

## Bases and missile pact spells Government's Secret Sell-out

Bob Briton

**Without any fanfare – and certainly no consultation with the Australian people – the Howard Government has just signed off on two decisions of grave regional strategic significance. In Washington last week, Defence Minister Robert Hill and his US counterpart Donald Rumsfeld agreed to establish a network of military bases in Australia that will host war preparations involving “tens of thousands” of US and Australian troops. They also shook hands on a 25-year commitment to joint research on the US’s Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system or “Son of Star Wars”.**

The decisions taken last week at the Australia-US Ministerial Consultations are radical steps toward the complete integration of the Australian armed forces into the US war machine. “Interoperability” is the euphemism being used to describe the takeover. While Defence Minister Hill is evasive about how many US troops and what sort of hardware would be permanently stationed on Australian soil, the plans are clearly huge in their scope.

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The Shoalwater Bay Training Area just north of Rockhampton is to be upgraded and will serve as the main “multiple combined training centre”. In the Northern Territory there will be another “joint facility” at the base at Delamere and the Bradshaw Training Area will give

the US military an area larger than Austria to conduct their training and war preparations.

Senator Hill is also very defensive about the question of the “pre-positioning” of US military personnel and equipment on Australian soil. He denies that the nod has been given for such an arrangement but his friends in the US are making his attempted snow job that much harder.

US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy, Douglas Feith, was in Canberra earlier this year to take part in discussions that apparently led to the recent agreements. Back home in the US he was effusive in his praise of the Howard Government before the House Armed Services Committee. According to a piece carried in *The Australian Financial Review* last week, the hawkish neo-conservative reported discussions “on a number of things – a combined training facility, possibly some pre-positioning”.

Australian defence officials have described the bases agreement as “embryonic” and “politically and symbolically” important. They said a mouthful!

The 25-year agreement for joint

Minister refuses to accept any responsibility for creating those changed circumstances.

This state of denial is maintained despite the opinions expressed at the Shangri-la dialogue held in Singapore last month by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. Australia’s group rapporteur Paul Dibb made it clear that China, Russia and India were all concerned about the implications of the so-called Ballistic Missile Defence system. They foreshadowed an arms race to prevent countries having BMD capabilities launching an attack from behind a BMD protective shield.

Hill has used nationalism to promote the risky scheme. He says that trials have shown that the Jindalee over-the-horizon might have some applications in missile defence.

Meanwhile, a one-sided slanging match between US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, ministers of the Howard Government and a very defensive Parliamentary Labor Party has sprung up in the wake of the decisions over just how committed a future Latham Government would be to the US Alliance and a military presence in Iraq.

Labor’s defence spokesman Chris Evans has reiterated his party’s long-standing support for joint training with the allies. He claims that the projects will be good for regional development and job creation. He has re-affirmed the ALP’s opposition to the “pre-positioning” of US forces at the new bases. No harm done so far.

However, the ALP has drawn fire from Mr Armitage and his supporters in the Howard Government over Labor’s opposition to “Son of Star Wars” and the commitment of troops to Iraq. “An alliance is a full-on relationship”, the burly Deputy Secretary of State is reported as saying in response to what he sees as Labor’s vacillation. An alliance with the US cannot be cherry-picked. It is an all or nothing, “for us or against us” type of commitment.

Labor has taken some measures to get in step with popular opposition to the war on Iraq and misgivings about reckless projects like Ballistic Missile Defence. Mr Armitage believes that the Parliamentary Party is divided over



the Iraq issue and has outraged many political players in Australia by saying so. Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has called on members of the Bush Administration to butt out of Australian domestic politics. So have Paul Keating and New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark. Mark Latham has objected by saying “we respect the great American democracy. I just hope the people would respect ours.”

Still, Mr Armitage’s outbursts deserve examination. Alexander Downer claims that Labor’s foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd met US officials including Mr Armitage recently in Washington. Also present at the US-Australia Leadership

Dialogue were Kim “Bomber” Beazley, deputy Senate leader Stephen Conroy and various Labor premiers including that connoisseur of US politics, Bob Carr. It is alleged that at these discussions Mr Rudd expressed the misgivings of a sizeable portion of the party about Mark Latham’s pledge to bring part of our troop deployment in Iraq home by Christmas.

Though Mr Rudd flatly denies the claim, it does sound plausible. When the Government can enlist the Australian people in the military plans of the US by stealth and draw only minor criticism from Labor in response, it is clear that the peace movement still has a lot of work to do. ☘

# The Guardian

No 1191

July 14, 2004

## Election tasks in Australia

Smearing and attacking personalities is stock-in-trade for capitalist politics. It is intended to divert attention from the real political questions facing society and lead voters into choosing between parties and candidates on the basis of relatively unimportant issues. It is also intended to cover up the real policies and consequences of the Howard Government's actions. The Australian people have been fed a diet of this sort of politics for the last few weeks as the election campaign heats up.

Desperate to win the election the Howard Government has pulled out all the stops in attacking Mark Latham. It is determined to continue its attacks on the working people and strengthen even further its "all the way with the USA" policies including the new US military bases and the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

The Bush administration joined the Howard Government in its attacks on the ALP. Their "coalition of the willing" is facing world-wide opposition and has suffered setbacks in Iraq and elsewhere. The withdrawal of Australian troops from Iraq, as promised by the ALP, would be a serious political blow to the US administration's agenda of war and occupation.

The comments of Bush, Powell and Armitage are clearly designed to influence the election outcome and as such constitute interference in Australia's domestic politics. Howard has attempted to pass them off as no more than the equivalent of comments by others regarding the US leaders. But coming, as they do, during the course of an election campaign and being made by the officials of a foreign government, they are a direct interference. They have the objective of obtaining the election of a parliament that will do anything that the US leaders want.

This is how the US leaders play their deadly game of world domination – although in many countries the interference is much more direct, including the use of assassinations, open military intervention and economic sabotage.

In their worldwide drive the US leaders have a 100 percent compliant sheriff in the Howard Government. The Howard Government is at one with US military plans for aggression in Asia and elsewhere. Both Bush and Howard are political and religious fundamentalists, completely dedicated to the preservation of the capitalist system with an ultra-conservative social outlook.

The defeat of the Bush and Howard Governments in the forthcoming elections would be a severe setback to their agendas even though the alternatives of Kerry in the US and Latham in Australia do not stand for significant change. However, such an outcome would represent a rejection by voters of the political course that the incumbents are following.

The political objectives for progressive Australians are similar to those that faced the people of Canada in their recent elections. A statement published by the Communist Party of Canada said that "the primary question was one of blunting the drive to the right by preventing a Tory victory, preventing either of the Big Business parties [winning] a working majority, and expanding the size and influence of other more democratic and progressive parties in Parliament.

"In this context, the outcome was a significant victory for the working class and the left and progressive forces in the country. The two parties of big business were hammered by voters, falling from 80 percent of the total popular vote in 2000 to 68 percent in 2004. The Conservatives lost over one million votes from the Alliance-Tory totals of four years ago, and the Liberals dropped 300,000, mostly in Quebec. "On the other hand, the parties seen by voters as defenders of progressive positions made gains; the New Democratic Party gained about one million votes, the Bloc Quebecois about 300,000, and the Greens almost half a million." (See page 8.)

This more or less sums up the tasks and possibilities in Australia. The only alternative to a Howard Government at present is a Latham-led ALP Government. And that would be a slap in the face for conservatism and war. But if that were all, it would be only a small step. A surge in votes for the Greens and other progressive, anti-war candidates would be an even better outcome. This is a real possibility but it will have to be worked for.

### PRESS FUND

The Guardian likes to keep its readers up to date with the news. For example several weeks ago we reported in detail on the horrific US treatment of Australian citizens Mandouh Habib and David Hicks. Last week the Howard Government finally requested confirmation from the US that Mr Habib was tortured in Egypt after being sent there by the US military. You can show your appreciation for The Guardian in a most practical way, by sending us a Press Fund contribution for the next issue. We offer our sincere thanks to those who have contributed this week, as follows:

In memory of Nadia Sharaf \$71.55

R Girvan \$10, Jim Innes \$25, "Round Figure" \$8.45

This week's total \$115. Progressive total \$6205.

# SA anti-militarisation campaign launch

A strong willingness for joint work and a determination do something about the militarisation of Australia were both on display at the SA launch of the Communist Party's anti-militarisation campaign last Sunday. Over 40 people participated in the event at the Semaphore Workers' Club and heard addresses from Bob Briton of the CPA, Don Jarrett of the Australian Peace Committee and Anne McMenamin of SA Greens and NOWAR.

Bob Briton launched the Party's campaign, which is centred on the wide distribution of specially prepared leaflets and booklets.

Don Jarrett highlighted the need for joint work to stop the theft of resources that the militarisation of or society represents. He gave examples from his experiences as a teacher of the needs that go unmet while the armed forces consume the available funds.

Anne McMenamin congratulated the CPA on its initiative and the



Photo: Avante Media Australia

One of the speakers Anne McMenamin of NOWAR and the SA Greens

content of the materials it has produced. She spoke of the possibilities for protest that exist in Adelaide. The headquarters of war-profiteering US transnational KBR was mentioned as a possible focus.

A recent US documentary on

the militarisation of space was then screened, followed by open discussion. Contributions were mostly about how to get the anti-war message out to as many people as possible given the limited resources of the peace movement. ☘

## Global exploiter in court

**Labour hire giant Adecco faces accusations of unfair dismissal, discrimination, sexual harassment, safety shortcomings, sacking a worker with epilepsy, and losing \$480,000 through management incompetence. The claims are contained in actions against the Swiss-based transnational being tested in separate Queensland jurisdictions.**

Adecco, which supplies thousands of workers to Australian companies every week, has already agreed to pay an epilepsy sufferer thousands of dollars in compensation after he was dumped from a job in Rockhampton.

That sacking, in August 2003, according to evidence which will go before the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) in Brisbane, led to the dismissal of a branch manager who went into bat for the epilepsy sufferer.

In an affidavit, Adecco's Gladstone branch manager, Brian Robertson, says the company rejected his argument the man should have been transferred to light duties.

Robertson paints the company that bills itself "the global leader in employment services" as dysfunctional. He says he saw nine state managers come and go in eight years, and that Adecco dropped \$480,000, in one instance, because its Townsville office did not obtain timesheets from clients.

He will tell the IRC that a senior manager told him to give the epileptic spurious reasons for his dismissal.

Robertson alleges problems with his employer began when he was informed by Workcover Adecco could be in breach of health and safety laws because it did not have rehab officers on major sites.

He claims that when he took up his problems with an Adecco director she told him, and others, that he sounded "old and grumpy and needed to get laid".

Robertson also contends Adecco threatened him over a statement he gave in support of the epileptic worker's Anti-Discrimination Commission case against the company.

The seriousness of that charge was reflected on by IRC Commissioner Ashbury in her assessment of an unsuccessful conciliation conference at which Adecco refused to consider reinstatement.

"I am also concerned about the applicant's allegations in relation to his evidence [to the Anti-Discrimination Commission]", the Commissioner said.

"Those allegations are serious. The applicant should raise that matter with those representing the applicant in the case in which he is giving evidence or with staff of the Anti-Discrimination Commission. Alternatively the applicant can provide an affidavit to the Commission detailing his allegations and it will be referred to the appropriate authority."

A Brisbane source says the Anti-Discrimination Commission has told Robertson to submit documentation on the witness intimidation claim by July 28, and informed Adecco it will have to provide a written response. ☘

## Fire and New Building Appeal \$10,000

The fire and new building appeal made a start this week although it is only a few days since *Guardian* readers received their copies with notice of the Appeal. *The Guardian* and Party staff are busy packing ready for the big move in August. There is a lot to be done and Party members and supporters living in Sydney are welcome to visit the office and help with the many tasks.

We expect to be moving over a period of three days beginning on Wednesday, August 18. We have decided to hire professional removalists but our own labour will still be needed to assist.

In the meantime, please send in your contributions as soon as possible and dig deep as the expenses never stop coming in.

**Many thanks to the following for their contributions:**

Bert Heinemann \$60, M Moore \$25, Dave Wenban \$50, ADEPU Chile \$300, J M Innes \$100.

**Total so far: \$535**

✂

### FIRE AND NEW BUILDING APPEAL

I, \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the CPA Fire and New Building Appeal.

I agree/do not agree to have my name included in *The Guardian* acknowledgements.

I need/do not need a receipt posted to me.

Post your contribution to CPA 65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills. NSW 2010.

Contributions can be made by credit card giving name (on the card), number and expiry date.



# Govt forced to release child prisoners

Peter Mac

Many of the hundreds of children held in the Howard Government's infamous immigration detention centres have been released, after the government was finally forced into a humiliating reversal of its previous policy.

There are still, however, 42 children in mainland detention centres and 20 detained on Australian islands. Another 27 are currently being held under virtual house arrest in "residential housing projects" and motels.

Last May the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) released a damning report on the holding of children in detention under the government's unlawful policy. The report stated that children held in detention were highly likely to suffer serious mental harm.

With no apparent sense of the ridiculous, the government described the report as "backward looking" and "unbalanced" while the Minister for Immigration, Senator Amanda Vanstone, declared that the report would send a dangerous message to people smugglers.

The number of children held in detention centres reached a peak of 842 in 2002. Nearly 200 children remained in custody at the time of release of the HREOC report. However, with an election looming the government realised

that the electorate would see its whole unlawful immigration policy as not only backward and unbalanced but also very cruel. They therefore issued orders that the remaining "boat children" held in custody in mainland centres should be released.

Last week, in a carefully timed announcement, Senator Vanstone proudly informed the nation that the government had released all but one of the children who had arrived by boat, or whose parents had.

The good Senator carefully avoided dwelling on cases of other children who are still imprisoned in detention centres, declaring herself to be "very pleased that we're now down to one child in detention centres". She also carefully avoided any hint of an apology when she stated that she was "very conscious of the fact that this wasn't possible in 2001 and 2002".

Children who arrived by means other than by boat remain in mainland centres, and so far the release policy has not been applied to those held in island detention. As Democrats Senator Andrew Bartlett noted, in these cases "... kids only get released after they have developed psychological conditions, which are a direct consequence of detention".

Moreover, most children and their family members who have been released on bridging visas find themselves penniless, disoriented

and with minimal government welfare support. As Senator Bartlett has pointed out: "... the minister has merely granted them the right to live in the community while their claims are being processed. The families are mostly dependent on local charities for their food, clothing and medical needs. Frankly, wild animals get a better controlled release program in Australia than asylum seekers".

And finally, the case of the one "boat child" who does remain in custody highlights a further agonising dilemma for the detainees. The child's mother refused to be separated from her husband. In other cases the release of children has been conditional on the father (if present) remaining in custody. For these people the cost of the release of the children has been the splitting of their families. As Bartlett commented: "... it is inhumane to force mothers to choose between their husbands and older sons, and getting their children out of the unsuitable environments of the detention centres".

## Some family values!

So much for the government's much vaunted policy of encouraging stable and united two-parent families! Not only do the families suffer separation, but the mothers and children whose applications for refugee status are pending have to live in the residential housing proj-



ects (RHPs), which in many cases are only a slight improvement on the detention centres. Except for once a week shopping trips (for which they receive the magnificent sum of \$56) they are kept indoors.

In describing the Port Augusta RHP, one detainee recently stated: "We cannot go out into the community, there are cameras everywhere. All the windows and doors have alarms. After 11 o'clock at night we are locked in, you cannot open any window. If you do, the alarm

goes off and (the guards) come running."

The decision to release detainee children is welcome. However, let's get things in proper perspective. The move constitutes electoral expediency, and does not stem from any deeply seated human convictions. We still have a long road to travel before we can say as a nation that we treat asylum seekers in a humane fashion. And we will not get there as long as the present government is in power. ✚

# US-arranged torture of Australians

Gareth Smith  
Nuclear Disarmament Party

Australian citizen Mamdouh Habib was imprisoned in Pakistan, sent to Egypt by US authorities where he could be interrogated under torture and now languishes in Guantanamo where he has been further abused (SBS TV, *Dateline*, July 7, 2004).

On the program, Steve Watts, Centre for Constitutional Rights, New York said that: "Egypt has a long history of use of torture on persons in detention and we believe that Mamdouh was sent there for the express purpose of interrogating him under torture ... this is state-

sponsored abduction and that's a violation of international law".

The US strategy of getting countries like Egypt, Pakistan, the Philippines, Morocco and Jordan to do its dirty work by extracting information under torture is known as rendition. Ex-CIA head George Tenet boasted that 70 people were "rendered" before September 11.

All of this must have been known to the Howard Government through our "special relationship" with the US, failing that they only had to look at Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch web sites to get a complete run-down on torture.

*Dateline* tracked down British ex-Guantanamo internees who had

spoken with Mamdouh. He told them that he had been blindfolded for eight months and had never seen the sun but saw his wife, Maha, and his kids every minute.

They took him to Egypt and said they would bring Maha and the children there as well - this prospect terrified him. He told them he had been beaten and electrocuted. Former Qatar Justice Minister, Dr Hajeeb Al-Naumi said: "Well, he was in fact tortured. He was interrogated in a way which a human cannot stand up." Similar allegations were made by Mamdouh to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade personnel about two years ago.

On the programme, Attorney General Phillip Ruddock stressed that Australian consular officials were denied access to Mamdouh by the Pakistani authorities but he admitted that before Mamdouh was abducted to Egypt, he was interviewed by Australian Federal Police officers. Doesn't the Australian Government have access to what transpired?

The following exchange between Mark Davis and Phillip Ruddock is a blatant example of how Australia has flouted not only the Geneva Conventions, but also the Convention Against Torture, Article 3 of which states that:

"1. No State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.

"2. For the purpose of determining whether there are such grounds, the competent authorities shall take into account all relevant considerations including, where applicable, the existence in the State concerned of a consistent pattern of gross, flagrant or mass violations of human rights."

MARK DAVIS: Why wouldn't you know that? Why wouldn't you know that by now? Why wouldn't your Department have made inquiries as to how an Australian citizen ends up secretly in an Egyptian jail?

PHILIP RUDDOCK: Well, you know what you're told. I'm simply saying that in relation to these matters, Egypt has not acknowledged at any time, as I am advised, that Mr Habib was in Egypt.

MARK DAVIS: Have the Americans advised that he was in Egypt?

PHILIP RUDDOCK: I mean we have made inquiries in relation to those matters. We know now he is in American custody in

Guantanamo Bay. We see assertions about the way in which other issues are dealt with, but I'm not in a position to account for or detail the way in which America handled the individual detainees. I'm not in a position to do that. I mean, it may be appropriate for me to ask, but I've not seen fit to ask at this point in time.

MARK DAVIS: Well, these allegations of torture - and rather extreme torture - aren't new. What does it take for you to see fit to make inquiry of at least a cursory nature?

PHILIP RUDDOCK: Well, again, I mean, these are not matters about which we can make inquiries. We can ask, but they're not matters about which we can make inquiries.

What we have asked for and been assured is that in relation to not only Mr Habib's treatment in Guantanamo Bay, but also his treatment at all times that he was in American custody or care or control, that those matters be the subject of investigation and we've been assured that they will be but we have had no reports at this stage on the nature of those investigations, who is undertaking the inquiries or the results of them. But that is what we have sought and we believe it was appropriate that we should seek to have those inquiries undertaken.

If anyone required further proof of the utter moral bankruptcy of the Howard Government they need look no further. Phillip Ruddock is wrong. The CAT obligates a pro-active response to torture not a lame, laissez-faire, look-the-other-way retreat. For the Howard Government to face up to the torture of Australian citizens would mean facing up to the US for whom torture is a long established *modus operandi*. They are so in thrall to the US Empire that this is something they cannot contemplate. ✚

Pete's Corner



# Hardie immoral & illegal

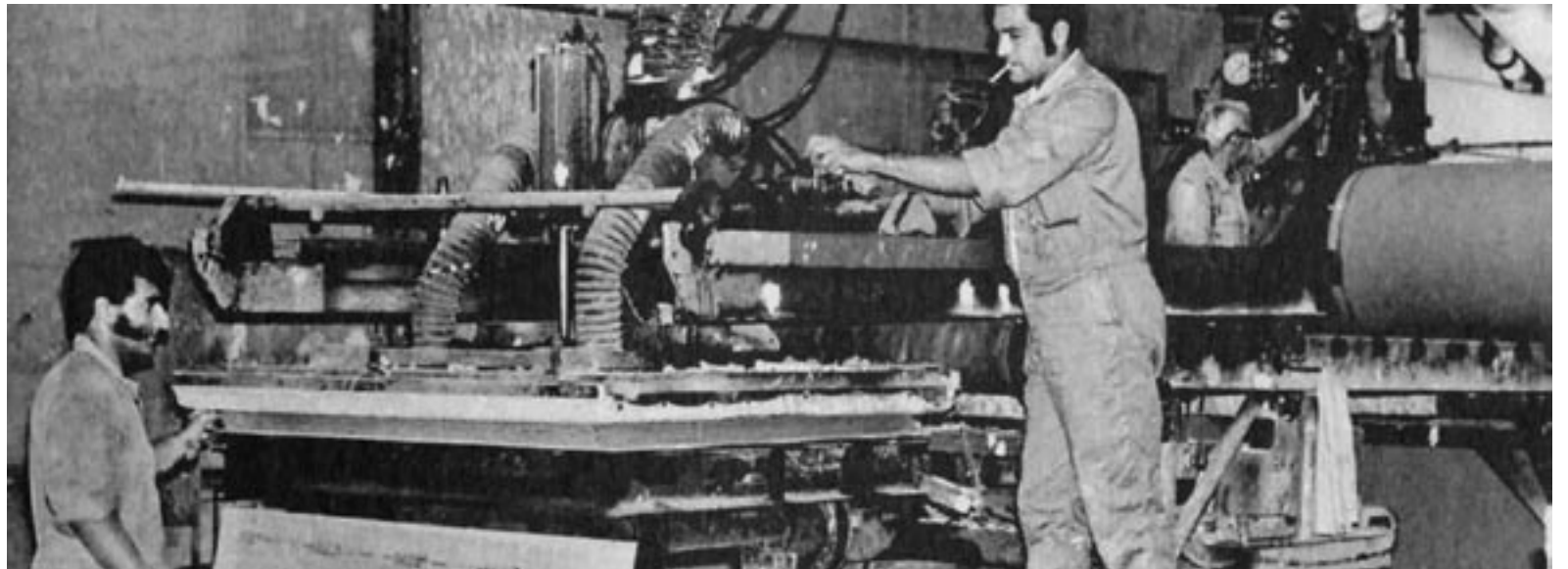
When James Hardie decided to trade blue collar for blue chip it knew "spoilers" would try to wreck its party. It even nominated the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and its NSW secretary, Paul Bastian, but was confident they would be seen off by an A-List cast of lawyers and spin doctors.

Hardie CEO and Californian resident, Peter Macdonald, had good reason to reassess that position as he flew out of Sydney this month after five gruelling days before the Jackson Inquiry into the company skipping out of the country to avoid compensation claims.

The inquiry, launched by NSW Premier Bob Carr, was the result of constant lobbying and badgering by unionists incensed that Hardie appeared to have duded thousands of lung disease sufferers, courtesy of, what Paul Bastian called "an act of corporate bastardry".

They demanded to know how Hardie, a major producer of asbestos products for half a century, had relocated to the Netherlands and told Australian sufferers that, when it came to compensation, they could "go Dutch" as well.

The AMWU highlighted the restructure that left all Hardie's liabilities with a grossly under-funded corporate creation, the Medical



A Hardie asbestos factory in the Sydney suburb of Rosehill

Research and Compensation Foundation (MRCF). Mr Bastian told key Carr government ministers MRCF would come up \$800 million short of compensation requirements, minimum.

But it wasn't until two things became clear that Carr stunned the business community by announcing a formal inquiry. Mr Bastian's figures appeared, if anything, conservative while Macdonald remained adamant the parent company had

"no moral or legal obligations" to Australians dying from asbestos-related diseases.

Irrespective of what Jackson reports when he due back in September, demands for corporate law reform will surely follow testimony that ripped the veil off how the big end of town operates.

The Inquiry learned that:

- in the late 1990s, James Hardie directors considered a number of options that would allow them to separate the operating entity from obligations to compensate sufferers of asbestos-related diseases;
- much legal advice warned of the dangers to Hardie of any strategy requiring court approval;
- the Hardie board, in 2001, opted to set up a trust to house AMABA and AMACA, the entities representing its asbestos manufacturing operations;
- when Hardie decided, months later, to become James Hardie Industries NV of the Netherlands for tax and legal purposes, the move required Supreme Court approval;
- the company assured the Court the creation of a new Dutch entity would not disadvantage anyone

owed money by the Australian operation;

- Hardie backed this by saying asbestos victims would have the right to call on partly-paid shares with a 2001 value of \$1.9 billion;

- in March, 2003, directors cancelled those shares at a "private" board meeting. Shareholders were not told and nor were asbestos victims, unions, the general public or the NSW Supreme Court;

- the company's own lawyer warned, in a draft opinion, that this cancellation might mean the Supreme Court had been misled;

- a former Hardie's legal adviser, Wayne Attrill, testified that senior executives knew a press release saying MRCF would be adequately funded was dodgy but authorised it anyway. Attrill said the worry was based on actuarial advice in James Hardie's possession;

- Macdonald "hit the roof", according to Attrill, when he learned the company's "retained experts", Trowbridge Deloitte, had posted "gory numbers" about asbestos disease rates on its own website;

- the restructure was preceded by a major public relations offensive

that used former ALP power broker, Stephen Loosley, amongst others, to try and quiet political and public concerns;

- James Hardie tried to limit restructure information to the business press where advisers felt "moral" issues would not carry as much weight;

- MRCF will fall either \$800 million or \$1.1 billion, short of being able to compensate Australian asbestos victims and their families, according to separate actuarial figures supplied by Trowbridge Deloitte and KPMG.

Counsel assisting, John Sheahan, this week flagged the possibility of corporate law reform that could make corporate groups responsible for the liabilities of their subsidiaries.

Sheahan has also suggested James Hardie will have to answer a number of allegations about the legality of its actions, arising from the evidence.

The shortfall being investigated by the Jackson Inquiry relates to product liability rather than workers' compensation that James Hardie was insured against. ☘

## Privatisation kills

The boss of a worker killed on a Wollongong construction site is one of eight people recommended for corruption charges by ICAC (Independent Commission Against Corruption). The ICAC investigation was launched after the Cole Royal Commission and the Building Industry Taskforce failed to address allegations by the construction union, the CFMEU, that "corrupt practices" were killing workers in the industry.

The NSW workplace safety body, WorkCover, has used accredited outside "assessors" to oversee the competency of operators of heavy machinery on building sites. The corruption allegations centre on kickbacks given to these "privatised" assessors to pass operators who may have not been properly trained i.e. not competent.

Now, a report handed down by ICAC has found thousands of competency certificates had been corruptly issued.

The report recommends criminal charges be brought against six assessors, a trainer and the boss of an Illawarra crane company.

"Assessment and certification processes for operators are fundamental to ensuring that only competent people operate potentially dangerous machinery", says the ICAC report. "When the procedures

for minimising and controlling risks are compromised through corrupt practice the potential for harmful consequence escalates."

Michael Boland died while working as a dogman on a crane that struck overhead power lines at Heathcote, on Sydney's southern outskirts, last year. Charges have been recommended against his boss, Terry Donald Whyte, managing director of Whyco Crane Services, for allegedly giving false or misleading evidence to the ICAC inquiry, which examined the circumstances of Mr Boland's death.

"We can put this down to outsourcing and cost cutting", said Brian Parker from the CFMEU. "WorkCover should take the assessor role back. We feel these issues should be controlled by the government. The use of private assessors opens the door to corrupt practices."

Mr Parker pointed to a rapid increase in injuries and accidents, as well as a number of crane rollovers and near misses prior to the inquiry.

"It's not just building workers whose lives are at risk, but the general public as well", he said.

ICAC launched its probe after Parker went public with allegations that private assessors were taking kickbacks to issue certificates to operators who had not passed competency standards. ☘

## Cabbies in Action

The NSW State Government has introduced a "no destination" rule which means that cabbies are not given the passenger destination at the time they accept a booking. The aim of this was to prevent cabbies "cherry-picking" the higher paying fares and leaving other passengers without a ride. Drivers have reacted strongly to the new rule, taking industrial action last month. They say it prevents them from organising most aspects of their work. Ronald Barrett, a Sydney taxi driver, reports on the action and concerns of taxi drivers.

There were not many taxis on the roads of Sydney on Tuesday June 22, as drivers went on strike to protest against the "no destinations on jobs" and against "no stopping" fines in Sydney Central Business District

The New South Wales Taxi Council, representing the big networks, said few drivers went on strike. But I got a different impression by watching the Mt Druitt rank where only a few cabs worked. It was to be expected that there would not be a 100 percent response to the strike but I am certain that most drivers did stop work.

My boss told me he could not afford to lose the day. I tried to explain to him that no worker could ever afford to strike. But as withdrawal of labour is the only weapon a worker has to fight with, sometimes there is no alternative.

Cabbies certainly have plenty to gripe about. Drivers are deemed to be self-employed, so on the road, you are on your own. A driver can be fined for stopping in a no standing or no stopping zone. A fine can mean a driver losing a whole day's pay.

Wages are a particular bone of contention. A day driver must take at least \$130 before making a cent for him or herself. This includes \$100 to the boss, at least \$20 for gas, plus GST tax of at least \$7.00 or more on top of that. It is not unusual for a driver to go home with less than nothing after a 12-hour shift.

There is also the unscrupulous passenger that runs off without paying the fare. I know of a driver who was jailed for three months for attempting to get a fare from a runner. Another driver was charged with murder after it was alleged

that he ran down a fare evader. He was acquitted, but should not have been charged in the first place. A taxi council spokesman said that we should not condone drivers assaulting passengers, but it seems the other way round is OK.

It must be said that taxi driving is not all bad. It can be very satisfying helping old people and disabled people. I often count my blessings when I pick up disabled people who are much younger than I am. Most passengers are friendly and co-operative.

The bureaucrats only hear the petty complaints that are often groundless.

Drivers now have what could be called a Trade Union – the NSW Cabbies Welfare Association.\* Its President Mr Michael Joolo told me that it was formed about five years ago following an assault on a driver. Its aim is to improve the position of drivers and it sees political activity as a way of achieving this.

Last month's stoppage was probably the first action of its kind but I'm sure it will not be the last.

\*Striking taxi drivers were also members of the Transport Workers Union. The union held stopwork meetings on the day, which were attended by 300 angry cabbies – Ed.

Abridged ☘

Melbourne

### Public First Free Trade Agreement Question & Answer Night

Wednesday 21 July 7.30pm  
Trades Hall Council Chambers  
Cnr Lygon St & Victoria Pde, Carlton

Chair: Marcus Clayton Public interest lawyer  
David Ristrom Greens  
Sen Lyn Allison Democrats  
Sen Gavin Marshall ALP  
Liberals and Nationals declined invitation  
Alan Moran Institute of Public Affairs

More info: 9662 9688; 0402 679 201

# Quarantine and "free trade" – the plot thickens

Bob Briton

**You have got to hand it to John Howard. His training in the law and decades of surviving in the snake pit called the Australian Parliament have made him the master of the carefully chosen word. Earlier this year the PM was under a lot of political pressure over the threat the Australia US Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA) posed to Australia's strict quarantine laws. The US's lead negotiator Bob Zoellick had made it clear that a "relaxation" of the quarantine laws was a prerequisite for the conclusion of the pro-corporate AUSFTA. The questions about this crucial issue were raining down on Howard.**

"Australia's quarantine and food safety regimes, which ensure our health and our environment are protected, are not affected by the Agreement", the PM said with his chin thrusting forward. Since then, however, there has been a host of challenges to the effectiveness of Australia's quarantine regulations. In all of them, the agency of the Federal Government overseeing

The Australian Banana Growers' Council had engaged a senior scientist from Britain's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to examine the dangers of the imports. The Council says it has evidence that BA approached the professor's bosses in the UK to force him to drop his investigations.

Another BA risk analysis recommended the lifting of the ban on pig meat from 11 countries currently in place to prevent the entry of post-weaning multi-systemic wasting syndrome. The potential for damage to producers is so grave that industry body Australian Pork Ltd is mounting a Federal Court challenge to the proposed change.

Then came the most widely reported recommendation from Biosecurity Australia. A draft report recommended that a ban on apples from New Zealand should be lifted to allow for their import "under strict quarantine conditions". BA has either a thick hide or a devilish sense of humour to suggest this in light of what it had previously proposed with regard to our system of quarantine inspection.

and re-examined several times during the next few days. In the meantime, the whole orchard was sprayed with the anti-biotic streptomycin. In bad cases the orchard was also dusted with copper causing severe russet of the fruit...

"I remember driving past a beurre bosc pear orchard in the state of Washington that was badly affected by fire blight. The trees were cut down a week later and the same orchard resembled a cemetery, with only the trunks left as tombstones. This hardly describes the anguish and frustration orchardists will feel when fire blight hits pear and apple orchards in Australia."

Biosecurity Australia argues that it merely applies a mathematical formula to assess risk. It accepts that some Philippine bananas carrying Moko will enter the country. Using this same "qualitative" yardstick, it is conceded that between 0.35 and 5 per cent of the 200 million apples set to come from NZ could carry fire blight bacteria. This is acceptable to the Federal Government's panel of experts!

Controversy over BA's draft report has remained in the news since its release. A Senate Committee has been reviewing it and has heard some remarkable evidence. John Corboy of the apple and pear industry's fire blight task force has identified 46 errors in the figures contained in the report. The term "low" was used to describe risk when it should have read "moderate".

Biosecurity Australia chief Mary Harwood is standing by the report. Errors and all, the recommendation for a "relaxation" of our quarantine standards still stands. Meanwhile, the European Union is reported to be challenging Australia's quarantine system for being too restrictive. New Zealand is going to take the apple and pear issue to the World Trade Organisation.

In all these actions, it appears that the Federal Government will be on the opposite side to local growers. It has its own agenda. The fate of the sugar industry during the US Free Trade Agreement negotiations has already demonstrated that it is prepared to abandon large industries supporting large numbers of people to get in the good books in Washington.

Howard will have a battle on his hands. Rallies of 10,000 people have taken place in the Victorian town of Shepparton. More actions are planned. The support of the broader labour movement to stop this attack on the Australia's much envied quarantine safeguards and the livelihoods of people in fruit growing areas is absolutely vital. ☪



At a fruit growers' protest last month in Shepparton

## Biosecurity Australia argues that it merely applies a mathematical formula to assess risk. It accepts that some Philippine bananas carrying Moko will enter the country.

quarantine matters – Biosecurity Australia (BA) – has favoured "relaxing" current standards.

In February, BA recommended the scrapping of the current system of quarantine inspections at entry points to the country. This would be replaced by a system of "assurances" from the countries of origin that the produce being imported does not present any disease threat. A shakier system of "enforcement" could not be imagined.

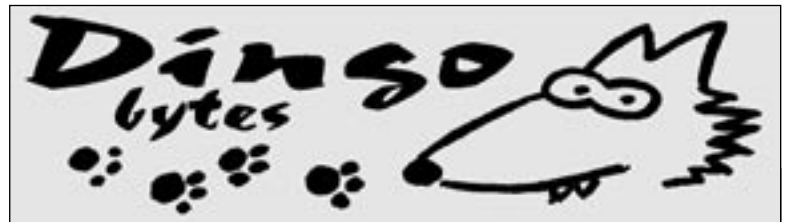
That same month, a BA report recommended that bananas from the Philippines be allowed into the country despite the existence there of Moko, a disease that could devastate Australia's \$400 million banana industry. Apparently, "assurances" that the imported bananas came from disease-free plantations would have been sufficient for BA. Growers now live in fear that Moko and banana bract mosaic virus could one day find their way into their crops with devastating consequences.

The ban on NZ apples has stood since 1919 because of the potential for contamination of local crops with fire blight. The disease could permanently reduce production to 60 per cent of current levels and destroy the viability of fruit growing areas like the Goulburn Valley. It has already wiped out NZ's pear growing industry.

Fire blight is spread by bees, aphids, leafhoppers and other sucking insects and birds. It can also be passed on by contaminated farm implements. An outbreak is the cue for a military-style mobilisation. Last week's *Vanguard* carried a report from a consultant in fruit production in the US who has witnessed outbreaks firsthand:

"When fire blight struck, everybody was mobilised. An army of orchard workers moved systematically through every pear and apple block, cutting out affected branches – sometimes whole limbs – which were subsequently burned.

"Every affected tree was marked



The Federal Government's plan to scrap an annual \$7 million subsidy for general aviation and regional airports will add \$1 million a year to the cost of Victoria's Metropolitan Ambulance Air Service. Air Ambulance Victoria carries about 6000 patients a year to Melbourne hospitals, mostly from rural areas. If the subsidy goes it will be forced to pay almost 700 percent more in airport charges. Costs will have to be cut. The Service's general manager, Ian Patrick, says it isn't possible to pass the cost onto patients: "If we don't get funding for it somewhere, you'd have to look at what you can and can't provide. Maybe you would end up cutting services." In response, the office of Federal Transport Minister John Anderson flippanantly said airport charges had been kept "artificially low".

Immediately after the death of 17-year-old Thomas Hickey in Redfern, which sparked a violent confrontation between police and the suburb's Aboriginal community, the police denied having even seen him. Then they admitted they may have seen him, then said, yes, they had seen him. The community claimed right from the start that the cops had chased him, and caused his death from a collision with a fence outside a housing commission estate. Now, at the inquiry into his death, police say they did follow Thomas, but didn't chase him. How's that for splitting hairs? If you're an Aboriginal kid in Redfern, a car-load of cops following you is a chase.

John Howard and his little crew of thieves and cutthroats are obviously jittery about the coming election, what with their character assassination of Mark Latham and the spending of more than \$4 million in just one week last month on advertising their package of lies about Medicare and promoting the \$600 child payment. In fact, Flakjacket Johnnie oversaw the spending of \$29 million of taxpayers' money in the past six months according to Nielsen Media Research. Labor claims the Government's advertising blitz will total \$122 million for the year.

**CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK:** is the Australian Democrats. The wavering, inconsistent and unreliable nature of the Australian Democrats as far as workers are concerned is nowhere better demonstrated than their approach to the trade unions. Rightly seeing the Greens as the threat to their balance of power position in the Senate, they have attacked them for having "rejected every piece of this Government's industrial relations legislation". They say that the Greens "not only oppose the Workplace Relations Act" but (horror of horrors) "philosophically have hard left views". The Democrats, on the other hand, "are not bound by ancient ideologies, nor beholden to big business or the unions". They actually credit the Howard Government's vicious anti-union laws with creating "lower unemployment, lower interest rates, higher productivity, higher real wages" and "lower levels of industrial disputation". Proudly they proclaim their contribution to the increased exploitation of workers: "Lost working days are at a record low".

## Bookshelf

**Booklets:** Any four for \$10 (including postage)

- *The Rush to Privatisation* by Anna Pha \$3
- *Enron: Capitalism in a Nutshell* by Anna Pha \$3
- *Save Medicare* by Dr. Con Costa \$1
- *Out of their mouths. Planning the new world order (What US leaders have said)* by Anna Pha \$2
- *Recolonising the Solomon Islands* by Peter Symon. \$2
- *A brief history of Australian Unionism and the role of the Communist Party* by Warren Smith \$3
- *Was the war against Afghanistan planned before September 11?* – based on articles published by Emperor's Clothes \$3
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Black on white & black on red in sizes M, L, XL, XXL
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NSW 2010 Payment by Cheq, Money Order or Credit Card (incl. card name/number/type/expiry date).



# Potamia village, Cyprus – symbol of the future

Steven Katsineris

**“Please let it be known that we are a living example of the sort of place Cyprus could be”**

Ibrahim Azziz, Turkish Cypriot writer and resident of Potamia.

**Before the Turkish invasion of 1974, Cyprus was dotted with ethnically mixed villages. There is a popular mistaken perception that since partition Cyprus has been divided between the two separate populations, with Turkish Cypriots living exclusively in the Turkish-occupied north and Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus in the southern part of the island.**

This is not an accurate reflection of the situation, especially in regards to the south of Cyprus. Here Turkish Cypriots still live peacefully together in villages and towns with their Greek and other Cypriot compatriots as citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. The largest of these mixed villages is Pyla with 900 Greek Cypriots and 500 Turkish Cypriots.

Another one of these places is the village of Potamia. It is nestled against a hillside surrounded by beautiful orchids in the island's central plain, bordering the “green line” – the zone that divides the rest of Cyprus from the occupied north. The village is one of the truly mixed villages in which Turkish Cypriots continue to live and work together with other Cypriots making a living from the land.

Potamia is a quiet community of mainly farmers and commuters from Nicosia. It is a small village with only 448 inhabitants, with several village coffee shops (or tavernas, as the preferred meeting places), restaurants and a primary school. There is not much to distinguish the two communities.

In the evenings Turkish and Greek Cypriots gather in Potamia's cafés to talk, joke and play backgammon. All the inhabitants are fluent in Greek and Turkish Cypriot dialects.

“In this village there are two mother tongues and there has never been a war with hate. Since Ottoman times, both communities have lived happily, side by side. We looked at the village of Ayios Sozomenos down the road and knew that's what we didn't want to be,” said Ibrahim Azziz. The nearby village of Ayios Sozomenos just one kilometre to the north was bitterly fought over in 1964 and then abandoned by its people.

It is a relatively comfortable village with well cared for homes and pretty fields and with a new community building that serves as the community headquarters where the two muktars (the villages community leaders) Panicos Yiatrou and Hussein Hami meet together to represent their people – the 48 Turkish Cypriots and 400 Greek Cypriots of the village. Turkish Cypriots were once in the majority in Potamia, but many left when ethnic conflict broke out in 1964,



Athens 1981 – A speaker at a meeting in solidarity with the people of Cyprus

some of them returned in later years.

After the Turkish invasion an estimated 250 Turkish Cypriots left again, settling in the north. Ibrahim Azziz was one of those who urged his fellow Turkish Cypriots to stay. Some have returned since, with more coming back each year, but some families remain divided.

When middle-aged Turkish Cypriot mason Hilmi Ermin fled the Turkish occupied north, crossing the ‘border’ during the night he went straight to Potamia. He was warmly welcomed and in 2002 his son also escaped and joined him in Potamia. He is now waiting for his wife and two daughters still on the other side to be reunited with him.

Since the lifting of travel restrictions by the Turkish authorities in April 2003, allowing limited freedom of movement more Turkish Cypriots from the north have been returning to visit the village. Prior to those changes leaders in Potamia were working on efforts to create a more welcoming environment to encourage more Turkish Cypriots to return to the village.

“We set up a regional committee to advance policies of reconciliation between the two communities. When Turkish Cypriots get the chance they attend bi-communal events. It's been very successful”, said Panicos Yiatrou, Potamia's Greek Cypriot mayor, a post he shares with his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Hussein Hami.

In July 2002, 11 villages in the area, including Potamia, announced the formation of The Regional Committee for the Rapprochement of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot Communities. This was an initiative established to further develop a relationship of co-operation and understanding.

## Radio Potamia

Potamia even has a special local FM radio station, Radio Potamia, serving a ten square kilometre area. The programming of its news, music, education, local cultural

programs and announcements of events, like births, deaths and marriages is broadcast equally in Greek and Turkish (both are the official languages of Cyprus).

The audience of Radio Potamia is small, but its reach extends to the neighbouring village of Dali and significantly the village of Louroudjina in the occupied area in the north. Some former Turkish Cypriot residents of Potamia who live outside the broadcast area are pushing for the station to widen its range.

Radio Potamia is rather unique and symbolic of a genuine bi-communal spirit and desire that transcends its humble role. Radio Potamia is the dream of Loukis

Potamia on May 11, 2003, a day of celebration was held with over 500 Greek and Turkish Cypriots gathering with music and food. It included 155 Turkish Cypriots who came by bus and another 150 by car mostly from Turkish-held Argaki village near Morphou. Radio Potamia is another important component promoting reunification and a return by former residents by providing a unified community voice.

Cypriot Interior Minister Andreas Christou spoke of its significance in comments to the *Cyprus Weekly*, “When this communication is built upon the long tradition of co-existence and cooperation between the two communities, then it reinforces the uniting

## All for capitalist accumulation

“Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 percent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 percent certainly will produce eagerness; 50 percent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated.”

Quoted by Marx as a footnote to *Capital* from T J Dunning in *Trades' Union and Strikes* (Marx Engels Collected Works Vol 35 p748 in the section *Historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*).

“Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall (and for quite a while before that) the triumphalists of the west have insisted that democracy is impossible without capitalism. It should surely be fairly obvious by now that democracy is impossible in the presence of capitalism or, for that matter, any system that permits the concentration of wealth.”

George Monbiot author of *The Age of Consent*

“The tortures and killings in Abu Graib were revealed to the world in the aftermath of Faluja. The explosive disclosures in their blood curdling detail mirrored the scale of the occupant's bestiality. Words such as shocked, horrified, despicable, appalled, had become a common currency. Day after day as the images struck the public eye there was the awareness that these crimes were not confined to a specific prison in a single city and were not limited in time. They straddled the occupied lands of Afghanistan and the Guantanamo Naval Base...”

Frederick F Clairmont in *Faluja: The Beacon of Freedom*

Piers Morgan was sacked as editor of the *Daily Mirror* because he ran the only popular newspaper in Britain to expose the “war on terror” as a fraud and the invasion of Iraq as a crime.... On July 4, 2002, American Independence Day, the *Daily Mirror* published a report of mine displayed on the front page under the headline “Mourn on the Fourth of July” and showing Bush flanked by the Stars and Stripes. Above him were the words: ‘George W Bush's policy of bomb first and find out later has killed double the number of civilians who died on 11 September. The USA is now the world's leading rogue state.’”

John Pilger in *How the 'Free Media' are Manipulated*.

**The aim of Radio Potamia as described by its director Kyriakos Kikas is “to reflect a spirit of mutual respect, rather than mere co-existence”.**

Papaphillippou, who grew up in Potamia and whose father was the village priest and served both Greek and Turkish constituents. Its planned mission is disseminating public broadcasting. The aim of Radio Potamia as described by its director Kyriakos Kikas is “to reflect a spirit of mutual respect, rather than mere co-existence.”

According to Nicos Prokomenas, the journalist at the station, “we must be aware that the audience are local people living together, that they are real friends and refer to each other by first name ... Potamia is the way it is because the people want to be the way they are”.

To mark the opening of Radio

and coexisting elements of a solution, fading the elements which look for dividing solutions. This message is conveyed by Radio Potamia ... to Turkish Cypriots”.

The value and impact of such an exemplary village as Potamia cannot be underestimated in showing the real vision of a reunited and renewed Cyprus.

“Hussein and I never stop making the point ... that Greeks and Turks coexist peacefully here and that it is possible”, said Panicos Yiatrou.

Steven Katsineris is a Tasmanian born freelance writer of Cypriot background living in Hurstbridge, Victoria, Australia. ☘



# The terrible price

In a letter to *The Guardian*, (No 1178, 7-04-2004) Tom Gill raised the question of the impact of the Second World War on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a factor behind the collapse of the Soviet Union. The following article by A S Rebrov, of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, provides information on the heavy loss of Party members during the War.

**On the eve of the Great Patriotic War the Communist Party of the Soviet Union numbered 3,800,000 members and candidates for membership; all official sources agree with this figure.**

During this war more than 5,319,000 people were put forward as candidates for admission to the Party (History of the CPSU, GIPL, Moscow 1960 p.576, Russian edition), a figure which is, in my opinion equally reliable.

As a consequence, if the Party had had no losses, it would have had, in 1945 approximately 9,100,000 members.

After the war, in particular in the years 1945-1952, the ranks of the party had grown in a particularly rapid fashion, to the extent of at least 700,000 per year on the average.

It follows that for the beginning of the 19th Congress of the Party [1952], not less than 4,900,000 communists were enrolled in the course of seven post war years [see *The CPSU in its resolutions 7th Edition part III p 553*].

As a consequence [of these figures]:

- (1) in 1945 the Party counted in its ranks an approximate total of 1,111,259 (6,013,000 minus 4,900,000) people;
- (2) while, during the war the Party's losses amounted to nearly 8,000,000 (9,000,000 minus 1,000,000).

I am indignant at the attempts by certain writers in the [Russian]

contemporary press to substantially reduce the number of losses sustained by the Party during the war, in their dishonest efforts to conceal the Party's role and its importance, in particular to the victory won in this war.

They were able to try, at this time, to refute the figures that witness incontrovertibly to the fact that there were not, and are not, more genuine defenders of the country than the Communists who, in this war, shed their life's blood.

And the patriots, of whatever colour they might be, could not, if they really intended to fight for the Fatherland, go anywhere but with the Communists, not with the nationalists or the surviving hangers-on of the White Guards, even with emigrants, etc.

But the number of the Party members lost during the

war has still another important consequence.

In the first place these losses most heavily impacted on the true Communists.

As a consequence of this, a situation arose in the Party organisations in 1956, where for each Communist who had passed through the crucible of the ideological struggle and the practical work of the party there were six raw, inexperienced newcomers.

That is to say, if in a Party organisation there were, for example 21 Communists, three of them at most were seasoned Bolsheviks.

But in practice there would be less than that. Now, remember, decisions of Party organisations are taken by a majority. In particular this means that in 1956 there was nobody to bar the way to the establishment of the reign of the Khrushchev clique.

The old Bolsheviks V M Molotov, N A Bulganin and others who had endured the fire of the revolution, the Czarist prisons and exile had no-one to depend on in their attempted struggle against the betrayal and adventurism of Khrushchev's clique.

And this scoundrel had succeeded in having those who had a hundred times withstood the test of fire and steel, proclaimed an anti-party group.

And the Party had swallowed this senseless and cynical insult in

**During the war  
the Communist Party's losses  
amounted to nearly 8,000,000.**

silence!

The country has firmly taken the road to treachery and the active dismemberment of socialism, which began in this country, the savage sabbath of adventurers, traitors,

thieves and swindlers, who hid behind the membership card of the Party of the proletariat.

The loss of Communists in the war had as a result the betrayal of the class, and of the Party and its degeneration.

This is one of the basic causes of the collapse of socialism.

The terrible price of the war and



The number of Communists lost during the war had important political consequences

Published in *Editions Démocrates*, 1 May 1998. Originally in *Yedinstvo (Unity)* No 14042, 1997 Translated from Russian into French by Jacques Lejeune, and from French to English by Tom Gill. ☼

# Who owns the sod?

Jerry Jones

**As discovered by Kevin Cahill, author of *Who Owns Britain* (published in 2001 by Canongate), when first assigned the task of investigating land ownership for the first Sunday Times Rich List, information is hard to come by.**

The Land Registry, in existence since 1925, has managed to register not much more than half – what's missing is the land owned by the rich.

However, during the course of piecing together information from press cuttings and records of wills and estates, Cahill heard about a "second Domesday Book" – a report submitted to Parliament in 1876.

He asked the Royal Agricultural Society if they had a copy. They assured him that there was no such thing, while, at the same time, possessing several copies in their library.

The Country Landowners Association at least admitted to having a copy, but refused to let Cahill see it.

Eventually, he was able to obtain a copy of extracts from Ealing library and, later, a view of the whole thing in the Devon and Exeter Institute.

The report, entitled *The Return of Owners of Land*, contains the names, addresses, acreages and valuations for all landowners of over one acre.

As Cahill puts it, Britain's "large

landowners had been appalled by its appearance and moved, with their academic friends, to bury it. In this endeavour they were eminently successful, with nothing of significance written about it in 126 years. It had, in effect, vanished".

Having rediscovered it, Cahill was able to trace most of the missing estates and, in many cases, discover their current owners.

He found that just 189,000 families own two-thirds of the 60 million acres in the UK, of which nearly three-quarters is owned by the top 40,000.

Meanwhile, Britain's 16.8 million homeowners account for barely four per cent of the land, about the same as that owned by the Forestry Commission, the top institutional landowner.

The highest landowner is the Duke of Buccleuch with 277,000 acres and the wealthiest is the Duke of Westminster with 140,000 acres, including 100 acres in London's Mayfair, which is valued at 3.35 billion pounds alone, and 200 acres in Belgravia, its even more expensive neighbour.

Land owned and controlled by Britain's royal family, comprising the Crown Estates, the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster and private land, amounts to around 677,000 acres.

However, some 5.6 million acres – nearly 10 per cent of Britain's landmass – could still not be accounted for.

Most of the big private estates can be traced to appropriations and handouts from the reigning monarch in bygone days and, more recently, through purchases by those who had made money through large-scale theft in other ways.

The first great land grab came with the Norman Conquest, when William donated the lands acquired to himself and his brigands.

The second came when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and distributed their 10 million acres to those followers and barons willing to accept the new church and impose it in their local areas.

Third, some major redistributions and awards of land according to political allegiances took place during Cromwell's rule and following the Restoration, which more or less settled the broad nature and ownership of Britain's land through to the present time.

This was consolidated further between 1700 and 1900, when common land used for grazing was incorporated into private estates through the various Enclosure Acts pushed through Parliament by the big landowners themselves or their representatives.

Most freeholds of owner-occupied houses and businesses that exist today derive from the big landowners cashing in from selling off small parcels of their land to property developers.

*Morning Star* ☼



The royal family has 677,000 acres of Britain's land



# A significant victory against big business parties

The result of the June 28 Canadian election has been described as a "significant victory against big business" in a statement by the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). The Conservatives were defeated and the Liberals barely managed to hold onto power and were reduced to a minority government, dependent on the support of other parties for survival.

The primary question in the election was to blunt the drive to the right by preventing a Tory victory, denying either of the Big Business parties a working majority, and expanding the size and influence of other more democratic and progressive parties in Parliament. In this context, the outcome was a significant victory for the working class and the left and progressive forces in the country, says the CPC statement.

The two parties of big business were hammered by voters, falling from 80 percent of the total popular vote in 2000 to 68 percent in 2004. The Conservatives lost over one million votes from the Alliance-Tory totals four years ago, and the Liberals dropped 300,000, mostly in Quebec.

## Progressives made gains

On the other hand, the parties seen by voters as defenders of progressive positions made gains; the New Democratic Party [social democratic – editor] (NDP) gained about one million votes, the Bloc Quebecois about 300,000, and the Greens almost half a million.

The first result is that the Martin Liberals were denied a fourth consecutive term as a majority government. Despite Martin's hypocritical posturing as a "progressive" during the campaign, he has led a concerted drive to shift Liberal policy in a more right, neo-liberal direction.

Second, the even more right-wing Conservative Party has been kept from power.

Third, the minority government situation in which the Liberals will have to make certain concessions may open up prospects for the extra-parliamentary forces to exert greater pressure. This could blunt the pro-corporate agenda of the Liberals, and even win certain reforms around issues such as pro-

portional representation, or blocking Canadian participation in Missile Defence and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). On the other hand, the Liberals may well seek support from the Conservatives on important economic issues where the parties have similar policies.

The Liberal Party suffered the greatest losses at the polls, losing 37 seats and witnessing the defeat of seven cabinet members.

But it was the "new" Conservatives under Stephen Harper who suffered the biggest rebuke from the electorate. Despite their efforts to soft-pedal and in some cases completely obscure their reactionary, right-wing program, many voters saw through this deception and acted to prevent the Conservatives from achieving control of Parliament.

## Counter reactionary influence

However, the Conservatives control a large bloc of seats, and it will be necessary for the progressive and democratic forces inside and outside of Parliament to counter their reactionary influence on policy and government action.

The results for the New Democratic Party marked an advance, although not nearly as much as its optimistic forecasts.

The NDP benefited from presenting their policies as a dynamic alternative to the big business parties. However, their proposals fell far short of a militant, class-based program for political change which the circumstances require to meet the offensive of finance capital in Canada and imperialism on a global scale.

It is clear that the last-minute decision of many workers and progressive-minded people to act strategically by voting for the Liberals in a bid to block the election of Stephen Harper's Tories also limited the chances of the NDP to make further gains. In the end, the NDP's popular vote rebounded to 15.2 percent from its dismal 8.5 percent showing in 2000, but their representation will only grow by six seats to a total of 19 in the new House.

## Greens moved to the right

The Greens built their popular vote to over four percent, but failed to elect anyone to Parliament. The Green Party received a sizable chunk of the "protest vote" of those wishing to express displeasure with the big business parties. The Greens however have shifted their policies sharply to the right, offering tax incentives to "environmentally-friendly" corporations and propos-



Counting his chickens before they hatch – Martin was denied a majority

dates contested. This resulted from a combination of factors such as the continuing effect of the undemocratic first-past-the-post system, the corporate media blackout, and lingering anti-communist bias among sections of the people. Mostly, how-

to reach out to broader circles of working people, especially progressive labour and youth activists. The party's website received over 3,500,000 hits during the campaign, reflecting growing interest in the policies and perspective of the Party, and new members and supporters were won across the country.

## Stage set

The election results set the stage for a new period of ferocious struggle over such issues as Canada's position on missile defence, the battle over privatisation, the FTAA and moves for further economic, cultural, political, and diplomatic "harmonisation" with the US, and the direction of foreign and defence policies, to name but a few, the CPC said.

While battles will continue in parliament the decisive field of battle will shift to the streets and workplaces of Canada, to the extra-parliamentary arena of struggle. "More than ever, unity of the labour, progressive and popular forces will be the key to blunting the continuing offensive of Big Business and its parties, and shifting momentum in a new direction", the CPC statement concluded. ✪

**The New Democrats ... campaign focused on pro-environment, anti-war positions, and pledges to defend healthcare, education and the public sector, and bring about electoral reform, including the introduction of some kind of proportional representation.**

The New Democrats under their new leader Jack Layton mounted an ambitious campaign focused on pro-environment, anti-war positions, and pledges to defend healthcare, education and the public sector, and bring about electoral reform, including the introduction of some kind of proportional representation.

ing to cut corporate and income taxes, replacing revenue shortfalls with a highly regressive consumption tax [such as the GST] that would fall most heavily on working people. Tellingly, the largest environmental groups did not endorse the Greens in this election.

The Communist vote was modest in the 35 electorates its candi-

ever, a compelling sense of urgency led many left and socialist-minded people to vote strategically to block the Tories and deny the Liberals a functioning majority.

That said, the Communist campaign had an important positive impact, gaining a higher public profile for the Party, the CPC statement said. The campaign was able

# Tear it down! – Israel's wall illegal

The World Court of Justice strongly condemned Israel's West Bank wall as illegal saying it imposed hardship on thousands of Palestinians and must be torn down. Of the 15 judges that make up the World Court only the representative of the United States voted against the decision.

The court called on the UN Security Council and the General Assembly to stop the barrier's construction. However, the US, the most ardent supporter of Zionist Israel, may veto any Security Council decision.

"The construction ... constitutes breaches by Israel of its obligations under applicable international humanitarian law. Israel is under an obligation ... to dismantle forthwith the structure", the court's head judge, Shi Jiuyong of China, said in the ruling.

## On Palestinian land

The wall curves at points deep into the West Bank around illegal settlements built by Israeli squatters on Palestinian land. The wall, which is about one third built, is to be 370 miles (625km) long.

The World Court of Justice which is the UN's top legal body, acknowledged Israel had a duty to

protect its citizens but said it must do so within the law and should compensate Palestinians for homes and land lost or damaged by the building of the barrier.

"The court considers that the construction of the wall and its associate regime creates a 'fait accompli' on the ground that could well become permanent, in which case ...

it would be tantamount to de facto annexation", said the ruling.

## A victory

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said the Court's decision was, "a victory for the Palestinian people and for all the free peoples of the world".

The wall is clearly a land grab that robs Palestinians of territory

public services and cities. If it is completed as planned, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians will be trapped between Israel and the Palestinian territory of the West Bank. They will not be able to reach their schools, jobs, hospitals, fields, and other facilities. This situation will lead them to leave the trapped area, which will then be annexed by Israelis.

**It is an apartheid wall built on the basis of ethnic origin.**

It is an apartheid wall built on the basis of ethnic origin.

Palestinian representatives are expected to ask the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution affirming the court's ruling.

## Incredible claim

Making the incredible claim that the issue of the wall was a "political

About 150 demonstrators outside the Court when the decision was announced, held banners that made a call to "Boycott Israel" and "Away with Apartheid". They chanted slogans against the Israeli occupation of Palestine and against the Apartheid Land-Grab Wall. Some of the demonstrators were Orthodox Jewish Americans. ✪



# Massive theft of Native land

John Gallagher

**USA: The "Western Shoshone Distribution Bill" has passed both houses of Congress and is on its way to the Bush administration for signature. The bill would authorise a payout to the Western Shoshone Indian people of approximately 15 cents an acre for tens of millions of acres of disputed lands in Nevada, Idaho, Utah and California.**

A majority of tribal councils, representing approximately 80 percent of the population, and the Western Shoshone National Council, strongly oppose the measure. The National Congress of American Indians, Amnesty International, Oxfam America, and the Petra Foundation have also denounced the bill.

**"To take this land from us will be to lead us into a spiritual death."**

At stake are 60 million acres of Western Shoshone land recognised by the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley. Competing with Western Shoshone interests are corporations seeking billions of dollars in profits from gold, energy production, nuclear waste storage and weapons industries. The land produces two-thirds of the gold in the US, making it the third largest gold-producing area in the world behind South Africa and Australia.

At a House Resources Committee hearing a year ago, Interior Department officials testified that "vast majority" of Western Shoshones favour distribution of the

money. Democratic Representative Tom Udall of New Mexico responded to this testimony by requesting "for the record" whatever documentation Interior had used as the basis for its testimony.

Ten months later, Interior has still not honoured Udall's request. Such stonewalling leads to at least two questions. What is the Interior Department hiding? What did it base its testimony upon?

This push is being made at the same time that the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste repository is being pushed along, which would open up Shoshone lands to privatisation by multinational mining companies and massive geothermal energy development with no provision for Western Shoshone interests or concerns.

Additionally, notices of intent to impound livestock have been received by Western Shoshone grandmothers Mary and Carrie Dann and other Western Shoshone ranchers.

## Dehumanised

Carrie Dann said it is domestic terrorism designed to steal the dignity of the people. "Economically we were a self-sustaining people. With these recent actions stealing our livelihood we are now facing economic starvation designed to remove us from our lands.

"To me, that is terrorism.

Domestic terrorism. This behaviour is designed to steal our dignity, our honour, and to make us feel that we are less than or lower than human – we are treated like animals. We are being dehumanised."

Dann said the distribution bill is an unconstitutional, unjust and unwanted payment. "To take this land from us will be to lead us into a spiritual death."

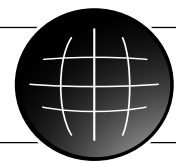
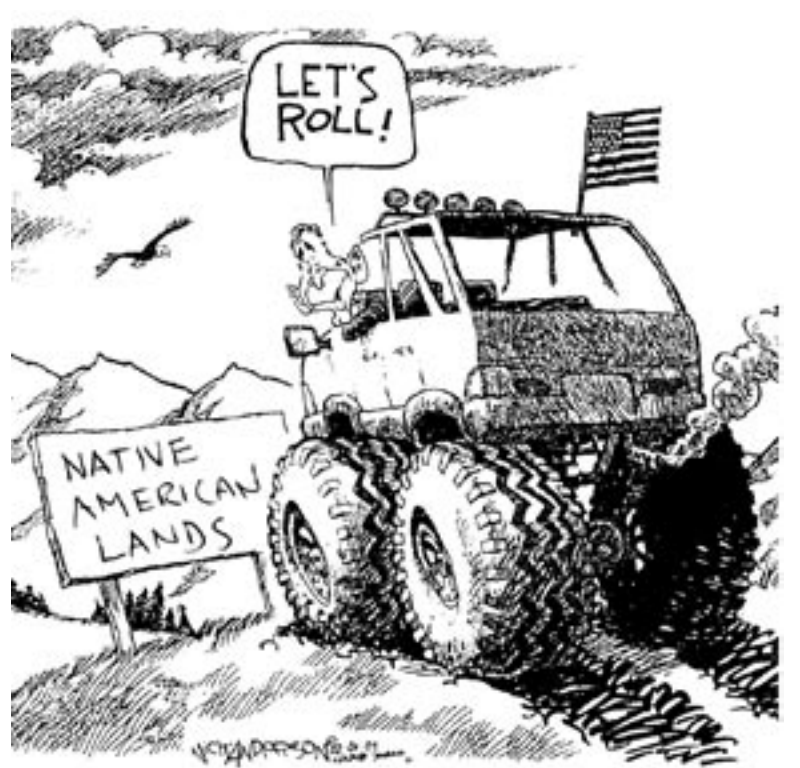
Last year, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in its final report on the case of Dann v US, found that with regard to the Western Shoshone, the US is currently in violation of rights to property, due process and equality under the law. It is the first judicial review of the United States law and policy regarding Indigenous peoples within its borders.

Julie Fishel, attorney for the Western Shoshone Defense Project, said the United States does not want American Indians to learn about the ruling.

In a November 2003 letter sent to Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, Congressman Raul Grijalva raised serious concerns about the real intent of the Distribution bill and the involvement of the federal government and mining, energy and nuclear industries in presenting a misleading picture of the issues to the public and to members of Congress.

In the letter he raises concerns that the bill may be contrary to federal policies with regard to treatment of Native Americans and may conflict with the Interior Department's position as trustee and its obligation to uphold the laws of the United States.

**A copy of the letter and more information on the bill is available on the Western Shoshone Defense Project's website at [www.wsdp.org](http://www.wsdp.org) People's Weekly World**



## Global briefs

**NEW ZEALAND:** New Zealand's right-wing opposition National Party says it has dropped plans to abolish the ban on nuclear ships visiting the country should it win the national elections. The National Party lobbied to ease the law to allow nuclear-propelled ships into New Zealand ports. But it had to admit that there had been little public enthusiasm for the change.

**USA:** The US Government spent just two percent of the \$18.4 billion it had obtained from Congress for the urgent reconstruction of Iraq before officially declaring the end of occupation. The first detailed audit of the reconstruction showed that the US occupation authorities had spent nothing on healthcare or water and sanitation – two of the most urgent and important needs for Iraqis.

**HONDURAS:** Thousands of teachers blocked sections of Honduras' major highway on June 24 to press the government to fulfill its financial and legal obligations under a 1997 law. The blockade greatly slowed the traffic in and out of the city. The teachers' main demands include payment for years of service and grade level, de-politicisation of the education system, and payment for days deducted from their salaries as a result of the protest. The government claims it cannot live up to the 1997 law because it lacks the funds.

**ANGOLA:** Parliament unanimously passed legislation outlining measures for the prevention, control, treatment and investigation of HIV/AIDS. The legislation was initiated by the female MPs. The law establishes the right of people living with HIV/AIDS to receive free public health assistance, employment, professional training, and to have information about their health status kept confidential. The law also calls on AIDS patients to be responsible in their sexual conduct and to inform partners of their status.

**ISRAEL:** A group of recently demobilised Israeli soldiers opened an exhibition in Tel Aviv documenting the Israeli military's mistreatment of Palestinians. Ninety photos taken by soldiers serving in the West Bank city of Hebron show blindfolded and handcuffed Palestinian detainees. The exhibit also featured video testimony from 29 soldiers. They described incidents of mistreatment and abuse of Palestinian residents of Hebron. Last week the Israeli military confiscated the video and called five ex-soldiers in for questioning. The exhibition, which has been attracting hundreds of visitors each day, remains open. The military authorities claim that they took the video to investigate the abuses. But the ex-soldiers say the military are trying to shut them up and to keep others from speaking out.

**RUSSIA:** Russian pensioners are not impressed with the government's plans to increase their pensions. The reason is simple – the pension increase comes with the abolition of pensioner concessions, including rent assistance, free public transport and medical treatment in public hospitals. No amount of pension increase could help a cancer patient to buy necessary drugs. Public protests are taking place in many cities and towns.

## Prescription for plunder

**USA- In the final push for Medicare prescription drug legislation, the pharmaceutical industry, Health Management Organisations (HMOs) and related interests spent more money and hired more lobbyists in 2003 than ever before, according to a report issued by Public Citizen.**

The pharmaceutical and managed care industries spent a combined US\$141 million last year, according to Public Citizen's analysis of newly released federal lobbying disclosure records.

Drugmakers and HMOs hired 952 individual lobbyists in 2003 – nearly half of whom had "revolving door" connections to Congress, the White House or the executive branch. That's nearly 10 lobbyists for every US Senator.

"The Medicare Modernization Act, a top priority of President Bush, promises to safeguard industry profits at the expense of America's taxpayers", said Frank Clemente, director of Public Citizen's Congress Watch. "Considering the legion of lobbyists unleashed by pharmaceutical companies, HMOs and allied industry front groups, no wonder taxpayers ended up with a bill tailor-made to serve these special interests instead of senior citizens."

Since 1997, Public Citizen has conducted an annual study of Washington lobbying by the pharmaceutical industry.

Among findings in the latest report:

- In 2003, the drug industry spent a record US\$108.6 million on federal lobbying activities and hired 824 individual lobbyists – both all-time highs.
- This army of lobbyists helped ensure that the new drug benefit will be administered by private companies.
- The new law expressly prohibits the government from using its bargaining clout to negotiate lower prices and effectively bans the "reimportation" of cheaper drugs from Canada.
- Managed care lobbyists helped ensure their clients got a windfall in the bill – US\$531.5 billion over 10 years based on data from the Medicare actuary – as enrolment in managed care plans is expected to climb from 12 percent to 32 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries.

## Revolving door connections

Both the pharmaceutical and managed care industries relied heavily on lobbyists with "revolving door" connections. In all, 431 lobbyists employed by the drug industry or HMOs – or 45 percent of all their lobbyists – previously worked for the federal government. Among them were 30 ex-US Senators and Representatives – 18 Republicans and 12 Democrats.

- At least 11 top staffers who left the Bush administration lobbied for the drug industry and HMOs in 2003. White House and administration insiders working as lobbyists on the Medicare bill included several former top advisers to Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson.
- Since Bush signed the new Medicare law at least four key Bush administration officials have exited to help industry clients benefit from the Medicare bill that they wrote or promoted. Another six top congressional staffers at the centre of negotiations over the Medicare bill now lobby for drug companies or HMOs.
- The revolving door spins both ways. Three prominent drug industry and HMO lobbyists have recently moved into senior health policy positions at HHS.
- Drug industry and HMO executives and lobbyists ranked among Bush's elite fundraisers. Twenty-one executives and lobbyists achieved "Ranger" or "Pioneer" status by collecting at least US\$200,000 or US\$100,000, respectively, for Bush in the 2000 or 2004 campaigns.

"The revolving door between the White House and K Street has made the Bush administration indistinguishable from the industry," said Craig Aaron, senior researcher for Public Citizen's Congress Watch and lead author of the report.

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



email: guardian@cpa.org.au

## Iraq possibilities open up

**The possibility of the establishment of a democratic government in Iraq depends not only on the democratic and patriotic forces in Iraq but on world politics.**

The military and political position of the Bush leadership is much weaker now than when it launched the massive air and ground attack on Iraq.

Militarily, it has failed to subdue the opposing forces and even suffered defeat at Fallujah where it pleaded for a truce.

Jack Fairweather reported in *Telegraph Group London* that US officers said that Fallujah was handed to the insurgents. "All we have succeeded in doing is paying the mujahideen to stop shooting us."

US thumbed its nose at UN

when launching the war, but now has to accept UN Resolution 1546 that in the estimate of the Iraqi Communist Party "consolidated the steps taken on the path to end the occupation and regain full sovereignty".

Key nations in UN, France and Russia, had their own reasons to weaken the US in Iraq and to welcome an independent Iraqi government committed to work for a united democratic pluralistic federal Iraq.

The Governing Council appointed by US administrator Bremer had early shown some independence. It forced Bremer to agree to override its decisions, which included the refusal to allow permanent US bases in Iraq; that the oil industry be a state asset; that large scale privatisation be shelved.

By consensus it passed the Law of Iraq State Administration in the Transitional Period to lay the basis of a democratic regime.

It set elections by January 2005 for a transitional national assembly.

The US is not accepting these decisions.

In *Guardian* June 30, 2004, Ruth Russell, a human shield in Baghdad, stated that the US is building 14 permanent military bases in Iraq.

The strong support for Bush

at the beginning of the war has crumbled.

The *West Australian*, May 17, reported a *Newsweek* poll that found 57 per cent disapproved of the handling of the Iraq war. The *Weekend Australian* quoted a Pew Research Centre poll finding after the exhibition of the torture photos that only 33 per cent thought the US was on the right track in Iraq.

Spain threw out the pro-US government and withdrew Spanish troops.

*Washington Post* July 18, 2003 was concerned that "the Federal budget deficit would be a stomach-turning \$455 billion this year and increase to \$475 billion in 2004." [\$650/\$680 billion A\$.]

The US Government has gone further in the hole by the cost of the Iraq war. These costs have been hidden but the Center of Strategic Budgetary Assessment found Congress had passed \$100 billion just to keep troops in Iraq till September 2004, and Rumsfeld was asking for another \$25 billion. The other disaster for the US, caused mainly by the war, was oil at \$40 a barrel with the US importing two thirds of its oil.

There are forces inside and outside Iraq that are hostile to the project of a democratic government of Iraq. The remnants of the Saddam Hussein forces that have cut the US supply lines and ambushed troops are violently opposed to a democratic government that was selected from organisations struggling against the Hussein regime. They are still attacking the US army, but directing even more of their attack against the supporters of the interim government.

Religious extremists among the Shiites and Sunnis want a Muslim

state in Iraq. They have support from surrounding countries with Muslim states who do not want a democratic secular Iraq. This would give encouragement to their own internal democratic forces.

We can assist the Iraqi democratic movement with direct financial help, by helping their refugees, by understanding and explaining the situation. But the most important action we can take to help them is to defeat the Howard Government. Such a victory would further isolate and weaken the Bush regime that is aiming for a puppet Iraqi Government.

Vic Williams  
Perth, WA

## Socialism betrayed

**In his review of *Socialism Betrayed* (Guardian June 23) Peter Symon says that Gorbachev was responsible for the demise of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to understand why he stops there. One purpose of studying history is to seek the cause of events in order to use the knowledge in our practice and so avoid making the same mistakes.**

If Gorbachev had become an arch-enemy of socialism in his youth, as Comrade Peter asserts, two questions arise. What were the shortcomings of a Communist Party that welcomed that kind of person into its ranks, and what were the shortcomings of the leaders, including Andropov, as Marxists, if they were not only unable to see the vipers in their midst, but actually encouraged their advance to leadership positions?

What is the lesson to be drawn from accepting that Gorbachev was responsible? Surely that it is pointless to struggle for a better world,

because our achievements are at the mercy of fickle human nature.

We need to delve deeper and examine what made it possible for Gorbachev to become a leader and what enabled him to have such unbridled power. I think it began when a distorted democratic centralism, one more centralist than democratic, became the driving organisational principle of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

This was the fatal deviation from the Leninist principles of party organisation which individuals were able to exploit to gain the power and to impose policies that created problems and eventually led to a tragic outcome.

Bob Saltis  
Adelaide, SA

## Pushed to suicide

**A woman rang me to say she was being harassed by Job Network to go on Work for the Dole. She has a mental illness and the relevant doctors' papers but Job Network are still harassing her to do work for the dole.**

She says she is even more stressed out by the continuing harassment. They do not understand that she cannot perform work for many hours because of her mental condition.

She rang me because she did not know where to turn for support. I put her in touch with Welfare Rights. I only hope they will be able to help her soon.

People like this woman are being pushed to suicide by the Job Network.

Mary Jenkins  
Underemployed  
People's Union WA

Melbourne

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# Culture & Life

by  
Rob Gowland

## Here's what happened, see

**The attempt by the US Attorney General John Ashcroft to foist the blame for the killing of two US schoolteachers on to the Free Papua Movement (OPM) has not gone down too well.**

An ambush in August 2002 of a convoy carrying employees of the US-owned Freeport copper and gold mine in West Papua killed two US teachers and an Indonesian colleague and left 12 other people, most of them Americans, wounded.

West Papuan police soon revealed that a witness had linked Indonesian special forces (KOPASUS) soldiers to the killings. These forces have waged a "shoot to kill" campaign against West Papuan advocates of independence from Indonesia.

Even the US State Department has recently come out and identified the Indonesian military (TNI) as being responsible for "numerous" unlawful killings in West Papua. The TNI's terror campaign against the West Papuan population has also driven many people into Papua New Guinea as refugees.

Undaunted, the TNI have established, as they did in East Timor, armed local "militias" to spy on and terrorise any who might support the independence movement.

Despite widespread belief and even evidence that the Indonesian

military were themselves responsible for the Freeport ambush, the TNI were quick to blame it on the poorly-armed fighters of the Free Papua Movement.

The giant Freeport copper and gold mine (along with oil and gas) is at the centre of US/Indonesian interest in West Papua. If the OPM (Free Papua Movement) had pulled off the spectacular ambush you would expect them to claim responsibility with gusto.

It would have re-established them as a guerrilla force to be reckoned with. Instead, the OPM has steadfastly denied any involvement.

The international spokesman for the OPM, Dr John Otto Ondawame, called the US Attorney General's latest attempt to blame the OPM for the ambush a "blatant cover-up".

Speaking from exile in Vanuatu, he went on: "The OPM has made it clear that the OPM was never involved in the attacks. Earlier investigations by the local Police Chief, Brigadier Pastika, and the FBI, have shown strong evidence that the Indonesian military were directly involved in the killings.

"This view is shared by the surviving victims themselves."

Ashcroft claims his accusation is based on the FBI's final report.

Curiously, that report indicts a certain Antonius Wamang. Dr Ondawame noted that, "The indicted man, Mr Antonius Wamang, has worked closely with the Indonesian military for the past four years in the sandalwood business and also as part of a pro-Indonesian militia".

Not exactly the portrait of your typical OPM guerrilla!

Ashcroft got no joy from West Papuan human rights campaigner John Rumbiak, either. Rumbiak called the decision "a very naïve attempt to scapegoat the Free Papua organisation".

Edward McWilliams, a former senior US diplomat to Jakarta, said, "If we go after the Free Papua movement we're basically conspiring in a cover-up".

So why is the White House so keen to put the blame on the OPM that they ignore not only the evidence but even common sense?

Because the Bush administration is desperate to restore military links with the Indonesian army. These were suspended by Congress in the wake of the savagery unleashed by the Indonesian military's "militias" opposing the independence struggle in East Timor.

US strategic policy is to break up large or even middle-sized countries into small separate states or even "statelets". Little countries can so much more easily be bullied, dominated and exploited.

To this end the US foments religious and ethnic strife, fanning differences and encouraging separatist aspirations. Local conflicts are good for the arms business and keep alive the "endless war" that Bush speaks of.

Local wars and the "war on terror" provide the perfect cover for the ruling class to intensify its attacks on democratic rights, to ride roughshod over the sovereignty of small nations and to acquire control over the public utilities of the whole world.

Such are the contradictions of capitalism, however, that the US also tries to keep its foot in the door of larger countries. Indonesia is not yet about to break up so the US is working to once again tie Indonesia to it economically and militarily.

US arms corporations stand to make a lot of money from the Indonesian military if they can just get around Congress's ban. Clearing the TNI of any wrongdoing over the



The US wants to label the OPM a "terrorist organisation"

Freeport ambush and finding a "terrorist" group in the region that can be targeted is the perfect solution.

The perverse reasoning behind this approach was pinpointed by Dr Ondawame: "Any attempt by the US government to label the OPM a 'terrorist organisation' is not only wrong, but counter-productive, considering that it is TNI/KOPASUS

forces who are training and protecting Islamic terrorist organisations such as Laskar Jihad".

Like a character in an old Hollywood gangster film fixing an alibi, Ashcroft (the US Attorney General, remember) is saying to us "Here's what happened, see". But no one is buying the story.

'Cause, frankly, it smells. ✪





Sun July 18 ~  
~ Sat July 24

In the mid-19th century, most historians were agreed that the Trojan Wars and even the city of Troy itself were fictitious. Even Homer's account in the *Iliad* was merely based on myth.

However, in 1870, the German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann, convinced that there really had been a city of Troy, began excavating at his own expense a large mound at Hissarlik on the coast of Asia Minor.

It is one of the great tales of archeology, how Schliemann, who was basically an amateur, to the amazement of all did in fact discover the ruins of Troy. He uncovered the remains of mighty walls and recovered elaborate gold necklaces, all testifying to the existence of a city of great wealth and power.

However, the city of Troy had been built over, layer on layer, numerous times during the previous few thousand years. Later, more scientific scholarship showed that Schliemann had the right site, but the wrong layer.

His necklaces, for example, were made a thousand years after the Trojan Wars of Homer's tale. And that's the subject matter of *The Truth Of Troy* (ABC 7.30pm Sunday).

The program begins by raising questions about whether the ruins Schliemann found really are Troy after all, but eventually and anticlimactically concludes that they are. More importantly, for *Guardian* readers, are its conclusions about the Trojan Wars themselves.

Homer said they were fought

for the love of Helen, but this BBC *Horizon* program dismisses that as absurd, and instead convincingly seeks out an economic cause: trade and gold.

Troy, a strategically important trading centre by the Bosphorus, was caught in the clash of two mighty empires: the Mycenaean and the Hittite. Unlike Troy, Helen probably never existed.

**The World According To Bush** (SBS 8.30pm Tuesdays) is a two-part documentary that takes an "in-depth look" at the Bush administration. SBS did not supply a preview tape so I have not been able to see it, which is a pity because it certainly sounds interesting.

According to SBS the issues covered by the program include the business connections of the Bush "dynasty", the close ties between the Bush family and administration and Saudi Arabia, and how Bush's own religious beliefs and ties to the Christian Right shape his presidency including his foreign policy.

Prescott Bush, the current President's grandfather, invested money for the Nazis during World War II. Trading with and for the Nazis is the basis for the Bush family fortune (and this is the guy who prattles on about patriotism).

One of Prescott Bush's companies even operated mines in Poland using inmates of nearby concentration camps as forced labour. Today, the Vice President's wife sits on the board of the giant arms firm Lockheed Martin, a company which receives lavish US Federal Government contracts.

George Bush Senior works for the Carlyle Group, a notorious private equity house which handles nearly US\$16 billion in investments. Charles Lewis, director of the Centre for Public Integrity, points out that the majority of its activities are linked to the defence sector. Bush senior is therefore working for an American military contractor during a period when his son, the President, conducts a war.

Historian Joseph Trento observes that Saudi Arabia spends more money in Washington than almost any other government. Ex-



Ties to the Christian Right shaped Bush's policies (*The World According To Bush*)

CIA analyst Robert Steele comments, "we have essentially been whores, political whores for the Saudis for the last 40 years".

In a report to the Defence Policy Board, analyst Laurent Muarwicz described Saudi Arabia as America's most dangerous opponent in the Middle East and active at every level of the terrorism chain. His report was leaked and Muarwicz lost his job.

The program examines the de facto alliance between the Christian Right and the Israeli lobby. Adviser to Ronald Reagan, Michael Ledeen claims that a higher percentage of American Christian evangelicals support Israel than do American Jews.

Analyst Robert Steele compares the propaganda efforts of the current administration to Goebbels. He claims that even while people were still dying during the September 11 attacks White House officials were calling a serving general to tell him to "pin it on Iraq".

Ex-chief weapons inspectors Hans Blix (of the UN) and David

Kay (CIA - the Iraqis always said the weapons inspectors were disguised CIA agents) criticise how the Bush administration pursued WMD. Kay comments, "the worst thing for a democracy is to suppress the truth in the interests of an election".

Modern US mythology has it that the Americans of Texas rose up against the rule of Mexico in the 1830s and won their independence, before taking their new state into the USA. In the course of that struggle some 200 of them were killed at the Alamo, including Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett.

However, the truth is that the battle for Texas was started long before the Alamo, by Jose Antonio Navarro and a group of Tejanos - Mexicans of Texas who had lived there for generations.

**Remember The Alamo**, screening on *As It Happened* (SBS 7.30pm Saturday), explores the life of the famed Tejano leader and his efforts to protect the sovereignty of his homeland as it passed

through the hands of multiple governments.

This program shows how Tejanos, far from being passive onlookers, actively changed the course of Texas history - on the battlefield and in the political arena.

It explores the relationship between Navarro, the Mayor of San Antonio, and the ambitious US empire builder Stephen F Austin of Missouri who moved to San Antonio in 1821 with an ambitious plan to lure United States families to Texas through rock-bottom land prices.

Navarro was one of the Texas leaders who in February of 1836 gathered at Washington on the Brazos, 150 miles east of San Antonio, to declare independence.

And when the following month 200 volunteers tried to defend the Alamo against General Santa Anna's army of 4000 men, they comprised both Americans and Tejanos.

But you never see any reference to them in US Western mythology. All the heroes of the US have white faces. ☹

Sydney

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The Josephite Sisters, Inspirational Fighters for Social Justice:  
East Timor: Refugees And Other Issues  
Sr Susan Connolly: Sr Josephine Mitchell

July 23

Latham's snakes and (aspirational) ladder.  
What does it really mean for the disadvantaged and the common good?  
Michael Raper: President of the National Welfare Rights Network  
Julian Disney: Director Social Justice Project UNSW

July 30

What do women want... from a Labor Government?  
Anne Summers: noted author, feminist and former political adviser to former PM Paul Keating  
Marian Baird: Work and Organisational studies, Economics, Sydney Uni

Inq: Pat Toms 02 9358 4834 [pbtoms@bigpond.com](mailto:pbtoms@bigpond.com); Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891;  
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65 Campbell Street

Surry Hills NSW 2010

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Editor: Anna Pha

Published by

Guardian Publications

Australia Ltd

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

# Burn, Baby, Burn

## A Review of *Fahrenheit 9/11*

Pamela Oswald

Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* is a documentary everyone should see. Pundits on the far right and in the corporate media who insist this film is "liberal propaganda" are absolutely correct; if propaganda is the connective tissue which makes relevant facts accessible to the average person, then yes, this is certainly propaganda. That it stands alone as possibly the sole example of progressive commentary which has reached a mass audience lately is not only a testament to Moore's genius, it is also a symptom of the parched ideological landscape to be found in 21st century American media. Disney, who had originally been contracted to distribute it, declined upon learning of the film's content.

Of course the capitalists don't like it; not only does it expose several unsavoury examples of conflict of interest at the highest levels of the current administration, it is executed in the peculiarly effective manner Moore perfected in his previous films, *Roger And Me* and *Bowling For Columbine*.

The material mined by Mr Moore will not be news to many in progressive circles. The facts that are building blocks for this work have been available for quite some time, but the intrinsic value of the film is Moore's uncanny ability to link pieces of seemingly disparate

snippets to present the average person (typically too pressed for time to digest the implications of sound-bites) with the truth. As he assembles the newsworthy pieces of this puzzle the scenes that emerge are a damning condemnation of George W Bush and his cronies.

I found *Fahrenheit 9/11* to be an emotional roller-coaster ride. There is the black humour of Moore's

the killing of Iraqi civilians, of which there are several disturbing scenes. There is the surrealism of an American soldier idly comparing the killing with his video games. In an especially wrenching scene, Donald Rumsfeld is shown discussing the "incredibly humane care" exhibited by the military in its choice of targets, while interspersed scenes show people being cut down by machine

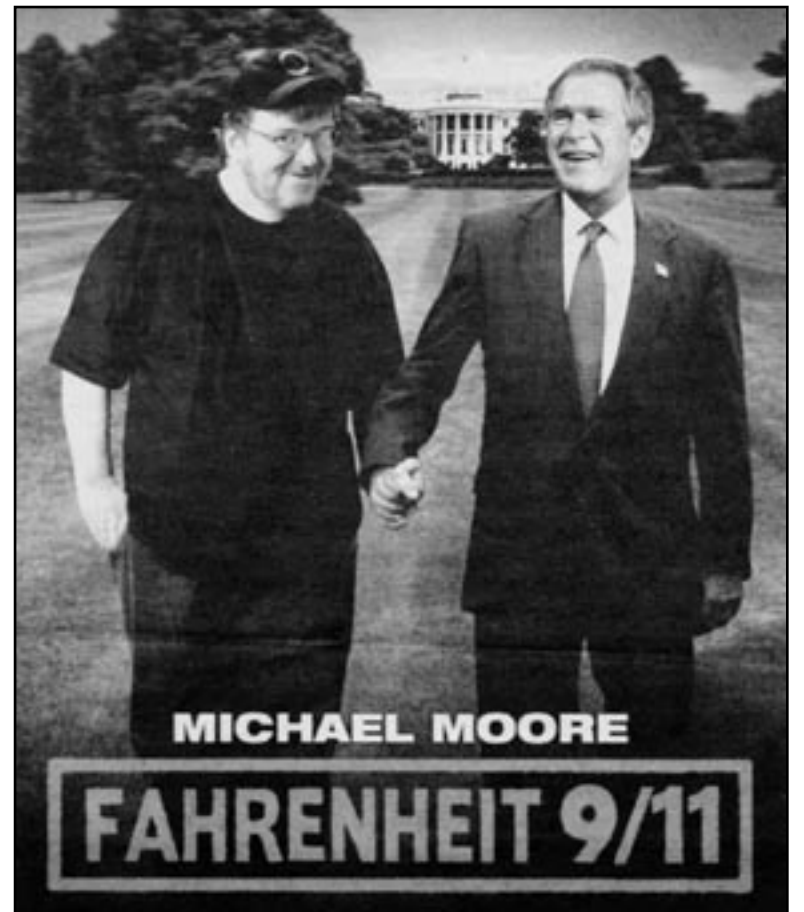
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use of old Dagnet footage in reference to the Bin Laden family being flown out of the country shortly after 9/11, approved and effected by senior members of the administration, when every other flight was grounded.

There is rage at the knowledge that our tax dollars are paying for

gun fire and wounded Iraqi children screaming.

There are two important women in this film; an unnamed Iraqi woman who is insane with grief at the loss of her children, house, and village; and Lila Lipscomb, whose son, an American soldier, was killed in Iraq.



These two women, from different cultures, wailing at the horror of war, serve to humanise the statistics so blithely reported in the corporate media; the US casualties are people's sons, daughters, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers; the dead Iraqi children piled in donkey carts are what the Pentagon calls "collateral damage", and every one of them has grieving family.

*Fahrenheit 9/11* also comes very close to identifying the

real cause of the economic woes which feed the war-machine with a steady supply of new recruits, yet, sadly, stops just short of identifying capitalism and capitalist excess.

The film is clearly a vehicle to unseat Bush and company in November, and barring a second coup by the radical right, it should succeed.

*Political Affairs Magazine*, Communist Party, USA ☪

## "This is a crazy idea!"

Jean-Guy Allard

"This is a completely crazy idea." Alfredo Ramirez has lived in New Jersey for more than 20 years and works in New York. He is waiting for his return flight to the United States at José Martí Airport's Terminal 2. For him, like the majority of Cuban-Americans, the anti-family measures of the George W Bush Government have no sense whatsoever.

"All my family is here", he told me. "Everybody. I have family in Havana, family on the island [of Youth], in different parts. I have been coming to Cuba once every two years ... And now ..."

"And now you have to wait for three years before your next visit?"

"Let's see what happens. It's unbelievable ... My mother is sick, very sick. She has cancer."

"So three years on ...?"

"I'm never going to be able to see my mother again? That's completely ridiculous!"

"Did you see what happened at Miami Airport?"

"Yes, I was here. It was heavy, very heavy. Of course there has to be a lot of controversy! Nobody is going to be able to separate the Cuban family. Let Bush do what he

likes. All that really surprised me because what he did is not logical on the part of a politician."

### "Things are really hot in Miami"

For his part, Ramón García, also awaiting his return flight, has lived in Miami for 24 years.

He doesn't have a very good opinion of the author of the restrictions either. He's not afraid to say what he thinks.

"It's really shit that this president is going to split up families. I don't think he's going to make it [in the November elections]. Things are really hot in Miami. I talked with my son and he told me that the people over there are mad at this."

All his family are on the island too.

"My whole family is here. It's a large family. And my family is angry: This separation of families isn't coming from the government here but from the government over there."

Visibly distressed, he admits a certain incredulity.

"This really hurts me. And now I can't come back for three years? I think that's impossible and that this

Kerry – the Democratic candidate – will get rid of this in January when he assumes the presidency."

And he concludes: "That order was a big mistake ... and, for that reason, this president's no good."

Surrounded by her family, a grandmother, Ena Torres from Miami, heads toward the immigration booth.

**"Things are really hot in Miami. I talked with my son and he told me that the people over there are mad at this."**

"And how was your stay?"

"Wonderful! Twenty-one days! I have a big family here."

"And the new measures?"

"Well, imagine! Nobody likes that. It hurts me because I would like to come and see my children and grandchildren more often. I'm 76 years old."

"And what does your family in Miami think about it all?"

"They're very upset because everyone has family here. It's very hard. It isn't going to last, it can't."

Brothers Eddie and Héctor González have been resident in California since they were children. Young, and very much part of the US world, they prefer to talk in English. They have come from Sancti Spiritus where all their

normal relations between our two countries", Eddie laments.

Cuban relatives live.

Although they consider themselves American and patriotic, having grown up in the United States, they affirm that they are very upset about the new measures. These will prevent them for the foreseeable future from coming back again for a visit as enjoyable as the one that they have just experienced.

"It's a shame that there aren't

The situation of Dairen Betancourt from Pinar del Río reveals another angle on the new situation decreed by the White House.

She is travelling to California with an immigration visa obtained via the US Government's migratory lottery through which a few thousand Cubans annually receive authorisation to emigrate legally.

The majority of them do so for economic reasons with the aim of supporting their family.

Her husband is waiting for her in Los Angeles.

But now the *bomba* – as the lottery process is known here – comes with a trick: a ban on returning for three years in addition to a large number of restrictions that severely curtail remittances and parcels from the United States.

"Will you not be coming back for three years?"

Kissing her eight-month-old nephew Roberto with much love, Dairen reveals all her concern with one look.

"We shall see ..." she says, her smile mingled with apprehension.

*Granma* ☪



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