

Editorial

Black Saturday

Last Saturday's federal election can only be regarded as a savage blow to all democratic minded and peace loving people, to workers and their trade unions, to other sections of the labour movement, to Indigenous Australians, and to many others, including Australia's neighbours. It was a defeat for the environment.

It was a significant victory for conservatism and extreme right-wing politics, for the Christian right and for the US corporations that stand to gain from their dominant trade relations with Australia. It was an outright victory for the stream of lies that have poured from Liberal and National Party leaders on so many issues.

It was a victory for the fear inculcated in wide sections of the community including in the ranks of the working class – fear about jobs, fear about higher interest rates, fear about the outside world.

In the previous election, Liberal Party Prime Minister John Howard succeeded in stampeding the electorate with fear about refugees and of those people "over-there" who were alleged to be threatening Australia's security.

Millions of workers have been taken in by the propaganda and lies of the conservatives. They have been persuaded that home-ownership is a panacea for individual achievement and even liberation, and have bought homes on inflated property markets. They live in constant insecurity, fearing a rise in interest rates that would break them financially and see the banks throw them onto the streets. Many swallowed Prime Minister Howard's threats of higher interest rates should a Labor Government be elected, although this charge was not backed by a single Australian economist.

Fear and lies

The fear of job losses by "blue-collar" workers was highlighted by the incredible sight of a mass meeting of loggers cheering Howard on the eve of the election. It must be one of the most shameful episodes in the whole history of the trade union movement of Australia.

It proves the adage of the Nazi propagandist, Goebels, that if you tell a lie



often enough it comes to be believed. The Liberals implement this strategy to perfection.

The re-election of the Howard Government, with an increased majority and with the conservative Liberal-National Party Coalition now poised to gain a majority in the Senate (with the support of the Family First Party), creates a dangerous situation. The Howard Government will have absolute power to intensify its attacks on every democratic right, progressive gain and economic benefit won in the past.

The final unleashing of this vicious attack will see a further destruction of democratic rights. Howard's intended industrial legislation is meant to shackle the Australian trade union movement.

The Australian state is now entering a period which can only be described as neo-fascist, the obvious next step as the crisis-ridden Australian ruling class, facing

many difficulties at home and overseas, attempts to secure its domination over society into the decades ahead.

The Liberal Party-promoted Family First Party is an extreme right-wing organisation based on the thinking, the physical support and the money of Christian fundamentalists. (See page 3.) It has links with the Assemblies of God Church. It is similar to the powerful religious right in the United States which strongly backs the Bush administration and the war against Iraq. Behind its purported concern for "family values" is a narrow-minded and conservative agenda. Its "family values" are fundamentally anti-women and are being posed against the wider interests of the community as a whole.

Those Australians who voted for Howard despite his conservative policies and his stream of lies must also be held responsible for the consequences that are certain to follow.

Labor Party

The Australian Labor Party (ALP), with just over 38 percent of the primary vote (counting is incomplete), received one of its lowest returns in modern times. This was not any particular fault of the leadership of Mark Latham who has simply followed the right-wing policies and ideology of current ALP leaders.

There is a many-years' long failure of the Labor Party and the trade union movement to answer the propaganda of the Liberals and to take the fight to the capitalist class – not simply in terms of somewhat better economic policies and more grandiose promises, but in terms of the conservative philosophy of Howard in particular.

The ALP failed to offer a genuine alternative; it failed to win the trust of the electorate.

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Black Saturday

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Howard does not hesitate to talk about his philosophy – even using the word “philosophy”. He poses, once again dishonestly, as the champion of “choice” and even as the champion of the workers. In reality he champions “individualism” which is behind the disastrous “individual work contracts” which seek to turn every worker into unorganised and isolated individuals to face the united power of employers. Employers do not fall for this individualism nonsense which is being incessantly pushed down the throats of workers. Howard also champions “family values”.

For its part the Labor Party and the trade union movement adopt one compromise after another. They have, so far, proved to be incapable of answering Howard on the more basic ideological issues.

Trade unions

The real rot started when the trade union movement – left, right and centre – adopted the theories of economic rationalism advanced by former Labor Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating and by the leadership of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

These theories have led the labour and trade union movements to the present-day disasters, and they have still not been analysed or repudiated, much less overcome, by the labour movement. There has been no return to any semblance of class politics and struggle. During the recent election campaign the trade union movement simply tagged along behind the Labor Party. It did not stridently and boldly fight for the cause of the working people. Its voice was largely unheard and its influence was obviously minimal.

The trade union movement will not buy any sort of thanks or truce from the corporations or the government as a result of these policies. What is certain is that the Howard Government will intensify its attacks. It is equally certain that the trade union movement will sink further into insignificance unless there is an honest and forthright return to the policies and willingness to struggle that built the trade union movement to its glory days. Those days came to an end when the Accord (a social partnership between the ALP Government and the ACTU) was adopted in the early 1980s.

The Greens

The Greens put forward strong progressive policies and campaigned openly for them without perpetually looking for compromises with the conservatives. For this, they were (and will be in the future) strongly attacked by Howard and others.

Their strong vote over-all and their over 20 percent vote in some electorates is a living indication that there is a sizable voting electorate that is willing to support principled left and progressive policies.

We need to take heart that the combined ALP, Green and Democrat vote means that half the electorate did not fall for the lies. This must encourage us to organise and resist. Furthermore, the actual voting figures, rather than the number of seats won, shows that the Coalition gains had more to do with the return of One Nation voters to the Liberal and National Parties and the decimation of the Australian Democrats than to any mass swing to the political right. (See adjacent article for voting figures.)

The Left

The Communist Party of Australia did not stand candidates in this election but leafleted and helped other left and progressive forces.

Some left groups supported the Labor Party as some sort of propagandist helper and ginger group. They put forward worthwhile policies but remain within the context of the social democratic Labor Party. Surely the shortcomings and limits of labour parties in many countries have been demonstrated time and time again.

For a number of years the left has allowed itself to be fractured on the basis of policies and personalities. It is a chronic illness which prevents the participants from acting in the interests of the whole. There remains a lot of potentiality on the left but it is futile to keep calling for change and protesting against the vile conservatism of the Howards and Costellos unless the left – as a whole – is prepared to take steps to overcome the present fractured reality.

Above all we must work to build a strong united front force with advanced social, political and economic policies that can take on the conservative philosophy of the Howards and expose it for the fraud that it is. A stronger and more influential Communist Party is fundamental in the development of such an effective opposition.

We must fight now for the day when we have broken the two-party stranglehold and Australia has a new type of government, one that really represents and looks after the working people of this country, an honest government committed to jobs, to peace and to democratic rights. The Communist Party is committed to help build this united front force, but to do so we must greatly expand the size and influence of our Party.

PRESS FUND

It certainly was a double-speak election, with pork-barrelling thinly disguised as policies, and secret preference deals to keep progressive candidates from winning seats. The results mean signal the need for an all out struggle against the forces of extreme right. So, what about the Press Fund! With the year rapidly dwindling away, we're still about \$4600 short of this year's target of \$14,000. So please, if you possibly can, send us a contribution for the next issue. Our thanks go to the following stalwart contributors this week, for their generous support:

Bert Appleton \$40, W F \$16, “Round Figure” \$14.

This week's total: \$70. Progressive total: \$9400.

Will of electorate not reflected in new Parliament

Anna Pha

The Murdoch media has told its readers that it was an “emphatic election victory”. Labor lost seats and the Democrats were almost wiped out. A Christian fundamentalist Family First candidate is running neck and neck with the Greens and the Democrats for a Senate seat in South Australia and for one in Victoria against Labor and Greens. The Prime Minister John Howard has good reason to be jubilant. It is an important victory for the extreme right of politics.

An examination of the voting figures, however, shows that overall there was not a mass swing away from Labor to the Liberal or National Party.

Howard's success is more a result of the skewed single member constituency electoral system, the return of One Nation voters to the Liberals and the decimation of the Democrats.

House of Representatives

While there are variations between electorates, nationally the ALP's percentage of **primary votes** (before preferences are counted) increased from 37.8% in 2001 to 38.2% in 2004. (These figures are not final, as counting of postal and absentee votes continues.)

The Coalition parties also increased their share of the **primary vote** from 42.7% to 46.2%.

The combined **primary vote** for the major parties was around 84%, a significant increase from the 80% received in 2001. This marks a reversal in the trend towards voters looking beyond the two-party system in the Lower House.

The Democrats were the main losers – crashing from 5.41% to 1.17% - with a decrease in vote for

most other smaller parties and independents.

In such a situation the Greens did extremely well to increase their vote to 6.94% (from 4.96% in 2001). From anecdotal evidence it appears that the Greens might have polled even higher were it not for the lies and scare-mongering of the major parties, such as the Labor leaflet suggesting that “if you vote 1 Greens and 2 Labor – your second preference will never be counted”, implying that voting for a Green candidate would help the Liberals.

As before the election, the Coalition will have complete control of the House of Representatives with between 83 and 88 seats (up from 81 in 2001) out of 150, despite the fact that less than half the electorate voted for them.

Labor, despite increasing its proportion of the vote, will lose seats, to give it between 58 and 63 seats (down from 65).

The Lower House is solely based on single member electorates which prevents smaller parties from gaining representation. Under a more democratic proportional system the Greens might be entitled to between five and ten seats.

Senate

In the Senate, voters were much more prepared to support smaller parties, with the major parties receiving just under 80 percent. Senators are elected from states and territories on a proportional system combined with preferences. Hence the Senate better represents the political reality.

This has in past elections created a situation where the ruling party has not had a majority but depended on independents, One Nation, Democrats, and other smaller parties to pass legislation.

Forty of the 76 seats were up for election. In the old Senate the Coalition had 34 seats and Labor 28, the Democrats 7 and Greens 2 with

independents and other smaller parties 5. The Coalition looks certain of 38 seats, Labor 26, the Democrats 4 and Greens 3, with five more still to be decided.

The Coalition is running close in one of the seats, which would give it an absolute majority. Even if it does not win that seat, it will still be able to rely on the Family First representative (if elected). The Government may also get the support of several right-wing Democrat Senators to push through privatisation and union-bashing legislation.

As in the Lower House, the Labor vote has risen – at this point in counting the increase is 1.32% giving it 35.35% and the Coalition 43.3% (up 3.77%). The increase in the Labor vote did not materialise in an increase in seats. The Greens increased their vote from 4.38% to 7.52% while the Democrats fell from 7.25% to 2.05%.

The major parties poured millions of taxpayer and corporate (and trade union in the case of Labor) dollars into what has become an industry in itself - market testing electorates and different social and economic groups, marketing leaders and policies, how to bribe voters, how to sell their lies, etc. The Liberals were more successful on this occasion.

Electoral reform

The need for reform of the House of Representatives to a proportional system is pressing.

Howard has plans to carry out his own “reforms”, not to make Parliament more democratic, but to enshrine the two-party system. He would like to destroy the Senate as a House that can block legislation and set up committees to inquire into legislation and other matters. This is bound to become an important issue.

It can be stopped by starting to campaign for real progressive electoral changes now, and fighting his agenda. ☼

Open Day

Sydney

Communist Party of Australia

invites

Party members, friends and supporters to

visit our new building

Light refreshments provided

Sunday
17 October
12 noon – 5 pm
74 Buckingham St
Surry Hills
enq 02 9699 8844

Scorched earth policies

With control of the Senate in its own right or via Family First or right-wing Democrats, the Howard Government has open slather to implement its scorched earth agenda.

The full privatisation of Telstra is high on its list, taking Australia down the path of a user-pays telecommunications system. Communications Minister Helen Coonan cooly said of Family First and Telstra's privatisation: "... one would think they would be more aligned with our view."

Every public asset and service that can generate a profit is up for sale. In the front line are health and education. Elite private schools will receive even larger handouts.

Issues for resistance and struggle

These and other issues, some of which are listed below will provide many opportunities for the whole of the labour movement to struggle against these policies which will savage the living standards and rights of the overwhelming majority of the Australian people.

It is time for unity and joining hands after the inevitable investigations into the causes of the defeat for the Labour movement.

Simply because the Coalition Government has won a majority can never be accepted as a reason to meekly accept the attacks that the Howard Government is set to imple-

ment. Working people have the right to resist and fight back against any and every attack by the corporations and its conservative government representatives.

The Government legislate away more fundamental democratic rights, build more camps for refugees, and take any other measures it deems necessary to quash any form of dissent or resistance to its policies.

It will press ahead with its remaining anti-union legislation, adding to the already substantial armoury in the hands of the employers in their offensive against workers and unions. The drive to impose individual contracts, the Government's Australian Workplace Agreements, will be stepped up, as will the dismantling of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

Further deregulation of the financial system will be given priority passage. This will include the scrapping of the four pillars policy, allowing the Commonwealth Bank, ANZ, NAB and Westpac to merge with each other or be taken over by foreign banks.

ABC

The ABC will be hit even harder with funding cuts in order to make it run advertisements, the first step towards its complete commercialisation, when it will be broken up and sold off piecemeal. The Government

before the election announced its intention to dump cross media ownership laws, which will result in turning even more information, news and current affairs into a Rupert Murdoch-Kerry Packer view of the world.

Welfare will be slashed more deeply across the board, hurting many of Australia's most disadvantaged, beginning with major cuts to the disability pension. The unemployed will have their payments cut completely after a strict time limit. All people on welfare, regardless of their situation, will be forced to take whatever work is offered or lose their payments, essentially turning the privatised system into a cheap labour scheme.

Forests

Tasmanian forests will be savaged by the chainsaws of those loggers who were conned into supporting the Howard Government with his dishonest claim to represent workers and save their jobs.

Employers are lined up with their shopping lists. The tax rate for big business is set to be reduced to as low as 20 percent. The Government intends to reduce the tax paid by those on incomes of \$85,000 or more while leaving those on average and lower incomes without relief.

All this while the Government is spending \$55 million a day on the military. ☸



Family First Party – evangelical right's successful entry into federal politics

Bob Briton

It started in South Australia at the last state election. Assemblies of God Pastor Andrew Evans was elected to the Upper House on a platform of no poker machines, no nuclear dump and, of course, "traditional family values". The mixture of slogans helped gloss over the underlying reactionary nature of the group and bumped the pastor into parliament.

Having taken the decision to

enter candidates in last weekend's Federal Election, Family First (FFP) recorded the fifth biggest vote in the country, outpolling the Democrats in the House of Reps. At the time of writing, Victorian businessman and lead FFP Senate Candidate Steve Fielding appeared likely to enter the Upper House with the possibility of holding the balance of power.

Clearly, something had been brewing ever since Coalition heavyweights started making appearances at the packed all-singing, hyped-up

gatherings at Hillsong Church in the Sydney suburb of Baulkham Hills. The PM and the Federal Treasurer were both given rapturous receptions at the impressive facilities where senior pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston host conferences on "God-given prosperity".

Prayer groups

While prayer-groups in parliament are not new, the entry of the sort of pro-wealth evangelical influence that now has a strong grip in

the Bush Administration in the US is very disturbing.

Family First was keen to downplay its religious associations. Its website was recently cleared of religious references and made far more bland. Candidates were subjected to Police checks so that there were no surprises during the campaign – estimated to have cost the group \$1 million overall.

Witches

However, the ugly truth will out. FFP electoral workers allegedly pelted the Greens candidate for Dickson Howard Nielson with eggs before driving off and shouting "f.k the Greens". The Greens were the object of a lot of Family First's hate during the campaign. So were gays. While the party was upfront in its opposition to gay marriage, the rank and file tell it like it is. A campaign worker in Dayboro in Queensland answered "yes" to a question about whether lesbians should be burned to death as witches.

Liberal candidate Ingrid Tall was not given Family First preferences in the seat of Brisbane in a rare break of solidarity between the right-wing parties. Ms Tall is a lesbian. In Leichhardt, Liberal MP Warren Entsch missed out because he supports gay marriages. In spite of all this, FFP had sufficient clout to conclude a preference deal with the Democrats with spokesman Senator John Cherry insisting the newcomers were not homophobic.

Satan's strongholds

Elsewhere, Victoria FFP Senate Candidate Danny Nalliah of the

Catch the Fire Ministries distributed a leaflet with the following advice:

"Spot Satan's strongholds in the areas you are living (brothels, gambling places, bottleshops, mosques, temples – Freemasons/Buddhist/Hindu etc, witchcraft... If you are ready to pray against it do so. If not, bring it to your church and ask your intercessors, through the pastor, to pull these strongholds down."

The PM sat down with the Family First leadership and has agreed to subject Government policy to "Family Impact Statements", regardless of whether or not they get a seat. It is the least he could do considering the services rendered by the religious party and the potential for further cooperation. And while federal party leader Andrea Mason had previously said the full privatisation of Telstra might fail the "family friendly test", spokespersons like Andrew Evans and Steve Fielding are being far more open.

Fire and brimstone

The religion of the Family First Party is based on the "fire and brimstone" concepts common to all fundamentalist religious sects. It is socially extremely reactionary and many of its members once whipped up in a religious fervour are quite capable of playing the part of storm-troopers in support of the Howard Government and those who are its paymasters.

Although the Howard Government is likely to keep its distance and the FFP has already moved to obscure its religious and international connections it is a dangerous new element in Australian political life. ☸

Pete's Corner



Crunch time for smoke-free pubs and clubs

It's crunch time in NSW for smoke-free hospitality workplaces. NSW Cabinet met last week on the issue and were apparently deadlocked.

The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) point out that there is majority community support for the ban; all the health leaders have been vocal on the issue; but still the NSW Cabinet is delaying.

The NSW Minister assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), Frank Sartor, has publicly accepted letters from 400 NSW doctors calling for an end to smoking in pubs and clubs

state will introduce a ban at the end of next year. Queensland will follow suit six months later.

"With five NSW pub workers dying of tobacco-related diseases every month, there's no time to waste. We plead with the NSW Government to introduce a ban as soon as possible", Dr Gullotta said.

"It's all about saving lives and ensuring a safe workplace for all workers."

Jazz violinist George Washingmachine is a non-smoker who regularly performs in smoky pubs and clubs. After a gig last week, he used a kit from the US



Numerous peer-reviewed papers in the US had found bans had a neutral effect at worst. In many cases, business was better than ever.

by the middle of next year.

Australian Medical Association (NSW) President Dr John Gullotta handed over a giant cigarette box crammed full of letters, plus a petition from more than 1300 patients also supporting a ban.

Thanks to a strong campaign by Tasmanian LHMU members that

to test the levels of cotinine (a by-product of nicotine) in his urine.

After just a couple of hours performing, he registered a 2 on a scale of 0-6. A regular smoker would register a 3 or higher.

"It's pretty disgusting to think my lungs are soaking up that much smoke night after night", he said. I

can certainly feel it in the back of my throat after a gig and even my violin stinks of smoke.

"I made a choice to be a non-smoker, but it seems my choice counts for nothing."

A ban is inevitable, but the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) is still trying to delay it by arguing that a ban would be bad for business and jobs would be lost.

Dr Gullotta said numerous

peer-reviewed papers in the US had found bans had a neutral effect at worst. In many cases, business was better than ever.

"The only 'research' that found a negative impact was sponsored by the tobacco lobby – and we know their track record for twisting the truth", he said.

"Claims of job losses and pubs shutting down because of bans overseas are absolute rubbish. California

has had a smoking ban in restaurants and pubs since 1998 and the sky hasn't fallen in. Revenues from restaurants and bars in California rose almost 50 per cent between 1995 and 2001.

"By the end of 2001, there were also 140 more bars operating than in 1997, before the smoking ban was introduced. Yet, somehow the AHA would have us believe a ban would be an economic disaster here." ☺

Restaurant picket reaches 200th day

Building workers, subcontractors and their families, recently entered the 200th day of a picket in the inner Sydney suburb of Newtown.

The restaurant's owner, James Nazmi, employed building contractor PACI Pty Ltd, whose owner fled to South Korea two years ago, owing some \$1.5 million in unpaid debts. He is said to have had a close working relationship with Nazmi. Several companies which Nazmi has either managed, or with which he has had dealings, have also crashed in the last few years.

PACI's creditors included the subcontractors and tradesmen who

had worked on the Safari project. Although Nazmi has derived the benefit of their labours, in the form of work carried out to date, he has so far refused to pay them any money, as he maintains that this was PACI's responsibility.

In retaliation, the Safari workers and contractors decided to mount a picket on the restaurant, and they've been there ever since. The 200-day anniversary was marked with a special celebration (outside the restaurant, of course), which was attended by Labor MPs Tanya Plibersek and Anthony Albanese, as well as representatives of the Green Party and the

Construction, Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU).

The CFMEU's NSW Secretary Andrew Ferguson, stated: "We are determined to keep up this picket until Mr Nazmi takes responsibility for the shonky builder he employed and pays these workers what they are owed. [His] actions are nothing short of disgraceful, and his continual refusal to pay these small busi-

ness people the \$1.5 million owed from the site is unacceptable.

"This isn't about a few dollars owed to a big company. This non-payment has left many small businesses in serious financial trouble. The CFMEU will not tolerate these bully – boy tactics from developers and we'll continue to fight alongside these workers until they're paid every cent they're owed." ☺

Childcare workers forced to pay for police checks

Childcare workers – who are among the lowest paid workers in Australia – are being forced to organise and pay for their own child abuse police checks, before some prospective employers will even look at their job applications.

"Some childcare operators require updated police and medical checks to be paid for by these workers", LHMU Child Care Union Assistant National Secretary, Jo-anne Schofield said.

"When you earn between \$13 and \$15 an hour, the nearly \$30 cost for these checks are a significant whack out of your pay. Our union believes the employers should be paying for these important police checks.

"The employers are legally responsible to ensure these police checks are made, but too often they are shifting this cost onto their low-waged employees", Ms Schofield said.

"In effect they are making the childcare worker responsible for these checks."

The union says the Federal Government should back the

Federal Police crackdown on child porn by insisting that employers pay for checks; or that a compulsory allowance be paid to all childcare workers to cover the costs of these checks.

"Unfortunately this government has ignored the plight of childcare workers – having fought any claim for wage and allowance improvements that childcare workers have put forward in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

"Victorian and ACT childcare workers have been waiting nearly two years for a work value case decision by the AIRC.

"The Federal Government joined with employers to argue against any improvements for nearly 25,000 childcare workers in this case."

Police check regulations vary from state-to-state. The union advises its members to contact their local branch office for the best information. Non-union members should consider joining the union to get good, independent advice and support. ☺

Kodak workers accept package

A mass meeting of 600 Kodak workers last week voted to accept the revised redundancy deal negotiated by their unions and the company.

Kodak announced three weeks ago its intention to close the manufacturing arm of the Coburg site at the end of November, resulting in massive job losses.

Since then, the three unions representing the workers on site, including the NUW, AMWU and LHMU have been working hard to ensure the workers got the best redundancy package possible. The company was unwilling to discuss any possibility of staying on.

The main points of the redundancy package are as follows:

- 15 weeks redundancy payment on termination;
- 3.5 weeks/year of service for the first five years;
- 4 weeks/year of service from six years onwards;
- Productivity and attendance bonus of up to one week's pay;
- \$1500 fixed lump-sum payment;
- Payment of all accrued sick leave;
- Payment of all accrued long service leave (pro-rata after one year's service);
- Additional lump sum payment for those with 25 years service or more, totalling from \$2000 to a maximum of \$15,000.

The unions' efforts will now turn to finding jobs for the redundant workers. ☺

Melbourne ACFS invites you to the brilliant film

SACCO and VANZETTI

The US ruling class has always found judicial murder a convenient device to suppress those who are trouble-makers for the system, and to intimidate others. Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, and the Rosenbergs, all were judicially murdered to protect the State and its secrets. The ruling class has developed to a high art the use of circumstantial evidence, planted evidence, false identification, racism and political terrorism.

On May 5, 1920, two Italian radicals, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were arrested and brought to trial, revealing obvious frame-ups. International protests developed.

Despite obvious illegalities and continued world-wide protests, Sacco and Vanzetti, still protesting their innocence, were judicially murdered on August 23, 1927.

20 November 7.30pm

Unitarian Church, 110 Grey St, East Melbourne

Cost: \$15/\$12 – Supper provided

Further information: Joan Coxsedg ph 03 9857 9249

Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

Bob Carr and NSW Labor Arrogance and a certain stench

Peter Mac

Orange Grove! The name conjures up images of hundreds of retail workers and small business owners thrown out of work by the NSW government's decision to close a cut-price Sydney retail complex, apparently at the behest of the retail giant, Westfields.

Construction of Orange Grove, a large retail complex at Liverpool, west of Sydney, was originally approved by Liverpool Council. It had the imprimatur of the Carr Government, despite widespread concerns about the project, particularly the site zoning.

Orange Grove's trading operations sparked complaints from Westfields, which owns a huge retail centre close to the new Orange Grove complex, and which is also a major contributor to NSW Labor.

At first Carr maintained that he had not been influenced by Westfields. "I have not met with Westfield chairman Frank Lowy to discuss the matter", he declared. However, he has now been forced into the humiliating admission that his Chief of Staff did in fact meet with Lowy, and that the project was discussed at length.

But Orange Grove is only one

of many Carr government scandals. In one recent example, Carr escaped a conviction of contempt of court by the narrowest of margins. This would almost inevitably have led to his having to stand aside as premier.

The case centred on an inquiry by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) into a series of catastrophic failures in Sydney's public hospitals and, in particular, allegations of medical and administrative malpractice made by a number of hospital staff "whistleblowers".

The evidence given to the inquiry, and the behaviour of Carr and his ministers, have revealed an astonishing level of government arrogance concerning issues of public health and criticism of government policy.

In the course of the inquiry a number of employees from Sydney's Campbelltown Hospital stated they had previously approached the then minister for Health, Craig Knowles, with evidence about clinical and administrative misconduct at Campbelltown Hospital.

They claimed Knowles had become increasingly aggressive during the course of the interview, tapping his fingers on the table

with annoyance. They said he had finally slammed his fist on the table, stating that one of the people the nurses were complaining about was a friend of his and that they had better be right, because they could lose their jobs and their homes as a result of their defamatory statements.

As might be expected, Knowles claimed that throughout this discussion he had been remarkably forbearing, reasonable and even-tempered – in fact, quite saintly really. Moreover, he claimed he had behaved in a similarly exemplary fashion during another interview with a nurse from Fairfield Hospital, who had also described having been verbally mauled by the minister.

However, it was not Knowles but Carr who eventually incurred the wrath of the Commissioners. Towards the end of the inquiry the Premier claimed in a media interview that evidence brought before the inquiry had vindicated Knowles, who was (according to Carr) the victim of attempts by one of the whistleblower nurses to blacken his reputation.

The Commission concluded that Carr's remarks could be interpreted as a denigration of the Commission's independence, and that they could also be regarded

as a "wilful insult" to one of the witnesses.

In the event the Premier issued a heavily qualified apology to ICAC (but not to the nurse), and the Commission decided not to prosecute. However, both the ICAC inquiry and the Orange Grove saga have left an indelible impression of arrogance and corruption at the highest levels of government in NSW.

And finally, the Carr Government is now considering introducing jury majority decisions instead of unanimity, to convict those accused of crimes. This has far more to do with currying favour with that section of the electorate

which bays for harsh penalties, than with the pursuit of justice.

And all this from a Labor government, that would claim it has an unshakeable commitment to the nation's working people, who has almost brought the public railway system to its knees, ignores long hospital waiting lists and fails to protect injured workers and their families.

In point of fact, the behaviour of the Carr government is characteristic of those who believe they have a God-given right to govern, and who do so in the interests of developers and other sectors of big business (and, of course, themselves), rather than ordinary working people. ❖



No childcare means no work

A national shortage of childcare places is causing widespread problems among working families. Forty-four percent of parents taking part in a survey conducted by the ACTU and childcare unions said it affects their employment.

The National Childcare Phone In was conducted over three weeks and received more than 720 calls from parents and childcare workers detailing widespread problems in the industry.

The survey found that childcare is a major barrier to parents taking on work and is adding severely to the financial pressure on working families.

Key survey results include:

- 52 percent of part-time workers are prevented from taking up more work due to lack of childcare
- The childcare shortage is also a major problem for mothers, with 29 percent unable to return to work after maternity leave.
- Affordability is a major problem for parents with 62 percent indicating childcare is not affordable.

Of these, 34 percent said childcare was not affordable but the alternative would be to lose their job and another 12 percent said it was not affordable but they were unwilling to give up their childcare place.

• Childcare waiting lists of more than 12 months are common with 44 percent of people on waiting lists unable to get a childcare place within 12 months.

• Childcare is an important election issue with 85 percent of respondents indicating that the childcare policies of the political parties will influence their vote, including 62 percent saying it will have a major influence on their voting behaviour at the coming election.

All survey findings are yet to be fully analysed, however other obvious trends in the results are a strong awareness among parents that childcare staff are poorly paid and deserve a pay rise.

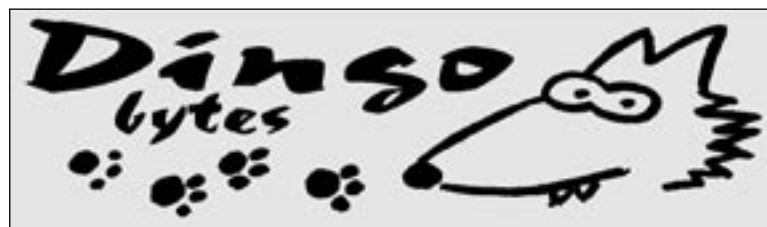
Also, many childcare workers indicated that it was impossible to deliver the quality of care children needed due to inadequate staffing,

an increase in special needs children, and insufficient investment in facilities.

Helen Creed, National President of childcare union LHMU said, "High staff turnover is a direct result of the low wages for childcare workers and a lack of coherent planning by the federal government".

Greg McLean, Assistant National Secretary of childcare union ASU said, "These results highlight the need for a national rescue plan that applies to all sections of the childcare industry, including full and part-time childcare centres, occasional care, family day care, and before and after school care.

"The plan should be developed with the full cooperation and involvement of all childcare workers and include more Government investment in childcare infrastructure and decent wages for childcare workers to ensure all Australian families and communities get a fair share of quality childcare services." ❖



An email released to Greenpeace under freedom of information shows that the Howard Government offered Queensland energy company, Southern Pacific Petroleum, a \$36.4 million dollar grant on the proviso that it took legal action against the conservation group. The Government does not deny that it offered the bribe. Instead it claims that as the money was not taken up, the issue was redundant. Just goes to show, under this system you can justify anything.

International performers such as Michael Franti and Spearhead, along with locals such as The Warumpi Band and Spiderbait, have come together to produce a CD to raise awareness the campaign to save Tasmania's forests. The production of the CD has been coordinated by the Huon Valley Environment Centre. Also available is an information booklet containing local artwork and Tasmanian forest facts. Funds from the sale of the CD will be donated to Huon Environment Centre and Native Forest Network, which work to protect Tasmania's Forests. "Tasmania's southern forests are being clearfelled, burned and poisoned by woodchip-driven industrial forest practices", said spokesperson Jenny Weber. "Forests like those of the Weld Valley have been recognised for their World Heritage values and deserve immediate protection." For more info phone Jenny on 0429 966 171 or www.talloon.com.

A former head of the NSW Premier's Department has made a stinging attack on Federal and State Governments, saying that public servants are in danger of being cowed into silence. Gerry Gleeson has warned that the public servant is no longer able to offer frank and fearless political advice to their bosses because of employment contracts that allow them to be sacked without reason. Mr Gleeson has also called for a halt on residential development in the Sydney CBD foreshores, and warned against the rise of public private partnerships.

Three of the major banks, the CBA, NAB, and ANZ, and a bunch of mortgage brokers, have been caught napping by a group of wily swindlers. It involves a real estate scam in which one of the gang buys a property, sells it to another at a hugely inflated price who takes out a large mortgage well above the value of the property, providing false a ID to the bank. The two then share the profit, the original purchaser appearing clean, the accomplice having vanished beyond trace and the bank foreclosing to find it has a huge debt. As Berthold Brecht put it, as a crime, robbing a bank is nothing compared to setting up a bank.

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: has to go to the Commonwealth Bank Chief Executive Officer David Murray. Murray, who is also head of the Business Council of Australia's Education Taskforce, has announced that he believes the governance of Australia's universities should be left up to business. Naturally, he is a loyal supporter of Education Minister Brendan Nelson and his anti-union offensive in the universities announced earlier this year.

Deported to danger

Government's reckless treatment of rejected asylum seekers

Bob Briton

Last week a little more light was thrown on the secret processes used by the Federal Government to deport those asylum seekers rejected by its controversial assessment and review processes. The press carried details of Operation Long Haul, which had as its objective the removal of 31 detention centre detainees to several countries by staff of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and contractors Australasian Correctional Management (ACM).

The detainees were considered to be of high risk of self-harm or attempting to escape – they were handcuffed, held with restraining belts and batons were kept at the ready. The flight in August 2001 included drop-offs at Kuala Lumpur, Dubai and Damascus with a final destination of Istanbul. Back in Australia, the then Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock commended the crew for completing the task in such a “professional manner”.

The public might have assumed that to be the reality behind the deportation of those particular “illegal aliens” and the many others that get the thumbs down from the Commonwealth immigration authorities. However, the “operation” had been a nightmare. Tensions on the flight had been so high that its commander, Grant Cummins, had hit his second in command Bob Cork on the return journey. In Dubai, they had quarrelled when local officials became curious about the restraint equipment being carried.

It was only when Cork appealed his subsequent dismissal from the department to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission that the rest of us got additional insights into the Government's lawless deportation practices.

During the outbound flight Mr Cummins “encouraged” a dehydrated detainee to drink by holding his head and forcing a cup to his mouth. He ignored medical advice to perform the manoeuvre. In Istanbul the deportees were obliged to sit in the airport lounge before catching connecting flights when it turned out that holding cells were not available after all. A nurse working with the 34 contracted escort staff described the charter flight as dangerous.

Succession of Scandals

This was only the latest piece of bad press for the Federal Government with regard to its treatment of asylum seekers. Last month a whole study based on the treatment of 40 rejected asylum seekers was released.

The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education and the School of Education of the Australian Catholic University conducted the survey during 2003 and 2004 in order to look into questions raised in another report – *A Sanctuary Under Review* – arising from a Senate Enquiry in 2000.

The questions the researchers probed in *Deported to Danger* were:

- Has the Australian Government or its agencies sent or attempted to send asylum seekers to unsafe places?

- Has the Australian Government or its agencies actually increased the dangers for rejected people by sending reports about them to overseas authorities?

- In managing removals, has the Australian Government or its agencies encouraged asylum seekers to obtain false papers, or become associated with bribery and corruption?

- Is the manner of conducting asylum seeker removals consistent with Australia's legal obligations?

- Is the manner of conducting asylum seeker removals consistent with Australia's traditional values?

In its damning conclusions, the answers given are plainly: yes, yes, yes, no and no. Of the 40 people interviewed in 11 overseas countries, 35 were living in dangerous circumstances on arrival at their initial destination and only five are now clearly safe. Following extensive research, including corroboration of the former detainee's accounts, the team came to the following unavoidable conclusion:

“We conclude that the Australia has not adequately respected and safeguarded some fundamental human rights of the people we interviewed. It appears that the Government's present policy regarding refugees is dictated not by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Refugee Convention but by other political agenda.”

Accountability and responsibility

Questions of accountability and responsibility in the removal of rejected asylum seekers are blurred by the outsourcing of the Department's various roles to contractors like ACM and its successor Global Solutions. Not all the claims and stats available from the Government are what they seem at first glance. For example, while 3390 detainees were forcibly removed last year, many others are said to have left “voluntarily”. However, this often occurs only after years of intolerable detention and under considerable pressure.

In the process of interviewing the deportees and coming to understand how they had wound up in their current predicament, the authors learned a lot about what the Government's pursuit of its political agenda entails. Prejudicial treatment and poor translation services often combine to undermine the “anxious scrutiny” required of DIMIA to avoid the possibility of *refoulement* – the term used to describe the removal of rejected asylum seekers to places that are unsafe.

The treatment of appeals of DIMIA decisions to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) was also criticised. Only six per cent of adverse decisions by DIMIA were set aside by the RRT in 2003. However, in the decade since 1993-94 an average of 15.36 per cent of RRT deci-



Australia has not respected fundamental human rights

sions were overturned on appeal to Australian courts. The Government responded to this situation by restricting asylum seekers' access to the courts. As a result, there were only 69 RRT decisions set aside by the courts last year – down from 467 cases in 1998-99. However, it is when the report gets down to summarising the cases of the deportees that the grubbiness of the official practices truly comes out.

Rajab's case is typical [the actual names of many individuals could not be given because of the continuing risk from authorities in destination countries]. Rajab fled Afghanistan when religious divisions between the families of his Shia and Hazara father and his Sunni and Pashtun mother exploded. Following his mother's conversion to Shia Islam, a group of Sunnis killed his elder brother and threatened his father. The family decided

to return to Kabul where, he was assured, a special centre for returnees had been established. There was no such centre. He was left in Kabul as the snow was starting to fall with little money and with only the clothes he wore on Nauru.

He found he was not safe in Afghanistan. A fundamentalist sect had seized his home and his family had fled, presumably to neighbouring countries. Rajab rented a room secretly with some companions. He escaped an assassination attempt before fleeing himself to a neighbouring country where his situation remains unsafe.

The Australian Government is aware that the security and human rights situation in Afghanistan and several other destination countries is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless it promotes the myth that the overthrow of the Taliban regime has enabled many asylum seekers to return

A member of the Bedoon ethnic minority from Kuwait was encouraged to go to Syria where he was assured he could live safely. It was only when he was about to board his flight that he saw that the Syrian Visa obtained for him was only valid for a few months. He was given US\$200 to pass to Syrian immigration officers as a bribe to avoid being taken into detention. Before his nightmare ended with a successful application for asylum in another first world country, he had been jailed and beaten in Syria.

Another deportee to Syria was given an airline ticket to go to that country but which had a final destination of Kuwait shown on the document. The deportee believes, very reasonably, that this was done to give Syrian officials the impression that he was staying a short time in the country before continuing on to Kuwait. There is a colour photo of the ticket in the report with the DIMIA clearly shown as the purchaser.

Other reports from Sri Lankan asylum seekers show how ACM guards would intimidate detainees by threatening to fax details of investigations into terrorist links ahead of them before their arrival in Colombo. By the way, although the report uses the terms “deportation” and “forced removal” interchangeably due to their common usage, deportation normally refers to the removal of criminal subjects. None of the people interviewed were suspected of terrorist or other criminal acts or associations. However, some deportees were jailed on their return to Sri Lanka on the strength of faxes from DIMIA. They were subsequently found innocent and released.

Deported to Danger has 60 pages of this sort of evidence against the Australian Government. Its authors now want urgent official action and truth. Its closing paragraph has a warning for us all in these days of anti-human right-wing political dominance: “The stories of our rejected asylum seekers remind us that to ignore or deny the rights of one person puts the rights of all of us in jeopardy.”

He was left in Kabul as the snow was starting to fall with little money and with only the clothes he wore on Nauru.

to send Rajab away.

The young Afghan was among the asylum seekers rescued by the *Tampa* who were taken into detention on Nauru. He remembers the lack of legal advice, poor standards of translation, low quality food, depression, isolation and uncertainty. He also recalls officials of the UNHCR and International Organisation for Migration telling Afghans of the determination of the Government to send his countrymen back, “because it is now the policy of Australia to send refugees back, however much your life will be in danger, you won't be accepted”.

When a young friend died in the Nauru camp, he was persuaded

safely. In other cases, it has returned people to countries like Iran which, in other contexts, it has described as gross violators of human rights and “rogue states”. The constant in the cases appears to the authors of the report to be the drive to deliver rough justice and high rates of returned asylum seekers.

Getting down and dirty

The descriptions of the cases in *Deported to Danger* in their general terms are disturbing enough, but it is some of the detail that reveals most about the extreme behaviour of Australian authorities.

ON guard against fascism Julius Fučík remembered

Shailendra Kumar

On September 8, journalists in various parts of the world remembered Julius Fučík, the fighter against fascism, the teacher and the journalist crusader who was murdered by the fascists on that day in 1943. He left behind a global legacy – the famous *Report from the Gallows*, translated since his death from Czech into a number of other languages.

There are schools of journalism, roads, streets and factories named after him as a man who fought against fascism but also gave journalism an ideological content.

It goes to his credit that while in countries such as India awards are given in the name of press barons who, in their own words, could “even commit murder” for profit, here was a journalist for whom the world was seen as a call to action. To quote Fučík himself: “A hero is a person who at a decisive moment gives everything in order to do what should be done in the interest of the society.”

It would be more than correct to say that even when his physical space as an editor was confined within prison under the threat of the executioner’s guillotine, Fučík was able to look far ahead, far beyond the frontiers of his life. Indeed, journalism to him was very passionate and purposeful as well, without illusions of the most modern day scribes of being great newsmakers. It was on the contrary an artistic instrument calling for action.

September 8, 1943 was the day of a decisive victory over the German fascists in the battle at Kursk. It thus became a day of foreboding of the impending capitulation of fascism. For many, however, it was a day of deep sorrow as on the same day the Nazi execution-

ers dragged Fučík from his cell and executed him.

Referring to his teachings, he once said that “there is nothing known as a neutral journalist, a journalist who stands above everything”. Of course, those were not the days of market-driven journalists, who could become political and ideological turncoats, daily changing sides for money and power. To him, anyone opting for this profes-

On a visit to the Soviet Union after scrutinising one paper in depth, he made what has become a motto: “Show me the newspapers of your country then I will tell you what the situation in your country is.”

The fascist occupation of Prague marked the beginning of the most difficult test in his life. In the summer of 1942 he was arrested and brutally tortured. Every trick was tried to break him and to force him

“I have seen the film of my life a hundred times, in thousands of details.”

sion has to exercise it as a vital calling, to make an ideological choice, and learn to seek and recognise the new.

As he puts it: “A good reportage consists of small specific facts, facts that are diverse which are in no case isolated exceptions. Only from them can one create a living and faithful picture of people and events, an image that we call reportage. Usually there is no lack of such small typical events, but it is necessary to single them out of the grey monotony of everyday materials.”

“If we want to properly judge a reporter, we must evaluate him not only according to the way he writes, but also the way he sees.”

to betray his comrades. Then began the last period of his life when he wrote his greatest piece, *Report from the Gallows*.

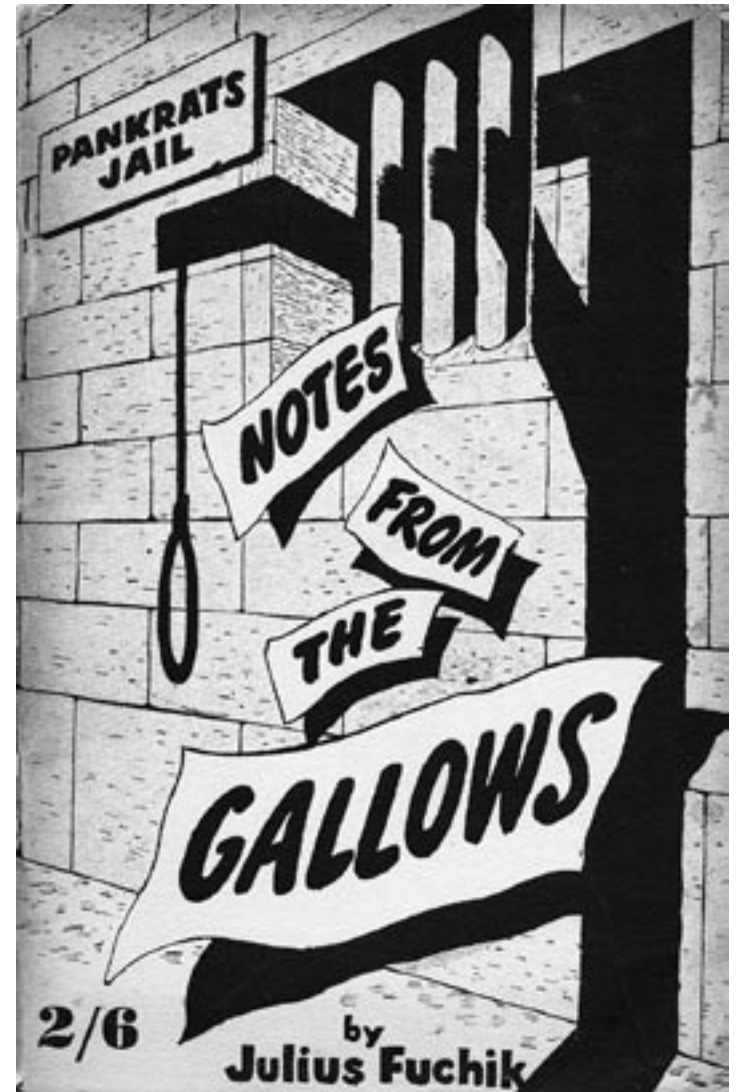
Each of its papers bared evidence of not only his horrific experiences but also the methods of torture used by the enemy. One also got flashes about those who betrayed and those who withstood the trials. He also explained why he had embarked on such a difficult struggle with all its hardship. He observed: “We lived for joy and for joy we are dying. Therefore never let sorrows be associated with your names.”

His writings are a masterpiece of his mosaic of observations. His first was about Tamara Tsereteli. “Tamara Tsereteli is one of the most famous Soviet singers”, he explained. “With all her successes, she is now going to provincial Samara” to sing for electric workers. And that was the name Fucik gave his reportage: “Tamara Tsereteli is Going to Samara”.

He spent a day sitting with her over tea, talking about books and newspapers, about incidents in the theatres where she sang, the civil war, and about gramophone records. Some time in the night when they were nearing Penza, the electric bulb burst in the carriage and yet the conversation continued in the dark. Fucik learned why the Soviet singer preferred the gipsy life of going from one factory to another, why she raced thousands of kilometres to the east, the north, the west and the south instead of profiting financially from her talent and living comfortably in a big city.

Before he reached Orenburg, the reportage about Tamara Tsereteli was already down on paper. He mailed the envelope addressed to the newspaper from the mailbox at the station.

Another aspect of Fucik’s intellectual greatness was his refusal to slot people simply into categories of good and evil. He made a request to his readership: “You, who will survive this time do not forget the good or the bad. Patiently gather evidence about the fallen. One day, today will be the past, there will be talk about a great age and about nameless heroes



A 1950 translation of Julius Fučík’s book

who created history. I want you to know that there were no nameless heroes. They all had their names, their faces, their longings and their hopes.”

In present times, the onslaught of global capitalism has made press baron Rupert Murdoch a hero. Mafia dons sit in the houses of the people and genocide takes place in a variety of forms as evident in the war on Iraq; embedded journalism is the buzzword. It is in such adverse circumstances that names such as Julius Fučík have a significant place in the history of progressive and democratic journalism.

The anniversary of Julius Fučík’s death is still, for many, a day to express human solidarity and determination to defend life against death. It is a moment to defend peace with his famous, historic appeal: “People I love you. Be on your guard” – an inspiring legacy for progressive democratic journalism. As he states in the preface to

his book: “I have seen the film of my life a hundred times, in thousands of details.”

“Now I shall attempt to set it down. If the hangman’s noose strangles before I finish, millions remain to write its happy ending.” He says in the end, “We always reckoned with death. We knew that falling into Gestapo hands meant the end. And we acted accordingly, both in our own souls and in relation to others, even after being caught. My own play draws near its end. I can’t write that end, for I don’t yet know what it will be.”

“This is no longer a play. This is life. In real life there are no spectators: you all participate in life. The curtain rises on the last act. I loved you all, friends. Be on guard!”

It was a call to be on guard against fascism in a variety of forms and guises. It is still visible in many parts of the world today.

People’s Democracy, Communist Party of India (M) ☉

YOU ARE MY COUNTRY

You are the field
I am the tractor
You are the paper
I am the pen
My wife
The mother of my son
You are a song
I am the guitar
I am a damp, warm windy evening
You are a woman strolling on the quay
and watching the lights on the other side
I am the water
You are the one who drinks it
I am walking along the street
You are the one who opens the window
to wave at me
You are China
I am the army of Mao-Tse-Tung
You are a fourteen-year-old Philippine girl
I am rescuing you
from the hands of an American marine
You are a village in Anatolia
on the top of a mountain
You are my city
the most beautiful and magnificent
You are a cry for help
You are my country
The footsteps running toward you are mine

Nazim Hikmet



NEW AUSTRALIAN EDITION!
In celebration of the 100th anniversary of Nikolai Ostrovsky’s birth the Communist Party of Australia is pleased to present a new CD Rom Edition of the classic Soviet novel
How the Steel Was Tempered
Prepared from the 1952 English Edition by Progress Publishers, this edition includes the 12 original illustrations by A.Reznichenko.
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US backs Israel's slaughter

The United States vetoed a draft UN resolution on October 5 demanding an immediate end to the massive Israeli military thrust into the Gaza Strip that has claimed almost 100 lives. Eleven members of the 15-member Security Council voted for the resolution; Britain, Germany and Romania abstained.

The Arab nations that introduced the resolution had wanted a quick, affirmative vote on the resolution because of high casualties sustained by the Palestinian side, particularly civilians, over a period of six days — the deadliest Israeli incursion into Gaza in more than four years of fighting.

Nine Palestinians died on October 4 in northern Gaza, including four militants and a 14-year-old girl who residents said was shot as she baked bread with her mother in their garden. More recently on October 7 two 14-year-old children were killed by Israeli fire in the Jabalya refugee camp.

Israel has vowed to keep its troops in the area until Palestinian militants end rocket attacks against southern Israeli towns.

Palestinian UN observer Nasser al-Kidwa told *Al Jazeera* that his leadership condemned the "rudimentary" Qassam rocket attacks by Palestinian militants, especially the killing of Israeli children.

But he said Israel had killed at least 83 Palestinians, including 20 children, and wounded more than 350 others, using 2000 soldiers, 100 tanks, more than 100 other armored

vehicles, and helicopter gunships. Destruction has been heaviest in Jabalya refugee camp and the northern Gaza towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia.

"Israel persists in committing war crimes and acts of state terrorism against the Palestinian people", al-Kidwa said. "There is no justification for this Israeli hysteria, for these widespread killings and deliberate destruction."

Al-Kidwa rejected Israel's assertion that the military operation was a justified response to the firing of two Palestinian rockets from Gaza that killed two children in the southern Israeli city of Sederot on September 29.

"Now there are hundreds of Palestinians without shelter as a result of that total demolition or partial demolition of their homes, tens of thousands without water or electricity and suffering from severe shortages of food and medicine, precipitating a genuine humanitarian tragedy", Al-Kidwa said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called on the world and the Israeli peace movements to take urgent action to stop the Israeli military's "crimes against humanity", especially in North Gaza.

Prior to the vote, a Swiss foreign ministry spokesperson had expressed concern about the escalation of violence in Gaza and called on Israel to respect international law, which prohibits the use of disproportionate force and reprisals against civilians.



Muders inc. – Ariel Sharon and George W Bush in Washington

Algerian UN Ambassador Abd Allah Baali said, "The Palestinian people are exposed to a virtual war of extermination. The unfettered use of brutal force is terrifying."

Prior to the vote, US Ambassador John Danforth accused the Security Council, as well as the 191-member General Assembly, of acting "as the adversary of Israel and the cheerleader of the Palestinians". Despite a last-minute effort by the Russian Federation to amend the draft to Washington's liking, Danforth ultimately vetoed the draft, calling it "one-sided". Since 1984, the US, the closest ally of

Israel, had vetoed 23 draft resolutions condemning Israel's actions toward Palestinians.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) said that while it strongly condemns the killing of Israeli and Palestinian civilians alike, it regards as "sheer hypocrisy" Ariel Sharon Government's attempt to exploit the deaths of civilians, including the two children in Sederot, "to justify the renewal of occupation of parts of Gaza Strip and the killing of tens of Palestinians, among them pupils in their school classes".

The CPI called upon "all peace lovers, Jews and Arabs, to denounce the crimes of occupation and to demand the immediate pullout of the Israeli Army from all parts of the Gaza Strip."

It said, "Security and peace can be achieved only by putting an end to Israeli occupation, evacuating all Israeli settlements, establishing a Palestinian independent state alongside Israel, establishing two capitals in Jerusalem, and solving the Palestinian refugees' question according to UN resolutions."

People's Weekly World ☪

Asian-European meeting decides on closer relations

A meeting of the leaders of 38 countries of Europe and Asia was held in Hanoi October 8-9. This is the fifth meeting of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to be held since the formation of the grouping in 1996.

This trade and dialogue grouping brings together countries with 2.4 billion people, representing 37 percent of the world's population. Together they produce 46 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and their trade amounts to 43 percent of world trade.

At the Hanoi meeting Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (Burma) plus Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta were

admitted to the group.

The leaders discussed how ASEM could contribute to a multi-lateral approach to international relations, in particular the UN.

The political dialogue carried out in the past years between the two continents has deepened their mutual understanding on international and regional issues, the Middle East situation, international terrorism, development, social and rule of law issues.

The meeting in Hanoi adopted the "Hanoi Declaration on Closer ASEM Economic Partnership" and the "ASEM Declaration on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilisations".

Australia does not participate in the Asia-Europe meetings. ☪

Israel violates the rights of the child

Genevieve Cora Fraser

Israel often portrays the children of Palestine as terrorists, as faceless stone throwers. Yet they are much like children anywhere else. However, due to Israel's highly complex matrix of control and imprisonment, the health, education and overall well-being of the 1.8 million children of Palestine are at severe risk, according to a children's rights expert.

Adah Kay, co-author of the recently published book, *Stolen Youth*, spoke at the UN Conference on Palestine in New York City in mid-September. *Stolen Youth* is the first book to explore Israel's incarceration of Palestinian children based on first-hand information from international human rights groups and NGO workers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Through law, politics and economic restrictions Israel governs Palestine with thousands of military orders controlling every aspect of their lives", Kay explained, adding, "The use of prison is central to the occupation". Particularly harsh punishment is handed out to Palestinian children, a clear violation of Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, she said.

Article 3 states that "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth". The article says the family, as the natural environment for child rearing, also merits special protection and assistance.

"Since 1967", Kay said, "Israel has detained more than 600,000

Palestinians. Since the intifada until June 30 of this year, 2,650 children have been arrested and imprisoned." Under Israeli laws, Palestinian children — who make up 53 percent of the Palestinian population — have no right to a lawyer, nor are they permitted to know what the charges are.

"Children of 16 and 17 are treated by the military as adults, contrary to international law", Kay reported. "Palestinian children once arrested are subject to torture, including severe beatings, exposure to extreme temperatures and forced into extreme positions. They are blindfolded, shackled and put into detention centres in military camps or in settlement outposts where the Israelis force them into signing confessions and attempt to recruit them as collaborators. They are almost always sent on to prison."

Conditions in Israeli prisons are overcrowded and unsanitary, she said. They lack supplies and medical care. Children are isolated, lonely, and abused. Many attempt suicide. Once incarcerated, children have no access to formal education, which historically has been highly valued in Palestine, according to Kay.

Kay, a professor at London's City University, described how Palestinian education in general is under attack because of restrictions on movement. "Children and teachers are stopped at checkpoints and mounds of dirt block roadways. They are gassed, shot at and injured going to and from school", she said. Between 2000 and February 2003, 132 students have been killed on their way to and from school.

"Schools and universities have

been broken into, shelled and bulldozed by the military. Because of the constant disruptions there has been a decline in concentration. Absent-mindedness, panic attacks and requests for frequent breaks are on the increase", the professor stated.

The overall health of Palestinian children is also deteriorating, with death, injury and disability on the rise. Poverty has significantly increased along with severe malnutrition. In Gaza, malnutrition now equals that in poor sub-Saharan countries. Vitamin A deficiency is on the rise, there is insufficient access to safe water, and immunisation rates have dropped from 90 percent to 50 percent due to Israeli sieges, closures and movement restrictions.

Despite the violence that has become a fact of life under Israel's brutal occupation, Palestinians still display a remarkable resiliency and strong coping mechanisms, she said. However, the children are fearful for themselves and their families, with Gaza and the refugee camps displaying the greatest stress.

With death, disease, and disruptions, including homelessness, common, parents are experiencing increased difficulty controlling their children as well as a decreased ability to care for them. Social opportunities are rare for these children and their vision for a future is bleak.

"With the future of Palestine's children and society at risk, how much longer will the world stand by?" Kay asked.

People's Weekly World ☪

Sri Lanka

The BIG PICTURE

Independence from Britain presented a hopeful future for the Sri Lankan people in 1948, but since then they have gone through very difficult times. Plagued by violence and foreign intervention, they have nevertheless fought to make their country free.

The recent elections provided a great chance for the progressive people of Sri Lanka to highlight the endless possibilities for the country's future. The Sri Lankan/Australian Progressive Alliance brings together those interested in working to bring about positive changes in both societies.

To hear the latest update on events in Sri Lanka you're welcome to join us at:

13 November, 7.00pm

The Blue Elephant Restaurant

38 Willoughby Road, Crows Nest

Please RSVP Jagath Bandara on 0419 404 997
Admission \$50 (includes dinner, drinks and soft drinks)

Gagging the independent media

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organisations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage which operates on the internet with a number of websites around the world. Last week, on October 7, US authorities issued a federal order to Rackspace (Indymedia's provider with offices in the US and London) ordering them to hand over Indymedia web servers to the requesting agency. Rackspace, which provides hosting services for more than 20 Indymedia sites at its London facility, complied and turned over the requested servers, effectively removing those sites from the internet.

Since the subpoena was issued to Rackspace and not to Indymedia, the Indymedia still does not know the reasons for this action. Talking to Indymedia volunteers, Rackspace stated that "they cannot provide Indymedia with any information regarding the order". ISPs (internet service providers) have received gag orders in similar situations which prevent them from updating the concerned parties on what is happening.

It is unclear to Indymedia how and why a server that is outside US jurisdiction can be seized by US authorities.

At the same time an additional server was taken down at Rackspace which provided streaming radio to several radio stations, BLAG (linux distro), and a handful of miscellaneous things.

The last few months have seen numerous attacks on independent media by the US Federal Government. Last month the FCC shut down community radio stations around the US.

Two weeks ago the FBI requested that Indymedia takes down a posting on the Nantes Indymedia centre that had a photo of some undercover Swiss police and IMC volunteers in Seattle were visited by the FBI on the same issue. On the other hand, Indymedia centres (IMCs) and other independent media organisations were successful with their victories for example against Diebold and the Patriot Act. On this occasion the US authorities shut down IMCs around the world.

The list of affected local media collectives includes Nice, Nantes, Lilles, Marseille (all France), Liege, East and West Vlaanderen,

"The way this has been done smacks more of intimidation of legitimate journalistic inquiry than crime-busting."

Antwerpen (all Belgium), Ambazonia, Uruguay, Andorra, Poland, Western Massachusetts, Euskal Herria (Basque Country), Belgrade, Portugal, Prague, Galiza, Italy, Brazil, UK, part of the Germany site, and the global Indymedia Radio site.

On October 8, Indymedia learned that the request to seize Indymedia servers hosted by a US company in the UK originated from government agencies in Italy and Switzerland. More than 20 Indymedia sites, several internet radio streams and other projects were hosted on the servers. They were taken offline on October 7th after an order was issued to

Rackspace, Inc., one of Indymedia's web hosting providers.

The reasons for the court order or who actually holds the servers now are still unknown to Indymedia.

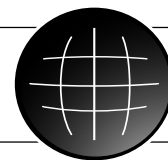
According to Italian news agency reports and an Agence France-Presse (AFP) interview with FBI spokesman Joe Parris, the FBI acted on Italian and Swiss requests. "It is not an FBI operation", Parris told AFP. "Through a legal assistance treaty, the subpoena was on behalf of a third country."

Rackspace published a statement that they turned over the servers in response to an order under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). The MLAT establishes procedures for countries to assist each other in investigations regarding international terrorism, kidnapping and money laundering. The court prohibits Rackspace from commenting further on this matter.

Aidan White, the General Secretary for the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) had this to say: "We have witnessed an intolerable and intrusive international police operation against a network specialising in independent journalism. The way this has been done smacks more of intimidation of legitimate journalistic inquiry than crime-busting."

Indymedia considers this extremely invasive operation a serious threat to the Freedom of Speech worldwide.

Indymedia is calling for the return of the servers. Each day that they are inoperable and Indymedia's irreplaceable data is inaccessible means greater material damages to the Indymedia operation worldwide. ☼



Global briefs

JAPAN: The Japanese Government is set to abandon the purely defensive role of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces, a role the international community imposed following Japan's aggressive part in WW2. Right-wing think tanks have laid out the details to allow the military to take a belligerent role in world affairs as a pre-emptive strike partner with the USA, based on the lie that North Korea poses a threat to the nation's security. A report, "The Vision for Future National Security and Defence Capabilities", calls for investment in state-of-the-art weaponry, including long-range missiles. It also recommends that Japan become a weapons manufacturer and exporter. The Koizumi Government has already breached the country's constitution by sending troops to Iraq.

KOREAN PENINSULA: The Pentagon's massive redeployment of US troops in and around South Korea, and the shipment of the most modern weapons to US forces there, is aimed at provoking a second Korean war, the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* said. The US this week deployed naval destroyers in the Sea of Japan. Though the US claims that the troop shifts are intended to fill a vacuum caused by a cutback in the number of US troops, the changes are actually aimed at waging blitz warfare through a pre-emptive attack.

MEXICO: Mexico's official unemployment rate reached 4.35 percent in August, up from 3.75 percent in July and the highest it has been since January 1997. President Vicente Fox tried to give the numbers a positive spin, saying the country had recovered jobs lost during the recession that started in 2001. However, he expressed concern about jobs for youth coming into the workforce. Over a million young people reach working age each year, and the economy would have to grow over seven percent a year, instead of the present 4.2 percent, to provide work for them all.

CANADA: The British Columbia Federation of Labor has released a report showing that abuse of agricultural workers continues to be widespread, naming changes in employment standards under the Liberal government as the main culprit. "Abuses that have long been part of doing business in the fields are increasing under Liberal policy", said report author Graeme Moore, a former Employment Standards branch program advisor. "The living and working conditions that this mainly Indo-Canadian workforce endures are comparable to those in the Third World."

CHINA: Chinese farmers' income grew by 16.1 percent in the first half of 2004, the *People's Daily* reports. The growth rate sets a new record for the last eight years, Ministry of Agriculture official Chen Xiaohua told a national rural conference in the south-western city of Guiyang. Mr Chen said China will continue to stress development of agricultural areas and development of rural industries, and work to make farm products more competitive on the world market.

Haiti: regime escalates repression

Tim Pelzer

According to an American filmmaker and journalist living in Haiti, the country's US-installed government is intensifying its repression of supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Speaking via telephone from Haiti, Kevin Pina stated that the regime that helped depose Aristide has arrested and detained "an incredible number" of people on false charges. It has especially targeted those who are demanding Aristide's return to office.

On September 30 Haitian police

in Port-au-Prince, the nation's capital, had fired on thousands of unarmed demonstrators who had marched and called for a return to constitutional order. An unknown number were killed and injured.

Calling these developments the "next level of repression", Pina said that, initially, the regime headed by Gerard Latortue was conducting police sweeps through poor neighbourhoods and arresting all young males. "Now they are arresting labour leaders, clergy and church people." He also stated that there are numerous reports of police and paramilitaries assassinating Aristide supporters, including burning some alive.

Asked about the whereabouts of Aristide's cabinet, Pina said that most cabinet ministers are either in jail, in hiding or in exile.

Pina said that the US-sponsored coup against Aristide has angered people. The opposition movement that overthrew the Lavalas Government earlier this year is not home-grown but was nurtured by the US Government.

Contrary to what the international press has reported, the Aristide Government was supported by the majority of the Haitian people. He said there has been a campaign to demonise Aristide and cast him as a repressive dictator.

"When I read the international press, I'm not sure that I'm living in the country they are describing", Pina said. Prior to the coup, he said, Haiti's impoverished majority felt empowered for the first time.

Describing the September 30

demonstration, Pina reported that up to 15,000 people marched, "and if police had not attacked protesters the march could have easily swelled to 50,000."

"As pro-Aristide protesters marched past the city's main prison", he said, "police opened fire on the crowd, killing and wounding several people. Police then placed the bodies in a nearby truck. Then a car passed by and opened fire on the Port-au-Prince police, killing three officers. Angry protesters then burned the police vehicle."

Pina also reported that the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) – a human rights group – helping to foster the climate of repression by making false allegations that Aristide's Lavalas Party is organising armed attacks against opponents and committing crimes.

"They [the NCHR leaders] are very destructive, spreading rumours but offering no evidence to back up their claims." Unfortunately, he said, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch get much of their information about the country's human rights situation from the NCHR.

Describing the horrible human toll wrought by tropical storm Jeanne as "a nightmare, compounded by tragedy", Pina remarked that prior to the storm the country had been prepared for such a disaster. The Aristide Government set up a disaster relief network across the country, "But the events of February 29 [the day of Aristide's ouster] destroyed all of this".

People's Weekly World ☼



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



email: guardian@cpa.org.au

Open letter to Kofi Annan

I write on behalf of the Trades Union International of Workers in the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries (UITBB) representing several millions of workers around the world, to express our deep concern over the flagrant violations of international law being committed by the Israeli Authorities during their current military campaign in the northern Gaza Strip which began on the evening of 28 September 2004.

As of 4 October 2004, 76 Palestinians have been killed, of which 22 were children, 246 have been injured through gunfire and heavy tank shelling in densely populated residential neighbourhoods. In addition 38 homes have been totally demolished, 130 homes have been partially damaged and UNWRA schools have come under fire. A focus of the military operations is the Jabaliya refugee camp, home to some 100,000 Palestinians.

The military operation is being carried out with total disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law and as such, demonstrates a clear unwillingness on behalf of Israel to be bound by the rule of law or to uphold its application, at the expense of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian civilian population.

Israeli actions such as wilful killings and extensive property destruction are considered to be grave

breaches (war crimes entailing individual criminal responsibility) under the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is particularly troubling that Israeli authorities are denying international non-governmental organisations access at this critical time.

In light of this, the ongoing military operation in northern Gaza presents a serious challenge to the value attached to the rule of law by the international community. On 21 September 2004 you reminded the General Assembly of the United Nations that "no-one is above the law, and no-one should be denied its protection. Every nation proclaims the rule of law at home must respect it abroad, and every nation that insists on it abroad must enforce it at home."

We therefore urge you to support this vision of an international community governed by the rule of the law, and give it substance by taking concrete action to ends

Israeli's military campaign in northern Gaza.

Yours sincerely

John Sutton
UITBB President

Totalitarian intolerance at Sydney Uni

We write to express our outrage at the denial of free speech and freedom of expression by the University of Sydney to Professor Michael Denborough and Ms Yvonne Francis of the Nuclear Disarmament Party.

What an awful descent into totalitarian barbarity this represents!

What a far cry this is from Newman's idea of a university! Those responsible for this should be publicly disciplined.

Gareth Smith & Maxine Caron
Byron Bay, NSW

Kids in detention: High Court says it's up to us

A unanimous decision by the High Court that detention of children was lawful does not mean that it is just or fair.

The decision by the High Court is another nail in the coffin of this myth that lawyers or courts will save Australians from a charge of inhumanity.

It's been clear for sometime that there are no real protections of basic human rights in Australia – and the long term detention of innocent children is unarguable proof of this.

If we want ethical and just standards of behaviour from our Government, we have to vote for it. It is heartening that over 300 candidates for election have signed a written guarantee that they will work for the release of all children from immigration detention and a change of policy for the long term.

Candidates that we believe should be supported on this basis can be viewed at our special election website (www.refugeeguarantee.com.au).

Whatever the result on Saturday, we will be continuing the campaign for a just Australia – this time we hope with a large number of MPs who have pledged to do what the courts can not – repeal these unjust laws.

Howard Glenn
National Director
A Just Australia

Sydney

Public Meeting

Defend Abortion Rights!

Abortion is a woman's right to choose
Let's keep standing up for women's lives!

Level 16, Tower Building on Broadway
University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)
Wednesday 20 October 7pm

In the wake of ABC television airing the film by Julia Black, *My foetus*, Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott has stepped up his attacks on abortion rights. In particular, Abbott has called for legislation banning abortion after 20 weeks and labelled the number of abortions taking place in Australia as "a national tragedy".

Both Abbott and Black ignore the complex stories of women, who at different stages of their pregnancies have chosen to have an abortion.

Attacks on abortion fail to acknowledge that the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy is all about women's lives, not the foetus!

Despite ongoing attacks, majority support for abortion rights remains firm in Australia. Join us in a forum to hear women's stories and to start organising against the push to undermine women's rights to safe and accessible abortion.

Speakers include: Dr Stefania Sledlecky, Margaret Kirby, Tracey Greenberg, MC.

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Sponsored by the Women's Abortion Action Campaign & UTS SA Women's Collective

More info: (02) 9649 9744 or e-mail: bessie@zip.com.au

Culture & Life

by
Rob Gowland

"Humanising" Hitler

In the 1960s, in Konrad Adenauer's West Germany, school textbooks portrayed Hitler as an important leader who did great things for Germany, but who made mistakes which diminished his standing. Had he not made those mistakes, he would have remained one of Germany's great leaders.

With US and British connivance, the Adenauer regime rehabilitated ex-Nazis, restored their property and raised them to positions of influence, especially in the armed forces. Meanwhile, anti-Nazi laws were used to repress the Communists and other anti-fascists.

There was a highly influential bloc of revanchists who demanded the "return" to Germany of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland as well as large chunks of Poland and the USSR. In these circumstances, a realistic portrayal of the Nazi period in the mass media was simply not on.

West German films and television eschewed any link between the Nazis and big business, portrayed Nazi Germany's armed forces as victims of circumstance, helpless pawns in Hitler's "mad schemes", people to be pitied not reviled. Concentration camps and the horrors meted out routinely by the German military were simply ignored, brushed under the carpet where it was hoped they would be overlooked.

And meanwhile, all the wrongs of the Nazi period that were admitted were put down as the sole responsibility of one man – Adolf

Hitler. By identifying all the evils of Nazism with Hitler (and to a lesser extent his "gang"), fascism as a system did not need to be examined.

The attempted return to the streets of neo-Nazi groups, however, brought large counter-demonstrations by anti-fascists determined to block them. If the streets belonged to the people, however, the mass media belonged to the capitalists, and in West Germany, anti-fascist films were as scarce as teeth in chooks.

In East Germany, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), by contrast, they were commonplace. Numerous GDR films portrayed the Nazi period and what it meant for the German – and other – people.

But films from the socialist countries tended not to show Hitler either, although for a different reason. They studiously avoided adding to the myth that the horrors of the Nazi period, and WW2, were the result of Hitler's personal whim, rather than the inevitable result of the dictatorship of big capital.

One of the best portrayals of Hitler on the screen in this period (before the overthrow of socialism in Eastern Europe and the unification of Germany), was by the Swedish actor Gunnar Moller in the splendid Czech epic *Days of Betrayal*, a detailed and fascinating recounting of the Munich deal of 1938. Moller gives a riveting depiction of the Nazi leader, complete down to the last nervous tic.

Hitler's telephonist, Major Freytag, has described Hitler as a physical wreck – at least at the end, in 1945 – who walked with a limp and hid a shaking left hand behind his back.

Some at least of these physical deficiencies are on display in the most recent – and in many ways the most disturbing – film portraying the German dictator: the new German film *The Downfall*. From the producer of *The Name of the Rose*, the film premiered in Germany in mid-September.

Based on the memoirs of Traudl Junge, one of Hitler's secretaries, who found him "enchanting", the film restricts itself to Hitler's last 12 days, trapped in his bunker as the Soviet Army closes in on his regime. This is not the first film to focus on this final act, which so handily shows Hitler as a tragic figure.

Pabst's *The Last Act* was made in 1955 in Austria and many a Nazi must have watched its maudlin depiction of Hitler's end with tears in his eyes. There was even a British TV film on this same theme, with Alec Guinness as "The Leader", facing his end with head held high.

Hitler in *The Downfall* has been deliberately "humanised" so that we might better "understand him". As played by Bruno Ganz, he is "an avuncular character with a penchant for chocolate cake" (London's *Daily Telegraph*), "a considerate boss with a tendency to shout" (*Weekend Australian*).

The effect of this "humanising" was succinctly summed up by the Berlin daily *Der Tagespiegel*: "This Hitler, who is so nice to the female bunker staff while he sends a whole people to the slaughter outside, does indeed keep awakening sympathy.

"A lonely screamer, betrayed by his followers, who stands firm until the end – isn't that a hero, maybe not as appealing as the few positive supporting characters, but all the larger than life for that?"

Hans Joachim Dribell, a 70-year-old retired engineer, told *The Times*' Berlin correspondent that the film "went too far" in making Hitler human: "There was no real explanation for his fanaticism. If you show someone like this as human, then people might be tempted to forgive him as a human – after all, to err is human."

The Times also noted another key element in this big budget apology for Nazism: "The strongest reaction of the cinema audience [at an afternoon screening] was not to the gentle portrayal of Hitler ... but to the footage of Berlin under



The horror of Nazism – slave labour prisoners slaughtered by Nazis, 1945

Russian bombardment in the spring of 1945".

Writing in London's *Daily Mail*, Allan Hall identified the film as part of the process of sanitising Nazism, of turning it into "Nazi lite", which he defined as "the embrace of mankind's wickedest regime as a historical entity, as innocent as a walk around a medieval castle or a trip to the museum".

Hall quotes Berlin real estate

agent Frank Hanuskewicz, whose family suffered under the Nazis: "When I see tourists outside the Finance Ministry – Hermann Goering's former Luftwaffe headquarters – looking at maps and giggling or visiting underground bunkers, I see that the cumulative effect is one of forgetting the real horrors of Nazism, the pain and suffering it caused on a scale unparalleled in world history." ✪



Sun Oct 17 ~
~ Sat Oct 23

When John Mortimer, author of *Rumpole of the Bailey*, was asked by Associated Television some years ago to write six plays on the life of Shakespeare, he naturally consulted some experts. "The first professor I asked said that everything known about the life of Shakespeare could be written on a postcard and you would still have room for the stamp."

But, as Michael Wood's series *In Search Of Shakespeare* shows, and as Mortimer himself admits, "in fact we know a great deal about him, quite enough to cover a whole packet of postcards".

We even know quite a bit about the period Mortimer calls Shakespeare's "blank years", between his "leaving Stratford and turning up in the London theatre". It's that period that is the subject of this week's episode of *In Search Of Shakespeare*, called *The Lost Years* (ABC 2.00pm Sundays).

In terms of concrete fact, apart from the records of the birth and christening of his three children, absolutely nothing is known for certain about Shakespeare's life between the ages of 18 and 28, but Wood uses the history of the early Elizabethan period to flesh out a number of intriguing clues.

Patrons, actors, other writers and Elizabethan spies, even The Queen's Men, a travelling theatre troupe presenting government propaganda plays, are all linked together in a splendidly coherent and watchable account.

Wood reveals the relationship between Shakespeare's life and – although Wood does not use these terms – the fierce struggle of the new English ruling class against the power of a foreign Church ("the Church of Rome") and Britain's principal imperial rival, His Most Catholic Majesty Phillip of Spain.

Refreshingly, Wood recognises at one point that Shakespeare's fellow actors were all – also – artisans, "carpenters, tinsmiths, grocers". They were of the same class as the bulk of their audience.

And a director with the Royal Shakespeare Company notes that when Shakespeare began to write, English audiences had had theatre for less time than we have had television. An exciting, innovative time to be a young actor-writer.

Compared to other television histories or biographies, Wood makes greater – and better – use than is usual of authentic locations as well as Tudor maps, guidebooks, parish records and recently re-discovered Victorian-era photos of old London to make Shakespeare's presence and his life real and believable.

The series should lay to rest the idea that Shakespeare was practically uneducated and barely able to write his own name.

It leaves little room for any credible conjecture as to Shakespeare's works having been written by someone else. As John Mortimer says, the author "was either William Shakespeare or someone else with exactly the same name."

Terrorism: Ellen's Journey, screening on the *Cutting Edge* (SBS 8.30pm Tuesday), follows Ellen Sarancini, whose husband, a pilot, died in the September 11 hijackings. Since his death Ellen has become a public figure in the US, campaigning for pilots to be armed and joining a law suit, involving 700 families of September 11 victims, against al Qaida.

At the same time Ellen is on a personal quest for understanding and amongst those she speaks to are

an Iraqi school teacher whose husband was killed during an American bombing attack.

She comments, "Americans have come into our country and killed our people – come in saying they would take away injustice but brought more injustice. Saddam didn't interfere with my life, children, husband. Americans killed my husband, destroyed my life."

A woman whose husband and parents were murdered in the Sabra and Shatila massacres by Israel says, "The international community denounces the terrorism of 9/11 but should have addressed the problem earlier."

"You have to see the reasons for terrorism – if justice and freedom existed there wouldn't be terrorism. I hope Ellen that you have the strength to save your children from racism ... we want equality between your children and ours."

Ye gods! Yet another program about those boring bloody British royals: a two-part series *Looking For Victoria* (ABC 7.30pm Saturdays), in which actress Prunella Scales (Basil Fawlty's viperish wife in *Fawlty Towers*) "sets out to discover the truth about the monarch she plays in her one woman show".

Despite the efforts of numerous TV productions in recent years, Victoria's essential irrelevancy as anything but a figurehead cannot be escaped. Can the ruling class really find nothing better to inflict on us than investigations of the minutiae of royal lives?

Throughout the 1950s, US strategists strove to get the drop on the Soviet Union and to "roll back" Communism. The Korean War was fought and the Hydrogen bomb developed.

The US and the other colonialist powers – Britain, France, Portugal, the Netherlands and Belgium – actively and aggressively waged open or covert war against Communist-led governments and national liberation movements (or even ones that were merely sympathetic to socialism) that emerged during the decade in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



The Kennedy Government went ballistic (*Cuban Missile Crisis Declassification*)

The US had a significant superiority in numbers of nuclear weapons, but the USSR constantly outmanoeuvred the US diplomatically, pushing forward the need for peace and refusing to be drawn into military confrontation with the US and its allies despite numerous provocations.

Nevertheless, US long range nuclear bombers ringed the territory of the USSR in preparation for nuking the country. But in 1957 the USSR demonstrated its new Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile by launching Sputnik 1. Now the US was vulnerable to nuclear retaliation.

The US hastily stationed medium range missiles in Turkey and "Hawks" in the US administration continued the policy of trying to "roll back Communism".

In 1960, the CIA prepared to invade Cuba, where the Revolution had triumphed the year before. At the same time, the US aided the Belgian Government in overthrowing the Lumumba Government in the newly independent Democratic Republic of Congo.

The USSR promised to provide Cuba with military support. In January 1961, Lumumba was murdered, in April the USSR launched a man into space and, a week later, the US launched the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

The Bay of Pigs invasion proved

abortive, but clearly the US would try again with a bigger force, so the USSR proceeded to install missiles in Cuba capable of hitting targets in the US.

The Kennedy Government in the US went ballistic (if you will pardon the pun). Still smarting from their humiliation over the Bay of Pigs fiasco, US Hawks tried to provoke nuclear war with the USSR over the "Cuban Missile Crisis".

For six days the world was close to full-scale nuclear war, but in the end Soviet Premier Krushchev agreed to remove the missiles in return for a US pledge never to invade Cuba.

Although the Yanks like to present the crisis as one that they "successfully withstood", in fact they were once again ultimately outmanoeuvred, and their plans for further Bay of Pigs adventures in Cuba had to be abandoned.

The US "take" on the affair is seen in detail in the two-part *Cuban Missile Crisis Declassified* (SBS 7.30pm Saturdays). Nevertheless, the perception of the crisis is very interesting.

"If we had invaded Cuba, nuclear war would have broken out. Absolutely no question about that. The one certainty is that the risk was very much greater than we ever imagined", says Robert McNamara, US Secretary of Defence 1961-68. ★

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Jim Staples Retired Arbitration Judge

Prof Frank Stilwell Economics Sydney Uni

October 22

UNITED STATES INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIAN PARTY POLITICS

Prof George Parsons Prof History, Macquarie Uni

Greg Pemberton Dept of Politics, Macquarie Uni

October 29

NEW ZEALAND; WHY IS IT POLITICALLY SO FAR AHEAD OF AUSTRALIA? WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THEM?

Ken Johnston Sociology, Macquarie Uni (Recently retired)

Prof Ian Burnley Geography UNSW

Inq: Pat Toms 02 9358 4834 pbtoms@bigpond.com; Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891;
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Paradise cleansed

Deportation of the people of Diego Garcia is a crime that cannot stand

John Pilger

There are times when one tragedy, one crime tells us how a whole system works behind its democratic façade and helps us to understand how much of the world is run for the benefit of the powerful and how governments lie. To understand the catastrophe of Iraq, and all the other Iraqs along imperial history's trail of blood and tears, one need look no further than Diego Garcia.

The story of Diego Garcia is shocking, almost incredible. A British colony lying midway between Africa and Asia in the Indian Ocean, the island is one of 64 unique coral islands that form the Chagos Archipelago, a phenomenon of natural beauty, and once of peace.

Newsreaders refer to it in passing: "American B-52 and Stealth bombers last night took off from the uninhabited British island of Diego Garcia to bomb Iraq (or Afghanistan)". It is the word "uninhabited" that turns the key on the horror of what was done there. In the 1970s, the Ministry of Defence in London produced this epic lie: "There is nothing in our files about a population and an evacuation".

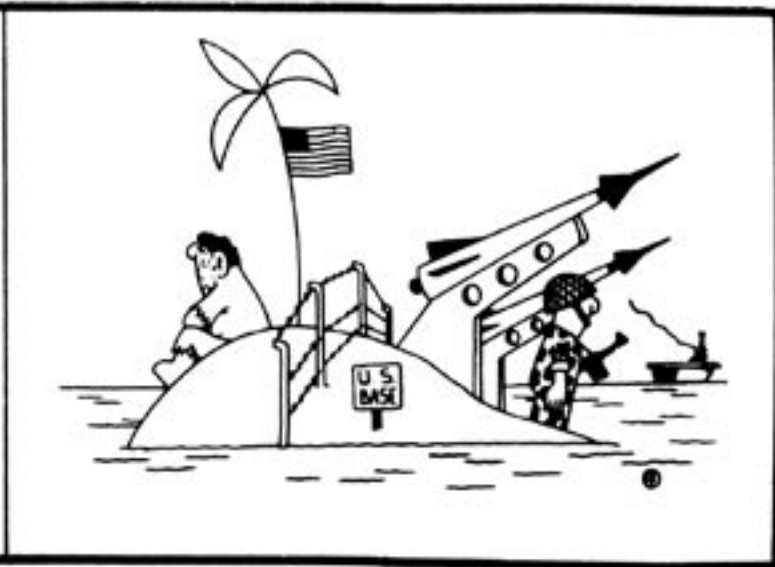
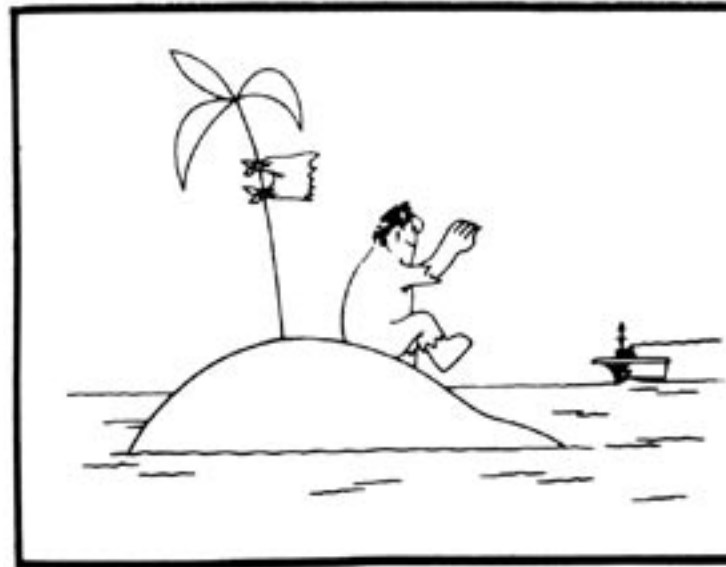
Diego Garcia was first settled in the late 18th century. At least 2000 people lived there: a gentle Creole nation with thriving villages, a school, a hospital, a church, a prison, a railway, docks, a copra plantation. Watching a film shot by missionaries in the 1960s, I can understand why every Chagos islander I have met calls it paradise; there is a grainy sequence where the islanders' beloved dogs are swimming in the sheltered, palm-fringed lagoon, catching fish.

"Camp Justice"

All this began to end when an American rear-admiral stepped ashore in 1961 and Diego Garcia was marked as the site of what is today one of the biggest American bases in the world. There are now more than 2000 troops, anchorage for 30 warships, a nuclear dump, a satellite spy station, shopping malls, bars and a golf course. "Camp Justice" the Americans call it.

During the 1960s, in high secrecy, the Labour Government of Harold Wilson conspired with two American administrations to "sweep" and "sanitise" the islands: the words used in American documents. Files found in the National Archives in Washington and the Public Record Office in London provide an astonishing narrative of official lying all too familiar to those who have chronicled the lies over Iraq.

To get rid of the population, the Foreign Office invented the fiction that the islanders were merely trans-



sient contract workers who could be "returned" to Mauritius, 1000 miles away. In fact, many islanders traced their ancestry back five generations, as their cemeteries bore witness. The aim, wrote a Foreign Office official in January 1966, "is to convert all the existing residents ... into short-term, temporary residents".

What the files also reveal is an imperious attitude of brutality. In August 1966, Sir Paul Gore-Booth, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, wrote: "We must surely be very tough about this. The object of the exercise was to get some rocks that will remain ours. There will be no indigenous population except seagulls."

At the end of this is a handwritten note by DH Greenhill, later Baron Greenhill: "Along with the Birds go some Tarzans or Men Fridays ..." Under the heading, "Maintaining the fiction", another official urges his colleagues to reclassify the islanders as "a floating population" and to "make up the rules as we go along".

There is not a word of concern for their victims. Only one official appeared to worry about being caught, writing that it was "fairly unsatisfactory" that "we propose to certify the people, more or less fraudulently, as belonging somewhere else". The documents leave no doubt that the cover-up was approved by the Prime Minister and at least three cabinet ministers.

"Sanitising" the island

At first, the islanders were tricked and intimidated into leaving; those who had gone to Mauritius for urgent medical treatment were prevented from returning.

As the Americans began to arrive and build the base, Sir Bruce Greatbatch, the governor of the Seychelles, who had been put in charge of the "sanitising", ordered all the pet dogs on Diego Garcia to be killed. Almost 1000 pets were rounded up and gassed, using the exhaust fumes from American military vehicles. "They put the dogs in a furnace where the people worked", says Lizette Tallatte, now in her 60s, "... and when their dogs were taken away in front of them, our children screamed and cried."

The islanders took this as a warning; and the remaining population were loaded on to ships, allowed to take only one suitcase. They left behind their homes and furniture, and their lives. On one

as they fought to survive, suicides and child deaths were common. Lizette lost two children. "The doctor said he cannot treat sadness", she recalls.

Rita Bancoult, now 79, lost two daughters and a son; she told me that when her husband was told the family could never return home, he suffered a stroke and died. Unemployment, drugs and prostitution, all of which had been alien to their society, ravaged them. Only after more than a decade did they receive any compensation from the British government: less than £3,000 (\$7,500) each, which did not cover their debts.

Justice denied

The behaviour of the Blair Government is, in many respects, the worst. In 2000, the islanders won a historic victory in the high court, which ruled their expulsion illegal. Within hours of the judgement, the Foreign Office announced that it would not be possible for them to return to Diego Garcia because of a

islander; it found that the islands were "sinking", which was news to the Americans who are building more and more base facilities; the US navy describes the living conditions as so outstanding that they are "unbelievable".

In 2003, in a now notorious follow-up high court case, the islanders were denied compensation, with government counsel allowed by the judge to attack and humiliate them in the witness box, and with Justice Ousley referring to "we" as if the court and the Foreign Office were on the same side. Last June, the government invoked the archaic royal prerogative in order to crush the 2000 judgment. A decree was issued that the islanders were banned forever from returning home. These were the same totalitarian powers used to expel them in secret 40 years ago; Blair used them to authorise his illegal attack on Iraq.

Led by a remarkable man, Olivier Bancoult, an electrician, and supported by a tenacious and valiant London lawyer, Richard Gifford, the islanders are going to the European court of human rights, and perhaps beyond. Article 7 of the statute of the international criminal court describes the "deportation or forcible transfer of population ... by expulsion or other coercive acts" as a crime against humanity.

As Bush's bombers take off from their paradise, the Chagos islanders, says Bancoult, "will not let this great crime stand. The world is changing; we will win."

Stealing a Nation, John Pilger's documentary investigating the expulsion of the Chagos islanders recently debuted on UK television; his new book, *Tell Me No Lies: Investigative journalism and its triumphs*, is published by Random House and will be available in November. ☼

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journey in rough seas, the copra company's horses occupied the deck, while women and children were forced to sleep on a cargo of bird fertiliser. Arriving in the Seychelles, they were marched up the hill to a prison where they were held until they were transported to Mauritius. There, they were dumped on the docks.

In the first months of their exile,

"treaty" with Washington – in truth, a deal concealed from parliament and the US Congress.

As for the other islands in the group, a "feasibility study" would determine whether these could be resettled. This has been described by Professor David Stoddart, a world authority on the Chagos, as "worthless" and "an elaborate charade". The "study" consulted not a single



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