to the United Nations to have the Franklin River World Heritage-listed. The status was granted in December 1982. In defiance the Tasmanian Liberal Government escalated the project. In January 1983 Mr Fraser promised Tasmania \$500 million to halt the dam, but when the offer was refused he declined to intervene further.

Mr Fraser lost power just two months later, and in April 1983 the new Hawke Government passed the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act* which eventually overruled the Tasmanian Government and permanently halted construction. ☺

# Govt ignores report of racist abuse

Andrew Jackson

**Australian Muslims and Arabs are concerned about the increased racism and harassment they have been experiencing since September 2001, a new Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report has found. However, this upsurge in racism does not appear to concern the Federal Government.**

The *Isma* – Listen project was launched in March 2003 in response to increasing concerns expressed by Arab and Muslim organisations about the rise in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice in Australia.

The majority of the 1423 participants in the project reported experiencing various forms of prejudice ranging from offensive remarks to physical violence.

Respondents said that racist abuse escalated after the “9/11” attacks in New York in 2001 and the Bali bombings of October 2002. National events such as the growing numbers of asylum seekers from the Middle East and Muslim countries and the trial, conviction and sentencing of gang rapists in Sydney in 2001-2002 were also identified as factors.

Participants felt that those most at risk were readily identifiable as Arab or Muslim because of their dress, physical appearance or name.

Muslim women who wear traditional Islamic dress were especially afraid of being abused or attacked, and many said they have restricted their movements and become more isolated since September 11.

Most experiences described by participants were unprovoked, “one off” incidents from strangers on the street, on public transport, in shops and shopping centres or on the roads. However, participants also reported experiencing different forms of prejudice from people known to them in the workplace, at school, universities or colleges and from neighbours.

Discrimination in the provision of some government services, par-

ticularly police services, was also reported.

Many Arab and Muslim youth felt that they were particularly at risk of harassment, which has led to an increasing distrust in authority.

These experiences are having a profound impact on Arab and Muslim Australians, with many saying they now live in fear and isolated from the wider community.

Respondents said their reluctance to complain about racist abuse and violence to police or government organisations was due to fear of victimisation and low expectation that there would be a satisfactory outcome from the complaint.

## Government mute

Not surprisingly the report was released with little fanfare from the media and to no official government response.

Attorney General Philip Ruddock declined to respond personally on the Report’s recommendation that new laws protecting citizens from discrimination and vilification be introduced and existing laws strengthened.

Instead a Department spokesperson merely stated the Government would tackle racism through education, and not with increased legal protection.

There was no official response to the HREOC report from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. (The combining of these three portfolios into one department itself a pointer to the importance the Government places on each.)

However, on the very same day a press release from Minister Amanda Vanstone proclaimed: “Eighteen illegal vineyard workers located near Mildura”.

Earlier in the week, in response to the “Free The Refugees” protest on Channel 10’s *Big Brother*, Ms Vanstone also declared: “Government committed to detention regime”.

The Howard Government declines to comment on rising racism and religious hatred because the

Government is directly responsible for it.

The 2001 election was won as the Government whipped up racist and xenophobic hysteria under the guise of “border protection”.

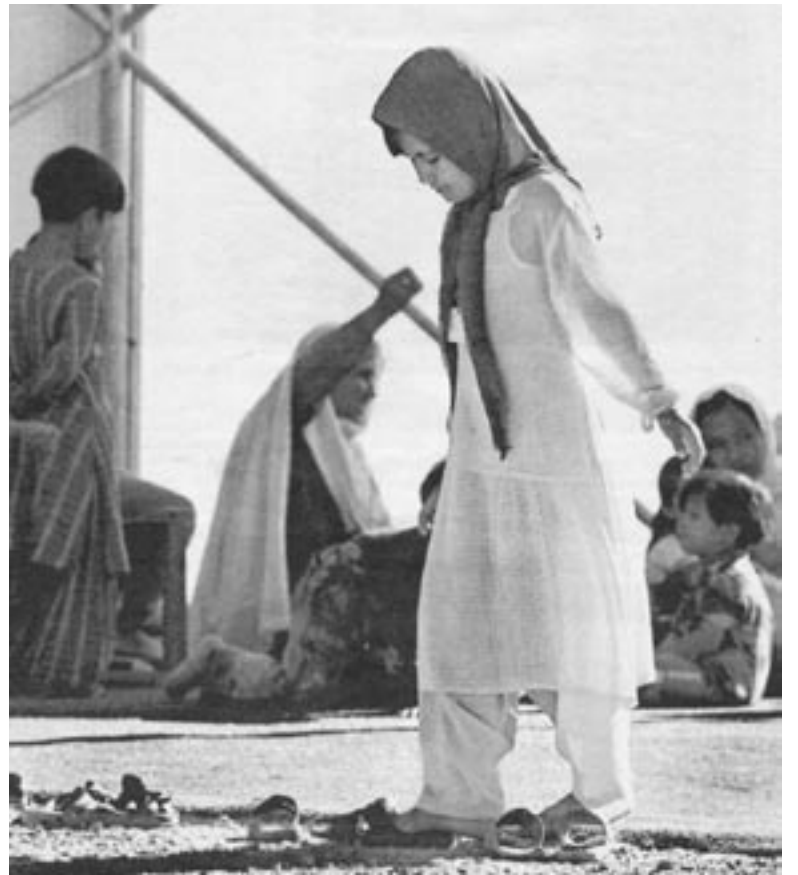
While the media headlines scream “gang violence” and “terrorism attacks” our governments continue to dismantle our public health and education systems and pass anti-union legislation.

The new “anti-terror” laws introduced by Federal and State Governments received public backing under the mistaken belief that it would be used to target Islamic extremist organisations.

However, the laws now in place will allow governments to silence anti-government dissent from any individuals or organisations they see as a threat – trade unions, peace organisations, Indigenous activists, and left and progressive political parties.

Australia went to war under the banner of saving the world from “Arab terrorists” and “Islamic extremists”, hiding its true intent of plundering Iraq’s oil resources.

Racism is a tool used by governments as they edge towards fascism to distract, divide and ultimately crush the working class. ☺



“The Government is committed to the detention regime”  
- Minister Vanstone

## A new battle for your ABC

Peter Mac

**The struggle for the political future of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has moved into a new stage, with the surprise resignation of Maurice Newman from the ABC Board. Newman is the Chairman of the Australian Stock Exchange and was appointed to the Board by the Howard Government.**

His resignation has triggered a number of attacks on the organisation, in particular new allegations of political (i.e. left-wing) “bias” in its broadcasts. It has also prompted Daryl Williams, the current Minister for Communications, to openly question whether a staff representative should continue to sit on the Board.

Newman’s departure followed revelations on the *Media Watch* program that he had persuaded the Board to commission a firm to monitor ABC broadcasts for evidence of the alleged left-wing bias.

The monitoring idea was originally the brainchild of former Minister for Communications, Richard Alston. He consistently pushed the line that the ABC was operating with a left-wing bias that, by implication, caused the organisation to deal dishonestly and unfairly with the Howard Government, the Bush administration and other conservative regimes.

By the time Alston left the ministry, two successive enquiries had failed to find any evidence of serious misdemeanors by ABC staff in their coverage of the Iraq war. Newman took up Alston’s idea of bias monitoring with relish, and persuaded the ABC Board to allocate the sum of some \$200,000 for such an exercise from the corporation’s ever-shrinking budget.

And now Newman himself has departed, but not without first trying to pin the blame on the ABC Board’s staff representative, Ramona Koval, for leaking the monitoring commission story to the *Media Watch* program.

### Attempt to gag staff representative

Newman and other Board members also failed to persuade Ms Koval to sign a “board conduct” agreement. Signing this document would have prevented her from reporting on her work on the Board to the ABC staff elected her as their representative.

Despite having implicitly blamed her for what he described as “a recent gross breach of boardroom confidentiality”, and despite having supported moves to muzzle the Board members, Newman declared with no apparent sense of irony that “I don’t wish to remain on a Board where you cannot remain frank and open”!

Newman’s fury at having his covert political role on the Board revealed is understandable – after all, the Howard Government had gone to a great deal of trouble to install him. His outburst was also, by implication, directed at *Media Watch*.

*Media Watch* is widely regarded as performing a vital and virtually unique role as a fearless critic of the mass media, including the ABC. Such programs as *Media Watch* and *Four Corners* which it follows on a Monday night, are the target of Alston, Howard and Newman. They provide penetrating and independent analysis – not the food of commercial television.

The ABC board should not expect to be exempt from the critical scrutiny of *Media Watch*, and must not under any circumstances be allowed to interfere in its production. Any attack on *Media Watch* will inevitably be recognised for what it is – a blatant attempt by the conservatives to force the ABC to reflect their very right-wing views.

This, of course, is also true of the bias monitoring project itself, which Ms Koval described as a “serious, improper and continuing political interference in

the processes of the ABC Board and the editorial policies of the corporation.”

Not that this will deter the Howard Government or the current Minister. Williams may use the Newman incident as an excuse to abolish staff representation on the ABC Board.

His views have been echoed by, among others, the extreme right-wing “think tank”, the Institute of Public Affairs. They recently attacked the ABC for its (relatively) low-key coverage of what they obviously considered to be one of the most significant events of the year – the death of Ronald Reagan!

The organisation that deserves the last word is, however, the community group Friends of the ABC. They commented: “... it is alarming that (Mr Newman) is unwilling to stay on the board because the staff-elected director refuses to sign away her rights, indeed her responsibility, to act according to her conscience.”

“All board members have responsibilities above their allegiance to the board on which they sit. Too often there have been serious consequences when individual members of corporate boards have placed confidentiality above the long-term good of the body they oversee.”

“It is not in the public’s interest to have the ABC board operate in total secrecy. The community is entitled to be informed about important matters affecting the operations of the country’s most significant information and cultural institution.”

“In making possible the position of staff-elected director, the ABC Act has ensured that at least one member of the Board has broadcasting experience. It has also provided one small counter to governments that smack the board.”

“Efforts to gag the staff-elected director should be condemned. Political abuse and interference in the ABC must cease.” ☺

### Pete’s Corner



# Staff cuts and closures for Sydney stations

**Up to 60 stations on Sydney's Cityrail network are being closed or short-staffed due to RailCorp cost cutting, according to rail workers, who have flagged industrial action unless the Carr Government addresses the issue.**

Short staffing came to a head on June 9 when a passenger on the Illawarra line suffered a heart attack, forcing the train to stop at Austinmer. An untrained RailCorp CSA (Customer Service Assistant) was the only staff member on duty to deal with hundreds of passengers as well as the heart attack victim.

The CSA was filling in as RailCorp had refused overtime so a qualified station manager could be on duty at Austinmer.

"This is not the CSA's fault", said Phil Kessey from the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU).

Railcorp has placed a restriction on overtime and, according to the RTBU, is not recruiting at a correct level, with more people leaving the rail service than coming in.

"The Minister and the Premier have been running around for four years saying that the system relied on overtime, now they're saying it's a problem", said Mr Kessey.

The RTBU slammed RailCorp's excuse that fatigue is behind the decision not to award overtime.

**Train station staff are also writing to parents expressing concern over the safety of school children on unstaffed stations**

The RTBU claims that it is all about cost-cutting and running down services.

"We want people to understand

that they are being made accustomed to having less staff on stations", warned Mr Kessey.

Rail workers have given the Carr Government two weeks to address the issue or face stopwork meetings that will discuss 24-hour stoppages.

Train station staff are also writing to parents expressing concern over the safety of school children on unstaffed stations, as well as circulating petitions calling on the Carr Government to act over the issue.

Meanwhile, train drivers who have undergone testing that has been labelled as "questionable" by experts, are sitting idle despite government and RailCorp claims of a driver "shortage".

"The regime of psychometric testing is not an accepted method of testing", said Phil Kessey. "We have drivers that are qualified and re-certified that are sitting on the side because of this testing that has been questioned by psychometric experts". ☘



People are being made accustomed to less staff on stations

## Once a rat ...

**Nigel Hadgkiss' sudden entry into the world of paid advertising has renewed calls for the scrapping of his Building Industry Task Force. The Task Force chose just six days before a Senate Committee is due to release its report on the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Bill, to advertise a service to workers. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) smelled a rat.**

"These advertisements are run under the banner of the Task Force but merely divert people with a complaint to Wage Line – a service already offered by the Department

of Workplace Relations", said the CFMEU's Dave Noonan.

"It's an admission by the Task Force's own marketing department that it refuses to prosecute employers who rip off workers. The Task Force claims to have zero tolerance for breaches of the law, but will not prosecute bosses who steal workers' money."

Mr Noonan pointed out that in the year and a half the Task Force had operated under Hadgkiss, it had not prosecuted a single employer, anywhere in Australia, for short changing a building worker.

He contrasted that with evidence placed before the Building Industry

Royal Commission that showed the CFMEU, alone, had won more than \$30 million for underpaid members over a six-year period.

He noted that the timing of the Task Force ads, run in metropolitan newspapers, was "no coincidence".

"The Task Force has been embarrassed by revelations in the Senate Committee. The ads are a bit of political spin just days before the Committee report becomes public."

Hadgkiss told the Senate Inquiry he wanted greater powers which would flow from the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Bill.

However, the inquiry heard allegations that Task Force members were already paying apprentices for information, and covertly recording conversations on building sites.

Hadgkiss told the inquiry it was legal for "anybody" to secretly record conversations in WA.

The issue of covert recordings comes a year after former undercover policeman, Michael Kennedy, told a lower house inquiry that when Hadgkiss had been senior investigator for the Wood Royal Commission into police corruption in WA, it had routinely engaged in illegal communications intercepts.

Kennedy told the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs he had been fitted up with the help of covert recordings for falsely accusing police officers of corruption.

"I was convicted because I pleaded guilty. I was absolutely done over", Kennedy said.

"Those people from the Joint Drug Task Force were all exposed in the Wood Royal Commission as being corrupt. The man who charged me was Nigel Hadgkiss. The man who revealed their years later was Nigel Hadgkiss."

Kennedy said he had lodged formal complaints about the "criminal and illegal activities of Hadgkiss" and others, at the time. Hadgkiss was subsequently exonerated of wrong doing but Kennedy alleged evidence and witnesses he put forward were never tested or interviewed. ☘

## People importer wants indemnity

**Labour hire outfit Freespirit wants exploited South Africans to indemnify it against back-pay claims that could exceed \$100,000 as the price of keeping them in the country. The company has been at the centre of controversy since the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) blew the whistle on its importation of 29 boilermakers, pipe fitters and welders who were paid effective rates as low as \$11.50 an hour to work in Western Australia (see last week's Guardian).**

Two of the South Africans, Ronald Oliveira and Roland Claasen, were sacked the day after they went public about their predicament. In the case of Oliveira, Freespirit has informed him in writing it was revoking his four-year immigration visa and seeking his deportation.

The company refuses to negotiate with the AMWU although all 29 South Africans have joined the union.

Last week it offered some of the men undisclosed amounts on condition that they sign secrecy agreements and deeds of release with a wholly-owned subsidiary that would take over their sponsorships.

Their new employer would be FSP Technical.

The deeds require the South Africans to release Freespirit from "all claims and actions in relation to the employment relationship".

Freespirit argues its only salary obligation to the skilled tradesmen is to pay the minimum \$37,820 a year, irrespective of hours worked or any agreements that might apply to Australian workers on the same jobs.

This rate, according to the new contracts, includes loadings for annual leave, long service, sick

leave, statutory holidays, termination and other entitlements, as well as "provision for repatriation of you and your dependents".

The proposed "sponsorship employment agreements" make it clear the South Africans are "casuals" who may be moved from job to job at Freespirit's whim.

"You will work for the periods and the hours required by our clients", it reads. "We will pay you no less than the minimum annual salary level, calculated on a pro rata basis, specified in Regulation 1.20B of the Migration Regulations ..."

The workers, already charged \$5000 in South Africa for fees, paperwork and airfares, are required to make another "non-refundable contribution" of \$650 towards costs of the new sponsorship agreements. Many are still being charged interest of 144 per cent on their original \$5000 loans.

Workers are required to meet their own insurance.

Freespirit insists that terms of the agreements must remain "confidential", even after they have ended.

The company has been accused of engaging in "pyramid labour hire" by AMWU WA State Secretary, Jock Ferguson.

The union is seeking to carry out time and wages inspections on behalf of each of the South Africans with a view to lodging claims in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Mr Ferguson has written to other state branches in a bid to identify 1000 South Africans Freespirit says it has working in Australia on Section 457 visas.

Meanwhile, the AMWU is confident of being able to prevent the deportations of Oliveira and Claasen. ☘

## Legacy of Empire

**You were born, where? Into unemployment, uncertainty? Asking your God, how, why? They wooed you into camouflage and moulded you from the rawest material: there are Hollywood aspirations and shards of brutality embedded in your dreams.**

**Now you are here, gloating over my body, even as they are taking some of you home in body bags: delivering to your frightened nation its sons and daughters dressed up in draped coffins.**

**All the waste – not only the present, but the past and future.**

**When you leave you think you have left me behind. But you do not return alone. I am with you. We are chained together and now you must pull me with you, a part of the cradle of civilisation in your land of Princeton poets.**

**I will remain like the heavy drag of the wind, my heavy resistance dragging through the rooms of your homes, into your fields of grain; you will feel my weight along the valleys of your beloved country, in its whipped deserts.**

**This is your terrible legacy, that I am always with you, you who are a prisoner in your own land.**

Tom Pearson

Newcastle  
Protest the continuing occupation of Iraq  
**Hunter Peace Forum Rally**  
Saturday 26 June 11am  
Panthers Club, King St Newcastle West  
Contact: Gary Kennedy, 4929 1162 or 0438 550 508  
Guests to include the Newcastle people's chorus  
Keynote speaker – Peace Activist: Donna Mulhearn  
Authorised by Gary Kennedy – Newcastle Trades Hall Council

# Open letter to PM

This is an OPEN LETTER being sent to you concerning "excess mortality" and infant mortality in Iraq.

As a citizen of Australia I appreciate your problems over the last few years of not receiving accurate and timely information from your subordinates in the Australian public service e.g. over the non-occurrence of "children overboard"; the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; and, most recently, the systemic torture of Iraqi prisoners of the Coalition.

In order to avoid such problems, I am sending the following information on horrendous mortality in Iraq to you directly (with copies to other MPs, media and fellow citizens).

[The] horrendous Iraq "excess mortality" (= actual deaths

MINUS deaths expected with the same demographics and a peaceful society) is 5.2 million since 1950 and 1.5 million since 1991 (www.control.com.au).

This type of scientific analysis is quite revealing: thus "excess mortality" since the ostensibly "bloodless" Fiji coup of 1987 has been about 4500; "excess mortality" since 1967 in the Palestinian Occupied Territories has been about 340,000; and "excess mortality" in Afghanistan since 1950 has been 16.2 million.

The horrendous Iraq "excess mortality" estimates are consonant with UNICEF-derived figures for under-five infant mortality, namely 3.3 million since 1950 and 1.2 million since 1991. According to UNICEF, in 2001 the under-five

infant mortality was 109,000 in Iraq (population 24 million) and 277,000 in Afghanistan (population 22 million) – as compared with about 1,000 in Australia (population 20 million). Estimated current infant mortality in war-ravaged Iraq is about 100,000 per year (300 per day).

In these difficult times it is vital for people of all kinds who are committed to peace, goodwill and humanity to honestly address the most important global issues. The Iraq holocaust is NOT being reported by global media; the victims are overwhelmingly CHILDREN.

Dr Gideon Polya  
Macleod, Victoria

Contact Dr Gideon Polya on  
(03) 9459 3649  
[+61 3 9459 3649]. ✪



## Howard beats war drums

continued from page 1

### United Nations

The United Nations is to be either used or cast aside depending on whether its decisions suit the interests of Australia, the US and its allies. Howard said, "While Australia works with and through the United Nations ... the only real test is whether Australian interests and values are being well and truly served". When that mechanism is ineffective "coalitions of like-minded countries will be required to act. We use the multilateral system to advance our national interests".

We are now told that the justification for the invasion and occupation of Iraq was not "whether the regime had weapons of mass destruction", but its alleged "non-compliance with UN resolutions" and that "the alliance relationship was a factor in the Government's decision". In common language this means that when told to jump by the US ring-masters the Australian Government did so without question.

The Prime Minister is gung-ho in defence of the US alliance and declares that "the United States would see a unilateral withdrawal by one of the original coalition partners as an unfriendly act". Whether in that circumstance the United States would regard Australia as yet another "failed state" to be invaded and have a US-friendly government imposed is not stated, but the inference is there.

We are told that Iraq is now "the front-line" and that "terrorists have flooded into Iraq" but Howard refuses to admit that those countries that invaded Iraq are directly responsible for creating that situation. Al-Qaida terrorists were not to be found in Iraq before the invasion.

### Involvement in US wars

The US alliance "delivers enormous benefits to Australia", claimed the Prime Minister. The fact is that the US alliance has seen Australian involvement in the wars in Korea, Vietnam, the first Gulf War, the

invasion of Afghanistan and the current war and invasion of Iraq.

The "benefits", we are told, are Australia's "privileged access to an unrivalled set of military and intelligence assets". One wonders how valuable US intelligence is when set against the abysmal failings of that intelligence before 9/11 and the total disarray of US measures to intercept the hi-jacked aircraft at that time. It was their contrived "intelligence" about weapons of mass destruction that was used to justify the invasion of Iraq.

The Howard Government is in awe of US military power. The Prime Minister says that "No country approaches the global power and influence of the United States..." We are told that the US spends "43 percent of global military spending". Yet this "global power" has not brought peace and security to the world but instead what Howard himself describes as "the terrible threats of the 21st century".

Howard speaks of the "noble purposes" of US foreign policy "down the ages". The large number of countries that have been invaded by the US and have had US military bases dotted across their territory may have a different view of these alleged "noble purposes".

### Asia

When speaking of relations with Asia the totally selfish basis of the Howard Government's attitude is again revealed. He told his audience, "What is needed ... is a clear sense of how to advance Australia's prosperity and security in Asia ..." Reference to "common interests" is tacked on.

Howard decries talk of "neo-colonialism", claiming that Australia's new "Pacific partnership is based on our willingness to commit resources for decisive action..." By that he means willingness to take decisive military action.

He claimed that "Australia commands respect based on our military capability, our economic strength, our strong alliance relationships, our diplomatic engagement and our willingness to take a stand".

It is to be noted that he makes reference to "our military capability" first and believes that Australia's "strong alliance relationships" (with the US) brings respect. It might bring fear but not respect.

Howard's address is also peppered with attacks on the Labor Party. It was electioneering at its worst even though it was promoted as a major foreign policy statement.

His address had an almost total emphasis on military preparations for involvement in war and the fear that he is intent on promoting by the references to the "horrendous prospects" facing the world.

### Devoid of honesty

Devoid of any shame or honesty, Howard continues to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq although there is no longer any talk of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction. The allegation that Saddam Hussein had links with al-Qaida has also been blown out of the water.

The ground has been shifted to allegations that the ALP's commitment to withdraw Australian troops by Christmas will encourage "terrorists" and damage Australia's relations with the US.

Howard's claim that "a capacity to speak openly and frankly with the United States ... is an asset no Australian leader should put at risk..." is shown to be hollow rhetoric given that that is exactly what Mark Latham did – speak "openly and frankly". The savage reactions by a number of US leaders to the ALP's withdrawal plans show that the only opinions that the US leaders want to hear are those that coincide with their own.

Howard said that in supporting the US, Australia "might have to join other military coalitions". The reality is that the US alliance will drag Australia into other military conflicts at the summons of the US leaders while the militarisation of Australia is a fast-tracked preparation for these future military adventures.

\*The Australian Strategic Policy Institute was set up by the Howard Government to provide it with allegedly "independent" advice. Its independence has to be questioned because it is financed out of the Federal Government's military budget. It has played a leading part in preparing for and justifying Australia's occupation of the Solomon Islands and other allegedly "failed states". ✪



Here's one of the many practical uses the \$50 billion-plus military budget is being put to: Readers will be pleased to know that "the nation's soldiers are to be given a tough new helmet to keep them safer in war zones". This helmet "promises more protection against ballistics, high velocity fragmentation, small arms fire and blunt trauma". Howard's little dictum, "relaxed and comfortable", is looking a bit limp.

Educated guess #1. We have an under-funded education system beginning to adopt the ludicrous behaviour of big business i.e. frenzied get rich schemes. Thus Victoria's TAFE colleges lost around \$3 million in a failed bid to win a \$1 billion education contract in the Persian Gulf state of Oman. Not only that, it was an operation to train the military called the Defence Joint Technical College.

Educated guess #2. The University of Southern Queensland has been forced to write off a debt from a dotcom venture. The university invested \$110,000 in an educational web program, setting up its own company, Indelta. Then along came a business consortium that offered \$5 million, not for Indelta, but for 50 percent of the intellectual property it contained. Using a bit of imaginative accounting, the uni wrote the money into its books as a profit. Then a combination of the dotcom crash of 2001 and "competition" for web-based intellectual property from the big internet players saw Indelta's intellectual property written down to \$3.5 million. There followed another write down, this time from the university's investment in irrigation futures. Now its faculties and departments have been told to look for "efficiencies" and that all plans for new positions have been scrapped.

The ACTU has lost the plot, if it ever had one aside from working to get the ALP elected. What the country needs is the creation of secure, full-time jobs with proper wages: lots of them. Employers, with the aid of governments, have successfully pursued a strategy of casualisation of the workforce, reduced wages and have generally increased the exploitation of labour. So, what's the latest from the ACTU? They're promoting more flexible working hours for women so they can attend to family needs; more time off work for men to attend to family emergencies; more "choice" for women to take part-time work; and extra family payments.

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is James Hardie Chief Executive Peter Macdonald. As asbestos victims and their families struggle to gain some compensation from the criminal asbestos producer, Macdonald was chilling out in his mansion in a "gated community" in California. His \$6 million digs overlooks the exclusive Laguna Beach, home of many members of the rich and famous club, all kept safely away from the riff raff behind security fencing and guards. When asked about the inquiry into Hardie skipping the country and leaving thousands of people without compensation, Macdonald declined, saying it would be "inappropriate" to comment.

**Needed urgently!**  
**Solidarity with the revolution in Venezuela.**  
Contact the **Bolivarian Circle**  
and help support the progressive achievements  
of the government and people of Venezuela.  
Contact Manuel on 0412 228 401

Book review by Peter Symon

# Socialism Betrayed

## Behind the collapse of the Soviet Union

By Roger Keeran and Thomas Kenny

**This is yet another analysis of what will undoubtedly continue to be a topic of discussion for many years to come. The authors hope their book will contribute to the discussion of the "reckless ways" that wrecked the world's first socialist state.**

They quote Fidel Castro: "Socialism did not die from natural causes: it was a suicide". But was it suicide or was it murder?

Before coming to this question again – something about the book.

*Socialism Betrayed* traces the many circumstances and deviations that undoubtedly contributed to the final overthrow of socialism and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union into many supposedly independent republics.

It identifies many contributors to this "greatest tragedy of the 20th century" from Stalin, Krushchev, Brezhnev, through to Chernenko and Gorbachev. This is not to suggest equal blame by any means. No-one can suggest that those that preceded Gorbachev had a mission to destroy socialism although they also contributed by numerous and various errors to the final outcome.

The only General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to come through with good marks in the period since the death of Stalin is Yuri Andropov. He unfortunately only lived for about 15 months after his election to the top position before dying of a kidney complaint. He did not have time to put the Soviet Union on a path that would have corrected many of the errors made by his predecessors but his program gave great promise that the party and government would return to the task of building an improved socialism.

### Declared support

Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985. At first he declared his support for the policies that had been outlined by Andropov but by the end of two years there was a sharp turn towards the mistaken policies of Krushchev and those put forward by Bukharin in the early years of the Soviet Union.

The authors say that Krushchev's ideas "consistently leaned toward social democracy, sowed the seeds of later problems, and created a precedent for Gorbachev's even more extreme views and policies".

The book traces the many economic, social and political policies initiated by Gorbachev that finally led to the victory of counter-revolution, the dismantling of socialism and the restoration of a crude, savage and brutal criminal capitalism on most of the territory of what made up the Soviet Union.

*Socialism Betrayed* gives many references and policy statements that are invaluable in tracing the pattern of betrayal.

We are again introduced to "perestroika" and what it really meant, to Gorbachev's supposed "new thinking", his promotion of a bourgeois form of democracy, his actual promotion of national conflicts within the Soviet Union and

the dishonest promotion of cooperative ownership which in practice was a hidden form by which capitalist ownership was consolidated.

In foreign policy Gorbachev advanced a policy of unprincipled compromise with US imperialism and systematically brought an end to the assistance that the Soviet Union had given for many years to other socialist countries and to the national liberation movements of third world countries.

Soviet troops were withdrawn by Gorbachev from Afghanistan to appease the US. We all know now what tragedies have overtaken that country following this act of betrayal. An unprincipled deal was made with US president Reagan over the question of nuclear weapons and the Soviet army was seriously weakened while the US imperialists gave nothing in exchange.

### By your side

At the time of the first Gulf War Gorbachev is reported to have remarked to James Baker the Secretary of State at the time: "I want to emphasise that we would like to be by your side in any situation".

Of course, Gorbachev did not act alone. During the period in which he stated his adherence to the policies of Andropov, Gorbachev brought his own men into the leadership of the CPSU – Shevardnadze, Yeltsin, Aganbegyan (an economist), Yakovlev (an ideologist) and many others. All played considerable parts in the Gorbachev betrayal.

While there are numerous references to ideology in the book, there is little explanation of how the policies implemented by Gorbachev deviated from the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and this I think is a weakness of the analysis. The policies adopted are well set-out and reflect the deviations from dialectical and historical materialism – the philosophy of Marxism.

### Different interpretations

The authors set out a number of different interpretations about the events that led to the break-up of the Soviet Union – some by writers who are pro-Soviet and others who are anti-Soviet.

The authors write: "... in some writers, a stress on Gorbachev leads to seeing in his actions a longstanding, preconceived plan. The weight of evidence, however, seems to point more toward a shallow leader who acted rashly, impulsively, and contradictorily."

"Gorbachev's policies may not have been inevitable but they were no accident either." But is it correct to also say that "possibly Gorbachev himself lacked an awareness of the full implications of what he was doing"?

This returns us to the question – was it suicide or was it murder?

There are a number of remarks in the book that call for a comprehensive follow-up:



On the same team - Gorbachev and Bush sr.

- What are we to make of an assessment made by one of Gorbachev's closest supporters that "Gorbachev had only contempt for the CPSU" and, when it was suggested by supporters that he should resign his position as General Secretary he remarked: "... they try to persuade me to abandon the general secretary post. But remember: that mangy dog can't be let off the leash. If I do that, the whole enormous thing will be against me."

- Gorbachev had kept in touch with leading figures of the Czech counter-revolution from his student days.

- Yakovlev, Gorbachev's principle ideologist who was put in charge of the Soviet media by Gorbachev had spent a number of years in the West, "more than any other Politburo official". In 1983, Gorbachev visited Canada and spent a week with Yakovlev before he became General Secretary. Was it to lay the plans of what subsequently happened?

### Can do business

Although it is not mentioned in this book it is timely to recall the remark of Margaret Thatcher when Gorbachev visited London (before becoming General Secretary). He had a meeting with the then Prime Minister of England and Thatcher said publicly that "he (Gorbachev) is a man we can do business with". Did Margaret Thatcher know something that others did not, even at that time?

It should also be recalled that the counter-revolutions in eastern European socialist countries coincided with visits to those countries by Gorbachev. He was also in China

at the time of the Tienanmen Square uprising.

Were Gorbachev's visits the signal for these counter-revolutionary events which were undoubtedly helped by the intelligence organisations of the imperialist countries?

Let it be recalled that Shevardnadze made the remark that his greatest achievement was the dismantling of the German Democratic Republic and east Germany's incorporation into capitalist west Germany.

### A final question

And a for final question that the book raised in my mind, remembering that the long-term objective of imperialism was always to defeat the Soviet Union and strangle socialism.

This could not be done militarily because the Soviet Union had become too strong militarily. It could not be done economically because the socialist system had become deeply entrenched in the life of the Soviet people and the country was also endowed with rich resources. It could not be done merely by propaganda although millions of dollars were spent by Radio Free Europe and other agencies to subvert the thinking of the Soviet people. None of these options were feasible.

But if people were found who could work their way into the top leadership of the CPSU and proceed to sabotage socialism from that position, even while proclaiming that their aim was to build a "better socialism", the job could perhaps be done from this vantage point.

If the scenario that Gorbachev had become an arch-enemy of

socialism even in his youth is made the starting point, many of the policies and the personal behaviour of Gorbachev fall into place.

Given the experience and capacity of Western intelligence agencies in bringing down governments it would stretch credulity to breaking point to think that they would not have been advising Gorbachev (and others) on a regular basis throughout his years as General Secretary. His and their actions were played out using the many objective circumstances, the policy weaknesses and growing dissident forces that previous regimes had unleashed.

In these circumstances Gorbachev becomes not a misguided, confused and weak personality that he is sometimes painted but the most successful Machiavelli of all time.

The people of the former Soviet Union assessed him well. From initial enthusiastic support they quickly came to reject and then condemn his leadership. When he stood for election to the position of president in 2000 he received a less than one percent vote.

In recent times, Gorbachev has been paraded at public forums throughout the Western world appearing at some with Norman Swazkoff the commanding general of the US forces who invaded Iraq during the first Gulf War. More recently he attended the funeral of Ronald Reagan. Nice company to keep, indeed! Gorbachev had returned to his spiritual home.

**Socialism Betrayed, International Publishers, New York, pp 230, available from SPA Books, \$18 plus \$2.50 p&p. See ad page 10. ☺**

## Book Review by Terrie Albano

# People vs. Profits

## Columns of Victor Perlo: 1961-1999

### Volume 1: The Home Front

Edited by Ellen Perlo, Stanley Perlo and Art Perlo

While reading *People vs. Profits* by Victor Perlo the old saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same", kept cropping up in the back of my mind. Capitalism has changed quite a bit in these last 40 years, and Perlo's writings faithfully reflect many of these changes. Even more impressive, however, is how these columns about the basic laws of capitalist production and crises retain so much relevance for today.

Perlo, for many years the chief economist for the Communist Party USA and a world-renowned Marxist, wrote a weekly column for *People's Weekly World* and its predecessors from the 1960s through the late 1990s – totalling over 3000 columns. He also wrote 13 books over his lifetime and delivered numerous lectures, reports and conference papers, creating a substantial body of political economic analysis before his death in 1999.

Here, as in all his writings, Perlo takes very complex economic and political dynamics and makes them user-friendly to non-economists.

The first chapter, "Economic Situation", starts with a column written in April 1961 entitled "What Kind of Recovery?" While the political situation was very different than today, including the leadership of the labour movement, the bottom line that Perlo points out is relevant

to the current discussion and struggle around the idea of a so-called "jobless recovery".

"Not everybody wants the same kind of recovery. For capitalists, recovery means the increase in profits above all. For workers recovery means jobs for the unemployed, higher real incomes, more paid leisure, and social security. The propaganda that the fates of labour and capital are automatically joined economically is a fiction."

George W Bush trumpeted his tax cuts to the rich for starting a so-called economic recovery, but that talk is exactly about recovery of profits for his ruling-class cohorts. The "jobless recovery" leaves working-class families, women and the racially oppressed wondering, "What recovery?"

Perlo focused a good portion of his writing on exposing racism. Using Marxist methodology, Perlo combines economic statistics with the historical and political situation and the people's mass struggle to expose racism in the economic, political, and social life of the United States. In the process he demonstrates a committed partisanship to the struggles of the African Americans, Latinos and all victims of discrimination.

Other areas of thought, analysis and struggle Perlo covers include Marxism, labour and industry, big business and profiteering, milita-

rism, taxes, Social Security, corporate corruption, agriculture, role of the CIA and FBI, education and problems faced by cities, states and regions.

"People vs. Profits" is illustrated with biting political art by notable cartoonists such as Bill Andrews, Fred Ellis, Ollie Harrington, Huck and Konopacki, Seymour Joseph, Peggy Lipschutz and Fred Wright.

Given Perlo's prolific writing, compiling his columns was a daunting project for the editors, his wife and partner Ellen Perlo, and his two sons, Art and Stanley. They managed it with skill.

As former *People's Weekly World* editor Tim Wheeler wrote in the forward: "The contradictions [Perlo] exposed are now hitting with devastating force: Enron thievery, a war for oil against Iraq, global corporations and the ultra-right running amok. I often wish Vic were still with us, hammering away at these greedy corporations."

With *People vs. Profits*, Volume 1, Perlo is in many ways "still with us, hammering away" at the ills, evils and corruption of capitalism. We look forward to Volume 2, which will cover international affairs.

**People vs. Profits, Volume 1**  
International Publishers,  
2003, Softcover, 372 pp,  
avail SPA books- \$15 plus  
\$4 p&p. (see advert p10)  
*People's Weekly World* ☺



## Theatre owner receives death threat for *Fahrenheit 9/11*

Michael Moore

We're a week away from the nationwide opening of *Fahrenheit 9/11* and not a day goes by where we don't have some new battle to fight thanks to those who are still working overtime to keep people from seeing this film. What's their problem? Are they worried about something?

A Republican PR firm has formed a fake grassroots front group called "Move America Forward" to harass and intimidate theatre owners into not showing *Fahrenheit 9/11*. These are the same people who successfully badgered CBS into cancelling the Reagan mini-series a few months ago. And they are spending a ton of money this week to threaten movie theatres who even think about showing our movie.

As of this morning [June 17], a little over 500 theatres have agreed to show the movie beginning next Friday, June 25. There are three national/regional theatre chains who, as of today, have not booked the movie in their theatres. One theatre owner in Illinois has reported receiving death threats.

The right wing usually wins these battles. Their basic belief system is built on censorship, repression, and keeping people ignorant.

They want to limit or snuff out any debate or dissension. They also don't like pets and are mean to small children. Too many of them are named "Fred".

This new nut group is the Right's last hope in limiting how many people can see this movie. All of their other efforts have failed. Let's recap:

1. Roger Friedman at FOX News reported that the head of the company which first agreed to fund our film "got calls from Republican friends" pressuring them to back out. And they did. But... Miramax immediately picked up the film!

Except...  
2. Michael Eisner, the chairman of Disney, then blocked Miramax (a company owned by Disney) from releasing the film once it was finished. But... public attention and embarrassment forced Disney to let the Weinstein brothers of Miramax find another distributor! But...

3. Instead of a new distributor stepping right in – as all the media predicted would happen – it took another month to find distributors who would take on this movie. A number of other distributors, thanks to various pressures, were afraid to get involved. It looked for a while that we would be dis-

tributing this ourselves. But then Lions Gate and IFC Films rode in to the rescue!

So, we have beaten back all attempts to kill this movie, and the only thing in the way of you now seeing *Fahrenheit 9/11* is this Republican big-money front group trying to force theatres not to show the movie.

Please, contact your local the-

atre and let them know you want to see *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Tell them that some people don't know that this is America and that we believe in freedom of speech and the importance of ALL voices being heard.

If a theatre in your area is planning to show the film, just give them a call and thank them for standing up for the freedom of speech. If your local theatre isn't showing the film, call them and let them know

that you would like to see it and you'd like them to show it. The White House and their minions in our media have presented one distorted version of the truth after another for the past four years. All we are asking for is the right to show what they HAVEN'T shown us, the real truth. The truth that ain't pretty (and is, sadly, damnably hilarious).

**The MPAA gave the film an "R" rating....  
I would like to think the MPAA is saying that  
the actions by the Bush administration are so  
abhorrent and revolting, we need to protect our  
children from seeing what they have done.**

On top of all this, the MPAA gave the film an "R" rating. [An "R" rating in the USA means children under 17 must be accompanied by an adult - ED.]

I want all teenagers to see this film. There is nothing in the film in terms of violence that we didn't see on TV every night at the dinner hour during the Vietnam War.

Of course, that's the point, isn't it? The media have given the real

footage from Iraq a "cleansing" – made it look nice, easy to digest. Mario Cuomo has offered to be our lawyer in appealing this ruling by the MPAA. Frankly, I would like to think the MPAA is saying that the actions by the Bush administration are so abhorrent and revolting, we need to protect our children from seeing what they have done. In that case, the film should be rated NC-17!

However it turns out, I trust all of you teenagers out there will find your way into a theatre to see this movie. If the government believes it is OK to send slightly older teenagers to their deaths in Iraq, I think at the very least you should be allowed to see what they are going to draft you for in a couple of years.

Finally, some very sophisticated individuals have been hacking into and shutting down our website. It is an hourly fight to keep it up. We are going to find out who is doing this and we are going to pursue a criminal prosecution. I'm preparing lots of cool stuff for the site so watch for new items on it next week ([www.fahrenheit911.com/](http://www.fahrenheit911.com/) and [www.michaelmoore.com/](http://www.michaelmoore.com/)).

Thanks again for your support and I hope to see you at the movies on opening night, June 25. ☺

# The real Ronald Reagan

Jarvis Tyner

**The Bush administration is using Ronald Reagan's death to boost Bush's failing campaign. They are eulogising Reagan because they are hoping to win back support for George W Bush and the right-wing Republican agenda. The TV is saturated with commentaries about how great a president Reagan was – many are saying he was the greatest President in modern times. Frankly, nothing could be further from the truth.**

Reagan is presented as if he were the second coming of FDR\*, when, as a president, he was really like the ghost of Herbert Hoover. He was called the Great Communicator, but the issue is not how good his speeches were, but rather, how bad his policies were. That's what is being left out by the media, falling right in line with the Bush administration. They want to put a happy face on a very negative presidency.

The real Ronald Reagan was a right-winger most of his life and was one of the most anti-communist, pro-imperialist presidents in US history. He started his career as a conservative by informing on his fellow Hollywood actors during the McCarthy witch-hunts.

As governor of California he ordered his state police to attack civil rights and student free speech movement activists. He fired Angela Davis from her teaching position at UCLA for her political views – because she was a member of the Communist Party USA – then he tried to frame her.

First he took her job, then he tried to take her life. He also carried out a bloody suppression against the Black Panther Party, which was born in his state. We have to ask, where was the greatness?

He was a master demagogue who knew how to present extremist right-wing policies in a simple,

folksy way. He fooled a lot of voters. Many democratic-minded voters became disgusted and gave up on voting. Reagan won each of his two terms as president with a minority of the electorate. Where is the greatness?

He was one of the most anti-labour presidents in history. He started his first term by destroying the air traffic controllers' union (PATCO) and sought to crush the entire labour movement. He was one of the most active presidents against racial equality in modern history.

He was elected using a fictitious "welfare queen" to convince millions of white voters that Black women on welfare were the reason for high taxes. He used racism to promote division and animosity. To send a message, he started his re-election campaign in Philadelphia where three civil rights workers were killed by the Klu Klux Klan in 1964.

Under his watch the Republicans developed their Southern strategy, an alliance with Dixiecrat racists, including the KKK. He staunchly supported the South African racist regime. He consistently opposed affirmative action and all attempts to seriously enforce civil rights laws. He was elected on racism and he ruled with racism.

**He consistently opposed affirmative action and all attempts to seriously enforce civil rights laws.**

The crack cocaine epidemic that so ravaged Black and Latino communities emerged and progressed under his watch. The victims of that genocide were probably in the tens of thousands. Where was the greatness?

His "supply-side" economic policies started a 20-year



A 1984 protest in New York City

Republican campaign to destroy the social safety net for low-income working-class families. Remember Reaganomics?

After leaving office, Reagan's budget director David Stockton

the Cold War. But when the USSR and other socialist countries collapsed, millions were driven into poverty. These countries are now suffering unemployment, homelessness, hunger, crime, and bloody ethnic strife. This is what Reagan and Bush call freedom. Where was the victory?

Today the average life span in the former USSR has plunged to the level of a developing country. Public schools have been trashed and pricey private schools have sprung up for the new rich capitalists.

Free health care is being eliminated and replaced by expensive private hospitals and clinics. The children who used to be a privileged class, the women who broke world records in many fields, are being victimised, exploited, and enslaved through the international sex trade. This is a victory?

Who benefited from the collapse of socialism? Not the people. Imperialism! Global capitalism, particularly US capitalism.

Thanks to Reagan's policies the world is a far more dangerous place today. George W Bush's militarist, sole-superpower imperial policies – including the invasion and occupation of Iraq – are a continuation of Reagan's agenda.

The American people have suffered through a quarter century of intensified right-wing attack. It's time for change. Let's step up the struggle to defeat Bush and the Republican majority in Congress this November so that we can begin to move our country in a better direction. That will be a real victory.

\* Franklin Delaenor Roosevelt  
Jarvis Tyner is Executive Vice Chair of the Communist Party USA ☻

## Florida voters sound alarm on voter purges

Tim Wheeler

**Florida Governor Jeb Bush's drive to purge 47,000 more voters from Florida's voter rolls has touched off angry charges that he is scheming a replay of the 2000 election, when thousands of Florida voters were scrubbed from the rolls to put his brother in the White House.**

Florida State Senator Tony Hill, of Jacksonville, a former longshoreman and an organiser for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), told the *People's Weekly World (World)*, "I'm very concerned. An alarm went off inside me that this could be a repeat of 2000 all over again".

The furore erupted when Florida Secretary of State Glenda Hood sent out a new list on May 25 of

47,000 names to be purged from voter rolls. All the data was provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement under Governor Bush's command, Hill pointed out. County election supervisors meeting in Key West said they have found a 6-7 percent error rate in the list.

"The purge list is not specific enough", Hill said. "If you happen to have the same name or a similar name as an ex-felon, you might be on that list and have your name expunged".

Voting rights groups have filed "friend of the court" briefs in support of a lawsuit by CNN and Democrat Senator Bill Nelson asking the courts to order release of the list. "I want access so I can inform every voter who is on it in Senate District One", Hill said. "Why

is this list secret? This is another attempt to suppress our vote".

Beverly Neal, executive director of the Florida Conference of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branches in Orlando, said access to the list "would give us an opportunity to monitor that list in light of what happened in 2000 when so many people were disenfranchised".

"It is our responsibility to fight to see that the right to vote is protected", she told the *World*. "State-wide, our branches have registered close to 10,000 new voters."

In 2000, Hill and Kendrick Meek, both serving in the Florida Legislature at the time, spearheaded a voter registration drive that resulted in nearly 900,000 Black

voters casting ballots in the 2000 election – 90 percent against Bush, 15 percent of the 5.9 million votes cast in Florida.

Hill said the labour and civil rights movement ACORN seeks to equal that turnout to defeat Bush in Florida this November 2. ACORN has collected 800,000 signatures to put a question on the November ballot to establish a minimum wage in Florida.

The Florida Supreme Court is expected to rule soon whether to grant it ballot status. "This initiative will be the 'flavour of the year' in giving people a reason to turn out and vote", Hill said. "We're trying to draw people out based on their needs. This election is not just about the President. It's about the House and Senate. It's about quality of life, civil rights, civil liberties".

Neal decried the Bush record on issues vital to the people. "Health insurance is not available, prescription drugs are not affordable", she said. The Bush-Cheney campaign "didn't even bother to answer" a questionnaire the national NAACP sent to candidates, she noted. "That was a slap in the face not only to the NAACP but to everyone touched by the issues in that questionnaire".

In 2000, then-Secretary of State Katherine Harris hired

Database Technologies (DBT) to purge Florida's voter rolls. At least 57,700 voters, disproportionately African American, were removed as "ex-felons".

The NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund filed a lawsuit containing proof that 19,000 people were improperly purged (the margin between Bush and Democrat Al Gore was less than 1,000 votes in the state). Florida promised to restore these voters but only 800 voters have been reinstated so far.

Leon County Election Supervisor Ion Sancho said Harris sent him a list of 694 supposed felons in 2000 but his office was able to verify that only 34 actually had a criminal record. The new Secretary of State has sent him a purge list of 820 to check for criminal records.

Ralph Neas, president of People for the American Way, part of an "Election Protection" coalition in Florida, wrote to Hood on June 1, calling it "simply outrageous that you would give county supervisors just seven working days to devise a timetable for a new purge of the voter rolls when in more than eight months you have taken absolutely no action to follow up on the restoration of voting rights of voters improperly purged from the rolls in 1999 and 2000".

*People's Weekly World* ☻



Wollongong  
Illawarra NoWar presents  
**Andrew Wilkie**

Hear the former Official of the Australian Office of National Assessments, who exposed the lies the Howard Government used to involve Australia in the invasion of Iraq and to try to dupe the Australian people.

**Wednesday 30th June 7.30pm Illawarra Leagues Club, Church St Wollongong**

**Peace Rally**

End the occupation of Iraq Troops out now  
**Saturday 3rd July 11am Wollongong Mall Amphitheatre**

Authorised: Illawarra NoWar Ph: 4229 2888



# Pro-war parties punished in EU elections

Anna Pha

**The elections held in the recently expanded European Union were marked by a record low turnout and the massive hammering that electors gave many of the major parties. Voting took place over several days, finishing on June 13, for 732 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).**

The lowest participation rates among the 25 member countries were to be found among the newest members – the former socialist states in Eastern Europe admitted on May 1, 2004.

So why such a small turnout? And why did voters turn on governments and major parties?

The Communist Party of Greece's newspaper *Rizo-spastis*, commenting on the results across the EU, noted that the ballots delivered a strong message of condemnation of the imperialist wars and the anti-popular policies promoted by the EU and national governments.

The Communist Party of Greece increased its votes compared to the results in the general elections last March and those of the EU in 1999, particularly in urban centres. It has three seats with 9.9 per cent of the vote. The ruling New Democracy and social democrat opposition PASOK held their positions relatively well compared with other major parties in the EU.

Iraq was one of the biggest issues, along with fears over further integration and loss of sovereignty in the EU, and strong discontent over government policies. In many instances the electorate rated the opposition parties as no better.

This was the case in Britain, where there was a 38 percent turnout. Blair's Labour Party was thrashed, receiving 22.6 per cent of votes and 19 seats – a loss of 8 compared with 1999. The Conservatives did not do much better with 26.7 per cent of votes and 27 seats – a loss of 8. Again, the main issue was the disastrous and criminal war in Iraq.

Labour also took a hammering in local government elections that were also held, losing more than 460 council seats. It only just held onto the London Assembly under the leadership of anti-war

campaigner Ken Livingstone, who recently returned to the Labour fold.

The newly formed and strongly anti-EU UK Independence Party (UKIP) won 16.1 per cent of the vote and 12 seats. It attracted much of the right-wing nationalist votes.

The Liberal Democrats increased their MEPs from two to 12 with 14.09 per cent of the vote as a consequence of their anti-war position.

In the Netherlands parties supporting the country's involvement in Iraq lost votes and opposition parties opposing the war in Iraq made gains. The government is presently considering whether to extend the mandate of nearly 1400 Dutch troops in Iraq beyond July 15.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (CPBM) won six seats in the Czech Republic with 20.3 per cent of the vote, finishing second only to the right-wing Civic Democrats (30 per cent, 9 seats)

The governing coalition of PM Vladimir Spidla took a hammering, winning only four of the 24 seats. Spidla's Social Democrats polled a mere 8.8 per cent (2 seats).

CPBM vice-chair Vaclav Exner told the communist daily *Halo Noviny*, that the Communist Party's result "... means a significant strengthening of the European radical left".

The opposition Socialist Party

The strong support for the "Olive Tree" opposition coalition in Italy is seen as a blow to the extreme right political agenda of media baron-cum-prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. The Party of Italian Communists and Communist Refoundation both improved their vote.

In Germany the left-wing Party of Democratic Socialism, which has its origins in the former Socialist Unity Party of the German Democratic Republic, received its best result ever in a nation-wide election gaining 6.1 per cent of votes and 7 seats. In one of the states in the east it came first with 30.8 per cent.

Voters punished Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's ruling Social Democrats for their ruthless attacks on the welfare system. They polled a record post-World War II low of 21.5 per cent, gaining only 23 seats.

The opposition conservatives got more than double that vote, and the Greens, despite being in government with the Social Democrats, did well, increasing their number of seats from 6 to 13.

In addition to France, the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and the Czech Republic, ruling parties also suffered defeats – some of them very significant – in Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Denmark, Lithuania and Portugal.

There was however, one very significant exception to this trend.

## **The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (CPBM) won six seats in the Czech Republic with 20.3 per cent of the vote, finishing second.**

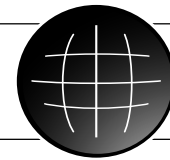
came out well ahead in France with 31 out of 78 seats. President Jacques Chirac's conservative UMP and its UDF government partner improved their positions with a combined 28 seats (up by 9). National Front increased its seats to seven (up by 5). The Greens lost two seats (now have 6) and the French Communist Party's list saw the loss of three of its five seats.

In Spain the recent general election result was upheld with the ruling Socialist Party gaining a majority over the opposition Popular Party, following its promised withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

The success of the government in this case is consistent with the views expressed elsewhere towards the Iraq war and occupation. A very encouraging development. ☪



Blair's Labour Party was thrashed



## Global briefs

**JAPAN:** Amid rowdy scenes, Japan's ruling coalition rammed a bill through parliament cutting pension benefits and raising premiums. The changes will be in stages beginning in October and continuing until 2017. Opinion polls show widespread public opposition to the new measures. The opposition boycotted the vote. Pensions look set to be a hot issue in parliamentary elections next month.

**RUSSIA:** Russia is conducting military manoeuvres involving the airlift of troops and weapons to the East. They coincide with joint US-Japanese war games in which several hundred US marines are being airlifted from Okinawa to Hokkaido, the nearest Japanese island to the Russian coast. In the course of a 21-day exercise codenamed "Mobility-2004" the Russian armed forces are to move 800 troops and 100 pieces of armour by air across nine of its time-zones – from Europe to the Far Eastern coast – to be able to repel acts of aggression and defend sea lanes in the region. Russia has simultaneously launched a large-scale logistics training exercise in its south-west. This involves a total of 2800 troops, more than 50 transport aircraft and over 650 pieces of hardware. The military exercises are in line a new military strategy which calls for rapid redeployment of mobile units to capture "strategic initiative" in the event of military threat to the country. Until now the Russian armed forces have relied only on mobilisation of reservists to boost their combat ability to war level.

**IRAN:** The International Atomic Energy Agency has admitted it wrongly reported that Iran had withheld information about imports of parts for potentially weapons-related machinery. Iran is likely to question the UN Agency's investigations into a program which, according to the USA, is aimed at developing weapons. Iran has denied US allegations of nuclear weapons development and stated that it only developed nuclear-powered stations.

**SOUTH KOREA:** The Asian World Economic Forum began in Seoul on June 13. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions organised a number of actions including a people's assembly and culture festival in Dongkuk University on the Sunday and later a demonstration to Shilla Hotel, where the WEF was meeting. There the crowd swelled to an estimated 10,000 people. Thousands of riot police were on the spot, using buses to block the way to the conference location. The police launched a violent attack on the protestors as they got closer to the hotel, injuring several protestors.

**HAITI:** More than 5000 supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide marched through Haiti's capital on Friday last week, many of them wearing T-shirts and caps with photos of Aristide. They chanted "George Bush kidnapped Aristide", and "Mobilise for Aristide to return!" They accused US agents of kidnapping him. Aristide was removed from Haiti last February and has been granted temporary asylum in South Africa. Protestors called for his return and demanded that he be allowed to serve out his term.

## G8 Summit: protestors hit war & greed

Greg King

**USA: On June 8-10 many businesses in Brunswick, Georgia, closed their doors as the city was virtually taken over by 20,000 military personnel and police who guarded the summit meeting of the Group of Eight (G8).**

The G8 is a loose association of the eight most powerful imperialist powers – the US, Germany, France, UK, Italy, Canada, Japan, and Russia – that shape global policy through institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation. It meets annually to discuss various policy issues.

Sea Island, where this year's meeting was held, was heavily guarded by the military and effectively unreachable for peace and anti-globalisation demonstrators, not to mention other people in the area.

Many Coastal Georgia businesses shut down and denied their workers pay during the week of the G8 meeting. Brunswick has the third highest unemployment rate in Georgia, and Coastal Georgia is also home to 12 Superfund toxic waste sites. The area has the highest cancer rate in the country.

The heads of eight wealthiest nations convened to advance an agenda of war and erosion of human rights. At this summit, the Bush administration launched its "Greater Middle East Initiative", which calls on Middle Eastern countries to adopt major economic and social reforms that would advance the G8 countries' profits and power over these nations.

The talks about the Middle East plan were paralleled by anti-war protestors gathered in Brunswick denouncing the US war and occupation of Iraq. Colourful banners, costumes and chanting painted the

street with festive resistance. When police blocked the demonstrators from laying flowers at a nearby war memorial, the marchers left flowers at an improvised cardboard memorial for Brunswick soldiers who have died in wars.

The police and military attempted to intimidate the marchers by surrounding them with police cars, closing off streets and flying overhead in helicopters. There were thousands of police here escorting a protest of about 500 people as local residents nervously peered out windows.

The Reverend Tim McDonald, a leader of the march, said, "We are here and we will not turn back." A group called Hip-Hop Against Racism led the protestors in chants, including "Move Bush, Get out the way, get out the way Bush get out the way".

*People's Weekly World Newspaper* (abridged) ☪

Letters to the Editor  
The Guardian  
65 Campbell Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010



email: guardian@cpa.org.au

## Beware pro-war backlash

Those of us opposing the war on Iraq must not only stand strong and united but be prepared to withstand the inevitable pro-war offensive. An example of such a backlash – and the response to it – was recently reported in the US.

In San Francisco, Lori Haigh, owner of Capobianco Gallery in North Beach was spat on and knocked unconscious last week for exhibiting an artwork highlighting the torture of Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison.

The assault came after two weeks of escalating threats. Now the painting may end up displayed at San Francisco City Hall.

San Francisco City Hall Supervisor Aaron Peskin introduced a resolution to hang the painting, titled "The Abuse", in City Hall and to condemn the attacks against Haigh. Peskin told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that displaying the art work would send a message to residents that elected officials won't tolerate efforts to stifle political dissent.

"The Abuse" depicts three US soldiers leering at a group of naked men in hoods with wires connected to their bodies. The one in the foreground has a blood-spattered American flag patch on his uniform. In the background, a soldier in sunglasses guards a blindfolded woman.

The artist, Guy Colwell, whose picture was a late addition to a month-long exhibit of his work at the gallery, is known for his social realist style, comic books, and anti-war activism in the San Francisco area. He was jailed for two years in 1968 for opposing the Vietnam War.

Within days of putting Colwell's painting in a front window, Haigh came to work to find the gallery's

entrance trashed with garbage, eggs and broken glass. Her business answering machine filled up with threats and slurs. She was called "un-American".

Local artists and writers then staged a protest outside the gallery, denouncing the attack and the threats against the gallery as an assault on freedom of expression.

**Jo Dunleavy  
Wodonga, NSW**

## Is John Howard really an Australian?

**As an average ordinary born and bread Australian I have my doubts. I even doubt sometimes that he is a member of the human species. Rather he is a creature spawned by the policies of the Liberal-National Coalition, which is why he espouses them so strongly and is the Coalition's much loved (by them) leader.**

There is an old saying of much merit "actions speak louder than words". Little Johnny has been great with the words – concern for the mums and dads of Australia, the

little Aussie battler and of course the **FAMILY**.

Now let us look at the actions – health system in a shambles; education (public) being downgraded and under-funded in an attempt to turn back the progress of the working class. As for people on welfare, the poorest and most disadvantaged of all Australians, they are being squeezed harder and harder, made to do more with less. In line with the opinion of the coalition he actually hates and despises the Australian people.

There was a time when I was a proud Australian. I stood erect and looked men of all nations straight in the eye and I could see respect and a feeling of comradeship. Australians in the main were regarded as big-hearted with generous natures.

Our nation had a good international standing as a strong supporter of progressive resolutions and programs.

No more. My shoulders are bowed and I am afraid to look into men's eyes for fear I will see scorn and derision.

We are follower of a small hearted, lying, little pompous man

who has caused a pall to fall on Australia.

Howard – and the Coalition – must go before our nation falls even further in international standing.

We do not want to be a "toady" nation.

**B Appleton  
Woy Woy, NSW**

## "Garrett move signals a shift to the left"?

**I would disagree with the proposition that the Federal Labor Party's intention to have former Midnight Oil singer Peter Garrett endorsed as the candidate for the seat of Kingsford-Smith signals a shift to the left in the Party's ideals.**

Successive Labor Party leaders since Bob Hawke at least, have left the ALP bereft of socialist or working class ideals, as they have sought to become a party more inclusive of all Australians, including the capital owning classes and the petty bourgeoisie – of which Mr Garrett with his not insubstantial land and corporate holdings is very much a part.

There is no room for people with passionate idealism and progressive politics in either of the conservative parties – only for those who want to play the game of the "hard headed Liberal and Labor party strategists" seeking to win government at any cost.

The Power and Passion have been replaced by a, "Welcome to the machine... you've been in the pipeline, filling in time, provided with toys and Scouting for Boys".

Thank you.

**Richard Titelius  
Perth, WA**

PS The latter lyrics are from Pink Floyd's song "Welcome to the Machine" from the album, *Wish you were here*.

## BOOKSHELF

**Socialism Betrayed. Behind the collapse of the Soviet Union** \$18 (p&p \$2.50)

by Roger Keeran and Thomas Kenny

This book is about the break-up of the Soviet Union and the collapse of socialism there. Bahman Azad who wrote the book *Heroic Struggle Bitter Defeat* says of this new book, "A well researched work containing a great deal of useful historical information. Everyone will benefit greatly from the mass of historical data and the thought provoking arguments". (pp230) (reviewed on p6 of this issue)

**People vs Profits** \$15 (p&p \$4)

by Victor Perlo.

The late Victor Perlo was an outstanding Marxist economist who wrote a regular column, "People vs Profits" in the Communist Party USA's weekly newspaper, *People's Weekly World*. This book

is a selection from the 3000 articles written over a period of almost 40 years. They deal with such topics as the economic situation, Marxism, social security, racism, education, bureaucracy, corruption and decadence, big business and profiteering, militarism, oil, taxes, agriculture – and that is not all. An excellent book for those trying to come to grips with political economy. (pp372) (reviewed on p7)

**Reader in Marxist Philosophy from the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin** \$15 (p&p \$4)

Selected & edited by Howard Selsam & Harry Martel What is Marxism? Materialism, dialectics, the theory of knowledge, the materialist interpretation of history, religion and ethics make up its seven sections. This is a very rich collection well worth the \$15 (pp 384)

**Dynamics of Social Change. A reader in Marxist social science** \$12 (p&p \$4)

Selected and edited by Howard Selsam, David Goldway and Harry Martel. This selection of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin presents their ideas in sociology, history, politics and economics. (pp 416) Once again, a very rich collection.

**On Colonialism** \$10 (p&p \$4) A selection of articles by Marx and Engels on colonialism in China, India, Persia (Iran), Afghanistan and Burma; on the Irish question; the opium trade; and much more. It includes a number of letters written by Marx and Engels on these issues. (pp380)

**Order from SPA Books, 65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010 Payment by Cheque, Money Order or Credit Card (name on card, card number/type/expiry-date required).**

## Culture & Life

by Rob Gowland

### Poor Ron is dead

**Oh, it's just so sad, isn't it? Poor Ronny Reagan is dead. He will be missed, won't he?**

And not just because He Made America Great Again or because He Won the Cold War. But because he epitomised the fact that, in America, any schmuck can become President.

All it takes is wealthy corporate support, a thick skin, a careless attitude with the truth and total contempt for your constituents/voters. Ronny had spent his life cultivating just those attributes.

Before he went to Hollywood on the strengths of his physical charms, he was in sports reporting – a form of journalism only slightly better than writing the social pages.

In Hollywood he was revealed as an actor of very limited talent indeed. But he did not let that stop him.

Like two other right-wing actors, John Wayne and Gary Cooper, he simply played himself in every film regardless of the character or the role. And a couple of his roles, in major films of the early '40s, actually drew laughs even though they were supposed to be dramas.

*Desperate Journey* was a ridiculous piece of rah-rah propaganda about three escaped POWs fighting

their way across Germany and back to Britain that stretched credulity to breaking point. It is so preposterous, and departs so completely from reality, that in its own way it becomes rather fun.

*King's Row* was adapted from a novel which the film's script-writer, Casey Robinson, described with disgust as "an absolute piece of trash". But he wrote a film treatment anyway and it emerged as a technically accomplished but absurd hot-house melodrama.

In Ronny's key scene, he wakes up in bed just after having both his legs lopped off by an insane doctor. He takes one look at the unnatural shortness of the bed clothes and exclaims (with such an inept attempt at passion that it never fails to send audiences into gales of giggles): "Where's the rest of me?"

Ronny may have been a rotten actor, but he knew who ran the studios. The studio bosses wanted the left-wingers who headed the film industry unions ousted, and, at least in the Actors' Guild, Ronny was their man.

Once the War was over and had been replaced by the Cold War, Ronny really got into union politics. Helped by the black-list and Red-scare tactics of Richard Nixon and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Ronny became the Secretary of the Screen Actors' Guild.

The Guild is still apologising for its lack of support for members targeted by HUAC (and the studio bosses) at that time. But Ronny was On His Way.

He used his contacts and his accumulated expertise as a public speaker to become the mouthpiece

for some big California-based corporations. As a former union leader he was a persuasive speaker against the "excesses" of "big unions".

He was eloquent in condemning government interference in industry, in ridiculing "big government" and telling business people how much money they could save if only tax dollars did not have to be spent on social welfare, the environment and industrial health and safety.

That the numerous factual examples he trotted out, with back-up statistics, were frequently misquoted or even irrelevant, did not bother him. They worked at the time, no matter what the occasional alert journalist might point out about them.

He clipped innumerable reports of useful "facts", from papers and magazines, and filed them in shoeboxes. If they were effective anti-Communist, anti-Soviet or anti-union "facts", then to Ronny they were true.

He was a plausible speaker who early mastered the advantages of the teleprompter over hand-held notes. By the time journalists had nailed down one of his erroneous "facts" he had long since moved on to new topics and even new audiences.

The corporations loved him. Later, they and the Republican Party would run him for Governor of the State.

As Governor, he put into practice in California the same "voodoo economics" that he would later impose on the country as President. California workers saw their wages fall, their government services slashed, their working conditions savaged.

In their place they got tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy,



Reagan – a rotten actor with studio connections

who in turn paid for an avalanche of pro-Reagan bullshit in the media. At the same time they foisted all manner of economic gobbledegook on the public to show that the good times were just around the corner and the bad times were not Ronny's fault.

Such a good job did our boy do in California on behalf of corporate America that they ran him for President. Half the electorate were too disgusted to vote, but Ronny got slightly more than half of those

who did. In American terms it was a landslide.

So there they were the other day, filing past his flag-draped coffin, tears in their eyes, their heads full of media beat-up about how "He Made America Great Again".

I remembered the words of Jane Fonda when he got elected (she still had a social conscience at that time, unlike now): "He was a lousy actor", she told reporters, "and he'll make a lousy President".

Which he did. ☘



Sun 27 June ~  
~ Sat 3 July

Only one program in this week's *Worth Watching*. The reason will become clear as you read. Back to the normal format next week.

Very few people these days read history books for pleasure. Most people get their understanding of history from TV.

For their part, most television programs on historical themes are put together by TV producers, not historians. Popularity is ultimately more important to them than whether the interpretation they are presenting is correct.

Even historical programs fronted by a specific historian are deformed by this need to sublimate the content to ratings. An historian who advances an unpopular point of view is not going to get his or her own program.

An historian who declared that the Soviet Union made the biggest contribution to Allied victory in WW2, in fact a bigger contribution than all the other Allies put together, would be hastily labelled a crank and a crackpot. A series of his or her own would not be an option.

Why? Because the "free press", the "unfettered media", that capitalism always brags about is in fact not free at all. The more popular

or effective a form of media is, the more tightly the capitalist system will want to control it.

Television, the most powerful and effective medium of all, is very tightly controlled, whether it is in private or public hands. Capitalism makes sure that TV does not produce programs exposing the many ways workers are exploited by the ruling class (would make a great series, though, wouldn't it?).

Nor does it tolerate programs that show ordinary people uniting in struggle to improve their working conditions, get better housing or secure a bigger share of the wealth they produce.

And just as rigorously, the capitalists make sure that TV presents their version of history. This is a history that ignores or distorts class struggle; that eulogises leading capitalists; that falsifies the causes of war, laying the blame anywhere but at its own doorstep; and that seeks to consign the victories of the working class to oblivion.

The successes of the working class are treated as achievements of the ruling class instead, or simply ignored, rendering them effectively non-existent. To help with this obfuscation, excessive amounts of time and space are given to alternative events in which the ruling class was prominent.

In time, the alternative events are the only ones people will remember, for they are the only ones on view.

Almost all aspects of the Second World War have been given this treatment for several decades now. Whether it is the causes of the War, those responsible, the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, the Resistance movement, or the course of the War itself, the historical account presented for popular consumption has been consistently distorted and misrepresented.



Where would we be without them? – Soviet troops take prisoners near Mocsow

Every year the lies grow bigger and the truth recedes further. Even the millions of victims of Nazi genocide are subject to this evil skewing of history, concentrating on one tragic group to the exclusion of an even larger group, so that more than half the victims of the Nazi death camps are totally ignored.

To get a good, reliable depiction of the Second World War it is helpful to go to works produced near – or immediately after – the end of it, before Churchill and Truman's Cold War had been able to overcome the positive attitudes of the Anti-Fascist Alliance.

In fact, one of the best compilation documentaries ever made was the 1945 Anglo-US film *The True Glory* by Garson Kanin and Carol Reed. *The True Glory* was distinguished by two things: it used the voices of actual soldiers to provide the "commentary", and it struck everyone with its humanity and honesty.

It was, and probably remains,

the most popular compilation film on WW2. I saw it in the early '60s, and I remember in particular the scene near the end where the Yanks reach the Elbe River and are greeted by Soviet troops with a huge banner: "Greetings to the Heroes' Army of the United States of America!"

An American soldier's voice comes on the soundtrack saying in awed tones: "Gee, we did pretty well, but I'd hate to think where we'd have been without them!" Can you imagine a modern day US documentary feature putting forward that sentiment?

Certainly you won't find it in *D-Day To Berlin* on *As It Happened* (SBS 7.30pm Saturdays). A three-part BBC compilation, *D-Day To Berlin* covers the same ground as Kanin and Reed's film but from a significantly different perspective.

In fact, since Kanin and Reed's film was compiled from newsreel footage, it is quite likely that some of the identical footage will appear in the new film. *D-Day To Berlin* views D-Day (and the subsequent ten months as the Anglo-US troops advanced eastwards into Germany) as an event "that changed the course of European life forever", even as – would you believe? – "the defining drama of the Second World War".

Like the older film, *D-Day To Berlin* also uses the powerful testimonies of those who took part. But it must be said, without in any way wishing to belittle the courage,

determination and suffering of the men who fought their way across Western Europe, D-Day was *not* the main event.

That was over in the East. Most of the German armour, most of the German guns, most of Germany's airforce and most of the German army were confronting the Soviet army.

The leaders of Britain and France had promised to open a Second Front in Western Europe in 1942, but continually reneged on the agreement in subsequent years while they held secret peace negotiations with Germany (excluding the USSR).

As I said a couple of weeks ago: despite public demonstrations in support of opening a second front, the capitalist powers only went ahead with it when it had become clear that the USSR would otherwise liberate Europe single-handed.

It was essentially a political – rather than a military – operation. But capitalism's propagandists are being encouraged to make it out to be not only "one of the greatest-ever military offensives", but *the* military conflict of the European theatre.

Young people in every capitalist country are being assiduously taught that the US and Britain, by means of the D-Day landings, defeated Germany. It's untrue, it's immoral and it's an insult to the millions of Soviet troops who died to defeat Hitlerite fascism. ☹

**MELBOURNE**  
"Bush, Baghdad and Beyond"  
Public Meeting

Melbourne Town Hall  
Monday, 28 June 7.30pm  
Tickets \$15/\$8

Tickets available at:  
• Hasta La Victoria Bookshop  
• Reader's Feast  
• New International Bookshop

**VPN fundraising dinner**  
with Tariq Ali

"Winning the Peace - Prospects for the global anti-war movement"  
Sunday, 27th June 7.00 pm  
Alasya (Turkish) Restaurant,  
55 Sydney Road, Brunswick  
\$40 per head  
Bookings Cyndy 0411 662 186  
Organised by the Victorian Peace Network www.vicpeace.org

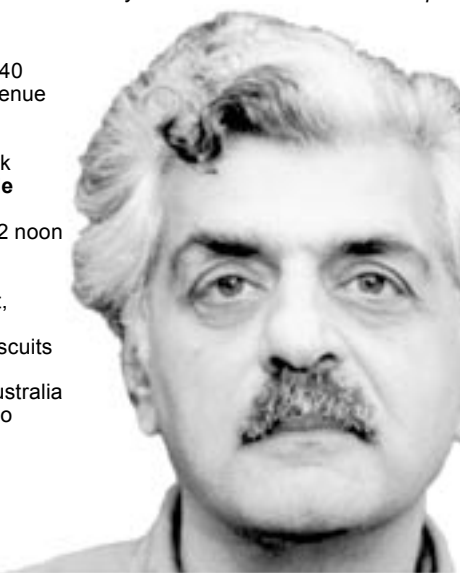
**PERTH**  
"Bush, Babylon and Beyond"  
Free Public forum

Tuesday 29 June 7.30pm  
The Octagon Theatre  
University of Western Australia  
Ticket outlets  
• Jim Scott MLC 9336 1991  
• Giz Watson MLC 9201 0582  
• UnionsWA 9328 7877

# Tariq Ali

Author of *The Clash of Fundamentalisms & Bush in Babylon: The Recolonisation of Iraq*

- Dee Parry 9274 3129
  - Octogon Box Office 9380 2440
- Please ensure you are at the venue by 7.15pm or your seat may be reallocated.  
West Australian Peace Network  
**WA Globalisation Roundtable**  
Guest speaker: Tariq Ali  
Wednesday 30 June 9 am to 12 noon  
Conservation Council  
Conference Room  
Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street,  
West Perth  
There will be tea/coffee and biscuits  
Suggested donation, \$2/\$1  
StopMAI Coalition, Western Australia  
Demand will outstrip seating, so attendance has to be strictly by RSVP.  
Brian Jenkins PO Box 637,  
Rockingham City WA 6168  
Phone 08 9528 1864  
email jenkins@inet.net.au



## Brown Nose Day 2004 Inaugural Awards Gala

Comedy/Music/Foreign Policy/Nose Awards

Sunday 4th July 4-7pm  
Gaelic Club, Devonshire St, Surry Hills

Presentation of Awards for:

**Brown Nose of the Year**  
For outstanding achievement in going all the way with the USA in 2003/4  
**Brown Nose Hall of Shame**

For lifetime achievement in sycophantic grovelling to a foreign power  
**Up Your Nose**

For outstanding defiance or exposure of the USA & its local sycophants by a local activist

Vote for your choice at [www.anti-bases.org](http://www.anti-bases.org)

Organised by Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition  
02 9688 2854 [www.anti-bases.org](http://www.anti-bases.org) [aabcc@zipworld.com.au](mailto:aabcc@zipworld.com.au)

## Subscribe to The Guardian

12 MONTHS: \$88 (\$80 conc.)  6 months: \$45 (\$40)  3 months: \$23 (\$20)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay by  Cheque  Money order

to: Guardian Subscriptions  
65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010, Australia

or by credit card:  Bankcard  Mastercard  Visa

Card #

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Guardian

65 Campbell Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Phone: (02) 9212 6855  
Fax: (02) 9281 5795

Email: [guardian@cpa.org.au](mailto:guardian@cpa.org.au)

Editor: Anna Pha

Published by T Pearson

65 Campbell St

Surry Hills NSW 2010

Printed by Spotpress

105-107 Victoria Rd

Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment is taken by T Pearson,  
65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, 2010

Sydney

## Politics in the Pub

Every Friday night 6pm – 7.45pm

Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills

June 25

Australian Trade Union Leaders

What We Expect From A Labor Government

Doug Cameron, National Secretary AMWU

John Sutton, National Secretary CFMEU

July 2

Iraq After June 30?

Michael Humphreys, Head of School of Sociology, UNSW;

Andrew Vincent, Director of Centre for Middle Eastern and

North African Studies at Macquarie Uni

Inq: Pat Toms 02 9358 4834 [pbtoms@bigpond.com](mailto:pbtoms@bigpond.com); Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891;  
PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039; Win Childs Fax 02 9660 6554

[www.politicsinthepub.org](http://www.politicsinthepub.org)

# John Randolph's life and legacy

**HOLLYWOOD:** John Randolph, actor and activist, passed away earlier this year, aged 88. Noel Rabinowitz recounts his life and times.

**John Randolph shined his light through the anti-Communist hysteria of the McCarthyite 1950s. He was systematically banned from film and TV for over a decade by the Hollywood blacklisting of those named as Communist, but made a triumphant 30-year comeback with his principles intact.**

Young Randolph, of middle-class Jewish immigrant stock, grew up in the Bronx in the 1930s. This was a hard time for anyone to find work, as the Great Depression still gripped the country in massive unemployment.

Randolph's first stage work came via the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA), which created work projects for the unemployed in their field of skill.

"I was in the theatre project part of the WPA and we did original works", said Randolph. The Federal Theatre Project (FTP), formed in August 1935, performed across the country. Its mission was to bring affordable theatre productions to working class communities. Two-thirds of the FTP productions were free and the rest were cheap. Their Negro Theatre Unit's "Macbeth," which electrified Harlem, for example, had a price scale from 15-40 cents, compared to a ticket price of \$1-\$3 for a Broadway show then.

One of the FTP's children's plays was called *Revolt of the Beavers*. Randolph describes the 1937 production. "There were beavers stripping the bark. They made the food, but they were always hungry. And I was on the other side. I played a reactionary beaver. There was 'Rough', 'Tough' and 'Gruff.' I was 'Tough'", said the smiling Randolph.

His first brush with stardom was also his first brush with anti-communism. The company was "hounded by Boy Scout Troop 237 in the Bronx who said *Revolt of the Beaver* was a Communist play", said Randolph. And the FTP would soon be engulfed in the gathering tempest of right-wing attack.

In 1938 Representative Martin Dies of Texas established a committee in the House to investigate "un-American" activities, especially of the FTP that Dies claimed was "nothing but straight Communist propaganda".

With corporate monopolies of 1938 facing a rising tide of union victories and progressive social changes, the right wing could not afford public arts programs that spread pro-worker politics. Dies' hostile "red-baiting" attack on the FTP from his House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) led to the 1939 WPA appropriations bill to specify none of its funds "shall be available ... for the operation of any Theatre Project".

However, three other WPA arts projects – music, art and writing – held on to their embattled funding until 1941. It was in this context that Randolph gained political and union experience.

"I met all these wonderful people. Then I became the editor of the newspaper in the union that was formed in the City Projects Council. Unheard of. A union? The government giving you money and you formed a union?"

While HUAC continued to operate through World War II, Randolph served in the Army Air Force as a control tower operator and fire fighter, never sent overseas due to health reasons – the same that had kept him from joining the Abraham Lincoln Brigades (ALB) fighting in Spain against Franco Fascism. In later years, he was made an honorary ALB veteran for his fundraising dedication.

Randolph was active in the early civil rights struggles and participated in efforts to open up the stage and screen to actors of all races. He said, "I've been with African American actors all my life. I was in *Native Son* and we went all over the country". In fact, he married his wife, actress Sarah Cunningham, in the break between two performances of *Native Son* in Chicago in 1945.

## Blacklisted

Soon after the Cold War was declared, the venomous Republican Joe McCarthy chaired the new Senate version of HUAC. McCarthy's HUAC, formed in 1951, lived off hunting "reds" in high places of government power and Hollywood glamour.

"Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" was the battering ram of the



Actor Ossie Davis sits with John Randolph at the 1988 tribute to Randolph in New York City

red scare. Hollywood studio bosses actively ran their part by sharing a list of accused Communists (the "blacklist") with each other and the FBI.

Blacklisted actors, writers and directors could not work and could only "clear their name" by naming others for HUAC. Hollywood was poisoned by an atmosphere of fear and paranoia where thousands lost their work and some, their lives. In so doing, the studios gained power over the unions and their workers by muzzling the most outspoken and setting worker against worker.

As a known progressive unionist and activist and rising actor of the screen, Randolph was betrayed to the blacklist by another actor who was "under suspicion". He and Cunningham were subpoenaed by HUAC in 1955. They both refused to answer any questions, pleading the 5th Amendment – the only way not to incriminate others nor get thrown in jail.

Randolph was a proud member of the Communist Party. His defiance of HUAC was based not on fear, but on principles plainly written by Randolph to the Committee prior to the hearing. "I may think what I want, and associate with whom I please, either in the union, on the stage, or in politics".

## In every struggle

Like before the blacklist, Randolph was a steady activist as he worked to overcome it. "I've been in every struggle in my day. I go back to the early days of the civil rights movement. ... I picketed against war. I marched for peace. I was elected to union office. I loved what I was doing. I didn't try to dodge it. So, I say, 'Speak up, say how you feel. Don't just sit in the back and let somebody else take it'".

Randolph said he survived because "I grabbed any job I could and I fought the whole time against blacklisting and so did my wife". By the '60s, TV commercials opened up to him when the TV union (AFTRA) stood against blacklisting. Dozens of TV roles would follow, including in recent years as Roseanne's father on the long-running sitcom *Roseanne*. In the '70s and on, after the Screen Actors Guild finally dropped its anti-Communist clause, he was back in film: *King Kong* (1976), *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), *Prizzi's Honor* (1985), *You've Got Mail* (1998) and many others.

His long comeback was capped by a Tony Award in 1986 for his work in Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*.

Accepting the Tony, Randolph joked, "I didn't get into acting to win awards; it's just that I couldn't do anything else".

## Stuck to his principles

On March 21, 1999, the Academy Award for lifetime achievement was given to director Elia Kazan, who cooperated with HUAC in 1952 and destroyed the careers of friends and fellow workers by naming them.

That tense night at the Academy Awards set the stage for a vindicating encore by Randolph. With millions watching news of the Kazan controversy on TV, Randolph spoke at a press conference of protesting actors.

He said that by Kazan's "choice and by his words, people's careers were virtually eliminated and lives shattered. No amount of filmmaking can change the unpleasant, uncomfortable truth. This was also part of his lifetime achievement." Kazan, without apology, saying few thanks, took the award and exited stage right. The deafening orchestra couldn't mask the loud jeers and the cameras couldn't avoid the many who stayed in their seats in protest.

Randolph remembered that night, "To see so many people not applauding ... was an example of the world not accepting rotten and stinking and hurtful people... When nobody's afraid, that's a good feeling."

Looking back on his own career and life, Randolph said, "You know you can't act if you're afraid. So I became a better actor because of my politics. It was a tough fight, but there's no answer to anything except you fight together. I have not given up my political convictions to this day and I didn't give in to anybody, and neither did my wife."

Looking forward to the tough road ahead, Randolph reminded us that German Communist playwright Berthold Brecht said, "When you see them rising up, the ones who hate the Jews, hate the Blacks, they are bringing back the lie and the lie will support them to a certain extent. And we have to fight against that lie. If you just talk and you don't fight back, what good are you?"

If measured by fightback, Randolph was damned good. Throughout his life, he lent his name, energy, resources and love to the cause of workers, equality and socialism. In today's atmosphere of fear and suspicion, of secret military tribunals, and corporate, right-wing media control and film censorship, we can help see our way through with light from Randolph's smile and his example.

*People's Weekly World* ☪

Sydney

## BOUGANVILLE: REVOLUTION – EVOLUTION

### Art exhibition

By Marilyn and Taloi Havini (mother and daughter)

The people's aspirations evolve from the revolution and are mirrored in oils, photo media & ceramic sculptures

Until 2 July

SAM (Student Union building)  
Macquarie Uni campus

Getting there by public transport: Catch an Epping bus from the city, or a City bus from Eastwood or Epping train stations. From the bus stop in the Uni, you walk down Eastern Rd towards building 11A and then veer left to the SAM entrance. Parking on campus available – metered.



## Communist Party of Australia

Website: [www.cpa.org.au](http://www.cpa.org.au)  
Email: [cpa@cpa.org.au](mailto:cpa@cpa.org.au)

**Central Committee:**  
**General Secretary:** Peter Symon  
**President:** Hannah Middleton  
65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, 2010  
Ph: 02 9212 6855 Fax: 02 92815795  
**Sydney District Committee:**  
Rob Gowland  
65 Campbell St, Surry Hills 2010  
Ph: 02 9212 6855 Fax: 02 92815795

**Newcastle Branch:**  
303 Hunter St  
Ph: ah 02 4926 1752  
**Wollongong Branch:** Leanne Lindsay  
PO Box 276 Corrimal 2518  
**North Illawarra Branch:** Janice Hamilton  
16/26-30 Hutton Ave  
Bulli NSW 2516  
Ph: 02 4283 6130

**Riverina:**  
Geoff Lawler  
PO Box 1016 Wagga 2650  
Ph: 02 6921 4316 Fax: 02 6921 6873  
**Melbourne Branch:**  
Andrew Irving  
PO Box 3 Room 0 Trades Hall  
Lygon St Carlton Sth 3053  
Ph: 03 9639 1550 Fax: 03 9639 4199

Website: [www.cpa.org.au/guardian/guardian.html](http://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/guardian.html)  
Email: [guardian@cpa.org.au](mailto:guardian@cpa.org.au)

**West Australian Branch:** Vic Williams  
5B Jemerson St Willagee Perth 6156  
Phone: 08 9337 1074  
**Brisbane Branch:** David Matters  
PO Box 2148 Salisbury East 4107  
Ph: 07 3398 9623  
**South Australian State Committee:**  
Marie Lean Rm 5, Lvl 1, 149 Flinders St,  
Adelaide 5000 Ph: 08 8232 8200

## The Guardian