

# Howard Govt killing Medicare

Since coming to office the Howard Government has undermined the Medicare system, not by openly cutting its funding, but by failing to increase funding to keep up with increases in prices and population. The Government now plans to test bulk-billing and apply a co-payment for a consultation with a GP to everyone else. Such a move would sound the death knell of Medicare.

Already more and more doctors have been dropping out of bulk-billing because they simply cannot operate their practices economically, and more and more patients are being forced to defer seeking medical treatment until their condition becomes unbearable.

Country areas are particularly hard hit. Many country towns now have no bulk-billing practices, and those who seek such a service must face hours of driving to another town.

Last Friday federal Health Minister Senator Kay Patterson took another step towards finishing off the Medicare system by boycotting planned federal/state public health discussions, announcing that she would not attend the state/federal health meeting to negotiate agreements on funding.

This is part the Howard Government's strategy to withdraw from its funding responsibilities.

The talks are held every five years. This month's meeting was due to discuss the crisis facing Medicare as a fee-free and universal health care system, and the Howard Government's proposed new Australian Health Care Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. The current five-year agreement ends in June.

Last November angry State Health Ministers let it be known they would be demanding increased funding for Medicare.

The effect of Senator Patterson's boycott, and postponement of the meeting until after March, is that the States will have virtually

no time to negotiate, and will be faced with a fait accompli from the Howard Government.

Under the Government's proposed means tested co-payment fee system, the consultation rebate provided to doctors would increase – but only for those on the lowest incomes.

Consultations with patients on higher incomes would only incur the same paltry rebate as at present. As a result, a means tested/co-payment Medicare would continue to be starved of adequate funds.

Bulk-billing would become a "safety net" provision, striking a decisive blow to the key principles of Medicare: universal access and fee-free services. As well as spelling the end of Medicare it would result in a two-tier system of health care based on ability to pay.

An increase in funding is essential. The rebate paid to doctors when they bulk-bill needs to be increased immediately so that doctors can afford to bulk bill.

This, and the additional funding required by the public hospital system, could be provided by scrapping the \$2.3 billion government subsidy (through tax rebates) of the private system, and redirecting the money to the public system.

Last week more than 100 doctors, chairpersons of Medical Staff Councils at public hospitals around Australia, and representing thousands of doctors who work in Australia's public hospitals, published a joint statement in *The Australian* newspaper.

Denouncing the current crisis in Medicare and public health, they demanded that action be taken immediately to rectify the situation.

"Currently the Commonwealth is resisting the most important elements of a broad-ranging reform agenda produced by clinicians and endorsed by State Governments. Given that it is the Commonwealth that controls the purse strings, and much of the structure related to

health care delivery, reform without Commonwealth co-operation is impossible", said the statement.

The doctors have organised a National Public Hospital Clinicians' Taskforce to communicate with the public and politicians in order to address "the many serious problems" facing the public health system.

"We see patients and their needs on a daily basis. We cope with the sadness and the frustration of the many Australians whom the system fails. We are fed up."

The Taskforce is calling on the public to add their voice by contacting their Federal Member of Parliament.

If a broad strong campaign is not mounted quickly to defend Medicare, it will be destroyed – by the failure of governments to adequately increase funding and through privatisation and government subsidies to the private sector.

Trade union involvement in particular would strengthen the

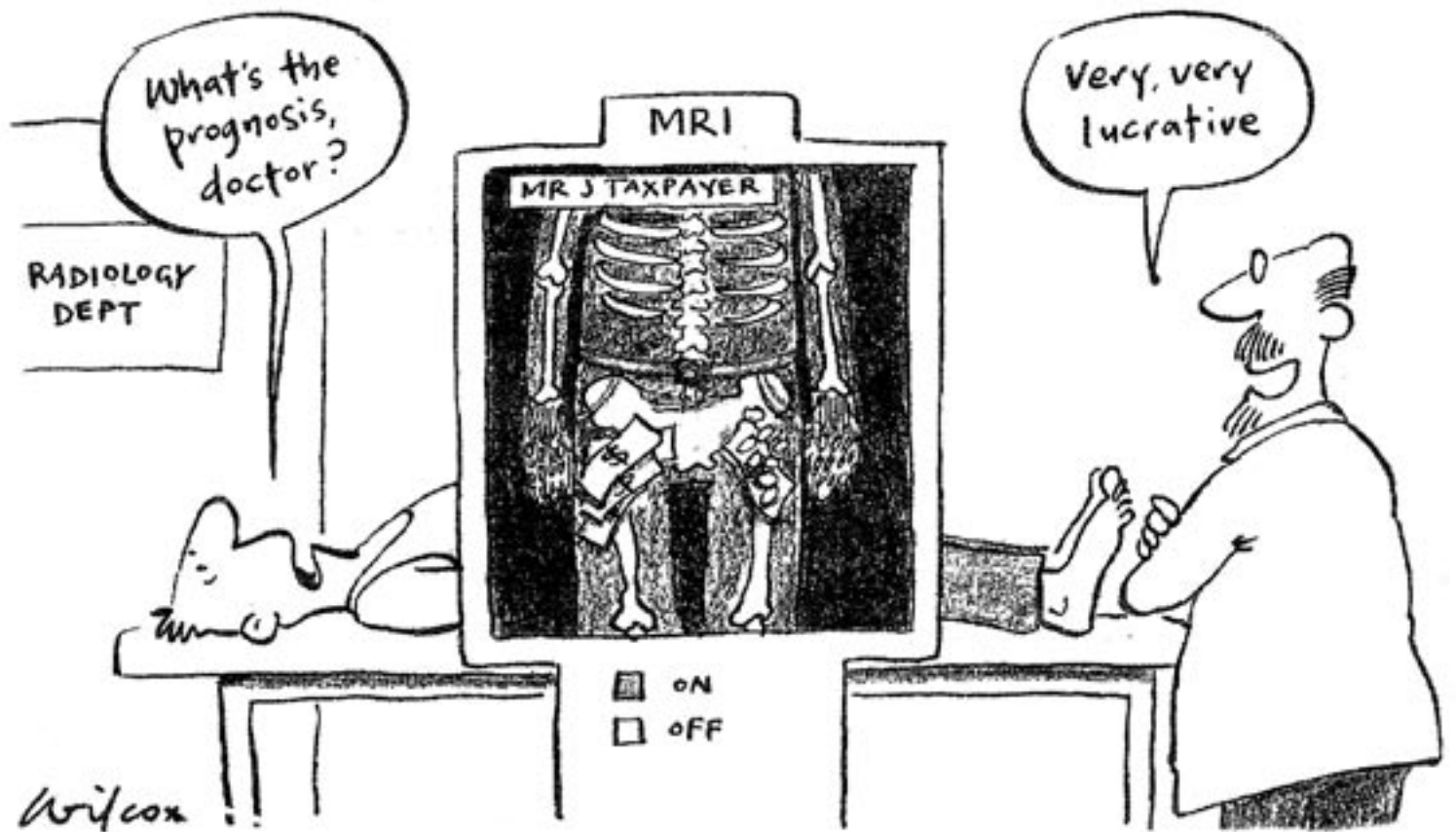
campaign to defend Medicare. After all it is their members and families who will be hit by the loss of Medicare – as both workers in the sector and as patients.

The 2000 ACTU Congress adopted policy supporting universal access to bulk billing and the need to lobby for increased funding for public health services.

The Howard Government was elected in 1996 with the promise to preserve Medicare, but since that time it has set about dismantling the system, while retaining the name.

As Dr Con Costa of the Doctors' Reform Society warns: "If the co-payment system comes in, it will change Medicare to a two-class system. The government will lose control over health costs, which will go through the roof, and we will eventually end up with a private health system."

"The government wants to cut Medicare, in order to fund its war ambitions", said Dr Costa. ✪



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## Some immediate tasks of the peace movement

The huge turnout at the peace marches in Australian cities and towns and throughout the world exceeded everyone's expectations. The question now is how to keep up the momentum and build the movement to even higher levels. The war agenda of Bush, Blair and Howard has not yet been halted although the call has gone out loudly: stop the war before it starts.

Many suburban and community peace groups are planning and carrying out a variety of activities. This is a very important development. Public meetings, peace picnics, letter writing, leafleting, talking to neighbours and the many other activities are happening on a daily basis. And there are plans for protests to take place immediately if a war were to be launched.

The peace movement is being strengthened greatly as more and more trade unions come into the struggle. Some unions have decided to call stoppages should the US and Britain launch a war. Trade unions had a strong presence at the February 16 rallies and marches. Some unions have simply opposed a non-UN sanctioned war; others have strongly condemned any war on Iraq and are actively striving to inform their members about the dangers of such a war. (See page 5)

At the same time the mass media and chief advocates of war have kept up their flow of propaganda trying to justify a pre-emptive strike, an invasion of Iraq, the setting up of a US military dictatorship and the seizure of Iraqi oilfields. It is clear that the US has plans to redraw the political map of the Middle East to serve the interests of its oil corporations.

Enormous pressure is being applied to other states to fall in line at the United Nations.

There are those who accept the charade that a UN Security Council resolution endorsing war would make invasion and war acceptable, that wearing blue berets would make it moral. The conduct and consequences of such a war would be the same whether conducted in the name of the UN or the US.

The peace movement has perhaps only days or a few short weeks left to prevent war, and in that time one of its most important tasks is to ensure that the UN Security Council does not take this course.

It is also necessary to expose the lies and hypocrisy of those who talk of the alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction while ignoring the huge arsenals of such weapons accumulated and being used by the US, Britain, Israel and a number of other countries. The weapons inspectors have found nothing in more than three months of searching, a fact that the warmongers also play down.

At the same time as hiding the truth, Howard and the media do all they can to discredit the peace movement. One of the latest attempts is to accuse peace demonstrators of giving support to the Saddam Hussein regime. This needs to be countered. The demonstrators are marching against war – in support of the Iraqi people, hundreds of thousands of whom are likely to be killed.

The demonstrators support giving the people of Iraq the right to decide freely what sort of government they should have. This is the sovereign right of all countries. The occupation of Iraq will not bring freedom or democracy but a military dictatorship and the imposition of a puppet regime.

Howard's claim to be pursuing peace is a lie. Howard and his allies are desperate to implement a military attack on Iraq.

Britain, Australia and the US are attempting to implement the long held policies of imperialism – occupation, control and exploitation of the resources and labour of a country and the imposition of a puppet government.

If the voice of the worldwide peace movement is disregarded by the Australian and other governments, (which is now the case), these governments will have to be thrown out of office. They will have to be replaced by governments that work for peaceful solutions to international conflicts and give priority to the interests of the people, not the corporations as the present governments are doing.

### PRESS FUND

So Mr Howard thinks that the half million Australians who marched against war with Iraq were just giving comfort to Saddam Hussein! Howard is clearly demonstrating a responsibility to his backers, i.e. US capital, rather than to the Australian working people, who marched in their hundreds of thousands. *The Guardian's* responsibility is to them, and we intend to support them, and the cause of peace, to our utmost. However, we in turn need their support in order to do this. So if you can, please send us a contribution to the Press Fund for the next issue. Our grateful thanks go to the following, for their generous contributions this week:

Mohammed Noor Ali \$8, T Bartlett \$100, Jim Robson \$50, "Round Figure" \$12.

This week's total \$170. Progressive total \$2135.

## AUSTRALIA

# Insult to Port Adelaide's Kurna History

A recent offer of land from South Australia's state Land Management Corporation (LMC) has outraged the Kurna people living in Adelaide. The community has rejected the suggestion that a "Kurna Park" should be built on a narrow strip of land beside the Jervois Bridge in Glanville. They have renewed calls for the entire former site of the CSR sugar refinery to be given over to the Aboriginal people for a retirement village and a cultural centre.

by Bob Briton

Kurna Elder Veronica Brodie told *The Guardian* last week that the idea that a monument on the otherwise unusable 50-metre strip of land would somehow sufficiently recognise the Aboriginal history of Port Adelaide is pure tokenism.

The strip in question is currently part of a vacant riverfront parcel of land which is earmarked for "development" into a precinct that would include commercial and apartment buildings of up to seven stories.

The local *Portside Messenger* carried an article in which developer Newport Quays is said to be planning to honour the Kurna heritage of the area.

The fact remains, however, that before the whole site was given over to CSR it was one of the major settlements of the Kurna people in what is now the Portside suburb of Glanville. Auntie Veronica's own great grandmother, Rebecca (Latarlare) Spender, lived on the land. The area's Indigenous people refer to the land as the "Latarlare Site".



Kurna Elder Veronica Brodie

Photo: Avante Media Australia

The Land Management Corporation has offered to meet with Aboriginal organisations to discuss relevant issues but Auntie Veronica remains sceptical. The current, insulting "offer" was supposedly made after extensive community consultation.

She believes that, while none of the authorities involved – the LMC, the Port Adelaide Enfield Council, the former Department of State Aboriginal Affairs and the Commonwealth Department – dispute research showing the Kurna people's attachment to the land, the lure of development has been too strong.

Auntie Veronica remains committed to retrieving something for her people out of the current situation. Clearly a park on a site considered unsuitable for housing due to the risk that vehicles might crash off the bridge overhead is unsuitable for family recreation, also.

A monument in honour of the Kurna history of Port Adelaide would most likely be vandalised.

The whole concept is obviously out of step with the rest of the redevelopment, which is to be devoted mostly to accommodation for high-income earners.

The Aboriginal community still needs facilities for its elderly and its youth. At present the Kurna youth have access to a second storey facility in a dilapidated building on Commercial Road in Port Adelaide.

Auntie Veronica said that, if the authorities could offer the Kurna youth an appropriate building in the area, a suitable compromise could be struck.

In the meantime, while work to rehabilitate the contaminated soil of the former CSR site is being considered, frustration among the Kurna people continues to grow. ☘

## Obituary

# Edith Gilmour

06.01.1901 – 08.02.2003

Edith Gilmour, long-time activist for women's rights, turned 100 on January 6, 2001. She died February 8, 2003. Her story is a treasure-trove of events and of women who have dedicated their lives to the advancement of Australian women.

Edith was born at Comongini in western Queensland, the second of seven children. When she was a few days old her mother asked local Aborigines if they would like to see the new white baby and give her a name.

They named her Evillali, which means "A baby bird just leaving the

nest". Edith's mother asked "What kind of a bird?" and they replied, "An eagle hawk".

Any "hawkishness" Edith might have had was definitely cancelled out by her strong feeling for peace.

At six, Edith began her school years in a school of only ten children and one teacher.

To attend high school, Edith boarded with a Mrs Cummings in Orange, a widowed school teacher, and her three sons. When Mrs Cummings moved to Sydney, Edith went with her and attended Fort Street Girls High.

Mrs Cummings had a great influence on Edith's life. She took Edith to political rallies and anti-conscription rallies in the Domain during 1916 and 1917.

They attended Workers' Educational Association (WEA) lectures, classes and weekend schools.

Edith trained at Sydney Kindergarten Training college. At Auburn Public School, she was elected infants' staff representative on the governing body of the NSW Teachers' Federation, which marked

the beginning of her dedicated trade union activism.

In the Teachers' Federation Edith learned to debate and take action on major issues of the day, here and overseas.

One important issue which concerned Edith was the "sacking" of Beatrice Taylor, an education delegate to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, who spoke in public (out of school hours) about her experiences in USSR.

The Federation successfully struggled to have her reinstated. Edith remained a Federation representative for 30 years.

Edith was a founding member of the New Housewives Association, which in 1950 was renamed the Union of Australian Women (UAW).

Edith was also a member of the Australian Peace Committee, People for Nuclear Disarmament, the Australia Vietnam Society and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

During WW2, following the magnificent "Sheep Skins and Medical Aid for Russia" campaign organised by Jessie Street, Edith joined the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society.

Acknowledgement: Merle Hight ☘



Edith Gilmour

# “We can walk side by side in this land”

The Australian Federal Police have had to hand back documents taken in last week's violent pre-dawn raid on the Aboriginal Tent Embassy outside old parliament house in Canberra. The pretext for the raid was the dismantling of an A-frame shelter put up on January 26 at the Embassy to protect historic documents from the time of King George III, documents which outline Britain's illegal occupation of the country.

by Tom Pearson

Seventy officers, some dressed in full paramilitary riot gear, launched the surprise attack at 5am on February 19, shocking the eight occupants of the Embassy — six women and two men — out of their sleep.

The operation was also a carefully contrived public relations set-up: a Channel Ten camera crew was there ready to role at 5am when the attacked came. The police, with balaclavas over their heads, then surrounded the A-frame structure with their guns drawn while contractors dismantled it.

When one of the women went to take the documents out and the police knocked her to the ground, one of the men confronted them with a stick while another of the women set fire to a piece of wood in order to defend herself. Two people were arrested.

A week earlier the Embassy occupants were put on notice that the structure was to be dismantled.

The Aboriginal Elders at the Embassy had gone to ACT Supreme Court in a bid to save the six-metre structure which was donated by a NSW tribe to house the documents that had been obtained in Britain

and brought back to Australia by Aboriginal activists.

The Elders, Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma and Neville Williams, sought a Court injunction to prevent the National Capital Authority (NCA) from carrying out the demolition.

The structure was also symbolically important in that the five different coloured sheeting which made up the sheltering roof represented the five nations of Indigenous peoples in Australia. The container holding the documents was bolted to the structure.

“It was given as a gift and was put up when we were celebrating our survival on Australia Day [Survival Day]”, Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma told *The Guardian*. “We didn't do it without any thought and take this thing and just put it up.” The NCA ordered the demolition because it said no permission for its erection had been sought.

The Embassy occupants responded that the land had been there long before white invasion and occupation and that Aboriginal law prevailed.

The Howard Government has long been attempting to close the Embassy altogether. Its campaign has included the construction of a monument which it has proclaimed to be the “official” recognition of Aboriginal peoples. But it contains no recognition of Indigenous Australians as the original owners of the land.

“It shows really what the Government is doing and how stupid they are”, said Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma. “\$5.5 million of taxpayers' money We're spiritual



Aboriginal Tent Embassy

people. We're not into monuments. They put it up there and now they want to kick us out of where we are.

“We are trying to bridge the gap in this country between black and white people. We are trying to put our case in a dignified way. We have a humpy there and a fire and people are more than welcome to come ... we want them to come to the Sacred Fire for Peace and Justice.

“But we are finding it really hard because the Federal Government is doing underhanded stuff.”

She described the new monu-

ment as a “monumental lie”.

“The whole issue is about one continent and two systems and *ours* is the legal sovereignty in this land. We are now challenging the Commonwealth to prove their alleged sovereignty”, said Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma.

“I want [also] to extend an invitation to all these people in high places to come to the Fire for Peace and Justice and listen to what we're saying and we'll work it out between us, all together, so that we can walk side by side in this land.” ☺

## NSW: Teachers confront parties

The ALP choked, the Greens shone, and the Liberals surprised everyone at a NSW Teachers' Federation debate last week. A packed Sydney Town Hall meeting of over 2500 teachers and parents asked the hard questions of the State's major political parties about their policies for Public Education in the run-up to the State election on March 22.

Andrew Jackson

Chaired by the ABC's Quentin Dempster, the meeting featured policy speeches from the Leader of the Opposition John Brogden, The Greens' Lee Rhiannon, and Nina Burridge of the Australian Democrats.

Labor Premier Bob Carr had been invited to speak at the forum, but sent Minister of Education, John Watkins to speak in his place.

The crowd booed at any mention of the Premier, who had declined to appear and debate his policies with the leader of the opposition, an approach he has maintained throughout the campaign.

The biggest cheers on the evening went to Greens MLA Lee Rhiannon, who said teachers' pay should be raised to 110 per cent of the average weekly wage immediately, rising to 150 per cent by 2010.

Ms Rhiannon also indicated that the Greens would move to legislate a maximum class size of 20 in years Kindergarten to Grade 3.

The current class size for this age group is 27, and a reduction to 20 is a key recommendation of the Vinson Inquiry into education.

The Greens would also maintain full public ownership of all public schools, said Ms Rhiannon. They would ban the sale of public land to private schools, and ban private ownership or operation of public schools including public/private partnerships.

John Brogden kicked off by making an outstanding commitment to provide a massive increase to professional development funding for teachers.

Under Labor the average annual amount available to teachers for professional development is approximately \$25 each.

Mr Brogden said a Liberal Government would boost that to \$800 per annum per full-time teaching position in Sydney-Newcastle-Wol-

longong, and \$1,200 in schools in other parts of the State.

Mr Brogden also committed a future Liberal Government to lowering the average class size for years Kindergarten to Grade 2 classes from the current average of 26-29 students down to 21.

Mr Brogden did fall foul of the audience at one stage though, and was met cries of “shame” over his refusal to back away from “League Tables” to rank public schools.

However, it must be questioned whether Mr Brogden's spending promises demonstrate a true commitment to public education, or whether he is just out to score brownie points in an election he is not expected to win.

The most hostile reaction on the night was reserved for the ALP Minister.

John Watkins failed to give any commitment to reducing class sizes, only giving an “if and when”, and spouting general policy rhetoric.

He also refused to be drawn on the Vinson recommendation of giving teachers a five percent salary increase.

Nina Burridge said the Australian Democrats also support the reduction of class sizes to no more than 20 students from K-2, and that the teacher-pupil ratio must be decreased overall.

The Democrats called for the creation of more full-time teaching positions so as to reduce dependence on casual teachers.

The Democrats opposed the sale of public schools, saying, “The Government must not sell off the schoolyard to buy books”.

The Democrats want TAFE funding to be restored, with catch-up for cuts in previous years, and will pursue the Federal Government to scrap its controversial SES education scheme, and redirect hundreds of millions of dollars they currently pour into private schools back into public education. ☺

### Book review

by Sheila Suttner

## My Country, My World

by Justina Williams

**Justina (Joan) Williams entered her 87th year on Australia Day 2003. Physically frail after a year of worrying and painful ailments, intellectually she is as feisty a fighter for peace, social justice, a nuclear-free planet, feminism, Aboriginal rights, workers' rights and freedom for all as ever.**

The publication of *My country, my world* is evidence of this: a beautiful and reminiscent selection of poems, covering personal and world-wide issues from 1970 to 2003.

Her vision is sharp and clear on the issues of the day; her language ranges from the euphoric to the frank. Justina calls a fork a fork, and not a garden implement.\*

Yet she can describe the birth of a baby, the opening of a flower in such terms that the reader can smell and touch and feel the experiences in a living and loving way from the pages of her book. Her poems vibrate with love and anger, outrage and wonder.

Justina's poems have inspired social activists over the decades. They are read out at rallies, emblazoned on flyers, called out in choruses of marchers.

Her poems are as relevant today as they were in the brutality of the bombing of Dresden, Hiroshima, Vietnam, the Gulf War and the war against Iraq, presently in prospect. (“Not in My Name” was reprinted

by peace organisations during the Gulf War and is read out at meetings and rallies, at home and abroad today, against the war on Iraq.)

They have spurred on the efforts of those who fought for legalised abortion, the protection of workers, the preservation of indigenous culture, a humane response to asylum seekers, and the cessation of environmental degradation of her beloved country.

And then there is the personal side of Justina's life, the relationships of marriage, parenthood and friendship that are described with passion and tenderness, in beautiful metaphor and symbolism.

What a living treasure we have in this woman. We must treasure her and her living legacy of the miracles of poetry.

*My country, my world*, published by Lone Hand Press, 68pps is available for \$10 plus \$1 p&p from: Vic Williams 5B Jemerson St, Willagee, WA 6156 ph 08 9337 1074 or

SPA Books, 65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010 ph 02 9212 6855

\* I must explain my misuse of the well-known adage “call a spade a spade etc.” Many years ago in South Africa I was involved in a family planning project in Soweto. The white lady running the event was explaining the sexual act in delicate terms such as “sexual intercourse”, “genital penetration”, etc. A large black lady stood up and said “If we are to help our people we must speak plainly. We must call a fock a fock, and not a garden implement.” ☺



JustinaWilliams

# Peace is union business

## Invasion of Iraq – “Not in our name!”

One very important feature of the momentous rallies and marches held from February 14-16 was the support given by trade unions and the participation of many of their members.

The peak trade union body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), state and regional labour councils and many of their affiliates urged workers to join the peace rallies. A growing number of trade unions are joining the various peace coalitions.

The involvement of the trade union movement in the anti-war struggle is playing a vital role in bringing the organised working class into the struggle for peace, giving it greater strength.

While very much united in their call for peace, there remain some important political and ideological differences in the specific positions adopted by trade union organisations. Some have taken a strong, unequivocal stand against war on Iraq, regardless of whether it is endorsed by the United Nations, while others appear prepared to support a UN-endorsed war.

NSW branch Secretary of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union, Annie Owens, expressed strong concerns over rushing headlong into war: "Many of our members know from bitter personal and family experience that the people who will be hurt the most will be the working class communities on both sides.

"The rich will pay the poor to do the fighting and the dying - while they make the profits.

"Already a British employers' organisation - the Institute of Directors - has released an almost gleeful report saying profits will jump, the world economy will improve from a quick, short, sharp war.

"Only the devil could think of

making profits from people's pain - and there is little guarantee that this will be a short and sharp war."

The Australian Education Union at its Federal Conference last month adopted a resolution commending those Australian political parties and individuals who have committed themselves to outright opposition to any attack on Iraq.

The AEU correctly points out that "an attack on Iraq will cause widespread death and destruction, increase insecurity and poverty in the world and threaten a wider conflict in the Middle East and elsewhere, including the South-East Asian region. The AEU is opposed to war against Iraq."

The AEU resolution points out that the "Bush, Blair and Howard governments have reacted in a superficial and reckless manner to terrorism by seeking to scapegoat nations like Afghanistan, North Korea, Cuba and Iraq and to pursue aggressive US geo-political ambitions, notably the oil reserves of Iraq.

"In so doing they have created greater insecurity and the potential for increased risks to their own citizens."

In opposing war on Iraq, the AEU does not hold back on the nature of the Iraqi government headed by Saddam Hussein - describing it as "a militarised authoritarian regime which has a shocking record of abuses of human rights including the execution of trade union leaders and political opponents."

The AEU, the Independent



Brisbane rally on February 16

Education Union and the National Tertiary Education Union, who between them have a combined teacher and support staff membership of over 250,000, placed a joint half page advertisement in *The Australian* newspaper urging people to join the peace actions.

"Our members teach respect for human rights, dialogue between cultures and nations and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

"The Iraq crisis should be resolved without recourse to war."

Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Leigh Hubbard, speaking at an international conference in the US last week, where leaders of labour organisations from around the world unveiled a declaration of opposition to a US war and invasion, stated: "To this day neither the US or Australian Governments have made a case for a strike on Iraq. The Victorian trade union movement will continue to

oppose any strike on Iraq with or without UN sanction."

The Queensland Council of Unions condemned the Federal Government's deployment of troops in the Middle East.

The United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, in promoting the Adelaide actions said, "The rally has the special support of unionists who recognise that their colleague workers in Iraq face being slaughtered - essentially sacrificed to suit the United States' political ends.

"The fact is that ordinary working people are the real casualties of war."

"The world must take note of the mistakes of the past.

The ACTU has taken a position that appears to be in line with that of the Labor Party leadership, i.e. opposing a unilateral declaration of war. This leaves open the possibility of support for a UN-

endorsed war.

The ACTU has attacked the Howard Government over its decision-making processes outside of Parliament and its failure to work within UN structures.

"Instead of rushing to war, the Australian Government should be working for disarmament and peace through the United Nations", ACTU President Sharan Burrow said.

In addition to opposing war and promoting the peace marches and rallies, the Australian Education Union, the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, the NSW Trades and Labor Council, Maritime Union of Australia, Unions WA and others are holding meetings and publishing material to better educate their members on the issues.

A number have decided on various forms of industrial action should war commence. ☺

## Terror raid on building site

The Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) has demanded to know why Federal Police conducted a dawn raid on a building site in Port Melbourne last week, threatening the safety of more than 160 workers who were confronted by the armed police who then singled out all those of Asian appearance - 61 of the workers - and herded them into a shed like cattle. The Federal Police then took 11 allegedly illegal workers away after they and management had ordered all workers off the site.

The VTHC described the raid as "an inflammatory and brutal attack on workers in the building industry" and asked how the Federal Government could condemn dictatorial regimes in other countries for violating democratic rights when it ordered its police to violate the democratic rights of workers and victimise them based on their race.

Further, the raid also contravened workplace health and safety regulations. "You do not send armed police into any workplace to conduct a raid without any protocols for ensuring workers safety. It is no exaggeration to say someone could have been killed in this raid.

During the Federal Government's kangaroo court - the Cole Royal Commission into the Building industry - the union movement warned that Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott's obsession

with destroying the building unions completely overrode and ignored serious workplace health and safety problems.

"This raid takes his disregard for the safety of building workers to new heights," Mr Hubbard said.

"Mr Hubbard said the manner in which the raid was conducted contravened workplace health and safety regulations. He said the fact that building sites were dangerous places should be apparent to anyone with common sense.



He also noted that there are glaring discrepancies by authorities when targeting sites for people working illegally.

"Why do our authorities turn a blind eye to the thousands of backpackers from the United States, United Kingdom and other European countries who are illegally working in call centres and offices around Australia?" ☺

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# Pearl Jam back better than ever... and with a message

It's hard to believe that Pearl Jam is actually a "survivor" band from the era of grunge music that used to emanate from Seattle, Washington. While Nirvana and lead singer, Kurt Cobain, are far from forgotten, the era they came to symbolise - and to which Pearl Jam originally belonged - does now seem a long time ago.

by Bob Briton

Any feeling that Pearl Jam might be a little "past it" has been emphatically swept away by the band's 2003 Australian tour. I managed to catch the band when they performed in Adelaide and, by so doing, capped off a magic day. They played on the evening following the massive anti-war rallies that flooded onto the streets of Adelaide and several other Australian capitals - a fact that became a theme running through Pearl Jam's inspired performance that night.

This is the second time I've seen Pearl Jam absolutely captivate an audience in Adelaide and the second time I've seen a very good "special guest" band struggle to entertain the faithful until the main act took the stage.

This time, Johnny Marr and The Healers played their own brand of very polished, tight, competent music to a generally respectful but restrained audience as the Entertainment Centre continued to fill.

I wondered why their talented contribution didn't draw more enthusiastic applause. I stopped wondering when Pearl Jam lit up the stage and the audience. Fans knew what was about to take place and poor Johnny Marr didn't stand a chance.

Pearl Jam's music has an earthiness and humanity that defies analysis. The Ancient Greeks used to imagine that music was touched by the spirit of Dionysus, the god representing all things wild and

chaotic. He stood opposite the tight, orderly Apollo in the ancients' pantheon. Pearl Jam is the inspired, unrestrained, Dionysian rock band *par excellence*.

Bandleader, Eddie Vedder, goes to some lengths to promote this wild image. He nearly always swigs from a wine bottle and spits during his performances.

In the very early days of the band, rumour has it that Eddie used to downplay his distressingly normal family background in working class Seattle. People in grunge bands had to have "issues" - usually arising from their dysfunctional families.

However, there is nothing phoney about Eddie's music or anything undeserved about the position of Pearl Jam in contemporary music. Their association with progressive causes is genuine, also.

They have suffered vilification campaigns from the religious right in the US because of their support of women's right to choose.

Pearl Jam's boycott of ticketing monopoly Ticketmaster during the 1990s must have cost them a packet.

In Adelaide, Eddie returned several times to the subject of peace and how Australia should be proud to have staged such powerful protests in its cities that afternoon.

He attacked a rubber mask of George "Dubya" at one point and led the audience in the Lennon song/chant "all we are saying, is give peace a chance".

We found out from Vedder that the band had actually marched in Adelaide alongside the other 100,000 participants on that memorable Sunday. Every pro-peace statement was met with louder and louder cheers of approval from the crowd.

Finding its way into the set list was a song from the group's *Bin-aural* album of 2000. *Insignificance* deals with the compromised moral position of a worker at Boeing's massive plant in Pearl Jam's hometown in Washington State.

Much of the aeronautical manufacturing company's capacity is dedicated to the military-mass-producing machines with deadly capabilities.

The song bewails Seattle's workers' complicity in this monstrous project:

*Bombs ..... dropping down,..... overhead,..... underground,..... its instilled,..... to wanna live.*

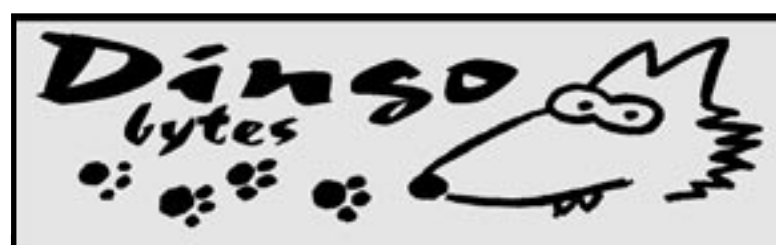
*Bombs ..... dropping down,..... please forgive,..... our hometown,..... In our insignificance.*

The band presented a satisfying mixture of new and old material. *Even Flow*, *Not For You* and *Go* were played, as well as *Black*. Eddie was able to leave the singing to the audience during *Better Man*. Songs from *Riot Act* confirmed the new album's reputation as a "creeper", one that slowly but surely wins you over.

It's rare to leave a rock performance feeling that the event had been intimate. However, that Sunday night I wouldn't have been alone in thinking that, as well being thoroughly entertained, I had been allowed into the world and the thinking of a sincere, humanistic band of artists. ☘



Pearl Jam



Petrol rationing is the latest in war hysteria propaganda. The Howard Government has dug out the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act from 1970 with which it could declare an oil emergency. Where were the brainstormers who dug this one up following Esso's disastrous 1998 gas explosion in Melbourne? Indeed, Esso last week was let off the hook, the Victorian Supreme Court ruling against a class action by workers who were stood down and small businesses who lost money when the state's gas supplies were cut for two weeks. The blast killed two Esso workers and seriously injured and traumatised others. Esso, which has already been found guilty of causing the disaster but has avoided any punishment because of its ability to work the legal system via its bottomless pit of money, called the decision "good for business". If there is any "terrorist emergency" it won't be the petrol companies that'll pay: the whole terror beat-up is about looking after the interests of big oil.

The economics and politics of privatisation were exposed when Victoria's RMIT University last week pulled out of a deal to host a conference on West Papuan independence. The official reason was that it was "not appropriate" for RMIT to "endorse activities" that involve "criticism on matters pertaining to the sovereignty of other nations". But the University, suffering from Howard Government funding cuts as part of the privatisation of tertiary education, was more likely thinking about the 1500 fee-paying Indonesian students it will enrol this year. The conference will now be held at the Victorian Trades Hall.

Dingo was reminded of a joke when reading a recent news report on the effectiveness and efficiency of Australia's new anti-terrorist measures. It was during a rash of airline hijackings in the 1970s: someone on a plane seeing a friend calls out "Hi Jack!", whereupon everyone hurles themselves to the floor. Fast forward to 2003 and a bloke at a little airstrip in north Queensland pulls a knife and demands the pilot of a six-seater Cessna fly him to Rockhampton. "Within minutes of the pilot sounding the alert", said the front page report in *The Australian* newspaper, "Air Services Australia, which has upgraded its hijack procedures since the September 11 attack, had informed Queensland police." Federal Attorney-General Daryl Williams, was not alarmed and did not issue an alert "as it was a criminal rather than a terrorist incident".

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is PM Howard who, along with his partners in death and destruction, George W Bush and Tony Blair, is clearly shaken by the mass anti-war protests around the world. Parrotting his two butcher boy buddies, Howard accused those for peace of providing "comfort to Saddam Hussein". Desperate stuff from an arrogant quisling who till now has been treating Australians with utter contempt.

## French Garden rediscovered

"This is one of our nation's most stunning historic sites. It is also a proud part of France's history... I can hardly believe it is there and intact after more than two centuries", said Greens Senator Bob Brown.

Senator Brown was referring to the stunning discovery of 211-year-old French Garden re-discovered in Tasmania.

The garden was built in the Tasmanian forests by the great French expedition of Bruni D'Entrecasteaux in 1792.



Archaeologist John Mulvaney at the site's vegetable garden

The stone surrounds of the garden are a walk through the bush from the beach on Recherche Bay, south of Hobart. They measure 9.5 metres by 8.3 metres, with two internal stone plinths.

A separate substantial stone wall, more than 20 metres long and one metre high, located at Bennetts Point one kilometre south of the garden, may well be part of the observatory set up to study the planet of Jupiter and electromagnetic navigation by the scientists on the D'Entrecasteaux expedition.

The history of the garden and observatory have been tracked by the local Recherche Bay Protection Group which opposes the imminent clearfell logging of the 140 hectare peninsula by the giant woodchip company Gunns Pty Ltd.

The stone sites were rediscovered two weeks ago by Tasmanian farmers Bob Graham and Helen Gee.

"We are sending a dossier on this discovery to the Tasmanian Premier Jim Bacon, who should make it a national park, and to Prime Minister Howard who should nominate it for World Heritage status", said Senator Brown. ☘

# Battle of the currencies

## The real reasons for the war

Despite over 300 unfettered UN inspections to date, there has been no evidence reported of a reconstituted Iraqi WMD program and despite Bush's rhetoric, the CIA has not found any links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaida.

By W Clark

Although completely suppressed in the US media, the answer to the Iraq enigma is simple yet shocking. The upcoming war in Iraq is mostly about how the US ruling class and the Bush oligarchy view hydrocarbons at the geo-strategic level, and the overarching macro-economic threats to the US dollar from the euro.

The Real Reason for this upcoming war is this administration's goal of preventing further OPEC momentum towards the euro as an oil transaction currency standard. In order to pre-empt OPEC they need to gain geo-strategic control of Iraq along with its second largest proven oil reserves.

The following is how an astute and anonymous friend alluded to the unspoken truth about this upcoming war with Iraq...

"The [US] Federal Reserve's greatest nightmare is that OPEC will switch its international transactions from a dollar standard to a euro standard.

"Saddam sealed his fate when he decided to switch to the euro in late 2000 (and later converted his \$10 billion reserve fund at the UN to euros) – at that point, another manufactured Gulf War become inevitable under Bush II.

### Permanent military presence

"The real reason the Bush administration wants a puppet government in Iraq, or more importantly, the reason why the corporate-military-industrial network conglomerate wants a puppet government in Iraq, is so that it

the Persian Gulf region in a post Saddam era, just in case we need to surround and grab Saudi's oil fields in the event of a coup by an anti-western group.

Everything else aside from the reserve currency and the Saudi/Iraq oil issues is peripheral and of marginal consequence to this administration.

Further, the dollar-euro threat is powerful enough that they'll rather risk much of the economic backlash in the short-term to stave off the long-term dollar crash of an OPEC transaction standard change from dollars to euros. All of this fits into the broader Great Game that encompasses Russia, India, China.

The steady depreciation of the dollar versus the euro since late 2001 means that Iraq has profited handsomely from the switch in their reserve and transaction currencies.

The euro has gained roughly 17 per cent against the dollar in that time, which also applies to the \$10 billion in Iraq's UN "oil for food" reserve fund that was previously held in dollars has also gained that same percent value since the switch.

What would happen if OPEC made a sudden switch to euros, as opposed to a gradual transition?

"... the effect of an OPEC switch to the euro would be that oil-consuming nations would have to flush dollars out of their (central bank) reserve funds and replace these with euros.

"The dollar would crash anywhere from 20-40% in value and the consequences would be those one could expect from any currency collapse and massive inflation (think Argentina currency crisis, for example).

### Saddam sealed his fate when he decided to switch to the euro in late 2000

will revert back to a dollar standard and stay that way."

(It hopes to veto any wider OPEC momentum towards the euro, especially from Iran – the second largest OPEC producer who is actively discussing a switch to euros for its oil exports.)

Furthermore, despite Saudi Arabia being our "client state", the Saudi regime appears increasingly weak/threatened from massive civil unrest. Some analysts believe a "Saudi Revolution" might be plausible in the aftermath of an unpopular US invasion of Iraq.

Undoubtedly, the Bush administration is acutely aware of these risks. Hence, the neo-conservative framework entails a large and permanent military presence in

"You'd have foreign funds stream out of the US stock markets and dollar denominated assets, there'd surely be a run on the banks much like the 1930s, the current account deficit would become unserviceable, the budget deficit would go into default, and so on. Your basic third world economic crisis scenario." (Radio Free Europe/RL correspondent Charles Recknagel)

In the aftermath of toppling Saddam it is clear the US will keep a large and permanent military force in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, there is no "exit strategy" in Iraq, as the military will be needed to protect the newly installed Iraqi regime, and perhaps send a message to other OPEC producers that they



Dollars and sense – part of an anti-war protest in Spain

might receive "regime change" if they too move to euros for their oil exports.

### "Axis of Evil"

Another under-reported story from this summer regarding the other OPEC "Axis of Evil" country and their interest in selling oil in euros is Iran.

"Iran's proposal to receive payments for crude oil sales to Europe in euros instead of US dollars is based primarily on economics, Iranian and industry sources said. But politics are still likely to be a factor in any decision, they said, as Iran uses the opportunity to hit back at the US government, which recently labeled it part of an 'axis of evil.'" (Gutman, Roy & Barry, John, *Beyond Baghdad: Expanding Targeting List*)

Moreover and perhaps most telling, during 2002 the majority of reserve funds in Iran's central bank have been shifted to euros. It appears imminent that Iran intends to switch to euros for their oil currency.

After toppling Saddam, this administration may decide that Iran is the next target in the "war on terror".

"While still wrangling over how to overthrow Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration is already looking for other targets. As one senior British official put it: "Everyone wants to go to Baghdad. Real men want to go to Tehran."

Aside from these political risks

regarding Saudi Arabia and Iran, another risk factor is actually Japan. Perhaps the biggest gamble in a protracted Iraq war may be Japan's weak economy.

If the war creates prolonged oil high prices (\$45 per barrel over several months), or a short but massive oil price spike (\$80 to \$100 per barrel), some analysts believe Japan's fragile economy would collapse.

Japan is quite hypersensitive to oil prices, and if its banks default, the collapse of the second largest economy would set in motion a sequence of events that would prove devastating to the US economy.

Indeed, Japan's fall in an Iraq war could create the economic dislocations that begin in the Pacific Rim but quickly spread to Europe and Russia. The Russian Government lacks the controls to thwart a disorderly run on the dollar, and such an event could ultimately force an OPEC switch to euros.

Incidentally, the final "Axis of Evil" country, North Korea, recently decided to officially drop the dollar and begin using euros for trade, effective December 7, 2002. Unlike the OPEC-producers, their switch will have negligible economic impact, but it illustrates the geopolitical fallout of the President Bush's harsh rhetoric.

Even more alarming, and completely unreported in the US media, are some monetary shifts in the reserve funds of foreign governments away from the dollar with movements towards the euro (China, Venezuela, some OPEC

producers and last week Russia flushed some of their dollars for euros).

It appears that the world community may lack faith in the Bush administration's economic policies, and along with OPEC, seems poised to respond with economic retribution if the US government is regarded as an uncontrollable and dangerous superpower. The plausibility of abandoning the dollar standard for the euro is growing.

An interesting UK article outlines the dynamics and the potential outcomes (Henderson, Hazel, "Beyond Bush's Unilateralism: Another Bi-Polar World or A New Era of Win-Win?")

"The most likely end to US hegemony may come about through a combination of high oil prices (brought about by US foreign policies toward the Middle East) and deeper devaluation of the US dollar (expected by many economists)."

As for the events currently taking place in Venezuela the Bush administration quickly endorsed the failed military-led coup of Hugo Chavez in April 2002. Although the coup collapsed after two days, various reports suggest the CIA and a rather embarrassed Bush administration approved and may have been actively involved with the civilian/military coup plotters.

George W Bush's administration was the failed coup's primary loser, underscoring its bankrupt hemispheric policy.

Interestingly, according to an article by Michael Ruppert,

# Prencies The war on Iraq

Venezuelan's ambassador Francisco Mieres-Lopez apparently floated the idea of switching to the euro as their oil currency standard approximately one year before the failed coup attempt.

Venezuela is the fourth largest producer of oil.

Furthermore, the establishment might be concerned that Chavez's "barter deals" with 12 Latin American countries and Cuba are effectively cutting the US dollar out of the vital oil transaction currency cycle.

Commodities are being traded among these countries in exchange for Venezuela's oil, thereby reducing reliance on fiat dollars. If these unique oil transactions proliferate, they could create more devaluation pressure on the dollar. Continuing attempts by the CIA to remove Hugo Chavez appear likely.

"World trade is now a game in which the US produces dollars and the rest of the world produces things that dollars can buy. The world's interlinked economies no longer trade to capture a comparative advantage; they compete in exports to capture needed dollars to service dollar-denominated foreign debts and to accumulate dollar reserves to sustain the exchange value of their domestic currencies..."

## Dollar hegemony

"This phenomenon is known as dollar hegemony, which is created by the geopolitically constructed peculiarity that critical commodities, most notably oil, are denominated in dollars. Everyone accepts dollars because dollars can buy oil. The recycling of petro-dollars is the price the US has extracted from oil-producing countries for US tolerance of the oil-exporting cartel since 1973." (Liu, Henry C K, "US dollar hegemony has got to go", *Asia Times*, 11-04-02)

## This war will be over the global currency of oil.

However, the introduction of the euro is a significant new factor, and appears to be the primary threat to US economic hegemony.

Moreover, in December 2002 ten additional countries were approved for full membership into the E.U. In 2004 this will result in an aggregate GDP of \$9.6 trillion and 450 million people, directly competing with the US economy (\$10.5 trillion GDP, 280 million people).

Especially interesting is a speech given by Mr Javad Yarjani, the Head of OPEC's Petroleum Market Analysis Department, in a visit to Spain (April 2002). He said:

"The Euro-zone has a bigger share of global trade than the US and while the US has a huge current account deficit, the euro area has a more, or balanced, external accounts position..."

"From the EU's point of view, it is clear that Europe would prefer to

see payments for oil shift from the dollar to the euro, which effectively removed the currency risk. It would also increase demand for the euro and thus help raise its value.

"Moreover, since oil is such an important commodity in global trade, in term of value, if pricing were to shift to the euro, it could provide a boost to the global acceptability of the single currency..."

"Should the euro challenge the dollar in strength, which essentially could include it in the denomination of the oil bill, it could be that a system may emerge which benefits more countries in the long-term. Perhaps with increased European integration and a strong European economy, this may become a reality."

Facing these potentialities, I hypothesise that President Bush intends to topple Saddam in 2003 in a pre-emptive attempt to initiate massive Iraqi oil production far in excess of OPEC quotas, to reduce global oil prices, and thereby dismantle OPEC's price controls.

**The end-goal of the neo-conservatives is incredibly bold yet simple in purpose, to use the "war on terror" as the premise to finally dissolve OPEC's decision-making process, thus ultimately preventing the cartel's inevitable switch to pricing oil in euros.**

How would the Bush administration break-up the OPEC cartel's price controls in a post-Saddam Iraq?

First, the newly installed regime (apparently a US General for the first several months) will convert Iraq back to the dollar standard.

Next, with the US military protecting the oil fields, the Bush junta will undertake the necessary steps to rapidly increase production of Iraq oil, quintupling Iraq's current output – well beyond OPEC's two-million barrel per day quota.

Dr Nayyer Ali offers a succinct analysis of how Iraq's underutilised oil reserves will not be a "profit-maker" for the US Government, but it will serve as the crucial economic instrument used by the Bush junta to leverage and hopefully dissolve OPEC's price controls, thus causing the neo-conservative's long sought goal of collapsing the OPEC cartel. (Iraq and oil, 13-12-02)

If Iraq were reintegrated into the world economy, it could allow massive investment in its oil sector and boost output.

What would be the consequences of this? First would be the collapse of OPEC, whose strategy of limiting production to maximize price will have finally reached its limit.

Contrarily, OPEC could meet in Vienna and in an act of self-preservation re-denominate the oil currency to the euro. Such a decision would mark the end of

US dollar hegemony, and thus the end of our precarious economic superpower status.

Again, I offer the astute analysis of my expert friend regarding the colossal gamble this administration is about to undertake:

"One of the dirty little secrets of today's international order is that the rest of the globe could topple the United States from its hegemonic status whenever they so choose with a concerted abandonment of the dollar standard.

"This is America's preeminent, inescapable Achilles Heel for now and the foreseeable future. That such a course hasn't been pursued to date bears more relation to the fact that other Westernised, highly developed nations haven't any interest to undergo the great disruptions which would follow, but it could assuredly take place in the event that the consensus view coalesces of the United States as any sort of 'rogue' nation."

The Bush administration and the neo-conservative movement has set out on a multiple-front course to ensure that this cannot take place by a graduated assertion of military hegemony atop the existent economic hegemony.

Despite President Bush's attempt to use the threat of applying military force to OPEC producers who may wish to switch to the euro for their oil payments, it appears their belligerent neo-conservative policies may paradoxically bring about the dire outcome they hope to prevent – an OPEC currency switch to euros.

The American people are not aware of such information due to the US mass media, which has been reduced to a handful of consumption/entertainment and profit-oriented conglomerates that filter the flow of information in the US. Indeed, the Internet provides the only source of unfiltered "real news."

It would appear that any attempt by OPEC member states in the Middle East or Latin America to transition to the euro as their oil transaction currency standard shall be met with either overt US military actions or covert intelligence agency interventions.

This war in Iraq will have nothing to [do] with any threat from Saddam's old WMD program. This war will be over the global currency of oil.

We must not stand silent and watch our country become a 'rogue' superpower, relying on brute force, thereby forcing the industrialized nations or OPEC to abandon the dollar standard – and thus with the mere stroke of a pen – slay the US Empire.

The above article has been substantially abridged for reasons of space. The cross-heads were added by *The Guardian*. There are extensive references to the material used in it which are available from *The Guardian*. The full text may be viewed by visiting [www.cpa.org.au](http://www.cpa.org.au) and then following the prompts or contact The Guardian 02 9212 6855. ☪

## "COALITION OF THE KILLING"

The "coalition of the willing" (according to the US), or "coalition of the killing" (according to the millions who marched in protest against the war) gather like vultures ready to pounce on Iraq. There are some things that rarely get media attention. Iraqi civilian casualties are being played down, and practically nothing has been written about another group of people who will be suffering the consequences of war – the military and their families. MARK METCALF of the British socialist daily *Morning Star* reports on a public meeting in Sunderland (Britain).

Professor Malcolm Hooper, chief scientific advisor to the Gulf War veterans, highlighted the problem confronting the forces in the Gulf – even if they defeat the Iraqi military forces (which is almost a forgone conclusion, considering the overwhelming superiority of the US killing machine), many of them are going to suffer long after the event.

Professor Hooper based his conclusions on the research done after the first Gulf War.

He cited figures released in the US about the health of forces who were involved in January 16 to February 27 conflict in 1991.

As the result of that war the US suffered 147 dead and British casualties totalled 49.

Body bags were not carried from the Gulf en masse. The servicemen and women got home to die and be sick.

Since 1991, 8000 US soldiers who served in the Gulf have died, 125,000 are registered disabled and another 253,000 are on medical care.

These were young, fit, well-trained people.

Babies born to some of the soldiers have exhibited abnormalities. It is not surprising that this time around a number of US servicemen had taken precautionary measures and made deposits at sperm banks.

According to Professor Hooper

31 per cent of those who served are now dead, seriously ill and/or receiving medical attention.

Forty-three per cent of those who actually went into Iraq are dead or ill – of those who stayed in Kuwait, the figure is 31 per cent and of those who got no nearer than being on board a ship in the Gulf the figure is 20 per cent.

In other words, soldiers who fight in the front line in a future war may survive an attack on Iraq, but they certainly won't live to a ripe old age to enjoy "victory".

As Professor Hooper pointed out: "If you are going to fight in the Gulf war then don't go, because you are not going to be looked after when you get home".

The effects of the depleted uranium ammunition and the unhealthy cocktail of vaccines being given to the military turned them into guinea pigs. Professor Hooper said that the 1991 war was "the most toxic war in Western military history".

Oil corporations' CEOs are not in the Gulf. They are safely tucked away in their plush offices, busy counting their profits and fighting over the carve-up of Iraq.

The millions marching in protest against the war are doing it not for Saddam as Mr Howard is implying but for all those who will be the victims in this war. ☪



Not in my name – a protester in the Philippines dressed as the Statue of liberty

# US sinks Armistice

Following is the full text of the statement carried by North Korean radio threatening to end the Korean War armistice:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement in Korea.

For 50 long years, the Korean people have suffered the tragedy of national division and all sorts of indescribable pain due to the constant war threat and acute tension brought about by the unstable state of armistice, which is neither war nor peace.

Our people can no longer undergo such pain and tragedy and our patience has reached its limit.

The Armistice Agreement was originally signed in anticipation of a higher-level political meeting that was to be convened within three months after the Armistice Agreement was signed and effective, so as to guarantee a peaceful resolution of the Korean issue through discussions about withdrawing all foreign forces from Korea and a peaceful

During the preliminary talks for convening a political meeting held at P'anmunjom in October 1953 which was held in accordance with the demand of Article 60 of the Armistice Agreement, the US delegate left the meeting place without any reason, and ruptured the preliminary talks.

The political meeting was never convened.

Thus, the way to a peaceful resolution of the Korean issue anticipated by the Armistice Agreement became blocked.

Less than five years after the armistice, the United States unilaterally abrogated all core clauses of the agreement that it deemed as being a hindrance to its illegal arms build-up and war preparations in South Korea and turned South Korea into the United States' military and nuclear base.

Line in our country's West Sea [Yellow Sea], and has continued a naval blockade against us for decades.

The Armistice Agreement has, in effect, become a blank piece of paper without any effect or significance.

Today the Armistice Agreement is actually being used, not to prevent the recurrence of hostile acts on the Korean peninsula, but in the United States' hostile policy towards the DPRK [North Korea].

In particular, what we cannot but take a serious view on is that today, when the Korean peninsula's situation has become extremely acute because of the US nuclear racket, the United States ignores the Armistice Agreement which prohibits arms build-up against the other signatory of the Armistice Agreement.

The USA is about to reinforce and deploy huge forces including aircraft carriers and strategic bombers on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity, and is putting into practice its plan for pre-emptive attack on our Republic, every minute, by fiercely conducting various surprise attack exercises aimed at us.

Now they are planning to send many troops and operational equipment to South Korea under the pretext of holding the joint military exercise combining the Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration Exercise and the Foal Eagle Exercise which begins on March 16.

The situation is growing more serious each day.

The United States openly declared that it would continue its brigandish encroachment upon our sovereignty in the waters near our country in the future just as it



South Korea soldiers – the US signing of the Armistice was a deceptive act

**Today the Armistice Agreement is actually being used, not to prevent the recurrence of hostile acts on the Korean peninsula, but in the United States' hostile policy towards the DPRK [North Korea].**

resolution of the Korean issue.

However, the history of Korea's 50-year long armistice, which is unprecedented in the world, plainly proves that the United States' signing of the Armistice Agreement, which is for a peaceful resolution of the Korean issue, was a deceptive farce.

Since then, our people have been faced with yet another new challenge of nuclear threat.

At the same time, the United States violently infringed on Article 15 of the Armistice Agreement prohibiting any form of blockade against the DPRK, unilaterally drew the so-called Northern Limit

captured and searched one of our country's trading cargo ships that was travelling in the open seas in broad daylight on December 9, 2002.

This means that it will conduct naval blockade operations, which are only seen to take place between warring states during a war, and this is virtually tantamount to a solemn declaration of war.

All facts clearly show how ridiculous and hypocritical is the US sophism that peace is ensured in Korea because of the Armistice Agreement.

The grave situation created by the undisguised war acts committed by the United States in ignoring the Armistice Agreement, compels the KPA [Korean People's Army], the United States' battle counterpart, to urgently take all necessary steps to cope with it.

If the United States continues

violating and abusing the Armistice Agreement as it pleases, there will be no need for us to remain uncomfortably bound to the Armistice Agreement.

The KPA P'anmunjom Mission is authorised to declare that if the United States gathers its forces on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity to attack us and take sanctions against us from anywhere, the KPA will regard this as an act of blockade against us, which is prohibited by the Armistice Agreement.

The KPA will be left with no option but to take a resolute step to abandon its commitment to implement the Armistice Agreement as a signatory to it and free itself from the binding force of all its provisions.

Future developments will entirely depend on the United States. ☛

## Most Israelis want peace

**PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil – Most Israelis want a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, and the Bush administration's policies are "very unhelpful", Galia Golan, a leader of Peace Now, Israel's oldest and largest mass peace movement.**

by Susan Webb

Golan, along with Shulamit Aloni, a member of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's cabinet, and Ziad Abu Ziad, a member of the Palestine Legislative Council, participated in the World Social Forum on January 23-28, speaking at a series of panels on the Israel-Palestine situation.

In an interview with the *People's Weekly World*, Golan, a professor of political science in Jerusalem, said polls show "a vast majority of Israelis agree with the idea of a two-state solution, a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel, and the vast majority are willing to see a withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, the dismantling of most or all of the settlements".

Peace Now was founded in 1978 by 350 reserve officers and soldiers from combat units in the army. "It's really quite unusual and significant: a peace movement founded by mainly young people who were in fighting units in the army," Golan said.

"I think one of the reasons it became a mass movement is that it came out of the centre of Israeli society with young people who

said they are willing to fight for the country but they must believe that the government is doing everything possible to reach peace. It grew into a movement of hundreds of thousands of people."

"Today the vast majority of Israelis, whether they identify with Peace Now or not, do accept our positions. While we have not succeeded in bringing about peace, and we have not succeeded in bringing about a government that is willing to make peace, I think we have played a large role in changing attitudes within the country."

The Bush administration's strong support of the hard-line militarism of Ariel Sharon's government has been a very serious problem for Israel, Golan declared.

"Clinton didn't do everything right perhaps, but he certainly was engaged and put forth ideas that I think were extremely helpful.

"The disaster for us is that the US is really the only country that has influence over the Israeli Government or the public, and the Bush administration has taken a very, very firm position in support of Sharon's policies, even to the point of supporting Sharon's refusal to

negotiate, Sharon's refusal to meet with Arafat or to even acknowledge Arafat. I think this has been extremely harmful for us."

Nevertheless, Golan said she is confident there will be a return to the peace process. "The reason I'm confident is that the public has come a long way and is willing today to compromise, does want to see an end to the occupation and an end to the bloodshed.

"And I think that we have the same thing on the Palestinian side. There is a majority on both sides that wants to see an end to this situation."

A major problem for the Israeli peace movement, said Golan, is that it is identified with the European-born middle class elite and "we have had very great difficulty in breaking this image."

In addition, she said, the fundamentalist orthodox Jewish parties have directed their right-wing ultra-nationalist appeal to workers, playing on class divisions. Although there are movements for rights and ethnic pride among the oriental (eastern) Jews, who in addition to Israeli Arabs are the preponderant group in the working class, she said they tend to be allied with the ultra-orthodox and support the extremist right-wing government.

"One of the major things we have been trying to do is to dem-



"Dismantle the settlements" – Israelis protest for peace

onstrate to people that the terrible rise in unemployment and severe hardship we have today inside Israel – where we have enormous numbers of people living below the poverty line and are now reaching 11 percent unemployment – there is a connection between this and the absence of peace, a connection between this and our absence of security and the monies going into the settlements and protecting the settlers."

At the moment the biggest problem in Israeli society in general, said Golan, is that as a result of terrorism there has been a shift in sentiment, "on the one hand being in favour of compromise – a two-state solution – and on the other hand saying 'there's no one to talk to, all they want to do is throw us into the sea'. So these are the contradictions with which we have to deal".

People's Weekly World ☛



# United Nations opinion swings against Bush's war

The UN Security Council opened its forum to the representatives of non-Security Council members last week. This process was proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement to give other countries an opportunity to express their views on the key issue of war or peace.

One after another, the overwhelming number of governments ruled out a pre-emptive strike by the US, Britain and Australia and called for the issues to be entrusted to the United Nations to resolve without war.

China's Xinhua news agency reported that "support for a peaceful solution to the Iraqi issue continued to build up at the United Nations [last week] when more members called for further inspections against a rush to war".

The Egyptian Ambassador to the UN said at the meeting, "Resolution 1441 had been implemented satisfactorily. Two briefings by the chief inspectors had described success in a very short period of time, and further success was promised in the upcoming period."

"The inspection process must be supported and continue, without interruption or rigid deadlines. The repercussions of armed conflict for the Middle East and the whole world made it imperative to work with diligence, patience and determination towards a peaceful settlement."

The Swiss UN Ambassador said he did not think the moment for the use of force had come and his government dreaded the consequences for the civilian population of a military operation.

"The resort to force could only

be envisaged after all peaceful means to find a solution to the crisis had been exhausted. In any case, the use of force must be authorised by a Council resolution", he said.

Malaysia's UN Ambassador supported the proposal by France on the need to increase the human and technical capacities of the inspection teams as well as their intention to request another meeting at the ministerial level on March 14 to appraise the situation and progress made.

The United States and Britain, both feverishly advocating prompt military action in Iraq, could only find partial support from a small number of countries including Macedonia and Nicaragua. Japan and Australia were among the very small number of countries fully supportive of Bush's war agenda.

Diplomats at the UN believe growing opposition at the United Nations, compounded with global protests for peace, could complicate Washington's diplomatic manoeuvres to push for a second resolution backing war with Iraq.

Before the extended UN debate, a number of Asian countries called for a peaceful resolution. Their voices are getting clearer and louder.

In Pakistan, a country in the forefront of the US-led anti-

terrorist war, the Government has reiterated that the Iraq crisis should be resolved through peaceful means.

President Musharraf, during a talk with President Bush, clearly said that it would be much better to resolve differences on Iraq through talks or diplomacy.

India, took a similar stand. Defence Minister George Fernandes, when asked if the United States had sought India's support on the Iraq issue said, "India cannot support. How can India support?"

Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said, "We have no military and financial strength but we can join the world movement to oppose war on moral grounds, about how bad it is to use war to settle a problem".

Malaysia's Vice President Hamzah Haz urged the United States to cancel its plan to launch an attack on Iraq, saying, "If the United States attacks Iraq, many countries will isolate it".

Indonesia's Foreign Minister said, "For the Indonesian government, the US intelligence data are 'indicative' that need further authentication by the UN weapons inspectors. We are keen to prioritise a peace solution".

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are two other Asian nations also speaking up for a peaceful, negotiated solution.

The extended discussion before the UN Security Council and the views of other nations have been almost totally ignored by the Australian media. ☘



## Global briefs

**MEXICO:** At least 32 babies have died in a hospital in Comitán, Chiapas, in the last two months, 26 of them in December alone. Cuba is planning to send at least 200 doctors to Chiapas to form health brigades. Chiapas is one of the poorest parts of Mexico, especially in Indigenous communities.

**ISRAEL:** About 200 US soldiers have been in Israel since mid-January as part of joint manoeuvres code-named "Juniper Cobra". The timing of the exercises coincides with the planned US war on Iraq. Israel has also deployed its new multi-billion-dollar Arrow missile killer, which is reported to be the only operational weapon capable of intercepting ballistic missiles outside the Earth's atmosphere.

**USA:** Senior citizen groups are boycotting drug giant Glaxo-Smithkline, since it cut supplies to Canadian pharmacies that sell its drugs to Americans on the Internet at bargain prices. Hundreds of groups started an e-mail and phone campaign urging US consumers to stop buying Glaxo's over-the-counter products. At the end of January, Glaxo stopped shipping its prescription drugs, including the antidepressant Paxil and allergy drug Flonase, to Canadian pharmacists. A favourable currency exchange rate and Canadian government price controls meant prescriptions cost up to 80 per cent less in Canada than in the USA, and many Americans were taking advantage of the savings.

**CUBA:** Five prisoners held at the infamous prison camp at the US's Guantanamo naval base have tried to commit suicide in the last three weeks. This brings the total of such attempts to 15 since the prison was built a year ago to house prisoners taken by US forces in its war against Afghanistan. The Guantanamo prison camp still holds 625 prisoners who are not afforded basic human rights as prisoners of war.

**TONGA:** The Tonga Communique, issued by 9th Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Conference, condemned the USA for its continuous expansion of military installations in the Pacific region, especially the increased build-up of nuclear submarines and warheads in Guam, in preparation for a possible attack on North Korea. Motarilavao Hilda Lini, Director of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, said the NFIP Movement, with membership in 33 countries, has followed closely developments at US military bases within and around the Pacific region, such as in Alaska, Hawaii, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Guam, Saipan and Diego Garcia, and the threat these pose to the innocent peoples scattered over the vast Pacific Ocean. Ms Lini warned that "The Pacific being the most US militarised region of the world is a target for any first strike by US enemies". The NFIP Movement urged Pacific Islands Governments to use diplomatic processes in calling on the United States and the United Kingdom to show moral responsibility in their leadership by adhering to the principles of justice and equal rights to nuclear security standards for the people of Guam, the population of the Pacific Islands and the Pacific regional environment. The NFIP Movement also called on the government of Guam to seriously pursue substantive discussions with the US administration on self-determination objectives to guarantee the complete closing down of US military bases.

# Will history repeat itself?

Ryo Kumasaka was playing touch football in a nearby playground on December 7, 1941, when he heard Japanese planes had bombed Pearl Harbor.

by Fred Gaboury

"It was incredible – beyond belief", he told me in a recent interview. He said his family tried to make sense out things later that evening. "We agreed to continue with our lives, which meant that I would continue to attend classes at the University of Washington."

Kumasaka said he did not notice much hostility among his class mates even as they gathered in the library to listen to President Franklin Roosevelt ask Congress to declare war. "There was lots of excitement but no hostility", he said.

But that was to change. Newspapers up and down the West Coast, taking their lead from the *San Francisco Examiner*, began running front-page stories demanding evacuation of all Japanese, citizen and non-citizen alike. The die was cast in February when President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.

The order authorising the Secretary of War to determine areas "from which any or all persons may be excluded", set in motion a process that saw more than 110,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry relocated in 10 concentration camps.

Kumasaka was one of them. On May 15, 1942, he, his mother, father and younger brother together with 1,500 other Japanese, some of them immigrants, others born in the United States were herded onto the train, with only those personal belongings they could carry.

After a three-month stay in the Pine Dale relocation centre the family was sent to the Tule Lake concentration camp near the California/Nevada border.

"Accommodations were minimal", Kumasaka remembers, "An entire family crammed into a room 20 feet square. We ate in a community mess hall and shared

bathroom facilities." He said many of the elderly people had a hard time adjusting to the food that "wasn't what you would call 'Japanese cuisine'".

Although he suffered many indignities, the change of his military draft classification from "1-A" to "4-C" still rankles. "I was classified an 'enemy alien' – me an American who was born in the United States!"

Kumasaka had a two-word reply when asked about the recent claim by Representative Republican Howard Coble that the round-up had benefited those sent to the camps. "That's bull", he snapped.

Unlike many internees who remained in the camps until 1946, Kumasaka left Tule Lake in December 1942 to live with his brother in Chicago. From there it was to Denver where his family eventually joined him. He was reclassified "1-A" in late 1944 and spent the waning days of the war in the army.

Now 83 and retired, Kumasaka lives in a Seattle suburb and plays an active role in the Alliance of Retired Americans. "When they sent us to the concentration camps hardly anyone spoke out in our defence," he said as our interview wound down.

"That has changed and today there is a growing resistance to laws like the Patriot Act. We may not be winning yet, but we will win."

People's Weekly World paper  
Communist Party, USA ☘

Sydney

Australia Cuba Friendship Society

Support Cuban people: South American BBQ

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Addison Road Community Centre, Latin American Hut

142 Addison Road Marrickville Sydney

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Contact Abraham 9628 4452 or 9572 9966

## Qantas the rogue corporation

**Qantas is using the prospect of war in the Middle East to make more staff cuts. They've always got an excuse. The 2001 terrorist attacks in the US was the excuse for cost cutting by airlines around the world. One month after the attack Qantas announced a \$1.5 billion buying spree for new planes and a pay freeze for its staff, then over the following 18 months threw 1000 of its staff out of work.**

This time it intends to cut the equivalent of 1500 full-time jobs through the non-replacement of workers who resign (attrition) and forcing staff to take holiday and long service leave. It has warned its workforce of more direct job cuts if the US and its handful of hangers on actually start a war.

All this is on top of huge profits – Qantas had a record half year net profit to December of \$352.5 million – and its \$514 million takeover push for Air NZ. This disgusting a list goes on and on.

The attack on its workers is in fact part of a \$1 billion cost cutting exercise planned for the next three years, regardless of oil wars or any other upheaval.

Its chief executive Geoff Dixon, while demanding that Qantas workers accept wage freezes and job cuts, in 2002 rewarded himself with a “performance bonus” of \$1 million on top of his \$1.45 million salary. And Qantas forecasts another record net profit of \$600 million by the end of the financial year in July.

As the unions representing Qantas workers have pointed out, the once publicly-owned airline is now yet another ruthless exploiter of labour. The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union has noted that “this is the same airline that was telling us prior to the last bargaining round that it was a disaster time for them”.

Every time the unions are negotiating with them they are having a crisis, be it terrorist attacks or the threat of war. This time Qantas slipped the planned cuts to a newspaper: sure beats the hell out of negotiating with the staff.

Qantas is a rogue corporate giant trying to have absolute dominance of Australian and New Zealand air travel. This war with other airlines for monopoly domination means someone's got to pay, so Qantas is mowing down its workforce.

Like all the other privatised and partly privatised services such as Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank, Qantas has gone from a

major contributor to Government finances to a money-making machine for a handful of ultra-rich major shareholders. The only thing they “contribute” to the country is more unemployed.

Nathan Barnes  
Brisbane, Qld

## Block the Budget

**Led to the brink of an unnecessary and unwanted war, by stealth and without a mandate, why should Australians continue to put up with the Howard Government?**

Why wait until the next election comes around – at the end of 2004 or later – to vote this subservient Government out?

The explanation is that our political system has no effective method to pass a No Confidence Motion in the Government and force it to resign – other than blocking the Budget in the Senate.

That is in fact an entirely legitimate measure and the opportunity comes along again in May/June.

The vote on the Budget is not just a vote on the Government's financial record and plans but on all its activities, nationally and internationally.

The ALP and the Democrats

should review their decidedly unhelpful, counterproductive positions on this issue or remain in the wilderness.

Yes, the political system needs a shake-up. Do not fear it, create it. That is what political leadership now is about.

Klaas Woldring  
Pearl Beach, NSW

## Anthrax Vaccinations

Defence Minister Robert Hill claims that anthrax vaccinations are perfectly safe. If this is truly the case why doesn't he lead by example and have himself, John Howard, Alexander Downer and the rest of the crazy cabal vaccinated?

Gareth W R Smith  
Byron Bay

## A side issue about the war

**At the moment we have in Australia one of the worst droughts in our history. Last year and the years previous the world has seen some of worst floods in living memory.**

Environmentalists and, to use John Howard's latest cliché many would argue that these calamities were caused by changes in the ozone layer.

I would suggest that the amount of pollution caused by the Gulf War and the blanket bombing of Kosovo would be a major contribution.

If there is a war in Iraq it also will cause major pollution, and you can put plenty on that Saddam Hussein will fire all his oil fields. Look out farmers.

K J Manski  
Howard Springs, NT

## Got something to say?

Got an opinion about the system, about human rights, the labour movement, peace, land rights, socialism, privatisation, child care, your local community? Then write it down and send it to us.

Letters of up to 400 words in length are preferred.

## Culture & Life

### Questions answered

Two *Guardian* readers responded almost instantly to my request for information on the composer Erwin (or Ervín) Schulhoff. You will recall that I had found part of a review of a cantata by Schulhoff (spelt with only one “f”) on the back of a photo of a production of Vishnevsky's Soviet play *An Optimistic Tragedy*.

by Rob Gowland

Both readers identified Schulhoff as a Czech composer and pointed me to some useful references.

That review referred to “the certainty that Ervin Schulhof [sic] will reach a towering stature as a composer for the masses”. And here we (myself and those I consulted) made our first mistake.

We identified the photo as probably from the 1960s. That would make the forward-looking review also a product of the 1960s and Ervín Schulhoff our contemporary (well, mine, anyway).

But in fact, as a check of the appropriate reference books quickly revealed, Schulhoff, a Czech Communist composer of Jewish background, was murdered in a Nazi concentration camp in 1942 at the age of 48.

As a youngster he had been advised by no less than Dvořák himself to study with Kaan at the Prague Conservatory, which he did. Later he was a pupil of Debussy. He won the Mendelssohn Prize (for piano) in 1913 and five years later won it again, this time for composition.

He became a prolific composer “in the modern vein”. In the 1920s, he was part of the lively art scene in Germany and later in Prague, involved in various art movements, from dadaism to cubism.

He was also an ardent exponent of jazz and a member of the Prague Theatre Jazz Orchestra. The Great Depression and the rise of fascism brought him, like so many others in the arts in the early '30s, to the working class movement and the Communist Party.

Schulhoff was proficient in many genres, “from Germanic late Romanticism to impressionism, expressionism, neo-classicism and Bartókian folklorism” as one of the reference books has it.

He seems to have regarded socialist realism as yet another genre, rather than as a general approach to art. This is a common enough error, examples of it pop up all the time.

So what of the clipping's predictions about his future? Clearly, as I said before, our identifying of the photograph as being from the '60s was wrong.

In fact, the clipping is almost certainly from a Soviet English-language arts magazine of the 1930s (*International Theatre* perhaps, or even the popular *International Literature*).

In which case, the photo is probably from the much-acclaimed 1934 Moscow Kamerny (Chamber) Theatre production of Vishnevsky's play. Even the anti-Soviet *Encyclopaedia Britannica* admits that that production, by the Kamerny's founder and producer-director, Aleksandr Tairov, “was regarded as a high point of Socialist Realist theatre”.

Under Tairov, who died in 1950, the Kamerny rivalled the Moscow Art Theatre, but was very different. “Tairov's style was avant garde, particularly with respect to staging.

“He helped develop the functional ‘constructivist’ setting, a bare, multilevel scaffolding devoid of traditional decorative scenery. His approach to theatre was stylised and anti-realistic and was diametrically opposed to that of the followers of actor-director Konstantin Stanislavsky” — *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In Soviet times, the theatre flourished. Even during the days of the Revolution and the Civil War, the Soviet Government strove to bring progressive culture – includ-

ing the best of bourgeois culture – to the mass of the people.

Theatres were built, large factories developed their own amateur companies, an intensive education system encouraged an interest in the arts and state subsidies made admission prices nominal. Everyone could go and most of them did.

Instead of being a pastime for the well-to-do and the well-educated, theatre under socialism became a cultural pursuit of the masses. As it should be, and will be, everywhere.

...

I have just received a letter from “Hon. Michael Gallacher, Liberal Member of the Legislative Council”. The latter is the NSW Upper House.

The Hon. Mikey's letter does not beat around the bush but gets directly to the point: “Dear Mr and Mrs Gowland. Unfortunately we cannot always control the events that create uncertainty in our lives.

“It is reassuring that we can have confidence in our Prime



Minister John Howard to steer us through these difficult times.” [I fall about laughing.]

The letter continues: “After all, it's the Federal Government's job to protect our national security.” Ah, I see: it's another warning about terrorism. [I quickly check the envelope for a second fridge magnet but draw a blank.]

Back to the letter's contents: “But we cannot be so confident at state level. Recent events have exposed a false sense of security in NSW.” Clearly revelations are about to follow concerning terrorists running rampant in our fair state.

[I quickly check under all the beds for al Qaida agents, but draw another blank.]

“The recent rail tragedy at Waterfall, the devastating bushfires across our state and revelations of asbestos in school playgrounds raise serious concerns about the actions of the State Government of New South Wales.”

Pardon? What have these to do with national security? And

although John Howard was in charge of the country when they all took place I suspect that the Hon. Michael Gallacher MLC does not intend that we should hold Howard responsible for them.

Mind you, the Federal Government's starving of the States of funds for public transport, its strongarm pressure on state governments to privatise and contract out, are ultimately major contributors to the run-down and dangerous state of what's left of the NSW railway system.

Gallacher does not promise that a Liberal government in NSW would do anything to upgrade public transport (or increase funding to the Rural Fire Service). Instead, he promises that “NSW Liberal Leader John Brogden” will “put police back on the beat” and “introduce tough compulsory sentencing laws”.

Ah, yes. It's a law and order campaign. Stiffer sentences; always a vote winner – especially if you have absolutely nothing else to offer. ☘

## Rob Gowland previews

### ABC & SBS public television programs Sun March 2 ~ Sat March 8

Arthur Conan Doyle's story *The Hound Of The Baskervilles*, featuring his amateur detective creation Sherlock Holmes, appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in 1901. It was not by any means the first adventure for Doyle's cerebral sleuth: that honour had gone to *A Study In Scarlet* published in 1887.

The stories of the detective who brought logic to bear upon the elucidation of apparent mysteries and used the method of deduction to solve crimes proved very popular. It is not surprising that they were soon being filmed by the new cinematograph.

The first Sherlock Holmes film was made as early as 1903, and the first feature-length version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* appeared in Germany in 1917. It was not until 1922 that English filmmakers tackled *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Since then there have been numerous adaptations of Holmes' adventures, sometimes based on Doyle's stories, sometimes far removed from them.

Television, of course, has seen a number of series based on the great sleuth, including a highly-regarded Soviet TV adaptation comprising five series spread over 11 episodes, made between 1979 and 1986.

The series I liked best was Granada's made between 1984-1993, with Jeremy Brett as a very satisfying Holmes and with David Burke and later Edward Hardwicke as Watson.

Although I think the five series (one adventure per series) with Jeremy Brett were practically definitive, the new Tiger Aspect production for the BBC of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

(ABC 8.30pm Sunday) does have the distinction of being set in the year it was written, 1901.

More importantly, Holmes and Watson are portrayed for once as Doyle conceived them to be: young men, both in their '30s. They are played by Australian actor Richard Roxburgh (Holmes) and Ian Hart (Watson) with considerable vigour, which is certainly not out of place in a story involving an escaped convict, quicksand, several murders and an enormous hound from Hell.

David Attwood directs with panache and an excellent feeling for period mystery atmosphere (rain or swirling fog on the moors, gloomy windswept formal gardens at night, large houses with creaking floorboards and mysterious servants).

The series shows its modernity by being very frank in its depiction of Holmes' morphine addiction, but fails to show the great detective being all that cerebral. In fact, at times, we could almost be watching an adaptation of one of the adventures of Holmes' literary rival, the action-oriented Sexton Blake.

But these are flaws in the original story rather than the adaptation. All in all, it's a damn good period adventure mystery.

If you don't care for period detective fiction and would rather have modern fiction, you could try the new three-part series *The Fall Of Milosevic* (SBS 8.30pm Sundays).

SBS says the series recounts "the events leading to the fall of the Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, told by those with first-hand knowledge of the events". Gosh, I thought: who could they be?

SBS went on to enlighten me: "Amongst those featuring in the series are - former President Bill Clinton, former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, NATO Military Director Klaus Naumann".

Wow! You certainly could not expect any of them to give a false, coloured, misleading or downright



*The Hound of the Baskervilles* - Richard Roxburgh as Holmes with Matt Day as Baskerville

dishonest account, could you. This must be really and truly what happened.

Yeah, sure. The four-part series *Wild Weather* on *The Big Picture* (ABC 8.30pm Wednesdays) should have been an interesting program. It dealt with the origins of "our" weather, after all.

Except that it turned out to be the Northern Hemisphere's weather and not ours that was being explained. No matter, it could still have been fascinating. Instead, it's a real turkey.

"Stunning footage and computer graphics re-create the unseen wonders of the world's climate, visualising the formation of phenomena and taking a detailed look at the most exciting and dangerous forces of the weather", says the publicity.

If only that was all that was in the program. Unfortunately, the producers have decided we need an onscreen "reporter" to experience the various phenomena and to

visit the many locations. For this intrusive, unnecessary person they chose one Donal MacIntyre.

MacIntyre is exceptionally tiresome. He is crass, irksome, and embarrassing; a walking intellectual insult to viewers with an intelligent interest in the subject matter.

My wife and I turned the preview tape off in disbelief.

Written and directed by award-winning filmmaker Frank Rijavec, *A Million Acres A Year* (SBS 8.30pm Friday) reveals the devastating consequences that have been visited upon the south-west of Western Australia by enforced clearing for unsuitable and inappropriate agriculture.

Industrial farming and salinity have turned most of this area's priceless natural heritage into a biological desert, devoid of trees and scattered with dried-up lakes. Fifty years of agriculture have effectively undone three billion years of evolution.

After World War II, successive governments sold off and encour-

aged the clearing of the region for agriculture. During the 1960s a million acres a year were opened up.

Much of the land was unsuitable for farming, yet the new landholders were obliged to bulldoze and burn the native bush or risk losing their allocation under the "conditional purchase scheme".

Many farmers are caught in a financial catch 22: unviable farms force them into debt and this prevents them investing in more sustainable systems. However, there are others who are trying to turn around half a century of gross mismanagement.

Val Lewton's 1944 production *Curse Of The Cat People* (ABC 10.30pm Saturday) is not a patch on the earlier *Cat People*. Although this film uses some of the same people and has references to the earlier film's plot, it is in all respects a conventional thriller, with none of the earlier film's remarkable atmosphere. ☼

### Communist Youth of Australia

Meeting: Sunday March 2nd  
Where: 65 Campbell St  
Surry Hills, Sydney

About: The massive anti-war demonstrations - where is the movement going, and what does it mean to us?

Contact Andrew on  
0421 418 206 or  
andrewlund73@hotmail.com

### Adelaide

#### Are You Fuelling War? Pushies for Peace Bicycle Party

- Cycle together through the streets of Adelaide
- Bring noisemakers/drums

Food Not Bombs (Free Food)

28th February 5.30pm

Hindmarsh Square

http://adelaide.indymedia.org

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

#### ADELAIDE

Rally and march  
Saturday 8th March 10.30am  
Victoria Sq, City  
March to Rymill Park for festival

#### BRISBANE

Rally and march  
Saturday 8th March 2pm  
Roma St Forum, City

#### SYDNEY

Rally and march  
Saturday 8th March 11am  
Town Hall Sq, City  
March to Hyde Park North

### If war starts rally at:

Adelaide 5pm on the day Parliament House steps  
Brisbane 5pm on the day in King George Sq, and then on the following Saturday at 12 noon  
Canberra 5pm on the day US embassy  
Hobart 5pm on the day Frankston Square  
Melbourne 5pm on the day State Library  
Perth 5 pm on the day outside GPO in Forrest Place  
Sydney 5pm on the day at Town Hall  
Wollongong 5.30pm the day after at the Ampitheatre

### Sydney

#### Politics in the Pub

Every Friday night 6pm - 7.45pm  
Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills

(across from the Chalmers St exit and Devonshire St tunnel at Central Station)  
Dinner afterwards in the Royal Exhibition Hotel across the road

#### Feb 28

THE RISE OF THE GREENS: THE NEW OPPOSITION?"

Ian Cohen, MLC, NSW Greens

Paul Pearce, ALP, Mayor of Waverley

Geoff Hawker, Snr Lecturer in Politics, Macquarie

#### March 7

THE FUTURE OF SYDNEY: THE COMING CRISIS IN HOUSING, WATER, ENERGY, HEALTH, TRANSPORT

#### March 14

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND THE RIGHT TO DISSENT

Lee Rhiannon MLC, NSW Greens

Rev Ray Richmond CEO Wayside Chapel

Simon Butler Resistance

Assoc Prof John Toon, Dir of Planning Research Centre

Uni of Sydney;

Monica Wangmann, Councillor Ashfield Council and

Committee member of Save our Suburbs

The Gaelic Club, like all clubs, is required to have non members sign in.

To avoid queues you may wish to become a social member for \$5.

Inq: Pat Toms 9358 4834 pbtoms@bigpond.com ; Jan O'Leary 9818 3737, jol@pnc.com.au PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039 ; Win Childs Fax 9660 6554

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### The Guardian

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Surry Hills NSW 2010  
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Published by T Pearson

65 Campbell St

Surry Hills NSW 2010

Printed by Spotpress

105-107 Victoria Rd

Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment

is taken by T Pearson,

65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, 2010

# Build the peace movement

At its meeting last weekend the Central Committee Executive of the Communist Party of Australia adopted the following statement.

Hundreds of thousands of Australians are contributing to the worldwide movement to stop a war against Iraq before it starts and to maintain the peace and security of Australia and other countries.

The unprecedented demonstrations in all Australian capital cities and many country towns are the most dramatic and forceful indication that the overwhelming majority are firm in their demand for NO WAR!

This is also being expressed in the emergence of many suburban and country peace groups, in letters to newspapers, on talk-back radio, by petitions, postcards, resolutions by organisations and so forth.

There is new breadth in this movement. It crosses all political, religious, age and social differences. Its unity and clear purpose are its great strength.

The resistance to US efforts to impose its will on the world has developed swiftly, is broad, well organised and has a high political level.

The growing trade union involvement in the anti-war movement is an important step forward. Bringing the organised working class into the struggle for peace can give it greater strength.

The Australian Government, particularly Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer, are playing a despicable, lying and hypocritical role in the drive to war.

Australian governments, Liberal and Labor, have a long history of subservience to US economic, political and military priorities.

Howard and Downer are the junior sheriffs, expecting that the TNCs [transnational corporations], whose interests they represent, will get generous regional pickings if the US achieves global domination and recolonises the world.

Attempting to weaken and divide those opposed to war, Howard derides the demonstrators as a "mob" and asserts that they are giving support and comfort to Saddam Hussein.

In reality the anti-war movement supports the right of the Iraqi people to freedom and democracy. And it sees the need to prevent war as the first and most important task.

The conflicting interests of different states and the impact of the massive international anti-war movement have created difficulties for US imperialism in its drive to war.

The peace movement is having an impact on the United Nations by insisting that the Security Council upholds the UN Charter, finds a peaceful solution and restrains the war mongering governments of the United States, Britain and Australia.

If, despite this, the US does launch a unilateral attack on Iraq, international law will be torn up and replaced by the law of the jungle.

The United Nations may be destroyed. A long period of chaos and insecurity affecting all nations will develop. Trade and economic life will be disrupted. Huge environmental damage will take place.



Photo: Anna Pina

Australians contributing to the worldwide movement to stop a war against Iraq

ALP Leader Simon Crean supports a military attack on Iraq if it is endorsed by the United Nations.

This position has the potential to split the peace movement.

We have to ask people to consider: a UN endorsed war would still be fought by US troops under US command.

It would still be a war run by the US military-industrial complex to serve US oil interests.

It would still devastate Iraq and kill hundreds of thousands of its citizens.

This would not be just another war. The Bush administration has set its sights on Iraq as the next target in its drive to dominate the world in an endless imperialist war to fill a bottomless pit of corporate greed.

The capitalist system cannot provide peace, just as it cannot

supply the vast majority of the world's peoples with food, clean water, jobs, good health, education, housing and much else. To challenge this system will require a massive popular movement.

Today's anti-war movement is a small example of what can and must be built. We are seeing, in microcosm, the force that can eventually establish a new type of government that will serve the interests of the people, not the corporations.

To help sustain and develop this movement, to contribute to clarity in its political direction and strengthen its organisation, every member of the Party must become active in the many anti-war activities.

• Make your Branch a centre of political activity – establish / join a peace group in your suburb,

your trade union or community organisation.

• Make full use of The Guardian in your work.

• Write letters to newspapers. Take part in talk-back radio sessions.

• Help to distribute the leaflets from your peace group and from the Party.

• Check on the commitments of every Branch member and discuss with them how to move to work in the anti-war movement or how to develop the peace work in their area of activity or, where support already exists, how to increase the level of political understanding and organisation.

It is possible that Bush can be stopped. It is clearly possible that Australian involvement in a war on Iraq can be prevented. ACT NOW! ✪

# Michael Moore bowls them over

Left-wing filmmaker Michael Moore's documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*, continues to attract huge audiences. It has more than doubled the old box office record for a documentary in the US. And now the film has been nominated for an Oscar.

Over one hundred film critics have named *Bowling for Columbine* one of the "10 Best Films of the Year". A number of US publications have declared it as the "Best Film of the Year".

Michael was named by the BBC as their No. 1 "Newsmaker of the Year", and *Entertainment Weekly* in the US named him as one of their 12 "Entertainers of the Year".

A poll of over 2,000 documentary filmmakers around the US and the world taken by the International

Documentary Association named it as the "best documentary of all time".

At the same time as Michael Moore's film is making its mark in the US – and elsewhere including Australia – his book *Stupid White Men* is also breaking records.

It has been on the *New York Times*' top selling non-fiction hardcover books list for 44 weeks! The book is now in its 40th printing and has been declared by Barnes & Noble and others

as the biggest selling non-fiction hardcover for 2002.

This is the book that the publishers Harper Collins wanted to trash after its author refused to change the content following the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001.

Despite fears that the book might be seen as anti-American, it has proved extremely popular. It offers readers, as does the film, information that the mass media does not provide. It answers many questions that people are asking as well as bowling them over with its hard facts and analysis.

The reactions to Michael Moore's book and film are con-

sistent with the huge and growing opposition to war on Iraq and the declining credibility of warmongering government leaders such as Bush, Powell, Blair and Howard.

Michael Moore's website\* receives between a million and two million hits a day.

David Schankula, who edits the site, quotes the following from one of his many visitors to the site:

"I want to tell you about what has proven to be one of the most rewarding experiences in my 30-year career as a public school teacher.

"I teach in a small town just south of Buffalo. After viewing *Bowling for Columbine* ... I decided that I simply had to take my Honours English class to see it.

"Watching it with them was an experience I'll never forget one of those crystal moments in teaching that all teachers long for. They cried openly during several scenes, especially the scene with 'What a Wonderful World' playing in the background.

"They gasped collectively at the statistics on gun-related murders in the US versus other countries.

They cheered when you and the Columbine survivors succeeded in having ammunition taken off the shelves at K-Mart.

"And, by the end, they hated Charlton Heston and booed when they heard 'from my cold, dead hands' for the second time. They were especially impressed with the Marilyn Manson interview and were surprised at his eloquence and intelligence.

"As one student said, 'I guess you really can't tell what a person is like just by appearances.' And that is a mouthful for a high school kid!

"I have no doubt that even the most conservative among them will rethink their positions on gun control, war, 'President' Bush, and the atrocities suffered by so many at the hands of our government.

"They were especially impressed by the idea that it is fear that runs the engine of capitalism – something that had never occurred to them before. You have helped to create better citizens. You have helped to create better human beings."

\* www.MichaelMoore.com ✪

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