

US slaughter in Falluja

As *The Guardian* went to press the US had begun a massive bombing offensive on the Iraqi city of Falluja. Although thousands had managed to flee the city in the lead up to the attack, most residents, at least 100,000 remain. Many will be slaughtered by the US forces in an attack that adds to the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Bush administration and its supporters.

Around 15,000 US troops, backed by all the murderous power available to them, are moving into the city for what the US commander in Iraq, General George Casey, called a "major confrontation". The remains of the city's main hospital and railway station are reported to have been taken by US forces.

All medical supplies, water and electricity have been cut off. This will multiply the disaster for the residents who have been under attack

from US bombing for a number of weeks. The Nazzal Emergency Hospital, in the centre of the city, was completely destroyed last Saturday.

This attack is a reaction by the occupying forces who are increasingly desperate in their failure to gain complete control over the country.

The extent of their desperation is reflected in the fact that they are willing to wipe out thousands of innocent civilians using massive fire power and ground forces to have a "confrontation" with, in Casey's words, just "3000 insurgents inside the city".

Clearly, the occupation of Iraq has now become an exercise to totally cover the population through the use of force.

Tony Kevin is a former Australian diplomat currently at the Research School of Pacific and

Asian Studies at the Australian National University. Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (November 9) he warned of the escalating situation if, as he thought, Falluja insurgents are likely to dig in.

"What I believe is then likely to be done to Falluja will be a war crime and a crime against humanity, morally indefensible by any civilized standard or for that matter, by the Statute of the International Criminal Court."

He points out that as a military ally with troops in Iraq, Australia is also morally implicated and notes, "While Australian former SAS commanders, the Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery, and the Australian Christian Lobby's chairman, Brigadier Jim Wallace, moralise about abortions and gay marriage, Australia's military ally is about to destroy a living city and its families." ✪



Bush's phoney "political capital"

Bob Briton

It did not take long for the election-night platitudes to stop. On Wednesday last week George W Bush was sweet-talking frustrated Democrat voters: "To make this nation stronger and better I will need your support, and I will work to earn it. I will do all I can to deserve your trust." The very next day, the posture in front of the TV cameras had changed completely. "You asked do I feel free? Let me put it to you this way: I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. It is my style."

Like his junior Australian partner John Howard, the re-elected US President is ignoring the fact of a narrow victory to claim overwhelming support for more attacks on the health, education and security of ordinary Americans while furthering advantaging the wealthy and pressing ahead with more military

adventures. Bush got no such ringing endorsement.

Out of a vote of around 114 million, George W Bush managed to get just three million more than the Democrat candidate John Kerry. To put it another way: if just over one and a half million people had

in support of the Republicans at the polls, the other big news of the elections was the strong turnout of the country's youth. The usual mass media sources played down the significance of the youth vote, however the 51.6 per cent turnout of 18-29 year-olds was the highest

noted other positive aspects of the campaign. Unions turned out about 27 million people to vote. New means of reaching people through entertainment and over the internet came into their own:

"While the results were a setback, a magnificent, progressive,

civil rights groups, Asian and Arab Americans, seniors, religious people, Internet activists, artists and first-time voters. They came together to wrest our country back from the grip of a small group of far-right extremists. This new grassroots movement did heroic work. It couldn't win yet against the fear, racism, sexism, homophobia, terrorism and corporate power the powerful far right group wields, which influenced significant numbers of people."

The fact remains that the results, however close, are indeed a serious setback. In the same way that Howard has wasted no time pressing ahead with anti-people policies, Bush will set about implementing his "Plan for A Safer World & More Hopeful America". Even some of the language used to sell the Bush second term agenda would sound familiar to Australians.

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While the religious right was successfully mobilised once more in support of the Republicans at the polls, the other big news of the elections was the strong turnout of the country's youth.

reconsidered their decision to rally around the post 9/11 "war-time" leader, the vote would have gone the other way.

While the religious right was successfully mobilised once more

since 18-year-olds were given the vote in 1972. Young people voted 54 per cent for Kerry and just 44 per cent for Bush. Thankfully, the future is in this group's hands.

The *US People's Weekly World*

grassroots electoral movement has been born. With the labor movement as its backbone, it encompasses women, African Americans, young people, Latinos, environmentalists, Native Americans,

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Commemorating the Russian Revolution

November 7 marked the 87th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution when Russian workers, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and his party, took power. If anyone doubts the part played by the Soviet Union for peace and social progress in the decades following the 1917, a look at the present dangerous world situation should quickly dispel such uncertainty. Imperialism is now running virtually out of control and the social and economic gains made by the people of the world are under unprecedented attack.

The government of the socialist Soviet Union (USSR) was for many years the main international voice for peace and disarmament. It was the Soviet Union that called for the immediate banning of nuclear weapons both before and after it also became a nuclear power. It was at the forefront in the United Nations in efforts to eliminate chemical and biological weapons. The call was for ALL NATIONS to eliminate such weapons. Without the Soviet Union's strong voice for disarmament in the United Nations, past gains are being reversed.

The Soviet Union exercised a strong restraining hand on the bellicose leadership of successive US Presidents. Bush is merely the latest and the most aggressive of all – but there is now no USSR to restrain his administration. The Soviet Union aided the liberation movements of the former colonies. One after another they achieved their political independence. They received generous material assistance from the USSR and other socialist countries to start building their economies. The Soviet Union gave tremendous assistance to Vietnam and helped protect Cuba from invasion.

The socialist system gave the people of the Soviet Union free, high-standard education to university level, universal access to free medical services and extremely cheap rents. They paid next to nothing for public transport, telephones, central heating, electricity and water.

The Soviet Union played by far the greatest role in the defeat of Hitlerism in WW 2. Despite the enormous destruction wrought by the Nazi invaders, the economy of the Soviet Union was quickly rebuilt after the war thanks to planning and the determination of the people. It became the second most powerful industrial power after the United States.

These and the many other achievements were made under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They were building a new society without exploiters and with a new morality based on the collective good. That there were shortcomings and mistakes is beyond dispute but the advances made for the people arose from that leadership and from the socialist system they were building.

From day one of the Russian revolution the capitalist powers worked unceasingly to prevent the building of a socialist society and to overthrow governments committed to socialism. Socialism was and is a mortal danger in the eyes of those who profit from the exploitation of the labour of others.

They eventually succeeded in overthrowing socialism in the Soviet Union with the assistance of Gorbachev and other traitors who had infiltrated the leadership of the Communist Party. This was a tragedy not only for the people of the former Soviet Union but also for the whole world.

The capitalist states proclaimed communism dead, that socialism did not work and was a failure, that it was the end of history and so would remain forever.

Fifteen years since the breakup of the Soviet Union the world is more insecure than ever. With Bush in power, more wars are a certainty. The economic, political and military power of the Soviet Union would have helped the people of the world straitjacket such warmongering politicians as Bush, Blair and Howard. It would have remained a beacon of hope for the poverty stricken, the homeless and those without health care and education.

Time marches on but revolutionaries and progressives around the world will not forget the experience and achievements of the Soviet Union. Its example will continue to inspire millions. It showed that a better life is possible for the world's people. Not even Bush is capable of stopping this march of history.

PRESS FUND

With five more issues of *The Guardian* before the summer break, there is little time left to meet our target of \$14,000 for 2004. It is awful to think that both Bush and Howard got back, but if we don't do something, if we don't organise and fight back, and defeat them, then it will be even more depressing! Not all is gloom and doom. Far from it. Be encouraged by the election results in Venezuela and Uruguay, the heroic struggle of the Cuban people, of the South African Communist Party, and the millions of people around the world who are challenging US imperialism, who are fighting for a better and safer world. Be encouraged by the huge participation and determination of youth in the US elections. In Australia, we have a big responsibility to fight on and see the Howard government thrown out and replaced by a government of a new type, a government of the people. *The Guardian* is committed to this goal. Send your contribution today so we meet our target and can play our role as the workers' weekly.

Special thanks this week to Elke & Mike Ainsworth \$50. What about the rest of you?

This week's total: \$50. Progressive total: \$10,170.

Nelson's renewed attack on university sector

Bob Briton

Last week Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson went public with plans for higher education that he intends to ram through the Parliament when the new Coalition-dominated Senate sits in July. Nelson will dust off bills blocked in the upper house last December to remove current limits on the number of university staff employed as casuals and to impose non-union Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs – individual work contracts). He will move to stop compulsory membership of student unions and to ban strikes by staff likely to adversely affect “innocent third parties”. But he is not going to stop there.

Nelson would also like to wrest the last vestiges of control of the country's universities from the states and be able to appoint their governing boards and council members.

According to Nelson, universities should be forced to become either narrowly defined teaching or research institutes. The research unis especially should open themselves up to “partnership” opportunities with private enterprise. He already has in mind the merging of activities undertaken at the Australian National University and the CSIRO, which itself has been forced into greater service to the corporate sector.

University heads are outraged. The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) thought that they had secured a deal with the Commonwealth last December that would remain in place for the foreseeable future. Committee President Di Yerbury complained in the media about the Minister's lack of good faith: “Neither the AVCC nor the Government achieved everything they were after. However, we did negotiate and compromise on what we believed was, overall, a desirable outcome.”

Unfortunately for students, part of the “desirable outcome” was a hike in uni fees of up to 25 per cent due to come into force next year. In the meantime, the promised review of the declining real value of Commonwealth base grants to universities is yet to begin. The vice-chancellors have just been handed a lesson on the value of unprincipled compromises with the Howard Government.

At present there is a limit on the

employment of staff as casuals in universities of between 12 and 25 percent. Universities also allow for individual agreements with workers on condition that the terms are better than the collective agreement reached with other staff. Nelson's insistence on AWAs would remove this safeguard. AWAs would override the relevant collective agreement and ensure that inferior pay and conditions could be imposed on uni staff.

Of course, this is not the way Nelson is presenting the “reform”. The government's propaganda line on AWAs is that they are good for productivity and good news for workers' pay packets. “We strongly want to drive this performance culture and financial rewards for performance culture”, he told the press last week. Not many are buying Nelson's snake oil, however.

Nelson's intention to resurrect legislation to stop compulsory membership of student unions. Decades upon decades of democratic tradition would be under threat if the Minister gets his way. Conditions for students would also suffer greatly.

“Plans to outlaw compulsory student unionism would see the erosion of important protections, and result in a sharp decline in student services such as accommodation, childcare, sporting facilities and counselling”, as Democrat Senator Natasha Stott Despoja noted.

Nelson's latest claim on the university sector involves wrenching the last remnants of control over the institutions from the states. While the Commonwealth took over most of the funding of higher education in 1974 as part of the sweeping progressive changes under the Whitlam

**Dr Nelson insists that
the current mode of operation
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Surveys reveal that the overwhelming majority of uni staff would prefer to have a union-negotiated collective agreement.

The meddling Minister would also like to stop universities granting staff time off to negotiate enterprise bargaining agreements. He wants to ban industrial action by staff that could hurt “innocent third parties”. This is widely assumed to be aimed at preventing staff taking action during class or at exam times or when it could prevent the processing of students' results. It is more likely that the Howard Government would take the broadest possible interpretation of this anti-union legislation.

The Government's contempt for unions is also on display with

Government, the current minister wants to assume total control in order to force his “performance culture” on them.

Universities are established under state acts. This enables the states to control their borrowing and commercial activities and part of the responsibility for filling governing councils. Nelson wants it all and unfortunately it appears that some state governments are willing to talk it over. While Queensland and Tasmania have reacted against the power gab, the Carr Government had already expressed its willingness to trade health and education responsibilities. Victorian Education and Training Minister Lynne Kosky is also “happy to have the conversation” with her Federal counterpart.

Dr Nelson insists that the current mode of operation of Australian universities is promoting “mediocrity” – a favourite neo-liberal term of abuse. “Too often the states see universities as quasi government departments. I think there are unnecessary restrictions on commercial activities”, the Minister said.

The Minister might well be about to throw a match into an explosive situation developing on Australia's uni campuses. National Tertiary Education Union president Carolyn Allport has warned of national strike action at our universities: “Brendan Nelson is going to destabilise each institution in the country and his reforms will not get through because they are not useful or helpful.”

This determined stance deserves the support of the rest of the labour movement and the community. Nelson cannot claim any “mandate” for this post-election ambush. ☛



Zealots push their anti-abortion agenda

As of July 1 the Federal Government will have control of both houses of Parliament, the first time this has happened since 1981. It will then begin to rush through its anti-people agenda. It has made very clear this will include taking away the right of women to safe, affordable abortion.

The National Party Senators and the one Senator from the Christian fundamentalist Family First, who gained his seat on the back of preferences from Labor, have signaled they expect anti-abortion measures in exchange for backing the Government's broader agenda i.e. the sale of Telstra, anti-union laws etc.

abortion is a life style choice for women. But Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson was more forthright, claiming that the number of abortions had "got out of hand". Catholic Health Australia wants a national inquiry.

Anderson has called for the now standard bogus "debate". This government's track record on "debates" should set alarm bells ringing for those who support women's right to have control over their reproductive systems. "Debate" has been used by this Government as a means to push through its policy agenda.

For example, there was the "debate" on Indigenous rights during which the Government and its

This has been a mode of operation of Prime Minister John Howard, tied closely to the beating up of fear, a tactic at each election - from fear of asylum seekers, to fear of terrorism and, in the last election, fear of interest rates.

(This tactic, as we know, wasn't used when it came to the momentous decision to take the country to war. Masses of people came onto the streets to demonstrate their opposition to Australia joining the coalition of the killing. But no discussion was entered into as the Government secretly signed up to the USA's criminal invasion force.)

Indeed, Howard is using all the firepower available to him to push the anti-abortion agenda. Just when people may have thought they'd rid themselves of a religious zealot for a Governor General - the disgraced archbishop Peter Hollingworth - they now discover they have another in Major General Michael Jeffery who last week made a public statement supporting Health Minister Tony Abbott's beat up about abortion numbers.

What are the facts? The termination of a pregnancy is a medical procedure. As such it is, rightly, covered by Medicare. It is the states that legislate on abortion law. The law allows for an abortion if the pregnancy poses a threat to a woman's physical or mental health. One in three Australian women will undergo an abortion. Laws are restrictive after 12 to 14 weeks. Abortions are rare after 20 weeks.

commercial media mouthpieces went on with a lot of racist claptrap while the Government pushed through legislation taking away Indigenous rights.

Historically it is the religious right, with its disproportional political influence, that has pushed this medical procedure into the legal arena.

They are cloaking their intentions in soft language - "It's very important that this decision is not done lightheartedly", said Family First Senator Steve Fielding, as if



These are inevitably undertaken to protect the woman's health.

The only laws that should pertain to abortion are those pertaining to medical practice generally: privacy provisions, ethical obligations, malpractice laws etc.

Historically it is the religious right, with its disproportional political influence, that has pushed this medical procedure into the legal arena.

The lies that Abbott and others are peddling about abortion numbers will be used to make claims based on the values of religious fundamentalists, who, with a fundamen-

talist government in office, believe the time is right to ram home their objective of putting abortion out of reach for most women.

Their first step is to have it taken out of Medicare. If they succeed in their aims, essentially blocking women's access to legal terminations as has happened in the USA, it will not mean women will stop having abortions.

It will mean that women with enough money will pay to have safe medical procedures, and those who don't have the money will have dangerous and potentially fatal medical procedures. ☘

US to test WMDs in Australia

Last Friday the *Courier Mail* revealed that the US will test new-generation weapons, including smart bombs, on Australian territory under an agreement signed by the Howard Government with the US military for the establishment of three new military "training bases" in Australia last July. At the time Australian Defence Minister Robert

Hill said: "By creating a training environment in Australia to test and evaluate our forces in a wide range of scenarios, our countries should be better able to integrate our military capabilities to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

He spoke of Australia "... enhancing a number of our ranges, in particular the Shoalwater Bay

Training Area in Queensland, the Delamere Air Range in the Northern Territory and also the new Bradshaw Range in the Northern Territory. And we intend these ranges to be ultimately interlinked and with, as I said, instrumentation and simulation, both of our forces can take opportunities to train together to the highest possible standard."

These bases and Last Friday's revelations indicate that the new bases in Queensland and the Northern Territory are much more than mere "training bases".

According to former ANZUS advisor Ross Babbage, who has recently returned from strategy briefings at the Pentagon, the bases will be used to test new-generation weapons of mass destruction, including computer-controlled missiles (so-called "smart bombs") and carry out experiments in hi-tech warfare, including mock attacks from US aircraft carriers.

The Bradshaw Range would be used for extensive special operations by ground forces and surveillance training.

A new Joint Combined Training Centre would link the Australian centres with US bases and the US Pacific War Fighting Centre in Hawaii to provide real-time battlefield assessments.

Shoalwater Bay will be the site of Talisman Sabre in 2007, exercises involving more than 20,000 troops, live bombing raids, amphibious landings, sea manoeuvres and simulations.

Babbage is reported as saying that the program would place Australia among the highest-priority training grounds for the US in the world. He also spoke of the potential for the new bases to be used by the US to stage deployments to "hot spots" in this part of the world.

Denis Doherty, spokesperson for the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC), warned of the

dangers from Australia's increasing involvement in US war plans. "These developments threaten good neighbourly relations with the countries in our region. China has already called us the 'cat's claw' of the US. Security is built on good relations with our neighbours rather than cuddling up to the world's bully [the US]", he said.

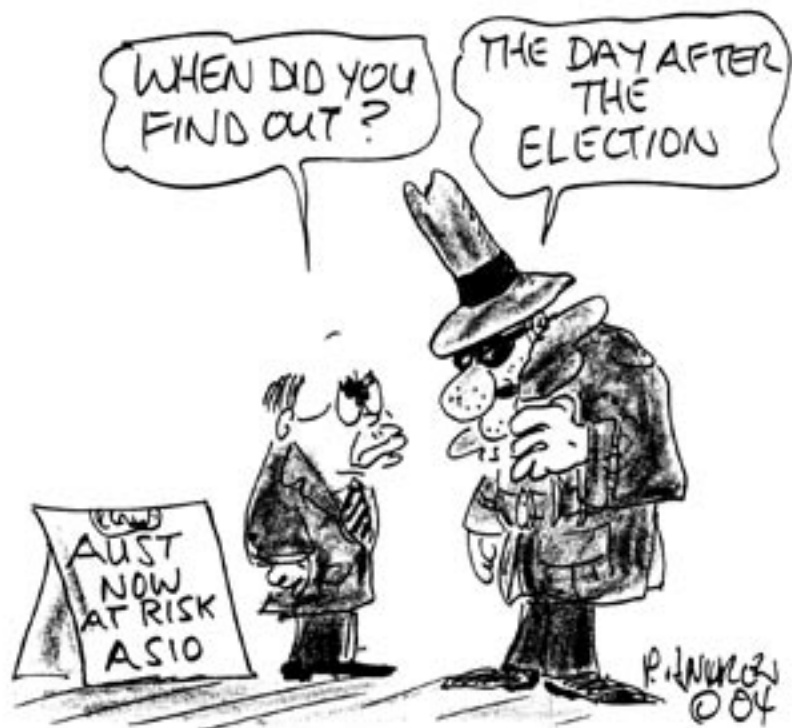
It can only raise new fears and suspicions, heighten the risk of terrorist attacks and further isolate Australia in the Asia-Pacific region.

The new bases also pose new dangers for the environment and local communities, particularly for Indigenous Australians whose land is yet again being used for testing with who knows what chemicals or even nuclear materials. The US has a very poor track record everywhere it has set up camp.

Many locals in Shoalwater Bay on the central Queensland coast were horrified when they heard about plans to extend the military presence there with a new joint training centre. The Shoalwater Bay region is an environmentally significant area, part of the Great Barrier Reef. It is home to the largest Dugong population in the Reef - the Dugongs are classified as a vulnerable species, and are found only in Australian waters.

Some saw the military presence as generating jobs and a means of gaining improved roads and services. But the testing of weapons adds a whole new dimension, posing additional dangers and increasing regional and local insecurity. ☘

Pete's Corner



Workers' action for mental health

Front line health, police and emergency workers are being forced off core duties to care for mental health patients and a new alliance has been formed to do something about it. A survey of more than 600 doctors, nurses, police, health, community services, and emergency workers revealed a lack of dedicated resources was causing problems for people living with mental illness and the workers left to pick up the pieces.

Survey results, released by the new Mental Health Workers' Alliance (MHWA), showed:

- More than 90 percent of police officers said caring for mentally ill people was affecting their ability to do core policing work;
- More than 80 percent of nurses estimated the occupancy rates of beds dedicated for mental health patients was 100 percent or above;

- More than 60 percent of doctors said they felt pressured to prematurely discharge mental health patients into the community and almost 70 percent were unable to find beds when needed in the past three months;
- Some 80 percent of ambulance officers, hospital registrars, social workers and other health and emergency workers listed bed avail-

"A failure to adequately resource the mental health sector is contributing to clogged emergency departments, an insufficient number of community and long-stay facilities, and overburdened police and emergency services."

ability, staffing, and resources as major issues impacting on care for mental illness sufferers.

As well as highlighting what is wrong with the mental health system the Mental Health Workers' Alliance has a plan for putting the problems right. As part of its Five Step Program for a Safer Mental Health System the Alliance is calling for:

1. Appropriate funding for mental health by increasing the mental

health proportion of the State health budget to at least 12 percent, as recommended by the Mental Health Council of Australia, and for mental health expenditure to be transparent and quarantined.

2. Better resourcing for long-term supported accommodation options for all people with mental illnesses, including homeless people.

3. Increasing the capacity of inpatient units and community ser-

vices to guarantee 24-hour access to those in need of treatment.

4. Appropriate crisis care, including 24-hour mental health expertise in emergency departments and community teams, to alleviate pressure on front line emergency services.

5. Addressing the problems of recruitment and retention in the sector by providing incentives to enter employment, enhancing access to training schemes, and providing support for learning and development opportunities.

Unions NSW Secretary John Robertson praised the Mental Health Workers' Alliance for coming together to ensure workers' voices on the issue would be heard.

"This study shows that government policies on mental health impact not just on those chiefly charged with caring for them but that it affects workers throughout the health and emergency fields.

"A failure to adequately resource the mental health sector is contributing to clogged emergency departments, an insufficient number of community and long-stay facilities, and overburdened police and emergency services."

The MHWA is a joint initiative of the Nurses Association, the Police Association, the Health Services Union, the Australian Services Association, and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation. ✪



Offshore protection for oil rig families

Victorian oil rig workers have opened an embassy to protect wives and families from attacks by contractors for a Texas-based multinational. In a move that is being strongly resisted by Gippsland based workers and their families, Esso, part of the Exxon-Mobil group, is attempting to shift workers onto a 14-day roster.

"Workers are already missing their kids' birthdays and grand finals", says John Parker from the Offshore Workers Embassy. "With this move, kids will start to miss their dad and rely on not having a dad around.

"It puts a huge strain on the family and the fathers get isolated."

Mr Parker says the Longford embassy is a place for oil rig workers and their families to bring their grievances, to get represented and to get information.

Contractors for Esso, including Lothways TBS Pty Ltd, are being pressured to fall in with the Esso

plan to shift from the current seven day on/seven day off arrangements to 14 days on/14 days off.

A move by Esso contractors Kellogg, Brown and Root and Corke Instrument Engineering to introduce a non-union collective agreement including the roster changes, was rejected when 96 percent of workers voted down the change in a secret ballot.

"This is yet another signal that these changes are unacceptable to working men, many of whom are fathers, who should not be forced to be away from the families for a fortnight each month", says Australian Workers' Union (AWU) National Secretary Bill Shorten.

An AWU survey earlier this year found 90 percent of workers' wives opposed the 14-day rosters.

Workers represented by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) and Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) have entered talks with a

conciliator in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

"The longer we're sitting around the campfire the more we're hearing about what workers employed by these contractors have to put up with", said the CFMEU's John Parker. "They are forced to share protective equipment, they are out in wet weather hanging over the ocean dealing with storms and sleeping four to a 14 x 14 foot room.

"Sharing these rooms with three other blokes for 14 days would not be pleasant."

Mr Parker said one worker described oilrig conditions as "like a prison ship".

The Embassy is also investigating allegations of workers being exposed to asbestos on ESSO oil platforms.

The embassy has erected a Christmas tree and is vowing to stay until problems are resolved. ✪

Shearers call for sedated super rams

Shearers are being advised to give big, dangerous rams a miss when farmers refuse to have the beasts sedated. The Australian Workers' Union (AWU) state President and long-time shearers, Mick Madden, issued the advice as the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) dug in its heels against calls to have rams, some as big as 170kg, sedated for shearing.

"This is an OHS issue and a serious one", Mr Madden said. "Shearers should assess the rams they are confronted with and where they are big and dangerous, insist on sedation, or refuse to shear them on health and safety grounds.

"Selective breeding means some of these animals are 50 percent bigger than they were 20 years ago but shearers haven't been put through the same program.

"All this is compounded by the

ageing of the shearing population. Farmers will pay for fitter, healthier animals but they won't pay the wages needed to attract younger people into the industry.

"Shearing is a dangerous industry, by its nature, and some of these rams multiply that problem."

The AWU says specifically-bred super rams are now twice as heavy as many shearers. On the basis that the average sheep run carries 20-50 rams, the union estimates farmers could sedate for a top figure of \$25 a session.

Sedation, prior to shearing, has been carried out safely on sheep properties in WA and New Zealand. The AWU says reports from those users suggest injections affect animals for about an hour and have no side effects.

However, National Farmers' Federation officials were doing the

rounds of bush media outlets, railing against the prospect of sedation.

Madden, who was once knocked out by a ram in a NSW holding pen, says the NFF's response highlights the need for shearers to protect their own health and livelihoods.

"Every time there is a move to attract younger people to the industry, they argue incapacity to pay, then spend the rest of their time complaining that youngsters don't want to shear their sheep.

"Now we have the NSW Farmers' Federation arguing that shearers should live in tents. "Shearers should take this matter into their own hands. They can't afford to be injured, their families can't afford it and, despite what the Farmers' Federation might think, wool growers can't afford to lose them either." ✪

Visy workers' victory

Visy Industries agreed to a single national agreement, incorporating industry standard wage rises, hours before Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) members were due to walk off 13 sites around Australia. The packaging giant, headed by billionaire Richard Pratt, agreed to fold two existing EBAs into a single document, featuring annual wage movements of 4.75 percent, at 11th hour talks in Melbourne last week.

AMWU industrial officer, Juliana Dickinson, called the agreement a "major victory" for 600 workers who had waged a three-month campaign.

They had given notice of indefinite action at sites in Queensland, NSW, WA and Victoria.

"Solidarity, and commitment to collective action has delivered one agreement", said Ms Dickinson. "Strong and disciplined leadership by our delegates around the country was the key to securing it.

"Everyone welcomes Visy's change of heart and is looking forward to a more co-operative relationship in the future."

Initially, Visy refused to dis-

cuss the national agreement claim, voted for at meetings on all its sites. Instead, it ran ballots, offering bonuses to individuals if they would break ranks and pick up single-site, non-union agreements that offered less than the 4.75 percent signed off on by major competitors Amcor and Carter Holt Harvey.

That strategy came to a halt after the proposal was rolled by ballots at TPC Smithfield, Visy Board, Warwick Farm; Visy Board, Dandenong; Visy Paper, Smithfield; Visy Board, O'Connor (WA); and TPC, Kewdale (WA).

Last week's early-morning meeting brought agreement on the single document, wage movements and increased redundancy entitlements.

Ms Dickinson said the "nuts and bolts" of bringing the existing documents together would take place next week.

"This is a great result because it gives Visy employees the best chance of defending their wages and conditions in what could be uncertain times", she said. "They have already proved that standing together works." ✪



A new CPA badge

with the official CPA logo in yellow outlined in black on a red background. Light weight, 3 cm x 1.5 cm, iron stamped, soft enamel with plating & butterfly clutch on back.

Cost: \$5 each plus \$1 p&packing. For CPA branches ordering 20 or more badges, the cost is \$4 each plus \$4 postage and packing. Please send orders with payment Make cheques payable to "CPA Port Jackson Branch" to: CPA Port Jackson Branch, PO Box 40, Glebe NSW 2037. (No cash or credit card payments.)

Tobacco retailers prey on children

Governments should move to get all tobacco products out of sight and should register all tobacco dealers to improve regulation and enforcement, says Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Australia.

ASH was responding to the release of a three-year survey by the NSW Health Department and the Cancer Council of NSW that shows smoking rates increasing for girls between the ages of 12 and 15.

said they had never been asked to provide identification proving their age.

"This survey shows 'self-regulation' isn't working to protect children from being illegally supplied cigarettes in shops", says ASH Chief Executive Anne Jones. "There will always be unscrupulous tobacco dealers who have a long track record of pitching their product to kids, despite laws banning sales to children."

which oppose more regulation – including storing tobacco displays out of sight.

"As a result", says Anne Jones, "there are more than a quarter of a million Australian school kids puffing away weekly – and another forty thousand taking it up every year."

A report to the federal government has recommended a registration scheme for all tobacco dealers. The benefits would include a self-funded education program, improved enforcement of laws, including penalties and loss of licence for anyone who sells to children.

"We need to put the health of children ahead of the vested interests of tobacco dealers, including Coles and Woolworths. These recommendations will not inconvenience smokers wanting access to tobacco."

"We call on governments to improve the health of children and teenagers by introducing registration schemes for all tobacco dealers and requiring tobacco displays to be stored out of sight in all retail outlets." ☘

"We need to put the health of children ahead of the vested interests of tobacco dealers, including Coles and Woolworths."

The survey also revealed 22 percent of teenagers were buying cigarettes freely from shops, including supermarkets and petrol stations; and a third of the child respondents

While some governments register tobacco dealers to help stamp out law breakers, other states including NSW have buckled to pressure from retailer associations



Union reaches in principle agreement with Qantas

The Flight Attendants Association of Australia, with the assistance of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, has signed a memorandum of understanding with international airline Qantas.

Although the agreement has to be ratified by postal ballot, the union has strongly recommended that their members vote for the deal.

Key features of the agreement include:

- A 3 percent per annum pay increase for each of the three years of the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA).
- The removal of the Pay Equalisation review clause from the

last EBA that could have resulted in a pay cut.

• The removal of the roster review clause from the last EBA that could have resulted in changes to the seniority-based preferential bid system.

• A new Divisional Flying Agreement with Qantas that provides for the Commission to conciliate, and in the event that the conciliation is not successful, for private arbitration by the Commission of any disputes.

• One flight per day for Australian based crews to London. This will not be date limited.

• A cap on overseas based crew. This cap does not have an expiry

date like the current EBA and continues for the life of the Agreement.

• The union has received assurances from the Company that the flight attendants employed on 11-month fixed term contracts will be considered for other positions within the Qantas Group when their contract expires, subject to there being suitable positions available.

In a statement the Flight Attendants Association said: "We do not believe that this agreement would have been possible without the very public support and solidarity of our membership. We are very proud and grateful for the support that you have given us." ☘

Bush's phoney "political capital"

from page 1

For example, Bush will push for:

• Tax reform – "to make the tax code simpler for taxpayers, encourage saving and investment and improve the economy's ability to create jobs and raise wages". Encouraging savings and investment actually means tax cuts for the rich and corporate sector. Creating jobs means lower wages. Bush's first term record show that he cares little for creating jobs, and less for raising wages.

• Health care – "President Bush will call for a community health center in every poor county in America." Nobody may answer but you can bet there will be plenty more poor counties by 2008 if Bush gets his way.

• Welfare reform – Bush wants to build on the success of previous "reform", "strengthening families and helping more welfare recipients achieve independence through work". He wants to create "Opportunity Zones, which will encourage public and private investment and provide priority consideration for Federal benefits

to communities that are under economic hardship." The same old story – kick more people off social security and onto the resources of struggling families or into pitifully low-paying jobs. Faith-based charities will get a bigger share of the welfare action once Bush has ensured they can participate "without discrimination".

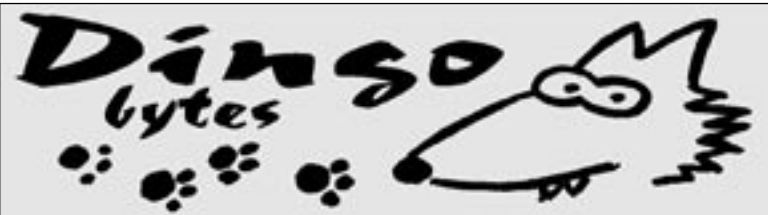
• Judges – "President Bush will continue to appoint to the Federal Courts well-qualified judges who share his commitment to strictly interpret the law". Bush is set to stack the Supreme Court with right-wingers, not only to enshrine his "hang 'em high" policies but also to get support for more unpopular legislation. High on the list are outlawing abortion, gay marriages and stem cell research and possibly the introduction of conscription.

• Intelligence Reform – Bush will appoint a new National Intelligence Director to coordinate the Administration's "anti-terrorism" intelligence gathering. Howard actually got in before Bush with introducing this one.

• "Defending American Lives and Liberty" – "President Bush will

continue to lead a worldwide coalition to fight terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home." (GOP Agenda) There will be no let up in the US-led drive to secure resources and markets for favoured transnational corporations. Bush is not dissuaded by the mounting US death toll in Iraq or the appalling cost in Iraqi civilian lives. Nor is he concerned at the record budget deficit and social consequences his wanton policies have produced.

The American people have also got a long period of tense struggle ahead of them. There will be pressure on the Democrats to move further to the right to try to steal some of the religious right vote off the Republicans. Support for Kerry and the Democrats from progressive US voters comes about in large part because they are a "less bad" option for workers and other exploited people. The support offered even on this basis would evaporate if the Democrats neglected their interests further to chase the unlikely support of extremist religious voters. The ALP would do well to take note of the parallels with Australia's recent experience. ☘



Staff at the ABC's *Gardening Australia* program have refused to co-operate with management as it proceeds with plans to shift the production of the program from Hobart to Melbourne. Apparently the ABC is planning to replace the popular gardening program with other as yet unspecified shows. Staff have resolved to resist management's attempt to dump the program. They also said in a statement that they would not take part in other program planning, either.

Still on the ABC, an Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) inquiry has dismissed complaints, mainly by former Federal Communications Minister Richard Alston, of bias in the Iraq war. The inquiry followed a referral of 68 examples of so-called anti-American bias to the ABC's internal complaints executive. Most of these complaints, according to the ABC's *Media Watch*, were made against the *AM* current affairs radio program. Overall the ABA found that the *AM* program was balanced in its coverage.

Five children are left without their mother after the High Court supported the Howard Government in its determination to forcibly deport her to Fiji. Plans to deport two of the children failed after the High Court granted an injunction pending the outcome of a citizenship case (both children were born in Australia). The Government argued in court that the children were not Australian citizens because they are under the age of 10. Lawyers for the children have asked the court to grant them citizenship because they were born and raised in Australia. No doubt about the big-hearted, pro-family credentials of this Federal Government!

The election of Family First Senator Steve Fielding on Labor Party preferences is outrageous, according to Greens Senator Bob Brown. "This is a perverse result with Labor's preferences cutting out the Greens David Ristrom and electing the far right Family First instead", Senator Brown said. "Labor cheated on its own voters, most of whom had no idea of this deal, to elect a Howard backstop rather than a progressive Senator like David Ristrom."

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is Australian Army chief, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy. According to the General the Australian public can look forward to real life scenes of blood in the streets like those depicted in the film *Black Hawk Down*. In an address to the right-wing Sydney Institute he announced that the army is in the process of exploring a boost to its mechanical forces. "We seek a development path that will transform the army from a light infantry to a light armoured force", he said. General Leahy also outlined three other major areas of change. Those include an influx of new high tech communications, training and education, and "improvements" to the Army Reserve to make it more teenager friendly. He didn't use the word "conscripted", but you get the idea.

The insecurity of the American Empire

The former Chinese vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, writing in *China Daily* says that changes in the world's structure in the 20th century were mainly brought about by war. In this century, two world-wide wars, namely, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, broke out. The world has not been clearly reconfigured since the end of the Cold War which signalled the collapse of a two-polar structure in the world.

For some time after the Cold War ended, the United States itself was not entirely sure of where its main threats came from – whether from the still destructive nuclear stockpile left over by the Soviet Union, or China's rapid development, or from somewhere else.

For a certain period after the end of the Cold War, the United States focused its main energies on developing new kinds of weapons and building a missile defence shield to overpower its potential strategic rivals. In 1999, the world's sole superpower waged the Kosovo War to consolidate its dominance in Europe and advance its strategic influence towards Russia. In 2000, George W Bush claimed China was a strategic competitor of the United States in one of his presidential campaign speeches.

All the blustering was a clear signal of the US' uncertainty over who was its main foe.

The September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, however, greatly shocked the United States. Even in the Pearl Harbour incident of December 7, 1941, the US mainland was free from direct attacks from Japan although its Pacific Fleet suffered heavy losses.

The September 11 event shows that the biggest threat to the US homeland is neither big powers with sophisticated weapons, nor its alleged strategic adversaries, but irregularly-based terrorist organisations.

Challenges

Facing such unprecedented challenges, the US Bush administration substantially adjusted its global strategy, aimed at not dealing with threats from strategic rivals, but

from terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In the wake of September 11, the "Bush Doctrine" came out, in which the United States created "axis of evil" and "pre-emptive" strategies. It linked counter-terrorism and the prevention of proliferation to the reformation of so-called "rogue states" and "failed states".

Under this doctrine, the United States launched two military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq within two years. It reviewed the structure of the US military forces, and drafted programs for redeployment of US forces overseas.

Under this doctrine, the United States has tightened its control of the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, strengthened its response ability to this outstretched "unstable arc," and put forward its "Big Middle East" reform program.

It all testifies that Washington's anti-terror campaign has already gone beyond the scope of self-defence.

These latest moves, when seen on the background of the Gulf War and the Kosovo War, have made it obvious that the United States has not changed its Cold War mentality and that the country is still accustomed to applying military means to deal with various threats, visible or invisible.

The philosophy of the "Bush Doctrine" is in essence force. It advocates the United States should rule over the whole world with overwhelming force, military force in particular.

Hardly strange, then, that Bush and his administration still insist on arguing that their decision to go to war in Iraq and US policy on the issue were right.

But the world's situation in response to the war is in effect a negative answer. In Iraq, the United States did win a war in the military dimension, but it is far from winning peace for itself and the Arab country.

Pandora's Box

On the contrary, Washington has opened a Pandora's Box, intensifying various intermingled conflicts, such as ethnic and religious ones.

The US case in Iraq has caused

the Muslim world and Arab countries to believe that the superpower already regards them as targets of its ambitious "democratic reformation" program. This perception has increasingly aggravated the long-brewing conflicts between the United States and the Muslim world.

Now, Washington's predicament in Iraq has become daily news.

On June 28, the White House hurried to transfer Iraq's power to the country's interim government. But the handover was of more nominal than practical significance. Currently, 150,000 US troops are still deep in the Iraq quagmire, and the death toll steadily increases.

The Iraq War has made the United States even more unpopular in the international community than its war in Viet Nam. Bush did not even dare to meet the public on the streets when he visited Britain, the closest ally of the United States.

From US pre-war military preparations to post-war reconstruction of the country [Iraq], the rift between the United States and its traditional European allies has never been so wide.

It is now time to give up the illusion that Europeans and Americans are living in the same world, as some Europeans would like to believe.



The Iraq issue also became a heated topic during the US presidential election [campaign]. Over the past year, some American think-tanks and politicians have had soul-searching reflections on the issue and made their criticisms.

Many of them believe that the Bush administration did not objectively and clearly assess challenges and difficulties facing the United States when it applied the pre-emptive strategy. In so doing, the administration was only practising the same catastrophic strategy applied by former empires in history.

Demise

Both history and practice of "the myth of empires" have demonstrated that the pre-emptive strategy will bring the Bush administration an outcome that it is most unwilling to see, that is, the absolute insecurity of the "American Empire" and its demise because of expansion it cannot cope with.

The paradox of the US force theory is that the world's politics have already changed, and even for the world's most powerful country, it is impossible to realise its key goals merely through its own strength, just like that by the ancient Roman Empire.

[US] unilateralism has seriously

underestimated the role a country's soft power and international systems can play, thus denting important means that Washington can apply to practise its new national security strategy.

The Iraq war was an optional war, not a necessary one, and the pre-emptive principle should be removed from the dictionary of the US national security. Even former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said so.

The Iraq War has also destroyed the hard-won global anti-terror coalition. Mounting hostile sentiments among the Muslim world towards the United States following the war have already helped the al-Qaida terrorist network recruit more followers and suicide martyrs. Instead of reducing, the number of terrorist activities throughout the world is now on the increase.

The US' call for help from the United Nations (UN) for Iraq's post-war reconstruction work once again shows that in the current world, unilateralism is not appropriate in solving international affairs.

The Iraq War provides another negative example of international relations in the new century.

In an increasingly interdependent world, in which the benefits of every country have been closely intertwined, the damages a war can cause will be far more than the benefits it can bring. No superpower can possibly force the international community into accepting its own norms merely by displaying its military muscle.

Arrogance

The current US predicament in Iraq serves as another example that when a country's psychological superiority is inflated beyond its real capability, a lot of trouble can be caused.

But the troubles and disasters the United States has met do not stem from threats by others, but from its own cocksureness and arrogance.

The 21st century is not the "American Century". That does not mean that the United States does not want the dream. Rather, it is incapable of realising the goal.

In this century, all big powers should compete in a peaceful way, instead of by military means.

Xinhua News Agency

'State of Working America' looks bleak

David Eisenhower

The Economic Policy Institute's report on "The State of Working America 2004/2005" paints a bleak picture of weak labour markets, a drop in real wages and a decline in job quality.

Bush's plan to boost job creation is to give millionaires a tax cut averaging US\$123,000. And this is on top of his earlier tax cuts to the wealthiest one percent. This will run up government debt by an unsustainable US\$5 trillion over the next 10 years, according to economists Peter Orszag, Robert Rubin and Allen Sinai.

Bush's tax policies accelerate a larger trend, which has doubled the share of national wealth owned by the richest one percent, while

promoting income inequality, report Edward Wolff and Jared Bernstein. The result, they write, is to "leave the country more class-bound, less democratic, more riven by wealth and income gaps that mean people's life opportunities are unequal."

Wolff and Bernstein cite other factors promoting deeper inequality: falling levels of unionisation, corporate globalisation, a declining minimum wage, lower taxes on corporations, a sharp increase in military spending and a leap in compensation for the top executives.

To survive, families have taken on more debt, with the ratio of household debt to disposable income reaching 108.3 percent.

Low interest rates have fuelled a housing bubble, sharply increasing home equity. In the process \$4

trillion was "created" in what Dean Baker at the Center of Economic and Policy Research calls "bubble wealth". This nest egg was tapped to sustain levels of consumption, buying some economic time. But as Baker points out, "There is no doubt that the housing bubble will burst."

Team Bush is determined to make "working America" absorb all the costs. As the study by the Economic Policy Institute reports, the resultant policies mean a sharp increase in the number of working poor, a reduction in unemployment benefits, a minimum wage kept below the poverty line, a continuing shift of manufacturing jobs overseas, union busting, more part-time work, less overtime pay, fewer benefits, elimination of company

pension plans, the disproportionate concentration of Black and Hispanic workers in poverty level jobs, maintenance of the gender gap, and acceleration of the concentration of wealth.

It is the condition of working America that is inspiring demands for universal health care; a national living wage; protection and enhancement of Social Security to make it immune from privatisation; employer provided pensions; an end to NAFTA, MAI and FTAA; the guaranteed right to organise and the repeal of all anti-labour legislation; fully funded public education; an end to the criminalization of poverty; progressive taxation; urban reconstruction; and much more.

People's Weekly World

Slaves do not vote

Spomenka Deretic

How are people called whose houses are torched with impunity, whose children are killed with impunity, whose women are abducted, who cannot move freely, whose labour fruits and holy shrines are being destroyed and who have their homeland taken from them? Some call them Kosmet (shorthand for Kosovo and Metohija and part of Serbia). I call them Serbian slaves, because Albanians and their tutors (KFOR and UMNİK – the UN occupying military forces) have taken everything from them, except the right to vote.

Serbs have for a long time now lost faith in the European Union and her Big Brother form across the Atlantic. They have also lost any hope that they would bring them anything good.

It was only normal, therefore, that Serbs did not go out to vote for the Kosmet Assembly. They could not give legitimacy to the creation of one more Albania on the territory of their country.

We can also understand the frustration of the European Union and of her Big Brother. No liar likes to be told that s/he is a liar – including Brussels and Washington. They do not like it when people, even when it is the demonised Serbs, shows them that they see through their deceit. Kosmet is officially under the protection of the “International community” and NATO, but in essence it is controlled by the Albanian narco-dealers and terrorists who are masked in the clothes of businessmen and politicians.

Serbs owned the majority of the land in Kosmet before the arrival of the Western occupation forces in 1999. Now after more than 300,000 Serbs have been driven out, they still own one half of the Kosmet land. Serbian land, houses, their monasteries and churches which have stood since the Middle Ages are being systematically destroyed by the Albanians. This is being looked upon kindly by both KFOR and UMNİK.

Recently the representative of the Baptist community from New York, former American sportsman Michael Faucner visited Kosmet. Astonished by the destructive barbarism of the Albanians, he stated while kneeling in front of the ruins of the Devich monastery: “This is racism of the kind I have never seen before, racism of the white man toward another white man”.

Faucner is an Afro-American and knows well what racism is. Albanian racism does not bother the military occupiers.

Sometimes I ask myself: Is not Kosmet an experimental polygon for the future enslavement and destruction of many states and people who hinder America and its ambition to remain the only superpower in the world?

Representatives of KFOR and UMNİK in Kosmet are well paid in order to snatch from one sovereign country, Serbia, the richest part of its territory and to drive its Serbian citizens away. I even think that many “officials” of KFOR and UMNİK are handsomely corrupted by additional resources coming from the Albanian narco-dealers, sometimes in the form of money and sometimes, as in the case of Michael Schtiner, in the form of Albanian brides with big dowries.

After the first euphoria of the Albanian population inspired by the terrorists of the “Kosovo Liberation Army” and NATO, ordinary Albanians began to gain consciousness.

Even Albanians did not rush out in great numbers to vote for their Parliament. This surprised Western commentators, having in mind that Albanians, as the national minority in Serbia, are being offered independence of the Serbian Province of Kosovo and Metohija through



Protest in Britain at the time of the US-led war on Yugoslavia

secession and without ever asking the State whose Province this is a part.

After the first euphoria of the Albanian population inspired by the terrorists of the “Kosovo Liberation Army” and NATO, ordinary Albanians began to gain consciousness.

For the four years during which

Today in Kosmet, 60 percent of the working-aged Albanian population is unemployed, poverty is enormous and only criminalised groups have good living standards. The situation in Kosmet is particularly burdened by the inflow of several hundred thousand Albanian immigrants who have occupied the flats, houses and land of the Serbs they have driven out. Accustomed to plunder they have begun to even attack the Kosmet Albanian population.

Kosmet is slowly but surely becoming a powder keg. This was also probably the intention of Euro-Atlantic allies. I think that Big Brother from across the Atlantic gave the European Union a kind of Trojan horse present – an unstable region that can explode at any moment.

If Kosmet gains independence, the fire will consume Macedonia, Greece and Bulgaria as well. I can bet that it will then become the Third Balkan war.

Americans support Albanian wishes for the creation of another Albania on the territory of the Balkans. This was persistently demonstrated by the Democratic Party and the Clinton administration while in the White House. Albanian terrorists clothed as Kosmet politicians were pets of the Democrat Madeline Allbright.

Hashim Thachi, (Albanian terrorist leader) returned his love to the American Democrats. During the Convention of Democratic Party in Boston Thachi enthusiastically sup-

ported the candidacy of John Kerry for the presidency of the USA. There was money to bribe with, the money gained mostly through selling drugs to American children.

Albanians who are American citizens have invested huge funds into Kerry’s campaign. According to the estimate of the FBI “Albanians are running almost all criminal businesses in bigger US cities, and especially in New York. They substituted themselves for the Italian Mafia, only much ruder and conspiratorial so that it is almost impossible to infiltrate agents into their organisations of the nostra type”.

Clinton’s administration emboldened Albanian terrorists in Kosovo and Metohija to develop pretensions toward the territories of other Balkan states in which Albanian minorities live. As a kind of collateral damage the US has received a well organised Mafia on its own territory. It will never be able to be ascertained with certainty how many Albanians from the Balkans settled in the US.

In the same manner in which they falsified hundreds of thousands of personal documents in Kosovo and Metohija, I suppose with certainty that they have already falsified very many documents before and after entering the USA.

It is clear why they will vote Kerry, since by voting for him, the Soros lobby will rule the USA, including Allbright and Clark. They have dug a powder keg in Kosovo and Metohija and the fuse can be easily lit. ☺

The myth of social partnership

Tom Curphey (MUSAA)*

The capitalist class in this country continues to enjoy maximum profits while many workers are finding it very hard just to exist.

Figures reported in the *Financial Review* point to a record year for the majority of companies with an overall return on capital of 24 percent.

In the transport and storage industry gross operating profits were up 29% Mining profits were up 17.5%.

During this period wage increases for workers in unions increased a mere 4.6% while non unionists fared even worse.

Unemployment at a conservative estimate is around 5.6% with youth unemployment a lot more than that figure, and no immediate prospects in the future for those leaving school.

ACTU figures reveal that 28 percent of the workforce is either casual or part-time with over 600,000 part-timers looking for longer hours to try and make a living wage.

Those, including advocates of social democracy, who say that

there is no class struggle are deluding themselves and still worse influencing other working people.

The ACTU adheres to the “trickle down” theory although not in so many words. If this is the prevailing view of the ACTU it will explain why they are reluctant to start a campaign to repeal the penal provisions in the various anti-worker acts. This theory relies on a tame cat union movement where the boss and the worker are in a “social partnership” where it is preached that the worker and the boss have common aims and the more the boss profits the more the benefits to the worker.

The objective reality is that there are two main classes in society, the capitalist class and the working class.

The capitalist class make their profit by exploiting the labour of the working class. The workers produce more values than they get paid for. This is the source of the boss’s profit.

As we have already stated record profits are now the norm with a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the capitalist class. Any talk of “social partnership” is a

myth and seeks to obscure this reality, and divert the workers from the struggle for a better future.

How will this “social partnership” work when we have the stated aim of Prime Minister Howard for “flexible workplaces free of rigidity in the industrial relations system and unwanted union interference”.

The neo-conservatives’ future for workers is bleak indeed where industrial relations will be rolled back to conditions prevailing at the start of this century, to the days of the master and servant. This is some “social partnership”!

The workers have two alternatives before them – capitulation or struggle. This question will have to be confronted by the trade unions faced with the employers’ agenda backed up by Howard’s anti-worker legislation now before the Senate.

The problem will not go away but can be combatted by a unified union movement which rejects “social partnership” and has its own strategy and aims and is prepared to struggle to attain its objectives.

*Maritime Unionists Socialist Activities Association
Acknowledgement to
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BOOK EARLY – SEATS ARE LIMITED

Haiti Priest's arrest highlights repression

Tim Pelzer

Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a Roman Catholic priest, pro-democracy activist, former Lavalas government cabinet minister and defender of the poor, was arrested by Haitian police on October 13, becoming the latest victim of the unfolding wave of repression that is washing over the country.

Police surrounded the Church of Saint Claire in the poor neighbourhood of Petite Place Cazeau in Port-au-Prince, where Jean-Juste is pastor, and arrested him on the relatively trivial charge of disorderly conduct. Bystanders reported that police beat and then dragged Jean-Juste through shattered glass and placed him into a waiting police car. Police then shot into the assembled crowd, wounding three children who had been waiting for a parish food distribution.

"When we saw the police start to hit the priest with their guns, we started to yell for help", said Erseline Louis, 14, who was shot in the leg. "They started firing their guns and I was running to hide when I got shot."

Jean-Juste has publicly demanded that the US-installed government

allow deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to return to the country to finish his presidential mandate, which expires in 2006. He has also condemned the violent repression unleashed by the current regime in Haiti, headed by former Miami businessman Gerard Latortue.

William P Quigley, a law professor from Loyola University in New Orleans who is in Haiti to advise Jean-Juste's lawyers, said that Jean-Juste has still not been brought before a judge as required by law, and is being kept in inhuman conditions.

Furthermore, while the police said Jean-Juste was merely brought in for disorderly conduct and for questioning, the justice minister said he was arrested for importing weapons, even though no arms were found, and for inciting the recent violence that has rocked the country.

Jean-Juste denies that he engaged in any criminal activity and said that his arrest is a desperate ploy by the government "to frighten people into silence who they believe do not support them". He joins the growing list of Haitians who have been jailed by the new government,

including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, the former minister of interior and the former mayor of Port-au-Prince. According to Quigley, none of them have been given trial dates.

A human rights monitor based in Haiti, who wished to remain anonymous, told the *People's Weekly World Newspaper* that the repression "has really intensified" over the last several weeks. Government forces and former members of the disbanded military are arresting, killing and "disappearing" more people than ever, she said.

"The international community, the Haitian and international media, and Haitian and international human rights organisations are responsible for what is happening right now", the monitor said. "They have made it clear that they will not condemn violations of human rights and, as a result, the government and the irregular armed [groups] working with it know that they can carry out any violence against the population without any interference."

She said Haitians perceive the United Nations peacekeepers as an occupying force because of their unwillingness to provide security to average Haitians and



their acquiescence to many human rights violations committed by the government.

Speaking of the regular police raids into neighbourhoods known for their support of Aristide and his Lavalas Party, she said, "The UN hasn't been entering into the neighbourhoods with the police, but has been resting at the outside. This is a problem because the most serious abuses occur inside the neighbourhoods."

She remarked that there is some armed resistance to the repression

but is unsure to what extent and its level of organisation. "I am hearing people say, 'I am going to die anyway so I might as well die defending a cause.'"

Many Haitians, she said, see the current period as worse than the period of the 1991-1994 coup. "Then the government was not recognised by the international community, whereas now it has full diplomatic recognition, is being supported militarily, and is receiving bilateral and multilateral aid."

People's Weekly World ☪

Israeli CP denounces Sharon's Gaza plan

Mark Almbert

On the same day that the Israeli parliament, or Knesset, voted 67-45 to support Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip, the leader of the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) denounced the plan as a manoeuvre to block and "bury the very idea" of an independent Palestinian state.

Issam Makhoul, CPI General Secretary, said the October 26 vote authorises a plan that, if implemented, "will turn all of the Gaza Strip into one big prison camp, dominated on all sides from the air, sea and land by the Israeli army". Instead of ending the 37-year occupation, the plan will allow Israel

to intervene in Gaza anytime it likes and simultaneously "disclaim any responsibility as the occupying power for the daily conditions of life Palestinians in Gaza living under Israeli occupation".

At the same time, Makhoul said, the plan will give Sharon the means to tighten Israel's grip on the occupied West Bank, facilitate the creation of apartheid-like "bantustans" for Palestinians, win international support for the occupation, and even win approval of parts of the Israeli peace camp for his policies.

Sharon proposes to close 21 Israeli settlements in Gaza and evacuate 8200 Jewish settlers in the summer of 2005. Settler families are to be compensated with packages ranging from US\$100,000 to

US\$500,000 each. About 1.3 million Palestinians live in the Gaza Strip under conditions of extreme poverty.

Four small Jewish settlements, comprising a few hundred settlers, are also to be dismantled in the northern West Bank, although 240,000 Jewish settlers will remain there. The West Bank is a much larger and resource-rich territory.

The Knesset vote was preceded by 17 hours of acrimonious debate over the plan, with ultranationalists, the religious right, and nearly half of Sharon's own Likud Party ultimately voting against it. Some accused Sharon of being a traitor for offering to "give up" even one inch of land.

Ironically, Sharon drew decisive support from his traditional opponents – the Labour Party and the more dovish parties, which cited the closing of any Gaza settlements as a positive development. Some peace activists shared this view.

For example, Gush Shalom, a predominantly Jewish peace group, called the Knesset vote "a great victory for the peace camp" and as a rejection of "the ideology of the settlers". It called for holding Sharon to his promise about carrying out the withdrawal.

The parliamentary deputies of the Democratic Front from Peace and Equality, Hadash-Ta'al, which includes the CPI, decided to abstain rather than vote against Sharon's plan. While they restated their opposition to the plan, they said they did not want to risk contributing to a right-wing parliamentary victory.

People's Weekly World ☪

Japan Protests against US military flights

On October 14, Okinawa's Ginowan City Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution protesting against the US Marine Corps' resumption of CH53D helicopter flights – the same type of helicopter that crashed into a building at Okinawa State University on August 13.

According to *Japan Press Weekly*, the resolution criticised the US forces for resuming the flights without providing area residents with a convincing plan to protect the population from accidents in the future, and in disregard of the shock many residents experienced as a result of the August crash.

The city assembly called for an immediate halt to US flights over residential areas and urged the early removal of the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station. It also strongly protested the central government's approval of the renewed flights.

Also in mid-October, the Zama City Assembly unanimously protested against the planned relocation of the US Army 1st Corps Command which covers the whole Asian-Pacific region up to the east coast of Africa, to the US Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture.

The resolution pointed out that the relocation would violate the Japan-US Security Treaty under which US forces in Japan are supposed to cover the "Far East" areas. Welcoming the resolution, Nakazawa Kunio, chair

of the Japanese Communist Party Assembly Member group, declared, "Mayors of both Zama and Sagami, cities which host the base, have expressed opposition to the plan. We will struggle until the plan is lifted, hand in hand with Zama's mayor, assembly and citizens."

The Okinawa helicopter crash brought some 30,000 protesters into the streets in the island's largest recent demonstration. Residents have long objected to the US military presence on the island, and for the last seven years have effectively blocked plans to replace the Futenma facility with a new base offshore.

In April, residents started a sit-in against the new base, which was joined by thousands of demonstrators including some from as far away as South Korea and the US.

Also on October 13, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution protesting two other incidents involving US aircraft – an October 4 mid-air collision involving an F-15 fighter, and the parts from a FA-18 that fell on Chatan Town last June. The resolution demanded a thorough investigation of the incidents, suspension of F-15 and FA-18 flights until measures are in place to prevent accidents, and cuts and reorganisation of US bases and forces on Okinawa.

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:

**Saturday, 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)

Historic left victory in Uruguay

While the media has been flooded with news of the re-election of George W Bush as President of the US, not much has been recorded about the truly momentous developments taking place in Uruguay. A few days before the disastrous US results, Tabaré Vázquez was elected President of the Latin American country. The success of the left candidate ends 174 years of the monopoly on power by the ruling class National and Colorado parties and continues the strong trend in the region towards progressive governments.

Vázquez, a doctor by profession, is the leader of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) – a coalition of 11 communist, socialist and other progressive organisations established in 1971. His candidacy was also backed by Encuentro Progressista (Progressive Encounter) and Nueva Mayoría (New Majority). He won 55 percent of the vote, eclipsing the figures for the National Party (37 percent) and the Colorado Party (11 percent).

Underscoring the victory of the left forces, a referendum to insert public control of the water supply in the constitution was passed by over 60 per cent of voters. The previous government had already sent a letter of intention to the International Monetary Fund promising to extend private ownership over these vital services. Uruguay now joins South

Africa in moving to outlaw the private ownership of water.

The new President's election was greeted with festive gatherings on the streets of Montevideo. Uruguayan author and social commentator Eduardo Galeano told a Brazilian daily "Vázquez is not a demagogue. He took the right way. He was not an important govern-

ment official and built his career in the neighbourhoods." Galeano believes that Vázquez will turn around the situation of a wonderful country reduced to ruins and sadness. He expressed his confidence that Vázquez will see to it that Uruguay "will not be a factory of poor anymore".

A statement from the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Uruguay saluted the "great and true creators of the resounding victory – the people of Uruguay". The International Relations Department rejected claims from the foreign press that the victory was "easy". General Secretary Marina Arismendi was quoted as saying that victory had

problematic ties with the regional MERCOSUR economic pact. Uruguay will seek to renegotiate its debts and the price of its agricultural products. Relations with Cuba are set to be re-established.

Venezuela's President Chávez sent a message of congratulations to Tabaré Vázquez on his convincing win. He welcomed his "comrade, friend and fellow fighter" to the "front line in the battle for justice for the people". On the same day as the historic vote in Uruguay, the popularity of Chávez' Bolivarian Revolution was confirmed with impressive wins in regional and local elections in Venezuela.

(See story this page) ☉

A referendum to insert public control of the water supply in the constitution was passed by over 60 percent of voters.



Ringling endorsement of Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela

Bob Briton

Last week the people of Venezuela gave candidates from President Chávez' coalition overwhelming support in the country's regional and local elections. The vote means that representatives of the Bolivarian forces will take up 20 out of the 22 state Governor positions

and have a majority on two thirds of the local councils. This is an increase of five in the number of Chavista governors and a doubling of local representation.

The results deliver the ninth election victory for the Bolivarian movement in six years and are a strong endorsement of the radical changes taking place in Venezuela.

During the campaign President Chávez called for a speeding up of the land reform process and a struggle against corruption and nepotism. He was not hiding the significance of his movement's program, either. At one pre-election rally he said, "Within the framework of capitalism it is impossible to solve the challenges of fighting against poverty, misery, exploitation, inequality."

Elsewhere he talked about the domination of corporations over his country. "This is economic tyranny. And this tyranny is still intact. We are going to break it up once and for all through a revolutionary process of economic and social liberation."

The opposition played some of its usual tricks. The National Electoral Council condemned prominent national opposition leader Henrique Salas Feo (and others) for rushing to claim victory in a contest he later clearly lost in order to stir up controversy and anger among his supporters. The disruptive tactic had also been tried during the Presidential recall referendum on August 15 this year.

The only notable setback for the Bolivarian movement was in the southern state of Nueva Esparta where the opposition candidate won. However, the Chavista win was underlined by the victories of mayoral candidates for the Metropolitan Caracas Council (a position previously appointed by the President) and Caracas Libertador.

President Hugo Chávez commented after the elections that the old order in Venezuela, which was dying is now dead and that which was waiting to be born is now born. "The revolution is here to stay, Venezuela has changed and will not return to the past." ☉

Cuba moves to be dollar-free

W T Whitney Jr

Up against sharpened threats against Cuba's revolution and a reduced flow of US dollars to Cuba, the government there has acted dramatically to move towards a dollar-free domestic economy. The goal is to prioritise dollars for use in international trade.

The Cuban Central Bank ruled that, as of October 28, stores, providers of personal services, and commercial enterprises are not allowed to accept payments in US dollars from Cuban citizens and foreign visitors. Banks are exchanging dollars for convertible Cuban pesos on a 1-to-1 basis. To speed the process along, they put off a 10 percent tax on such transactions until November 8.

The official rationale for the tax is to cover Cuba's increased risk in trading abroad in dollars. The possession of dollars at home remains legal, as are dollar withdrawals from individual bank accounts.

Cuba has long depended on dollars to conduct its foreign trade, and Cubans themselves have relied upon them to buy goods unafford-

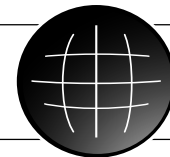
able on their peso salaries and unavailable through the rationing system. Half of all Cubans have access to dollars, mostly from relatives living abroad.

Appearing October 26 on a television round-table, six days after injuring his right arm and left knee in a fall, Cuban President Fidel Castro emphasised his government's resolve to "guarantee Cuba's economic independence" and protect itself from "external economic aggression".

The US State Department has just created an interagency task force to pressure foreign banks and commercial institutions into rejecting dollars used in Cuba's overseas trade. Washington recently imposed a US\$100 million fine on a Swiss bank for dollar transactions carried out for nations embargoed by the United States, among them Cuba.

It cracked down also on a company serving Cuban Americans by helping them forward remittances to Cuba. From now on, they will have to change dollars into other foreign currencies before sending money on to their relatives in Cuba.

People's Weekly World ☉



Global briefs

SOUTH AFRICA: Congress of South African Trade Unions spokesman Patrick Craven said the union federation was "appalled" by the revelations of business executives' soaring pay, as revealed by the South African economy news agency Business Report. Heading the list was CEO Chip Goodyear of the mining company BHP Billiton, with a \$4.5 million package. Mr Craven pointed out that these are "the same business leaders who complain about the dangers of wage inflation and do everything possible to prevent their workers from getting even modest real increases in pay".

SPAIN: In a dramatic demonstration of non-violent civil disobedience, three protesters chained themselves with metal tubes to the tracks being used by a train carrying military equipment to a NATO training camp near Zaragoza. The camp is to be the site of exercises for the new NATO Response Force. The activists, supported by other demonstrators who hung banners with the messages "Stop NATO" and "Let's Stop Wars", were able to halt the train for two hours before they were dragged away by police. The protesters demanded the closure of all NATO facilities in Spain, which they said are turning Spanish soil into "a gigantic training and military aggression platform", and their conversion to socially and ecologically positive uses. They called on supporters to "block the train of military expenses" by raising "conscientious objection" on their tax returns to that portion which funds the military.

GERMANY: Workers at GM's Bochum plant, who went on strike on October 14 after GM announced plans to cut 12,000 jobs, one-fifth of its European workforce, have returned to work. "We will do our utmost so that management does not implement its horror plans", said Workers' Council head Dietmar Hahn. On October 19, nearly 40,000 people demonstrated across Germany against the cuts and the possibility that one plant might actually close. As some 20,000 demonstrated in Bochum, GM workers and their families were joined by workers from other car plants, including Volkswagen and Porsche. The German workers received moral support from thousands of other European GM workers at factories in Poland, Spain, Britain and Belgium.

COLOMBIA: At least 700,000 Colombians participated in one-day nation-wide protests last month against the government of President Alvaro Uribe Velez. The one-day strike closed schools, hospitals and courts around the country, while marches were held in the state capitals. The participation of 300,000 marchers in Bogota made the demonstration the largest protest there in recent years. The national protest was called by a "Great Democratic Coalition" of labour unions, grassroots organisations, student associations, indigenous and peasant organisations and opposition parties. Demonstrators demanded a political solution to the armed conflict in the country and an end to the persecution of trade unionists. They also opposed negotiations for a free trade agreement with the US.

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



email: guardian@cpa.org.au

The killing of Indigenous rights

The participatory democracy that John Howard chortles about looks pretty hollow as far as Indigenous Australians are concerned. You might have noticed that he has given his "fair go" slogan the boot. He doesn't even bother to pretend any more.

His government's promotion of the idea that "all Australians should be treated equally" meant that there would be no recognition of past injustices to Indigenous people, no "sorry", and no recognition of prior ownership of the land. He has tried to wipe the slate of history clean, or to put it more accurately, whitewash it.

Now, after this latest federal election, he's even managed to wipe out Aboriginal people in the white man's system. Soon there will be no Aboriginal members of the

parliament. The Democrat's Aden Ridgeway, the only Aboriginal person elected to parliament, is on the way out as of next July. (Although the Democrats didn't do themselves any favours with their unprincipled preference allocations and opportunistic behaviour).

The Government killed off ATSIC, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, first by slashing its funding, then hounding its leaders through the courts and publicly slandering them. It then labeled ATSIC a failure and scrapped it altogether.

ATSIC was the first representative body elected by Indigenous people. It is now to be replaced by a collection of government-appointed "eminent persons", who will sit on a new body, the National Indigenous Council, to be headed by an Aboriginal magistrate from the Children's Court, Sue Gordon.

But its members will be seen – I think quite rightly – by many Indigenous people as lackeys for the Government.

The dispossession of Indigenous Australians makes us a disgrace in the eyes of the world. And you don't have to search far and wide to see why they have had their rights undermined.

In Cape York last week BHP Billiton attempted to bribe local traditional owners during negotiations

over mining leases. The bribes were so the company could avoid taking proper measures to protect the cultural sites on the land earmarked for mining.

Of course BHP denies it, but the Cape York Land Council was unequivocal, saying the company had offered up front cash to member of the traditional owners to not accompany BHP staff doing cultural heritage surveys in the area.

Furthermore, the traditional owners have only four months to ensure that BHP doesn't run roughshod over their sacred sites. After that the Beattie Government will use its new native title laws to give BHP the go ahead.

This is but one incident in the never-ending land grab by the big mining companies and pastoralists, aided by governments of every stripe.

Marcus Browning
Sydney, NSW

No mandate for war

Can someone tell me at which point in the last election campaign did John Howard tell the Australian people that their country was to be used as a practice bombing range? As I write the Howard Government is hammering out an agreement with the Bush administration that will allow the US to test new generation

weapons, including so-called "smart bombs".

Some will be tested at Shoalwater Bay, in Queensland, already the site of war games involving the US and Australian military. There are to be experiments with self guided missiles and dummy bombing raids into Australia from US aircraft carriers.

More millions of dollars, tens of millions added to the \$55 million already being spent on the military each day, are to be poured into these lunatic projects, which can only be seen by the nations in the region as preparation for a pre-emptive strike on them.

In 2007 Exercise Talisman Sabre is planned for Shoalwater Bay, involving 20,000 troops, live bombing raids and amphibious landings.

So you can add environmental devastation to the war plans.

There is to be a Combined Training Centre that will link Australia to US bases around the world and to the US Pacific War Fighting Centre in Hawaii.

ANZUS military advisor Ross Babbage didn't mince words. He said last week, "We are making it very clear that when push comes to shove Australia and the US Governments operate very closely together".

Just who is going to do the

pushing and shoving? Which countries are building up their military might to unprecedented levels?

Howard has no mandate to commit Australia to such a war. He has no mandate to give away our sovereignty. He has no mandate to slaughter the people of other nations in our name.

This is the march to "endless war" that Bush has already promised the world. The people must rally together to stop it.

Nathan Barnes
Brisbane, Qld

Wicked

The re-election of George W Bush, the man with the Stepford wife and strong "faith" led me to the words of Bertrand Russell on religion from *Why I am not a Christian* – "that is the idea, that we should all be wicked if we did not hold to the Christian religion. It seems to me that the people who have held to it have been for the most part extremely wicked".

I expect the American officer who is going into Falluja too, as he said, kill "them" has never read *Why I am not a Christian* but has probably read the Bible.

K – a reader
Sydney, NSW

A post-election E-mail to friends in the USA

I sat in front of my computer screen for 14 hours yesterday looking at the CNN figures, and had CBS and NBC on television. As the day went on I turned to comfort food – so much so that I'm gonna have to do some serious exercise to rescue my waist-line from the amount of junk I ate...

This makes the second election defeat within a month for the Australian people. (Well not according to Rupert Murdoch – his Sydney paper today had a headline screaming "VICTORY IS OURS".)

The government Australia voted in three weeks ago is pro-war, anti-environment, pro-free-trade-no-matter-what-the-consequences and anti-everything progressive.

However, the election of Kerry would have made the world of difference to us – it was our "second chance draw". If Kerry withdrew America's troops from Iraq (not that that was a sure bet), Australia would withdraw its troops. Kerry signs the Kyoto protocol, Australia signs the Kyoto protocol. Kerry reneges on the US/Oz free trade agreement, Australia pulls back too.

The importance of this election to us is underscored by the fact that I could watch the election live, all day, on two different channels. We only have five channels here in Oz, and the two top-rating channels cancelled all their usual programming to show all-day election coverage.

(Ok, we do have cable as well, but only in a fraction of the homes in the capital cities. It never took off here – we were all thinking, "we have five TV channels of crap, why the hell do we want 50?") Rupert

Murdoch wasted a fortune rolling it all out though... ha ha ha.)

So, what was the point of all this?

I've heard in commentary on this US election, and on the previous one also, "Well, like it or not he's been elected President now, so we all have to get behind him and work together for the good of the country".

George W Bush and the extreme right have won again but that doesn't make their evil policies correct or worthy of uniting behind.

Those of you who do not now lie down and roll over will at first be called "spoilers", then "un-American", then "traitors" and eventually "enemies".

The US now has the "patriot act" specifically to deal with such people! Just like similar "laws" were enacted in fascist Germany and Italy – where those who stood firm by their conscience, denounced the government and continued the fight for morality and justice mostly ended up swinging in the wind or disappearing in the dead of night...

But then people say, "Oh, that could never happen HERE, this is America, this is a democracy". Well, I haven't seen a lot of democracy or justice coming out of the USA in the last four years. People barred for life from voting, names disappearing off electoral roles, road-blocks, broken voting machines, lost ballot papers, four-hour queues not to mention Guantanamo and the 100,000 Iraqi civilians killed as the US brings "democracy".

Oh, yes, and people paid by the dominant political party to harass and intimidate voters IN THE POLLING OFFICE WHILE THEY ARE VOTING! LEGALLY!! Shit, even Hitler would have been proud of that gig!

As for me, here in Australia: I've spent the last nine years fighting against our slow slide to fascism. Oh, they don't call it that, and

it wasn't fascism when it started. At first they were "centre-right", then "right", now "hard right". And with the most recent election: in come the extremists and the religious fundamentalists!

Nine years of fight though, and it has gotten me abso-bloody-lutely nowhere.

There is just such a huge temptation to give in.

I could stop watching the news and reading the papers. Stop wasting my time writing articles and letters to the editor, quit handing out pamphlets, give up organising and marching in rallies. I could just keep my mouth shut when I hear people presenting Fox-News-fiction as fact.

I could save a fortune if I stopped donating money to overseas aid organisations who spend it on children in third world countries who have no future anyway, because even if I save them from dying of hunger or disease this year, they might next year, or chances are the US and Australia will declare war on their country and so the person I've just spend five years feeding will be blown to smithereens in an instant by a bomb dropped from a 100-million-dollar fighter plane from 30,000 feet...

Instead, I could buy enough DVD box sets of Star Trek, Simpson's and X-files to last me three years 'til the next election. I could get a job at a cinema chain and see endless free movies – I could get a job in a bank and get a discount on my mortgage.

I could relive my misspent youth – work out at the gym, bum around at the beach, go out to nightclubs five nights a week and get trashed.

And as for the creeping fascism all around me... As Max Detweiler says in *The Sound of Music*: "What's going to happen, is going to happen. Just make sure it doesn't happen to you."

But that's the scary thing: it will happen to me.

Many years ago, at a dinner



party, my friends and I had an odd conversation: "If you lived in Hitler's Germany, how many reasons would they have to send you to the gas chamber?"

People around the table scored points for various personal attributes: gay, Jewish, Basque, Slavic, anarchist, former Jehovah's Witness, Esperanto speaker, trade unionist, socialist. I won though, I scored four: gay, socialist, unionist with congenital deafness.

If this country I'm living in keeps hurtling towards the right, if more and more extremists come to the forefront in government, if the "morality" and "patriot" and "anti-terrorist" and "security" laws squeeze tighter and tighter...

They will come for me – and one by one my comrades, friends, family and anyone else who dares stand in their way.

Do I sit back and wait? Do I go to the beach, slap on some sunscreen, lie back and hope that in three year's time everything will be different because a progressive government will magically come to power?

Do I risk it?

Or do I continue fighting? Fight harder. Work longer. Give up more time. Donate more money. And every single time they try to strip away one of my civil rights I make sure I'm standing right in their path screaming "NO!"

As a person of good conscience, as believer in justice – I really don't have a choice at all.

So that's it. No more sitting around being depressed wallowing in self-pity – four weeks (since Howard was re-elected) is waaaaay long enough.

No more staring out the window. No more hitting the "refresh" button on the *ABC News Updates* site hoping I'm going to read the headline "John Howard dies of heart attack" or "George Bush meets his maker".

And no more chocolate. I've got work to do.

As one of your own great freedom fighters, Paul Robeson, once said: "I just keeps on fightin'".

In solidarity across the ocean

Andrew
Sydney, NSW

Culture & Life

Rob Gowland is on leave this week, there is no Culture & Life.



Sun November 14 ~
~ Sat November 20

It took all of history until the year 1804 for humanity's population to reach its first billion. Now a billion new people are added every dozen years. The relationship between planet and population is explored in *The People Paradox* (SBS Monday 7.30pm).

The first episode in this two-part series investigates three countries where social and economic forces have produced starkly different population profiles. In India, women still bear an average of three to four children. Within a few decades, the country will overtake China as the world's most populous nation.

While India's population pyramid has the classic shape of a triangle resting on a wide base with large numbers of youth at the bottom and a small number of elderly at the top Japan's population pyramid is shifting to look like a triangle standing on its head. There are now more people over 60 than under 20.

Meanwhile, the population pyramid in sub-Saharan Africa is beginning to resemble an hourglass. Adults between the ages of 20 and 60 are dying in the prime of life, largely due to AIDS, leaving the very old and young to fend for themselves.

The Clunies Ross Family ruled the Cocos Islands for more than 150 years. The last "king", John Clunies Ross, was

a feudal leader who walked the islands barefoot with a dagger in his belt, and had total control over the lives of his Cocos Malay workers.

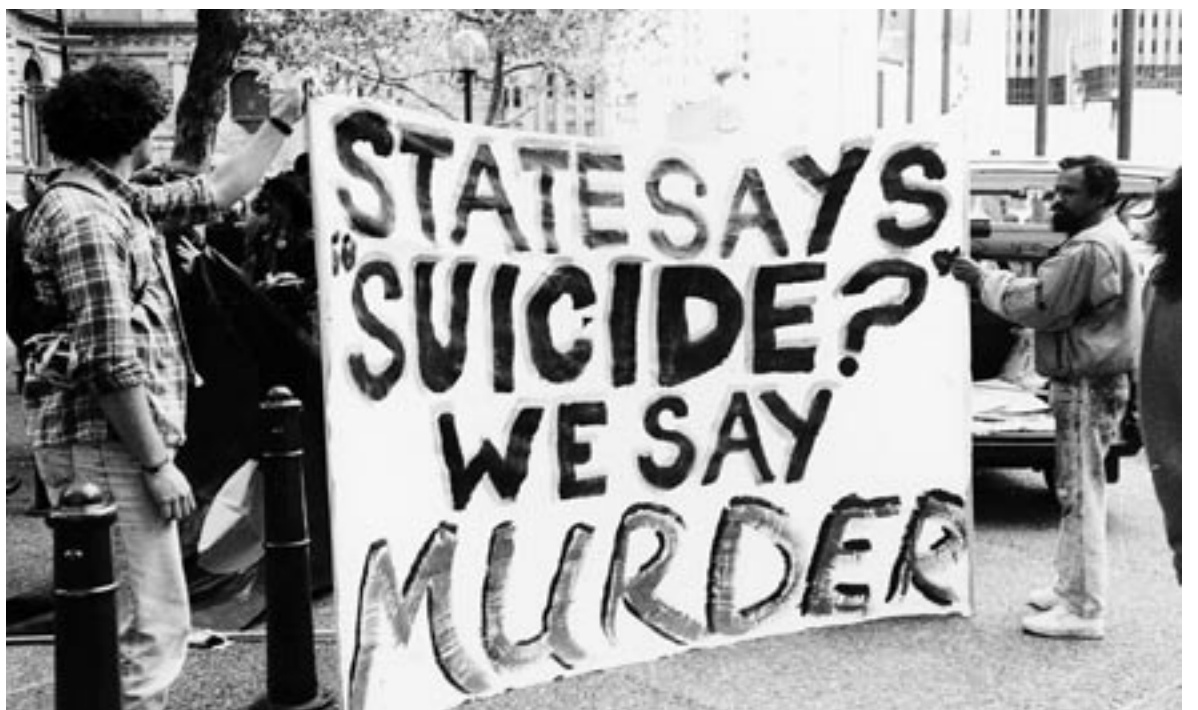
Dynasties: The Clunies Ross Family (ABC Tuesday 8.00pm) is the story of the Scottish pioneering family that first settled this remote island paradise. The Cocos Islands are tiny specks in the Indian Ocean, closer to Indonesia than Australia. In 1857 they became part of the British Empire, and later Queen Victoria granted the Clunies Ross family exclusive ownership.

In the early days the family made its wealth by staking a claim to the rich phosphate deposits on nearby Christmas Island. With the vast fortune a family mansion was built on the Cocos, and Malay workers were imported to develop the copra plantations. John Clunies Ross and his family lived in the mansion until their idyllic existence was shattered by a succession of Australian governments.

Before his demise Clunies Ross was the anachronistic colonial master, paying workers with plastic tokens redeemable only at the company store. Britain passed sovereignty over the Cocos Islands to Australia in 1955, and almost immediately Canberra began a war of attrition with Clunies Ross. Under the Hawke Government, Australia bought out the family's land. They boycotted the shipping company owned by Clunies Ross, sending him bankrupt. John Clunies Ross went into exile in Perth, broken and impoverished.

While the Clunies Ross family maintain they were acting for the common good, their history as feudal autocratic exploiters is in no doubt.

After the Second World War, Japan embraced the "Peace Constitution", which renounced the use of force in international disputes, and banned Japan from having its own military forces. Yet the country still maintained "Self-



Helped spark the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Leila Murray)

Defence" Forces (SDF). Whether Japan should or should not have the SDF has been controversial ever since, often provoking right-wing nationalistic outrage such as the failed coup attempt by author Yukio Mishima in 1970 and his subsequent ritual suicide.

The film *KT* (SBS Wednesday 11.50pm) is based on another political incident of that time. In 1973, a Japanese intelligence officer became involved in a Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) plot to abduct and murder the South Korean dissident (who later became President) Kim Dae-jung.

The southwest of Western Australia is one of the world's most bio-diverse areas. But in the last 50 years it has been the scene of environmental destruction on a massive scale.

A Million Acres A Year (SBS Thursday 8.30pm) tells the story of the way a region now recognised as

one of the top 25 biological hotspots on the planet was opened up for broad-acre farming, unleashing an environmental and social nightmare.

During the 1960s a million acres a year were opened up, despite the fact that much of the land was unsuitable for farming. Nevertheless, the new landholders were obliged to bulldoze and burn the native bush or risk losing their allocation under the "conditional purchase scheme".

The long term consequences have been devastating, with industrial farming and salinity turning most of this priceless natural heritage into a biological desert. Fifty years of agriculture had effectively undone three billion years of evolution. Through the voices of people on the land, the impact of this ecological disaster is revealed.

This week's *Message Stick* timeslot features *Leila Murray* (ABC Friday 6.00pm),

the woman whose campaign for answers and justice helped spark the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Twenty-three years ago, Leila Murray's son Eddie died while being held in police custody in rural New South Wales. Leila refused to believe he committed suicide in his prison cell and she was not satisfied with the inquest's open finding. Leila fought for the truth right up until her death in 2003.

This program looks at Leila's heartbreak at losing her eldest son and her struggle to find peace after his death, and features interviews with surviving members of the Murray family.

The story also touches on the fact that despite the expense and time spent investigating deaths in custody, Indigenous people are still over-represented in the prison system and are still dying behind bars. ☘

Sydney

MANUFACTURING FEAR

2 Forums

As terror laws and military strikes escalate, who gains, who loses? Who is manufacturing fear and why? Who lives in fear in the 'war on terror'? What can be done to challenge this? How can people take up the issues, and act for justice?

THE POLITICS OF ANTI-TERROR – Forum 1

Saturday 13 November, 9.30-4.30

Room 429, Building 2, enter via Broadway Tower, University of Technology Sydney

Entry by donation – disabled access – please email ahead if an interpreter is required

Speakers: Vicki Sentas, Community Law Centre, UTS; David Bernie, NSW Council for Civil Liberties; Agnes Chong, Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network; Ratna Dewi, Legal Aid Institute, Indonesia; Rafendi Djamin, Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia; Nori Colmenares, Karapatan, Philippines; Warren Duncan, Community Relations Commission; Ken Davis, APHEDA, Trade Union Aid Abroad; Keysar Trad, Lebanese Muslim Association; Kieran Longridge, Greenpeace; with participants from the NSW Labor Council, Amnesty, NSW Council of Social Service, and others.

FACING FEAR – Forum 2

Friday 26 November 9am – 5pm UTS Broadway (Room to be confirmed) No entry charge, refreshments provided

This forum focuses on the people and communities, racialised as 'Other', who have their freedoms curtailed, and currently are insecure, fearful, feeling terrorised in their own homes. Facing Fear concentrates on how people working with racialised communities have themselves responded, through media and cultural production, finding innovative ways to tell their stories.

Forums organised by: NSW Civil Rights Network + Research Initiative on International Activism, UTS

www.civilrightsnetwork.org www.international.activism.uts.edu.au
Email: manufacturingfear@yahoo.com Ph: James Goodman 02 9514 2714

Sydney

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Refrigerator

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Transport can be arranged

Sydney

Politics in the Pub

Every Friday night 6pm – 7.45pm
Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills
Dinner afterwards in the Royal Exhibition Hotel across the road

November 12

THE NEW US PRESIDENCY – WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Stephen Loosley (former ALP Senator)
Partner with Pricewaterhouse Coopers Legal
Prof Ian Tyrrell School of History, Uni NSW
Dr Bob Howard Research Associate,
Government and International Relations, Sydney Uni

November 19

NATION BUILDING IN THE PACIFIC

CAN AUSTRALIA BE A TRUE FRIEND?

Nic MacLellan Journalist and Researcher on Pacific Affairs,
author of *After Muroroa – France in the South*
Peter King Prof International Studies Sydney Uni

November 26

ACEH AND WEST PAPUA – STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM

Dr Nurdin Rahman Human Rights Activist,
formerly Lecturer English, Uni Aceh
John Martinkas Journalist and film maker,
author of works on East Timor, Iraq

Inq: Pat Toms 02 9358 4834 pbtoms@bigpond.com; Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891;
PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039; Win Childs Fax 02 9660 6554
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Women's labour, exploited labour

Parents are being advised to give daughters less pocket money than sons, by the Equal Opportunities Commission of Victoria. The exhortation is contained on a new poster prepared by the organisation in response to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures that show Australian bosses still value women at only 85 percent the rate of men.

"Prepare your daughter for working life", the Equal Opportunities Commission poster reads. "Give her less pocket money than your son."

"Unequal pay is an insidious form of sex discrimination, which requires top level commitment from government, unions and businesses to stamp it out", said the Commission's acting chief executive Matthew Carroll. "In 2004 women still don't earn as much as men, are subjected to sexual harassment, get sacked for being pregnant and suffer from widespread discrimination."

The Victorian Government launched a Pay Equity Inquiry earlier this year to investigate pay disparity between men and women.

"The Inquiry will investigate the pay disparity between males and females. The Commission is playing a key role in this inquiry, together with representatives from business, unions and government", said Mr Carroll. "The lack of affordable childcare combined with the pay gap forces most families to forfeit the earnings of the lower paid mother."

"We eagerly await the findings of the Inquiry which we see as a very positive first step to developing strategies to address this important issue."

The Equal Opportunity Com-

mission has been celebrating the 25th anniversary of Deborah Wardley's (Lawrie) landmark battle to become Australia's first female commercial airline pilot.

Mr Carroll said this was the first complaint to come before the newly established Victorian Equal Opportunity Board and the first contested anti-discrimination case in Australia.

"Since Deborah's victory much of the blatant discrimination faced by women has decreased significantly." However, Deborah, who now lives in The Hague, said that Australia lags behind European countries in addressing sex discrimination, maternity leave entitlements, sexual harassment and sexist attitudes towards women.

"Despite years of legislation and education, we still have a long way to go to achieve gender equality."

The struggles for equal pay

1920s

Throughout the 1920s to the present day, equal pay continues to be a main priority for women unionists.

Some landmarks in the struggle for equal pay

Between 1926-1930 the following unions lodged claims for equal pay:

The Federated Liquor and Allied Trades Union

The Amalgamated Clothing and Allied Trades Union

The Manufacturing Grocers Employees Federation

1937

The Council of Action for Equal Pay (CAEP) was formed.

Muriel Heagney was the Secretary. The Council's aim was

to fight for a commitment from the whole trade union movement for equal pay.

The CAEP was formed partly in response to women being unfairly blamed for unemployment during the Depression (because their labour was cheaper).

1939 The war years

Up to this point women made up approximately 20 percent of the workforce. During the war years participation was increased by up to one third and many women went into jobs previously held by men, especially defence production. This increased pressure for equal pay and greatly assisted the organisation of women into unions.

A women's wage board was established with the power to fix women's wages at 60-100 percent of male wages where they worked in male industries. The effect of this was to widen the discrepancies with women in the female-dominated industries.

1949

The Commonwealth Arbitration Court fixed the female basic wage at 75 per cent of the male rate.

This was despite the ACTU's policy adopted in 1941 that rates should be decided according to the job that workers did and not on their gender.

The equal pay issue remained top of the agenda for women unionists, with special union committees set up in each State, until 1969 when equal pay was granted only to women who did exactly the same work as men.

The campaign for equal pay continued.

Zelda D'Aprano chained herself to the Commonwealth building with two other women and there was a protest where women only paid two thirds of the train fare as they received only two thirds of male wages.

1972

Equal pay for work of equal value was granted to be paid in three increments. However even now women don't get equal pay.

Employers have managed to avoid equal pay by:

- re-classifying women;
- not paying women over award payments;
- not promoting women;

Also:

• women are more likely to work part time.

1973

Working Women's Centre was formed.

The momentum achieved by the equal pay campaign heightened women's expectations and raised their awareness of deep seated discrimination. The Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA - peak council of "White collar trade unions) adopted a Working Women's Charter and established the first trade union Working Women's Centre with funding from the Whitlam Government in 1975, International Women's Year. The functions of the Centre were:

- to provide specialist advice on women's employment issues;



Woman's Work

What can a helpless female do?

Rock the cradle and bake the brew,

Or if no cradle, your fate afford,

Rock your brother's wife for board;

Or live in one room with an invalid cousin,

Or sew shop shirts for a dollar a dozen.

Or please some man by looking sweet,

Or please him by giving him things to eat,

Or please him by asking him much advice,

And thinking whatever he does is nice.

Visit the poor (under supervision),

Doctor the sick who can't pay a physician,

Save men's time by doing their praying,

And other odd jobs there's no present pay in,

But if you presume to usurp their employments,

Or if you succeed where they knew you wouldn't,

Or make money fast when they said you couldn't,

Or learn to do things they'd proved were above you,

You'll hurt their feelings and then they won't love you.

Anon, 1915

- to promote the involvement of women in trade unions;

- to provide resources to assist unions in their work for female members.

The Working Women's Centre did a great deal of work to promote women's equality, including the production of a school kit and a register of women in non-traditional jobs speakers to speak in schools. One of its major projects was setting up of a model child care centre and making childcare a union issue.

Some years later, the Centre became part of the ACTU when the ACTU and ACSPA merged. It then lost its shop front and direct contact with working women, to become more of a research unit, producing a multilingual newspaper distributed to factories, women and workplaces and developing policy material.

Working Women's Charter

Following a heated debate, the ACTU adopted its own Working Women's Charter at its 1977 Congress. It set out basic priorities and principles for achieving equality for women as workers and as union members. Women's Charter groups

were set up all over the country to implement the policy. Unlike ACSPA's Charter, it did not recognise the right of married women to unemployment benefits, nor did it include paid maternity leave or recognise women's rights regarding abortion.

These short-comings were a direct result of the strong influence of the Right, especially the National Civic Council forces (Catholic Action) within the ACTU.

The struggle continues. Some of the gains that were made in the 1970s and '80s have been rolled back, as employers never let up in their drive to exploit and divide workers.

Australian Bureau of Statistics reveal that women's pay still falls far short of men. Average weekly earnings for female employees in August 2003 were 82 percent of males' - \$790 as against \$967 per week.

Under capitalism the struggle for equality never lets up. Howard, Costello and their mates would like to take women back to the days when "a woman's work is never done", women are "barefoot and pregnant", and obedient slaves to their husbands. ☘



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