

Howard gears up for US GLOBAL WARS

The *National Security Defence Update* published last week further commits Australia to involvement in the US's program for global dominance. It is a program for endless and worldwide aggression and war.

The Government claims that there is now a "changed strategic environment" but the policies being pursued by the US, Britain and Australia have been in preparation for many years. They were not set in train by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and the Bali bombing.

The document admits that the prospect of a conventional military attack on Australian territory has "diminished". The fact is that there was no threat to Australian territory from any power in the Asia-Pacific region or anywhere else.

The *Defence Update* is a propaganda exercise to convince the public that the issues are "terrorism", "weapons of mass destruction" and "rogue states".

It is a simple matter to allege that other states have weapons of mass destruction or are harbouring "terrorists".

The intention of the propaganda is to whip up hysteria and justify the US invasion and occupation of other countries. However, the mass demonstrations in Australia and worldwide show that the public is not buying the propaganda.

Defence Update makes a number of references to US "domination". It welcomes "increased US strategic dominance" and the fact that "the US with its combination of economic and military might, is increasingly dominant".

Under the umbrella of US "dominance", the Australian Government is throwing its weight around. The *Update* says, "... there may be increased calls on the ADF [Australian Defence Forces] for operations in Australia's immediate neighbourhood" and "involvement in coalition operations further afield is somewhat more likely..."

In keeping with this subservience to the US and its global ambi-

tions, Australia's military forces are being restructured. The size of "Special Forces" will be increased, a "Special Operations Command" established and a "Tactical Assault Group" formed.

Global instability

These outfits have nothing to do with the defence of Australia. They will be used to assist the Global Cop in its invasion of other countries.

The *Update* claims that "Australia and the US continue to ... contribute towards global stability and prosperity".

This incredible claim flies in the face of reality. Their aggressive policies have created the most unstable and dangerous situation since WW 2, while their economic and political policies are responsible for the impoverishment of millions of people in many countries.

In covering the *Defence Update*, the mass media ignored these questions. It has concentrated on the idiotic proposal of the Howard Government to sign up to the US "Star Wars" (the so-called National Missile Defence - NMD) project.

For this purpose PM John Howard and Defence Minister Robert Hill, have conjured up the possibility of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) developing missiles capable of hitting Australia.

Even if the DPRK had such missiles, there is no reason whatsoever for that country to attack Australia.

They promote the NMD as a defensive shield.

The true purpose of the NMD is not defensive. It would be part of an offensive war machine, with the aim of providing a protective "shield" for the US under which the US could rain death and destruction on other countries with impunity.

It would in no way protect Australia. It is meant to give the US first strike capability.

Australia's involvement in Star Wars is not a new development. When visiting Australia in July 2000, William Cohen, then the US



Photo: Avante Media Australia

NO WAR – peace activists in Adelaide state it plain and clear

Secretary of Defence in the Clinton administration said that he expected Australia to "play an important role in shared early warning".

This was a reference to the use of Pine Gap as part of the NMD. The Pine Gap base is essential to the "Star Wars" program.

Cohen also told the Howard Government, "There will have to be additional investment if Australia hopes to maintain a modern interoperable force with the US and other allies. This is a requirement of all our allies", he said. (*The Guardian* 26/7/00)

Having received the American instructions the Australian Government now openly admits its support for the "Star Wars" program.

The *Update* speaks of "effective missile defences". It goes on, "...the US is looking to involve its allies and this will be an increasingly important priority in the twenty-first century".

A whole section of the *Defence Update* is devoted to the "countries in Australia's immediate region".

The Pacific island states are warned that "Military or civil assistance could be required to restore law and order, to evacuate Australians, or to help in humanitarian disasters", and could require "swift deployment of the ADF." The Australian Government claims an unasked-for leadership role.

The *Update* says, "The strength of our national interests, and our prominent leadership role in the region, means that Australia ... will need to maintain the capability to respond effectively." (Emphasis added).

There is not a single proposal contained in the *Defence Update* that aims to help preserve peace and security in the region or further afield.

There is not a word about improving the lot of the millions of people in the region who have been impoverished, are unemployed, have little or no education or health care. It is all about war preparations. ✪

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New dimension of internationalism

It has never happened before in history. An unprecedented unity has arisen against the threatened war against Iraq — not because people are supporters of Saddam Hussein or even particularly of Iraq, but because they are opposed to an aggressive and unnecessary war. The protective slogan, “NO WAR”, has encircled the earth.

The people's demonstrations are remarkable for their size, for the wide diversity of those taking part and for the fact that they have taken place before a war has started. That is also new.

The people of many countries that have not taken part in such actions before are now taking to the streets in their millions.

They have become so powerful that they can influence or even change the decisions of governments. The failure of the Turkish parliament to agree to the use of Turkish territory by the US military to launch an invasion of Iraq from that country is an important win for the huge anti-war demonstrations there.

The people's voice is not yet strong enough to force a change in the warmongering governments of Britain, Australia and the US but that may come. If they do not change they must be thrown out!

Some issues ago *The Guardian* ran a headline “People's Power can stop the war” and this may yet prove to be prophetic.

Of course, this worldwide movement did not come out of the blue. There have been working class solidarity actions for many years. International trade union support during the maritime dispute of 1998 is one example. There were the movements to “Ban the Bomb” and to force the abandonment of nuclear weapons. People in many countries opposed the dirty US invasion of Vietnam. Demonstrators took to the streets to protest the illegal bombing of Yugoslavia and the invasion of Afghanistan. The OECD was forced to abandon its Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), and the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund are feeling the pressure of the many actions against their policies. But the present actions surpass all of these in their breadth and in the numbers taking part.

Unions must be involved

One weakness of the peace actions in Australia remains the limited involvement of the trade union movement. Although the slogan, “Peace is Union Business” was adopted during the Vietnam War, it still remains an empty and meaningless slogan for many trade unions.

This comes about because the policies of the ALP remain dominant in the trade union movement and ALP leaders (with some notable exceptions and widespread rank and file opposition) are equivocal in their opposition to the war. One is left with the impression that their marginal disagreements with the Howard Government are more about point-scoring than genuine opposition to the Government's war policies.

Their leadership does not strengthen the trade union movement as the rapid decline in trade union membership shows. It weakens and even strangles the union movement. It often channels the justified anger of workers into the sand. This was the case when the campaign against the NSW State Labor Government's workers' compensation legislation was called off.

The strong opposition of some trade union and ALP leaders to those trade unions considering industrial action if Australia becomes involved in an illegal war against Iraq is the latest example of their misleadership.

Why shouldn't the working people who will suffer the consequences of war in many countries, and will do the dying, take action against the policies of governments?

They claim that “we have to support our boys”. Yes, support them by stopping the war and bringing them home.

There is an appeal by the US veterans of the first Gulf War that says: “As troops we were ordered to murder from a safe distance. We bulldozed trenches, burying people alive. The use of depleted uranium weapons left the battlefield radioactive. Massive use of pesticides, experimental drugs, burning chemical weapons depots and oil fires combined to create a toxic cocktail affecting both the Iraqi people and Gulf War veterans today.

“Now we see our REAL duty is to encourage you as members of the US armed forces to find out what you are being sent to fight and die for...”*

Is this treachery? No, it is real patriotism.

*Go to www.citizen-soldier.org/C507-IraqWarResistance.html

PRESS FUND

There's a lot of work ahead for us all, with the full force of US imperialism and its backers again threatening war. Australians are playing their part in the global struggle for peace. Unfortunately, Australia plays a key part in the US's war plans, through the US facilities at Pine Gap. Success for the peace movement in Australia would be a big blow to the odious “coalition of the willing”. Our every effort is therefore crucial. You can help *The Guardian* play its important part in this struggle by making a contribution to the Press Fund. Our sincere thanks go to the following for this week's generous contributions:

H Abbott \$10, Elke and Mike Ainsworth \$25, B Appleton \$20, D L \$300

This week's total: \$355. Progressive total: \$2490.

Australian peace movement keeps gathering strength

In Australia opposition to war against Iraq is growing. This was demonstrated on February 16 by the size of the peace marches, not only in the capital cities, but also in regional centres.

In NSW for example, between 18,000 and 20,000 marched in Newcastle, 500 in Forster, 1500 in Tathra, 400 in Bega, 5000 in Armidale, 2000 in Byron Bay, 5,000 in Lismore, 1000 in Nambucca and 300 in Kempsey. And others attended rallies in Taree and Broken Hill.

At Wagga Wagga the president of the Cootamundra branch of the Liberal Party, Arthur Schofield, told a contingent of 1000 that Prime Minister Howard is in contempt of Liberal Party values because of his subservience to Washington.

At Bellingen, Vietnam War veteran Bob McCloud told a rally of more than 3000 people, (more than town's entire population), that he had sent his war medals back to Canberra.

One striking characteristic of the anti-war movement is the unity, co-operation and initiative of the organisations involved.

For example, in Western Australia, a recent public forum was held on “Alternatives to War on Iraq”. (See article below.)

There have been many other actions and joint activities. Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras included a purple-clad “No war in Iraq” contingent.

The group “High School Students Against War”, which participated in the February 16 rally, is planning a “Books not bombs” student strike against war on Iraq on March 5.

They have gained support from many teachers to attend the event, and they want the teachers themselves to come along.

Student organisations from both private and public schools are working together to develop joint anti-war activity.

The Medical Association for the Prevention of War has denounced government participation in plans for war against Iraq, and also the Prime Minister's statement that protests gave comfort to Saddam Hussein.

The Association's President, Dr Sue Wareham, declared that sanctions against Iraq were not the answer, and that they had brought misery for Iraqi civilians and had left Iraqi youth “bitter, isolated and dangerously alienated from the world”.

The association has suggested that people fax or email letters to

UN Security Council ambassadors, urging them not to vote for war against Iraq.

On February 19 the ACT parliament passed a motion from Greens MLA Kerrie Tucker with support from ALP and Democrat members, opposing war against Iraq.

Actions by individual organisations include a Greenpeace and Community Activists “Flotilla for peace” vigil outside Kirribilli House on February 25, and a union forum “Peace is Union Business” in Sydney last Wednesday.

The tide of public opinion is now running increasingly strongly against the government.

Some weeks ago around 30 percent of respondents to a public opinion poll stated they opposed war even if the UN sanctioned it.

In a recent *Sydney Morning Herald* opinion poll 78 percent said we should support the French-German plan for resolution of the conflict, and 52 percent said that they wouldn't support Australian involvement in such a war, even with UN backing. And 84 percent said the Government's terrorism kit was a waste of money!

Coming events include the following:

“High Noon” vigils are to be held by the group North Sydney for Peace, outside the gates of Kirribilli House every Sunday between

11.30am and 12.30pm until further notice.

International Women's Day marches next weekend will be taking a No War position.

The NSW State Labor Council is supporting “Think Global, Act Local” local initiatives for the weekend of 13, 14, 15 March, and suggests the following as a starting point:

March 13: Local Peace Vigils;
March 14: Unions Work for Peace Day, (wear purple ribbons to work);

March 14, 15: Rallies, picnics, peace street parties.

You can register a local action for publicizing with the NSW State Labor Council at emailinga.tattersall@labor.org.au.

Palm Sunday marches on April 13 are shaping up to be major “No War” actions.

A “Disrobe to Disarm” event was held on 2 March at Sydney's Leichhardt oval.

The organisers point out that a similar event held at Byron Bay recently had been shown around the world, including in the US. A spokesperson stated that “Male dominated political leaders... are unlikely to listen unless we get their attention!”

However, she also noted that the act of disrobing symbolises the vulnerability of war victims, and demonstrates the unity, courage, determination and commitment to the cause of peace of those taking part. ✪



Happy International Women's Day

Congratulations and best wishes to the women of Australia fighting for peace and women's rights on the 93rd celebration of International Women's Day.

Progressive and revolutionary-minded women are playing an increasingly important part in our social and political life.

Over the years many legislative and social advances have been achieved — the right to vote, the elimination of discriminatory legislation, child care, abortion rights, women's health services, refuges, equal pay for work of equal value, non-sexist education, the right to social security, the election of women to government, the break-

ing down of barriers to work in all fields, anti-discrimination legislation. Some of these rights have yet to be fully accepted and exercised, those that have are constantly under attack under capitalism. And there is much more to be achieved.

Migrant and Indigenous women suffer the greatest exploitation and discrimination in our community.

Today, the world is being rushed towards war on Iraq and then other countries. Women will be among those to suffer most from the bombs

and missiles that are going to be unleashed against the innocent.

This reality is being recognised by the millions of women taking part in the huge demonstrations across the globe.

The preservation of peace is the most cherished need at this critical moment in history. Stopping the war drive is the next step towards the liberation of women everywhere. Let women of the world unite!

Hannah Middleton

President

Peter Symon

General Secretary

Communist Party of Australia

Baxter Detention Centre – the truth will out

Most people of the TV generation would have seen at least part of the outrageous *Jerry Springer* program that regularly blights commercial daytime television. The usual format for the show is for a number of “guests” to confess for the first time to the most bizarre sexual behaviour in front of an abusive but morbidly interested audience while Jerry probes the subjects as to their motives. At the end, the host will give some moral instruction based on the deviant behaviour we have just witnessed and leave us with his trademark farewell, “take care of yourselves...and each other”.

by Bob Briton

Something like this treatment was given by sections of the media to the people of Port Augusta following a public meeting held in the South Australian regional centre. The meeting was called to discuss plans to allow nine teenagers from the Baxter Detention Centre to attend the local public high school and for a trial that would see some women from the centre placed in alternative accommodation in the city.

Subsequent media reports in SA made the most of the spectacle. A headline in the next day's *Advertiser* proclaimed, “Port Augusta rails against asylum seekers”. “The people of Port Augusta made it clear that Baxter detainees were not welcome in their community”, the article maintained.

Much was made of Mayor Joy Baluch's role at the meeting. She is reported to have told all outsiders advocating contact between the community and detainees that, “You can all piss off”.

The controversial mayor is always good for a sensational story. Her campaign for a curfew for the

city's teenagers and her hostility to those she considers to be “illegal immigrants” are typical of her style of red necked populism.

Supporters of her views were very vocal among the estimated 180 people at the meeting. They also took advantage of the audience's frustration at the fact that officers of the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DMIA) took an hour describing its position on the subject.

Appended to the *Advertiser* article was the observation that some people expressed sympathy for the plight of the asylum seekers and wanted to welcome them into the community. Father Ron Davoren of the Christian Ministers Association of Port Augusta and Whyalla was quoted as saying that “These people (at Baxter) are hurting and we are here to care and support people”.

The next day, *The Advertiser* revealed a whole other side to the story. Apparently Joy Baluch represents a minority view on the City Council and that it had already voted in December to let the children attend the school.



“They are hurting and we are here to care”

We also found out that Port Augusta Secondary School principal, Darryl Ashby, is keen for the Baxter teenagers to begin their studies at the school.

Vanessa Bailey, a 17-year-old student from the school said: “They have as much right as I do, they will fit in if people give them a fair go”. 16-year-old Tyson Shine said that his is a “multicultural school and will accept people more openly, and I think they'll fit in well here”.

It turns out that when Mr Ashby surveyed the 490 families represented at the school, the principal received only 15 replies expressing opposition to the proposal. Plans are also proceeding to have younger children attend Willsden Primary School.

Disregarding all this, the editorial of the next day's *Advertiser* was devoted to giving Port Augusta some gratuitous advice.

It said that the previous Tuesday evening's event was “... a meeting of shame. An indictment on the people of this normally friendly and welcoming city. An embarrassment to all fair-minded South Australians who understand the innocent children of Baxter should not be made to suffer for the wrongs [!] of their parents.”

Despite its own evidence of widespread community support in Port Augusta for the Baxter teenagers to take their place at the local high school, the editor offers up the following conclusion: “If the children of Baxter are allowed to attend community schools there would inevitably be difficulties with behaviour and cultural assimilation.

“But there would also be rewarding lessons in tolerance, dignity and understanding. They would be lessons well learned in Port Augusta.”

At this point in the above-mentioned TV program, Springer would give his signature farewell, the camera would zoom out on the duly shamed guests and the audience would begin to chant “Jerry!!...Jerry!!”

Bear in mind that, while you can switch over and watch something else while Jerry Springer takes over Channel Ten, *The Advertiser* is the only daily paper in Adelaide.

Meanwhile, other more reliable sources continue to break through the veil of disinformation.

Baxterwatch* at lifts the lid on the hellish facility whose accommodation has been described by Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock as “three star”.

It is also the place to go to put yourself in touch with organisers of a national convergence on Baxter Detention Centre from April 18-21.

* www.baxterwatch.net/ ☛

Control Freak

Extreme right-wing NSW Police Minister Michael Costa let slip his fascist tendencies again last week, revealing the next step in his plan to take total personal control of the NSW judiciary.

by Andrew Jackson

Mr Costa announced at a Local Government meeting last week that he would publish “shame file” lists of Judges who did not sit before public meetings and justify their sentencing decisions.

“It makes sense for magistrates to join police at PACTs [Police Accountability Community Teams] to meet with local MPs, mayors, business and community representatives to address their concerns”, Mr Costa said.

Citing recent several recent instances where he disagreed with sentences handed down by Judges, Mr Costa said, “a small number really haven't gotten the message ... the only way to deal with this issue is to ensure we put pressure on those people to get real about some of their decisions, because they are absurd.”

“The ones that we have seen reflect not only poorly on our whole system but poorly on the people who make these decisions because they have a complete lack of understanding of what the community expects.”

The NSW Attorney-General, Bob Debus, responded quickly to Mr Costa's proposal.

“I feel certain that my colleague fully accepts that under the Westminster system magistrates remain independent”, Mr Debus said.

“Under no circumstances are they accountable to police.”

But what about the “mayors, business and community representatives”, Mr Debus?

Mr Carr and his Government are renowned for slavishly following talkback radio, and rushing legislation through Parliament according to weekly public opinion.

Mr Costa is drawn in newspaper cartoons with right-wing radio host Alan Jones sitting on his shoulder as a parrot.

Other elements of Mr Costa's Police-State vision have already been implemented by the NSW Government.

Last year the Labor Government passed “terrorism” legislation so extreme that it would not have looked out of place in Pinochet's Chile.

The *Police Powers Bill 2002* reads:

“An authorisation (and any decision of the police minister under this part with respect to the authorisation) may not be challenged, reviewed, quashed or called into question on any grounds whatsoever before any court, tribunal, body or person in any legal proceedings.”

The Terror Legislation gave Mr Costa open slather to arrest, photograph, strip, secretly observe and interrogate with impunity any individual he deems may “prejudice the security of the state”.

It also allows him to shut down broadcasts, ban publications, seize property, order the removal of people from public places and call out large-scale use of military forces against NSW citizens. ☛

Students sacrificed for war

As the Australian Government prepares for its looming attack on Iraq, social goods are being compromised to sponsor the killings of Iraqi people. The anti-terrorism rhetoric has become part of Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson's justification for further government funding cuts to higher education.

by Thalia Anthony

His proposed deregulation reforms will shift the funding burden from the government to the individual student in an expansion of the user-pays system of education.

Already Melbourne University's proportion of government funding is a mere 23 per cent, and Cabinet's approval of Nelson's proposals last week indicates that this is just the beginning.

The proposals entail deregulation of fee structures that will allow universities to increase fees by 25 per cent, broaden of the loans system to entice students to take full fee-paying courses, drop standards for full fee-paying students and increase the proportion of full fee-paying students that universities are allowed to admit.

A deregulated fee-paying system will diminish the overall quality of education. Its effects will be worse for smaller and remote universities that will find it difficult attracting full fee-paying students.

Although the reforms are yet to be put through parliament and its budgetary implications yet to be finalised, funding will almost certainly not increase, placing more pressure on Australia's universities.

Even with increases in full fee-paying students, higher education will find it impossible to reach pre-1995 funding levels.

Already Australian universities receive less government funding as a proportion of GDP than in the United States and Canada. The level has dropped from 1.7 percent of GDP in 1995 to 1.5 percent in 2002.

Last year these preliminary proposals for deregulation were met

with student demonstrations across Australia. Students will have a lot to lose if the reforms go ahead, including their ability to organise.

Slipped into the reform package is a reincarnation of Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) plans. This will undermine the current structure of student representative associations that are financially and ideologically buttressed by compulsory unionism.

Examples of VSU in Western Australia and Victoria have had a crippling effect on the student movement. There are also threats to the present system of university industrial relations and to the bargaining power of staff unions.

Placing limits on organised dissent appears to be another manifestation of an ideology of conservative individualism in a climate of mounting collective dissent. ☛

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

Additional 50 seafarers out of work

The Australian company, Intercontinental Ship Management P/L (ISM) has decided to buckle to the Federal Government's fierce campaign to end the careers of the Australian seafarers they employ, by flagging out the remaining vessels under the Tongan Flag of Convenience (FOC). According to Dean Summers, International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) co-ordinator in Sydney, an additional 50 Australian seafarers have been put out of work due to the hostile attack on the Maritime Union of Australia by the Federal Government.

by David Hauser

This comes after a written statement in 1997 by then General Manager Chris Sorenson, "ISM can not support change that would result in Australian jobs in coastal shipping being replaced by low-waged workers from overseas".

For those readers who don't know of Chris Soerenson, he is now employed by the Canadian Shipping Line, responsible for the attempted removal of the crew of the *CSL Yarra* last year in Port Pirie, South Australia.

The motivation for this manoeuvre is purely a financial one, due to the fact that Tongan Seafarers get paid only US\$186 (approx. A\$300) per month and Trainees only US\$20 (approx. A\$32) per month. That is a saving from the ITF agreed rates of US\$1300 (more than A\$2000) per month per seafarer.

But there is an easy solution to this problem. The Federal Government could stop this abuse of foreign seafarers and reclaim Australian jobs in one swift move:

Stop issuing single voyage and multiple voyage permits!

As soon as that happens, and I know under the current government it is *not* likely, then Australian Seafarers can reclaim the jobs that are rightfully theirs. If only Australian ships are operating on our coast then there can be no exploitation of poorly paid foreign crews, and the cost of manning ships will be uniform.

But the problems that can arise from this move go even deeper. Tongan flagged vessels have been arrested, detained and investigated over a series of allegations. Ships operating under this flag have been caught running drugs, guns and are strongly suspected of having provided safe passage for some of the suspects responsible for the September 11 attacks in the USA.

But this does not seem to worry the Howard Government or its incompetent Transport Minister John Anderson, who is responsible for the issuing of permits that allow these vessels operate on the Australian coast.



Foreign flagged ships pay starvation wages in 19th century conditions

The Maritime Union of Australia has protested against the company at their St Leonards offices in Sydney last week, on February 27. More actions are likely. If the government and shipping lines get away with

this, then it will not be long before the government gives the OK to other employers to replace their workforces with "guest" workers on starvation wages slaving under 19th century working conditions.

This is a problem for all Australian workers and the removal of this completely spineless Federal Government is the first step for all Australians to secure a safe and secure Coastal Trade Shipping environment for our future. ☘

Air safety watchdog "a safety threat"

Federal aviation watchdog, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), stands accused of putting strike breakers ahead of public safety. Two groups of airline workers were scathing about CASA's "hands-off" approach to industry standards after it refused to censure Virgin or Qantas for taking shortcuts in the face of industrial unrest.

"It is standard for our people to go through two full weeks of emergency procedures before they are allowed to fly, then regular refreshers", Flight Attendants Association (FAAA) Assistant Secretary Michael Mijatov reported after Qantas crammed casuals through a weekend safety course and then used them to replace striking international cabin crew last week.

"CASA was informed of the potential safety implications but appears to have given them the thumbs-up", Mr Mijatov said.

Qantas has added the 106 short-haul casuals to a roster of management, ex-management and overseas-based non-union crew on standby to scab in the event of further industrial action.

Fourteen hundred angry flight attendants overwhelmingly endorsed further industrial action in support of their enterprise agreement (EBA) claims at a round of capital city stopwork meetings last week. Only one vote was recorded against the resolution.

The FAAA is battling to force Qantas to honour a "recognition" clause written into its last EBA. The company, which last week posted a record half-yearly profit, had agreed to "recognise" the contribution of cabin crew in return for a crewing agreement that has saved the company \$40 million in wages.

Qantas argues its "recognition" does not need to be financial.

Meanwhile, the Licensed Engineers Association (ALEA) is furious at CASA's green light for a Virgin Blue cost-cutting measure that authorises pilots to perform sensitive safety checks, taking the place of qualified maintenance engineers.

"This is not World Best practice, it is World Cheapest practice", association President Michael O'Rance said.

"It is dumbfounding that CASA has weighed into this dispute in support of the airline.

Mr O'Rance said his members had logged three incidents where pilots had approved aircraft that

were, in fact, unfit for flight. The ALEA will put the matter before members at a round of stopwork meetings this month.

Mr O'Rance accused the federal safety authority of "doing the bidding of the airlines".

In other airline news, Air New Zealand was accused of double standards as Australian-based workers struck for the first time this week.

Ninety ground staff took industrial action after seven months of unsuccessful negotiations over wages and conditions.

Australian Services Union (ASU) Assistant Secretary Kristyn Thompson said the company had one rule for its managers and another for those who did the work. She was referring to a leaked memo from managing director, Ralph Norris, which set out pay rises and performance bonuses for managers, effective from February 1.

"Some of these managers have sat across the table and insisted workers who have not had a pay increase since 1999 take another 12-month wage freeze," Thompson said. "The hypocrisy is staggering."

*Acknowledgement:

Workers Online
<http://workers.labor.net.au> ☘

LABOUR NOTES

The biennial conference of the Australian Workers Union called for companies to undergo annual financial audits to ensure workers' entitlements are protected. They will be seeking provisions for auditors to be nominated by the union and paid for by the employer in enterprise bargaining agreements. The call follows the collapse of One.Tel and Ansett where employees were left millions of dollars out of pocket. Under the plan companies will be required to provide information on the total amount of outstanding entitlements, including superannuation, and the value of net unsecured assets that could be sold to cover workers entitlements. The union said annual audits would give workers an early warning if companies were experiencing financial difficulties.

The AWU National Conference also condemned genetic testing of workers, describing it as "highly discriminatory" and "fundamentally offensive". A spokesperson for the union said workers' personal rights and privacy must be protected. Employers had no right to intrude in the private lives of workers. "They intrude by using psychometric (psychological profiling) testing to discriminate between prospective employees; by spying on employees' emails under the pretext of ensuring the content complies with company policies", the spokesperson said. The union is currently in the process of commissioning research on psychometric testing and developing a national policy to protect members from employer misuse of testing.

Members of the Community and Public Sector Union from the State Library of Victoria marched on Parliament House on February 26 in support of a wage claim. CPSU State Library delegate Jill Sparrow said the union rejected the State Government's offer of three per cent as unacceptable. "We are asking the government for six per cent because that is what we need to begin to bring us into line with other librarians in the state." The dispute has been running since December and CPSU members are determined to win their struggle for wage justice Ms Sparrow said. "We recently held a 48-hour strike. It is not every day that librarians go on strike but the salaries at this library are pitiful and we believe our claim is reasonable." Other unionists and members of the public can support the campaign by signing a petition at the union stall in front of the State Library.

Convergence on Parliament

Stop work to stop the war

Sunday March 23 & Monday March 24

Come to Canberra to demand the government hears the voice of the people: No War on Iraq! Protest will include rallies, marches, teach-ins, film showings and work stoppages. ACT Network Opposing War To endorse the call email: dimivasso@hotmail.com or phone James 0405 309 283

Perth THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA (WA)

A MORNING TEA to Celebrate

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Speaker: CHERYL DAVENPORT (introduced Bill to legalise abortion in WA) Former State MLC

SUNDAY 9TH MARCH 10am 1 SALAR PL, DIANELLA

\$5 DONATION AND/OR A PLATE OR JUICE rsvp Sheila Ph: 9276 9144

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

Alternatives to war on Iraq

Over 200 people attended a forum on Alternatives to War at the Subiaco Palms Community Centre (WA) on Saturday, February 22. While expressing horror at the imminent spectre of war and the casualties it inevitably brings, they addressed the question of alternatives to war. Greens WA State Member of Parliament Greens Dee Margetts chaired the meeting.

by Richard Titelius*

Ben Carter lecturer on international law at the University of Notre Dame University believed the parties to the dispute had not fully explored all the mechanisms for negotiation, conciliation and mediation.

The US was cajoling the UN for its own purposes which would, in the long term, weaken the UN and undermine its credibility. He said that some actions of the US would constitute acts of terrorism.

Dr Graaug called for the weapons inspectors to continue their job. He suggested a rewards system. For the first level of compliance there should be the removal of restric-

tions on medical supplies, followed by a lifting of the oil embargo and so on.

Quaker and writer Adrian Glamorgan said that it was far cheaper to address the causes of global inequalities and human misery than to fight an expensive and destructive war.

We need to control the trade in weapons and abolish nuclear weapons. When criticising scientists who work on the technology of war, Adrian Glamorgan quoted the passage from the old Testament (Isaiah 2:4) which says, "they shall beat swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against

nation; neither shall they learn war any more".

He asserted that it was less a war about oil than a war about the Americans wanting to be the centre of international affairs and influencing the way the whole world is run.

Dee Margetts suggested that Howard's fawning to the US was based on his pursuit of a bilateral free trade agreement with the US.

A free trade agreement will benefit only the few rich and powerful who own the factors of production in these two countries, and not the majority of Australians who will stand to lose many industries and the jobs that go with them, she said.

The forum gave an uplifting message from the usual, "war is inevitable and there is nothing you can do about it" mantra coming from the mass media.

*Abridged ☺



Dee Margetts – a free trade agreement will only benefit the rich

Please help save Mashallah's life

The Guardian has received an urgent request for assistance from UniSA Circle of Friends concerning a serious situation in the Immigration Detention System.

A young Iranian man, Mashallah Soleimani (age 28), is in a very serious condition in an Adelaide Hospital after having survived three years in the Woomera detention prison.

Readers are asked to consider sending a letter to the Minister of Immigration, Philip Ruddock, the Prime Minister, their local member of Federal Parliament and state Senators.

Below is a draft letter which explains the situation and calls for Mashallah's immediate release from detention.

If you live in South Australia, then ask your local MP and Senators to visit Mashallah so he/she can witness the devastating effects of the detention system on a human being at first hand.

UniSA Circle would appreciate receiving a copy of any letter you send so that they can monitor the campaign.

A recent letter campaign to Minister Ruddock, assisted in the release of another detainee into community detention. This can happen again, with your help.

Thank you very much.

UniSA Circle:
email: circle@newhorizon.com.au
fax: 08 8361 2504
Ph +61 8 8361 2501

Draft letter to Philip Ruddock

Hon Philip Ruddock MP

Re: **Mr Mashallah Soleimani**
Immigration ID: 32786006880

Your compassion and intervention are needed urgently

Mashallah is an Iranian man seeking refugee asylum in Australia and has been in detention in Woomera for over three years. His physical and mental condition began a rapid decline in August 2002. Mashallah attempted suicide in December 2002 and was subsequently brought to Adelaide where he lived under 24 hour guard at the Arkaba Court Motel on Glen Osmond Road.

While there, he received psychiatric treatment from Dr Howard Gorton. Dr Gorton reported to DIMIA in writing that, given Mashallah's mental condition, he should not be returned to a detention centre. However, on January 28, DIMIA decided to 'repatriate' Mashallah to the Baxter Detention Facility.

Since then, it is apparent that his condition has deteriorated alarmingly. He was hospitalised in the Pt Augusta hospital, then returned to Baxter Medical Wing before being sent to the Royal Adelaide Hospital by air ambulance early on Saturday morning (February 22).

Mashallah is now just skin and

bone and he is obviously seriously ill. He looks like someone from a German concentration camp at the end of WW2. Should he be sent back to Baxter detention centre, I fear that he will die.

If this were to eventuate, I believe the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and you as chief Minister of that department and legal protector of Mr Soleimani, would be responsible for his death.

The man has committed no crime, he has merely sought asylum in Australia according to the United Nations Convention. He has sincerely converted to Christianity and has skills and experience which would make him an asset to Australia.

If there is any compassion or mercy in your Department, please use your ministerial power to save his life by releasing him into care in the community at no cost to the taxpayer while his case is reviewed. There are many people in Adelaide who are prepared to provide him with financial and social support.

cc Your local member of Federal Parliament
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Fax: 02 6273 4144
www.minister.immi.gov.au/contact/index.htm#email
Email contact page. ☺



"PM vetoes maternity leave pay", said a front page headline last week. Howard believes a woman's place is in the home. Like all religious arch conservatives, he is in thrall to the belief that a certain system must be in place, a preordained hierarchy with the church at the top, from which flows a government with Christian values. Women in this scheme of things are homemakers and the vessel for receiving the male seed, as nature intended. Men go off to work and bring home the bread. This way profits are made, and these profits must be protected from such outrageous ideas as paid maternity leave, else the entire meaning of the existence of the world is threatened. And, naturally, those women who do not accept the system must be forced to bend to it, or be banished to the economic wilderness.

You knew it was coming. Federal Treasurer Peter Costello has announced that the budget will be "tough". Giving billions of dollars to war means that services to the people will be cut further. Medicare is being systematically torn apart. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is being dismantled. The wholesale gutting of the welfare system will be stepped up. Privatisation moves into top gear. The attack on the union movement reaches fever pitch. As the united front against conscription in WW1 put it: "War! What for? For the workers, death, starvation, poverty. For the capitalist class gold, riotous luxury, banquets of jubilation."

At the same time as this scorched earth approach is being implemented we have the head of the National Competition Council, Graeme Samuel, calling for a fairer distribution of wealth. "A society that relies purely on market forces to distribute the benefits of social change will inevitably sow the seeds for polarisation and resentment", said Samuel, a rampant free market carnivore. Concerned that the dispossessed will become increasingly aware of their dispossession, Samuel is voicing a deeply held fear amongst the ruling elite that "resistance to economic reform will grow" because "it will become synonymous with job losses and community breakdown".

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is the corporate drug monopoly. The major drug companies are continuing their push in the lead-up to the budget to have more of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme scrapped. The latest is a consortium of 15 drug companies in the US putting together a blueprint for a free trade agreement with Australia. This would include big cuts in the subsidised medicines, on the premise that their profits and "intellectual property rights" are being affected. For example, they want to end the reference pricing system which stipulates that new medicines on the PBS list must be the same price as the cheapest similar drug available. Said the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, "The pricing policy of medicines in Australia should not be determined in a trade agreement."

UAW: "No War in Iraq"

The following Resolution was passed unanimously at the Union of Australian Women SA Branch AGM last month:

We are alarmed at the speed with which our Government is committing Australia to invade Iraq on the pretext of holding weapons of mass destruction.

The UN inspectors' reports do not back up this assumption. The aim of this act is to ensure US domination in the oil resources of the world and if Iraq is invaded it will just be the beginning of war on so-called "rogue states".

By committing three contingents of soldiers our Prime Minister is trying to outdo US President Bush in his desire to show how aggressive he can be, despite his constant denial as to our involvement.

Such an invasion by the US, Great Britain and Australia will do untold harm to the working of the UN if it is allowed to happen. It goes against the UN Charter and would open the world to anarchy in rela-

tions with other states. No country has the right to invade another. War does not solve anything. Mediation must prevail.

We call on our Australian Government to withdraw immediately Australian troops in Iraq, to stop the use of Pine Gap for these war plans and to deny the use of Australian ports for the transfer of troops to US warships.

We call upon France, China and Russia to use their veto in the Security Council to prevent this action. ☺

Testing for drugs in the workplace Concerns for the labour market

"If you choose to use alcohol or drugs, that's your business – if you choose to do it in the workplace, it's our business." So goes a line from a leaflet distributed widely in the building industry by the Construction and Other Industries Drug and Alcohol Program. The attitude expresses the concern of building unions at the high rate of drug and alcohol use by workers in the industry and the desire to intervene in the interests of workplace health and safety.

by Bob Briton

The Building Trades Group of Unions has even won an award for its drug and alcohol program from the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention – the only workplace program in the world to receive such recognition.

Many larger workplaces have enterprise agreements hammered out with the relevant unions that contain procedures for dealing with instances of drug use in the workplace. Most have an emphasis on counselling and rehabilitation rather than penalties, at least in the first instance. More and more companies are gearing up with drug testing regimes to back up the "no drugs at work" message.

Leading transport company, Linfox, is about to introduce random testing for its 5000 staff around Australia. Another major carrier, Toll, is also considering them. Bill Noonan, Victorian State Secretary of the Transport Workers Union says that within three years, up to 25,000 workers in the national transport industry will have to face up to drug testing.

"It's inevitable", he told the *Herald Sun* last June. The same report quoted a Linfox source about the testing: "The plan is to have it put to bed in the next twelve months. It will be random, pre-employment and post-incident testing ... you can't argue against it".

In the US, 81% of large corporations now insist on testing prospective employees for drugs use. In Australia, at least 100 major companies are testing and a growing number of recruitment agencies are having tests conducted on behalf of would be employers.

World wide there has been a spiralling growth in workplace drug testing over the past decade. It's only been in recent years that a chorus of protests has gone up at a number of undesirable aspects of the practice.

Bosses Concern?

Indeed, it would be hard to argue against measures that would prevent an inebriated pilot from taking charge of a plane, a drug-affected driver from barrelling down the highway at the wheel of a road train or an intoxicated building worker from working at dizzying heights on an inner city project.

And Australia clearly has problems with drugs and alcohol that cannot help but impact on the workplace. Seventy-four thousand Australians are addicted to heroin. One in 17 of the Australian Defence Force personnel needed clinical help with their drinking or drug abuse according to a report released two years ago.

A study conducted by the Queensland University of Technology Centre for Accident Research found that one in three police officers drink to dangerous levels and, ten years ago, up to 20 per cent of construction workers were drinking at a level that was injurious to their health.

The examples could go on but space wouldn't allow.

Why, even Workplace Relations Minister, Tony Abbott, has admitted to having had "half a puff" of marijuana while on a footy tour of the US in his wild teenage years.

Questions must be asked, however, when the same bosses that are happy to see you handle toxic substances and work you until you are so fatigued as to be dangerous on the job suddenly profess a concern for the health of their workers.

Sure, they will also argue that a drug-free work place is better for the bottom line, that it will reduce the number of compensation claims they may have to contend with as a result of accidents, and so on. But other questions remain.

"Pee in here, or else!"

The first and perhaps most obvious objection to the urine test most commonly used for drug detection is that it is usually very degrading.

As long ago as 1992, the NSW Privacy Commissioner published the account of a test given to a 40-year-old mother. "I was led into a very small room with a toilet, sink and a desk. I was given a container in which to urinate by the attendant. I waited for her to turn her back before pulling down my pants, but she told me she had to watch everything I did. I pulled down my pants, put the container in place – as she bent down to watch – gave her a sample and even then she didn't look away. I had to use toilet paper as she watched and then pulled up my pants."

Last year it was reported that MIM had angered its workers by installing cameras in the toilets at its Mount Isa mine. The company apparently wanted to be sure that workers undergoing urine tests for drugs were not cheating.

Another major problem with the testing method currently favoured by employers and growing number of companies specialising in such surveillance is that it is more effective in detecting some drugs rather than others. A urine test will pick up evidence of marijuana use while passing over indicators for arguably more dangerous drugs. Marijuana will leave a calling card in your system for 28 days while heroin, cocaine and alcohol will pass through in a matter of 48 hours.



The statement "what you do in your time is your business" becomes a nonsense in the case of marijuana. The smoking of a joint on the weekend will most likely produce an adverse result in a test on Monday. You might be dismissed, especially if you are a casual or subject to a less tolerant enterprise agreement (EBA) or individual work contract (AWA). You might be classified as having a drug problem or, in other ways, exposed to what has been called "lifestyle discrimination".

The discussion society needs to have

Marijuana is a prohibited substance. The degree of tolerance before the law for its possession and use varies from state to state and from time to time but in the final analysis its use is still illegal in Australia.

There is no doubt that its use while working would impair your efficiency. A person affected by marijuana should not be in control of a vehicle or other equipment.

There is a steady stream of evidence pointing to a link between some psychological disorders and long-term heavy use of the drug. It would be silly to argue for some sort of privileged position for the drug when it comes to the workplace.

Some conclusions need to be made, however, from the fact that its use is very widespread and that it leaves evidence of THC (the offending chemical in marijuana) in urine and other tests for so long after contact and where the worker

is not suffering any impairment of their capacities.

A La Trobe University study revealed last year that 62 per cent of workers in the building industry use the drug, as do 52 per cent of hairdressers and 38 per cent of manufacturing workers.

High proportions of workers, then, are at risk of dismissal in the worst instance for the use in their own time of a drug still widely believed, rightly or wrongly, to be relatively harmless.

The way may have been shown by the example of the workers at BHP's iron ore sites in the Pilbara in WA. In negotiations over what was a very intrusive testing regime, unions were able to get BHP to depart from the Australian Standard by doubling the level of cannabinoid metabolites (from marijuana) to be regarded as acceptable for their testing purposes. This standard is less likely to discriminate against light "social use" of marijuana out of work hours.

"Intoxicated" or "impaired"?

There are many privacy issues associated with the increasingly common practice. What happens to those staff records of adverse findings following a weekend's "indiscretion"? Is this information given to the recruitment company that found your current job, to be used later on to ensure that you do not get any further jobs from them?

Other problems persist with the reliability of drugs tests. There have been reports of workers who

have tested positive for opiates after eating poppy seed muffins, as have those who have taken over-the-counter pain-reliever codeine (an ingredient of Panadeine). Other legal and harmless substances have turned up positive tests for cocaine.

Last year, workers at the South Blackwater Coal Mine refused to submit to random drug tests for the sorts of reasons discussed above. The workers, represented in their dispute by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, argued that technologies already exist to test impairment to a worker's capacities and thus largely avoid the intrusive sample testing.

The OPSAT system and Fit 2000 use a computer to carry out reaction tests that would pick out intoxicated workers. The union argued that only when the reaction test is failed should a drug test be administered.

To date, the authorities have insisted on the old regime. In considering this debate, it must be pointed out (as Workers Online has) that OPSAT and Fit 2000 are in a sense competitors in a growing drugs testing technologies market.

In any case, the fact that managements prefer the old ways is quite understandable.

An "impaired" worker may not necessarily be "intoxicated". It is not only alcohol and illegal drugs identifiable in workplace testing that may impair a worker's ability on the job.

Many other legal, over-the-counter medications may have an equal or worse impairment effect on

workplace movement

workers than light drug or alcohol use. Anti-histamines, for allergy and hayfever relief are renowned for causing drowsiness, especially when used in combination with codeine in "cold and flu" tablets or the pain-reliever Mersyndol.

Travel sickness tablets have a similar effect, as do tablets for gastro-intestinal cramping (Buscopan, Donnatab).

If significant numbers of workers failed impairment test under the OPSAT or Fit 2000 systems, it would require employers to take a more lenient stance on sick leave.

An "impairment test" might also provide results that put the brakes on the methods being used out there in deregulated workplace land.

For example, two years ago the House of Representatives Transport Committee reported that fatigue was four times more likely to cause impairment for workers in the transport industry than either drugs or alcohol.

In fact, the "productivity" demands being placed on workers in the transport industry are among the major reasons that drivers and other transport industry workers reach for amphetamines.

Issues the bosses avoid

Despite the Transport Committee's findings and recommendations, the employers are still more ready, willing and able to drug test than implement changes to reduce the pressure on workers.

"Busting" drug using workers is one thing but we might have no workers left if we send all the exhausted ones home. So goes the bosses' reasoning.

And this brings us to one of the supreme injustices of the drug-testing question. Obviously, the reasons for drug taking in a society are complex but growing social inequality, unemployment, increased pressures on the job, the related increased incidence of workplace bullying, heightened insecurity and other capitalist contagions are surely among them.

In a society like ours, these factors are still outside our control and many of us fall victim to these pressures. As we know, the ruling class loves to blame its victims. Rather than making workplaces human friendly, it is far easier to weed out the drug users.

A question of class and control

There is a strong ideological element in the current trends towards drug testing. From the US (the home of all these management ideas) comes the news that drug testing has not helped the bottom line after all. While some corporations are claiming a cash benefit, many others aren't so bold.

Warner Corporation repairs plumbing heating and air-conditioning. It says that its testing regime is saving it US\$75,000 a year for an outlay of US\$1,500.

Far more common lately are

reports to the contrary. Eugene Ferraro of Business Controls told *Business Week Online* that "[Employers] say it's not providing the return on investment that they expected. There are just not enough positive results."

Agilent Technologies has gone so far as to suspend its program until the current slightly tighter labour market loosens up.

The better organised and resourced professionals are usually not tested in case they litigate and it is needless to add that neither are executives or the political elites.

Ronald Regan was pulled back from volunteering for the tests he promoted as part of the "war on drugs" when it was realised that the drugs being used to keep the aging President alive, active and coherent would have made him fail the test.

Locally, NSW Police Minister Michael Costa was not obliged to answer a question in parliament about whether he would submit to the same sort of random drug test now obligatory for police when the enquiry was ruled out of order.

However, masses of lower paid workers regularly have to submit. Barbara Ehrenreich is a US author and journalist.

She took months away from her relatively privileged lifestyle to find out what it is like for the millions of her fellow Americans who work long days for \$5 and \$7 an hour. The result of her research is contained in the book *Nickel and Dimed: Undercover in Low-wage USA*.

Ehrenreich concludes, "The real function of these [drug and personality] tests is to convey information not to the employer but to the potential employee, and the information is always the same: You will have no secrets from us".

And further, "if you want to stack Cheerio boxes or vacuum hotel rooms in chemically fascist America, you have to be willing to squat down and pee in front of a health worker".

Standards

The trade union movement must continue to press for the sorts of demands that form the core of the construction industry's award winning program. Workplace programs must advocate education, individual responsibility, peer support, rehabilitation and job security.

There should be training so that staff can detect drug-related and other forms of impairment to work performance in their colleagues.

The confidentiality of staff records of counselling and other measures has to be ensured. In addition, alternatives to demeaning forms of testing should be explored as a matter of high priority.

It appears that Australia has already taken quite a few steps along the path that has led the USA to its current oppressive position with regard to drug testing. It is not being "soft on drugs" for the labour movement to insist that the same respect for the dignity and privacy of the "higher ups" be shown to lower paid workers, also. ☺

MARCH 5 STUDENT STRIKE TO DEMAND "BOOKS NOT BOMBS"

Following the highly successful February 14-16 weekend of global actions students around the world are organising a one-day strike, including in Australia. Dan Margolis, writing for the communist *People's Weekly World* reports from New York.

Under the slogan "Books not bombs," thousands of students at hundreds of campuses across the country are planning a one-day strike on March 5 to demand better funding for public education and an end to the Bush administration's drive for war in Iraq.

The strike is shaping up to be the biggest student action since the Vietnam War.

"We just can't sit in our classes while our government is doing something that's going to affect the world for decades to come", Amanda Crater, a spokesperson for the coalition organising the strike, the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition (NYSPC), told the *World*.

"Every dollar spent on the [war] is a dollar that could have been spent for the schools. I mean, where else is that money coming from? Meanwhile, tuition is going up, fees are getting higher, and schools are getting crunched."

Students will demand that the Bush administration end its drive for military actions in Iraq, fund education, and re-allocate military funds to eliminating poverty.

Local issues such as demanding campus administrators declare opposition to the war, disclose and eliminate military research contracts, freeze or lower tuition fees, and transfer money for JROTC programs to college preparation and counselling are also part of the strike.

"The biggest question that I have is, for my security is it worth spending hundreds of billions of dollars on a war on Iraq? Or is it better to take that money and invest it in education so that I can go to college?" said Ben Waxman, a high school senior and member of the American Friends Service Committee.

"The Bush administration wants to sell to me that somehow the people of Iraq are some kind of threat to me while in reality the biggest threat to my future is my inability to be able to pay for college."

"Students are responding to the strike because we see this not just as an international issue, but as a domestic issue. At the same time they have hundreds of billions of dollars to invade and occupy

Iraq, school budgets are being cut in public schools, tuition is being increased", said Adanjesus Marin, national co-coordinator of the Young Communist League USA, a member organisation of the coalition calling the strike.

"The money that they would spend on the war should instead go to fully fund our education."

In addition to the strike, students will hold mock elections.

"We will participate in a national anti-war mock election in which we show our electoral power against the war, and also our willingness to vote if candidates address our issues", said Erica Smiley, the president of the Black Radical Congress youth division, another NYSPC member organisation.

"We'll be sending the ballots to Congress."

The NYSPC is composed of various youth and students organisations, including the United States Students Association, Muslim Student Association of the United States and Canada, Campus Greens, United Students Against Sweatshops, Student Peace Action Network and Young Communist League.

For more information visit

www.nyspc.net.

or www.yclusa.org

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Every dollar spent on the war is a dollar that could have been spent on schools

Deafening call for peace by Non-Aligned Movement

A deafening call for global peace was made by the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held last week in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

Speaker after speaker condemned threats of aggression and oppression as the Middle East stood on the brink of a US-led attack against Iraq. They also watched in horror at developments in Palestine.

Sixty-three heads of state attended the Summit of the 114-member NAM. National leaders included Fidel Castro (Cuba), Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Mahathir Mohammed (Malaysia), Goh Chok Tong (Singapore) Tran Duc Luong (Vietnam), Megawati Sukarnoputri (Indonesia) and many more. The NAM was founded in 1961 to unite the many former colonial and third world countries.

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, as outgoing chairman of NAM said, "Some had promised that the end of the Cold War just over a decade ago would lead to the birth of a new world order of freedom, justice, peace and prosperity for all, but what we have seen since then is a world torn apart by merciless conflicts that have devoured many human lives".

He said member countries of the Movement, especially in the Asian region, were hit by an economic crisis that destroyed or undermined great advances that had been made to improve the lives of the people.

"... millions elsewhere in the world, in Africa, had no choice but to sustain life by depending on international food aid, even as they had to contend with a burden of disease", he said.

"As we meet here the terrible promise of war hangs over the peoples of Iraq and the world. When and if it will break out we do not know. How many human casualties we also do not know.

"... but what we know is that if war does impose itself on humanity, it will claim many lives. It will increase instability in the Middle East and the world. It will deliver a deadly blow to the poor of the world, who will have to bear the additional pain of growing impoverishment."

Surely, Thabo Mbeki said, "We must together make the statement that we do not want war. But we must also make the statement that neither do we want weapons of mass destruction".

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad accused the United States and Western countries of adopting "double standards" in combatting terrorism and made a strong plea for outlawing war and establishing an order in which no single nation is allowed to assume the role of world policeman and decide unilateral action.

Mahathir, who took over the chairmanship of the NAM that represents 55 percent of the world's population and almost two thirds of the seats at the UN, said that the biggest threat to NAM countries today was "the tendency of the powerful to wage war when faced with opposition, to spread their dominance".

"It is no longer just a war against terrorism. It is in fact a war to dominate the world", he said, adding, "powerful countries no longer respect borders, international laws or simple moral values following the September 11 terror attacks".

"They are now talking of the use of military conquests to change governments and are even talking of using nuclear weapons."

President Khatami of Iran said Tehran opposed the use of force to change any regime in any country. He was referring to the US intention to get rid of President Saddam Hussein.

"The current frightening world atmosphere makes it imperative for the Non-Aligned Movement to opt for a more affirmative approach toward achieving a peaceful world", he said.

Philippine President Gloria Arroyo said global security should be sought through nuclear disarmament, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction as well as balanced and progressive conventional disarmament.

She also called on Saddam Hussein to urgently negotiate a win-win settlement that would "spare the heroic Iraqi people the agonies of a devastating war".

Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri said the threat of military action by a powerful country, let alone just to act on the basis of or simply to demonstrate its might or superiority, was clearly a mistake.

"No matter how powerful the country is, that does not give it the right to act unilaterally against others."

Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said that all actions in respect of Iraq by the United States and others should respect international law and resolutions of the Security Council.

"In this crisis, we must not lose sight of the humanitarian aspect. The Iraqi people have suffered enough", he said.

Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong called on the United Nations to push back by all means the war for the sake of world peace.

"We also call for an end to power politics, embargo and sanctions against a number of countries, which have, for many years, caused tremendous hardships and sufferings for their people, particularly those imposed against Cuba", he said.

"The international community must make every effort to encourage Iraq to comply fully with Security Council resolution 1441 and to co-operate pro-actively with the inspectors so this objective is achieved peacefully."

The Vietnamese President said, "If ... the international community fails to agree on a common position, and action is taken without the authority of the Security Council, the legitimacy of, and support for, any action will be seriously impaired".

A statement on Iraq adopted at the conclusion of the Summit welcomed and expressed support for all efforts to avert war against Iraq.

It said they were fully cognisant of the concerns expressed by millions in their countries, as well as in other parts of the world, who rejected war and believed that war against Iraq would be a destabilising factor for the whole region.

At the same time, they also called on Iraq, a member of the



"Global security through nuclear disarmament" – Pakistan's Musharraf, the Philippine's Arroyo, Malaysia's Mahathir, Cuba's Castro

116-strong Movement, to continue to actively comply with the United Nations Security Council resolution. "We believe that this would be an important step opening the way to a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of all pending issues between Iraq and the United Nations that takes into account the concerns of all affected parties, including Iraq's neighbours."

In their statement, the leaders noted that the current disarmament efforts in Iraq should also constitute

a step toward the lifting of sanctions in accordance with Security Council Resolution 687.

In a special statement, the Summit also demanded an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian territories and sought full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions.

NAM leaders strongly condemned the systematic human rights violations and reported war crimes committed by the Israeli forces against Palestinians.

They emphasised that the main danger to the realisation of national rights of the Palestinians and the achievement of a peaceful solution to the problem was the settler colonisation that had been carried out in the occupied territories.

"This policy of settler colonialism must be immediately stopped and reversed", the NAM statement said.

Taken from Xinhua News Agency reports of the NAM Summit meeting

Fidel Castro's visit to Vietnam

Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz ended a successful three-day tour of Vietnam with a visit to the Ho Chi Minh mausoleum and a speech to 1000 cheering students at the Hanoi University of Technology.

Speaking of the 1975 victory of the Vietnamese people over US aggression, Castro said. "No words can describe the efforts and sacrifices of the Vietnamese people".

"You showed the world you could defeat the brainless who came from more than 20,000 kilometres away to invade your country.

"You have shown to the world that oppressed nations can oppose [invaders] and win and defend their legitimate cause."

Castro notes that US aggression does not end with the victory of the revolution.

"Our country has been suffering consequences of the sabotage for many years. We are very close to a superpower, only 90 miles away, compared to 20,000 kilometres away", he said. "You, friends, could imagine the dangers to us."

However, Castro also remarked that US embargoes on the two countries had played a positive role in their development.

"It should be admitted that our enemy has played a role in our achievements. It posed challenges to us which we were forced to overcome. Every time we overcome one, we grew and developed better", Castro said.

The Cuban delegation then visited the industrial area of Saidon-Hanel for a tour of the Orion-Hanel electronics factory, currently producing one million computers annually.

The factory's workers participated in a rally, and after some words of welcome, Fidel expressed his thanks for a donation of 500 computers to Cuba, most of which are destined for improving the public health system.

The Vietnamese press was equally effusive about the relationship between the two countries.

Nhan Dan, The Communist Party daily newspaper, said in an editorial:

"The image of Cuba, the image of Fidel has become very near and dear to every Vietnamese person. Fidel is the symbol of an undaunted revolutionary combatant fighting for independence, freedom and human dignity.

"President Fidel's 1973 visit to Vietnam happened when the anti-US struggle for national salvation was entering a crucial stage.

"And Cuba was one of the countries which took the lead in the world people's movement to

support and unite with the Vietnamese people to fight and defend national independence, freedom and construction.

"After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the eastern European socialist countries, the hostile forces have tightened their embargo in an attempt to interfere, sabotage and wipe out the socialist society in Cuba.

"In this difficult situation, by bringing into full play the mettle of a heroic nation, the Party, State and people of Cuba have pooled their efforts to together overcome all difficulties and shortages to find out the solutions to develop the society and economy in conformity with their own conditions on the socialist principle.

"By promoting the superiority of the socialist system, the Party and State of Cuba, by all ways and means, have maintained the free educational and medical system, subsidised the people in difficulties in the spirit that 'nobody is left roaming in the street to earn their living'".

Castro departed Vietnam to represent Cuba at the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Kuala Lumpur, of which he will take up the rotating Presidency next year.

He will complete his tour of Asia with four-day visits to China and Japan.

Security threat to US!

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey barred entry to the United States

Irish activist and former Member of Parliament, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey was detained by immigration officials in Chicago on February 21, and denied entry into the United States allegedly on "national security" grounds.

by Laura Flanders

According to her daughter, Deidre, two Immigration and Naturalisation Services (INS) officers threatened to arrest, jail, and even shoot the legendary civil rights campaigner when she arrived at Chicago's O'Hare airport.

Bernadette was then photographed, finger-printed and returned to Ireland against her will on the grounds that the State Department had declared that she posed "a serious threat to the security of the United States".

The two were travelling together from Ireland to the US to attend a christening.

According to Deidre, the McAliskeys cleared US immigration in Ireland prior to boarding, and received routine permission to travel, but upon their arrival they were stopped at the baggage claim.

Detained by two INS officers, they were told that the order to bar Bernadette McAliskey had come from US officials in Dublin.

During the dispute that followed, Deidre said one INS officer used "very thinly veiled threats" against her mother, including, "if you interrupt me one more time I'm going to slam the cuffs on you and haul your ass to jail."

One officer, said Deidre, "pulled his chair right up to mummy and I heard him say 'Don't make my boss angry. I saw him fire a shot at a guy last week and he has the authority to shoot.'" Bernadette was denied access to a lawyer and sent back to Ireland.

A tireless advocate for the Irish nationalist cause, at the age of 21, Bernadette was the youngest person ever to be elected to the British Parliament.

She witnessed the deaths of 13 civilians shot dead by British paratroopers during a civil rights march in Derry, Northern Ireland in 1972, and she narrowly avoided death a second time when she and her husband were shot in their home by a loyalist death-squad in 1981.

Bernadette has been frequent visitor to the US for the past 30 years, although this was her first visit in over 18 months. She has been awarded the symbolic "keys" to several US cities, including New York and San Francisco.

On her first trip, in 1971, the young Bernadette made civil rights history when she refused to be met by Chicago's Mayor Richard J. Daley on account of his treatment of opponents of the Vietnam War.

The McAliskeys, who have a long history fighting government repression on both sides of the Atlantic, are concerned about the denial of all visitors' rights.

"However INS is required to deal with things, and whatever their protocol may be, it is not part of their legal procedures that you should be threatened with jail and threatened with being shot", said Deidre. At this point, she is urging visitors to the US to think twice, "if the state this jumpy, I'd not advise anyone to come here unless absolutely necessary," she said.

Bernadette McAliskey is now in the process of filing a formal complaint with the US consulate in Dublin.

CounterPunch ☪



Greece: NATO turned away

In Greece thousands of protestors massed for two days of demonstrations against the presence offshore of the NATO Standing Naval Force of the Mediterranean. Protestors also targeted the Greek Government and the presidency of the European Union with their slogans

Very early in the morning on February 19, the Communist Party of Greece and the left-led PAME labour federation hung two huge banners visible from the sea, saying "NATO killers go home" and "NATO fleet is not welcome".

On the evening of February 20, the protest continued with one of the biggest demonstrations in the city's history.

As a result, the Greek Government was forced to appeal to the commander of the fleet of US, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch and Italian vessels, not to enter the harbour.

On February 20, the German vessel tried to dock at a secondary port in a suburb of Piraeus to take on supplies. Members of the seamen's unions immediately gath-

ered at the dock, together with area young people. As a result, the ship left in midday, empty-handed.

During a press conference, February 20, aboard the NATO fleet's flagship, Greek journalists presented US Admiral Gregory G. Johnson, commander of the NATO forces in Southern Europe, with a statement protesting any attack on Iraq, opposing the role of NATO and emphasising the popular opposition to the fleet's presence in Piraeus.

Italy: Train stopping

The Government has illegally guaranteed the US military the right to use state (public) infrastructure to move its weapons, vehicles and

personnel through Italy. On February 21, when the first trains left, protestors immediately began to stop the trains which were travelling from Ederle (near Vicenza) bound for the US military base at Camp Derby, near Pisa.

On February 22, despite intimidation and threats from the authorities the protests spread to other towns with varying degrees of success.

At Campo di Marte (Padua), where a train was blocked for hours, the route of the following train was changed. It was stopped by protestors in Verona for half an hour, until police charged on demonstrators.

In Pisa there were two demos, the first in the morning at the military airport, the second in the afternoon with 600 people marching from the station to the centre of the city.

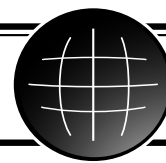
The British consulate was occupied in Torino. ☪

Greece

US diplomat resigns over US policy

The Greek state-run television has announced that B. Kiesling, political counsellor at the US Embassy in Athens and head of its political department resigned at the end of February (February 28) in protest against the US policy on Iraq.

According to the television report the US diplomat said in his resignation letter addressed to US Secretary of State Colin Powell that the policy followed by the US Government on the issue of Iraq hurts the greatest weapon the US has since the time of Woodrow Wilson namely, international legality.



Global briefs

JAPAN: Recent surveys in Japan show that the majority of Japanese people are opposed to a possible US attack on Iraq. 78.7 per cent of respondents in a Kyodao News phone survey said they opposed the war, while 15.5 per cent said they supported it. 48.5 per cent said Japan's government should not support a military attack on Iraq, an increase of 9.7 points from the last survey carried in January. 25,000 people took part in a Tokyo anti-war rally on February 14 as part of the world-wide actions against the war.

LATVIA: The pro-western Latvian Government has decided to abolish International Women's Day as a public holiday. March 8 has been one of the most popular public holidays in the USSR and marked the contribution of working women to society. It is still a public holiday in Russia, but Latvian authorities decided that IWD has strong connections to communist ideas – they were particularly unhappy with Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, two pioneers of the struggle for working women's rights.

CHINA: The value of Chinese exports to the USA in 2002 is estimated to have surpassed that of Japanese exports to the USA for the first time. That means China has become the third largest exporter to the USA, following Canada and Mexico, with Japan now in fourth place. China also became the largest exporter to Japan in 2002.

GHANA: Ghana's Minister of Health, Dr Kwaku Afriyie, has appealed to Cuba to use Ghana as a centre for research and manufacture of vaccines for the treatment of tropical diseases. "Because disease pattern differs from country to country and sometimes getting a particular kind of vaccine demands a combination of different types of vaccines, the big manufacturing companies in Europe are no more interested in researching into this area", he said. The Health Minister commended Cuba for consistently assisting Ghana with doctors who had filled the gap created by the mass exodus of Ghana's health professionals. The Cuban doctors are held in very high regard professionally and are willing to accept postings in rural areas. The Cuban Government has promised to increase the Cuban Health Brigade from 189 to 200 and support the opening of a biotechnology centre for the development of drugs as well as vaccines.

IRAN: Iran said it would close its borders to refugees fleeing from the US attack unless it received aid from other countries. After the 1991 Gulf War, 1.3 million people fled across the border to Iran.

ISRAEL: In a change of policy, the Israeli military is starting to court martial conscientious objectors, after they have spent more than 150 days in prison. Unlike the usual disciplinary sentences of 28 or 35 days, a court-martial can sentence an objector to up to three years in jail for refusing to serve in the army. Until now conscientious objectors have served multiple prison terms.

What's a life worth?

"Is the price worth it?" was the question Madelaine Albright (then US ambassador to the UN) was asked in 1996. The question referred to the deaths of half a million of Iraqi children as a result of sanctions imposed on Iraq. She replied: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it".

Right after the Gulf war Colin Powell was asked about the number of Iraqis killed in that war. His response – "It's really not a number I'm terribly interested in".

I don't think that the present US administration is any different in its approach though it's trying hard to present its proposed illegal attack on Iraq as a "liberation" of the long-suffering Iraqi people.

Fifty per cent of Iraqi population is under the age of 18. The two devastating wars – with Iran and the USA – have taken their toll on the male population of Iraq.

So in demographic terms, the attack on Iraq will be an attack on the young, the old and the women.

Doctors' organisations have been issuing warnings about the precarious situation where a generally exhausted population will be pushed into irreversible decline if a war starts.

Peace actions across the world are brought about by the fact that the USA and their willing partners (Britain and Australia) are keen to re-write the international law books

to make a pre-emptive war a legal means of solving international problems – a frightening proposition.

People are responding with compassion for the Iraqi people who are being treated as a disposable commodity in the "righteous" battle against the devil Saddam.

It's no wonder that the only churches that support this crusade are the American Christian Right and US tele-evangelists.

And where are the "right-to-lifers" now? I didn't notice their banners on February 16. But of course, that may be because the crowd was too big.

Jason D
Fairfield, NSW

Crowded classrooms

A recent State Government survey of class sizes in our schools confirms that well over 50,000 Queensland students are learning in crowded conditions.

This is disturbing news that supports the call by teachers for immediate Government action on the class size issue.

The survey shows schools statewide have at least 2500 oversized classes and that a large number of other classes are "full" and can't take any more students.

Amazingly, Education Minister Anna Bligh has taken comfort from the findings of her survey and is ignoring the needs of tens of thousands of school students.

The Minister must abandon her head-in-the-sand attitude and

urgently move to reduce numbers of oversized classes.

She must also realise the Government's 20 year-year-old maximum class size targets are outdated and ill-suited to the demands of modern schooling.

Steve Ryan
Vice President
Queensland Teachers Union

Iraq is not East Timor

I am absolutely disgusted with the war beat-up of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. We have a big choice of papers in Adelaide: Murdoch's Advertiser or Murdoch's Advertiser.

News Corp owns more than 175 titles on three continents, publishes 40 million papers a week and dominates the newspaper markets in Australia, Britain and New Zealand.

Murdoch was direct and open about the reasons to go to war – getting rid of Saddam Hussein would lead to cheaper oil.

"The greatest thing to come out of this for the world economy ... would be \$20 a barrel for oil. That's bigger than any tax cut in any country" (*The Bulletin* interview).

This is pro-war stance is not surprising, nor is it surprising that the war hawks get a good run for their (and our) money in the Murdoch rags.

But I was surprised and rather shocked by a feature piece by Jose

Ramos Horta, East Timor's Foreign Minister.

In his article Mr Horta recalled his family's suffering and losses during the long Indonesian occupation, the resistance struggle and the intervention of international forces to oust the Indonesian military.

However, on the question of attacking and occupying Iraq Mr Horta is a strong supporter of the US, British and Australian Government's positions.

He accuses all those who oppose the war of keeping Saddam Hussein in power and thus contributing to "the peace of the dead".

This is a catchy phrase. But I, for one am not going to be persuaded by it. Thousands of Australian people have been supporting the struggle in East Timor – despite their own government's policies as we all remember.

Thousands of people were prepared to hide East Timorese refugees in their own homes – and face punishing consequences for that.

East Timor was a country which had been illegally occupied. Iraq

is not. Iraq is about to be illegally occupied by a far superior force. That and the terrible price the whole world is to pay for such an occupation.

The US and its allies are desperately trying to bribe, coerce and threaten countries into supporting their war.

It is sad that Mr Horta got involved in this campaign for war, especially considering that Non-Aligned [Movement] countries came out strongly in opposition to the war.

It was not clear from the article if the views expressed there were of an individual or as an official of the East Timorese Government. Prominence is given to the fact that Mr Horta is a Nobel Prize winner. So he is. But so is Nelson Mandela who called the proposed war a holocaust.

A group of American Nobel Prize winners was one of the first to oppose the war. In short, I for one will be taking part in the next peace demonstration against the war.

Sandy Short
Glenelg, SA

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**Only in the USA**

Did you note the newsworthy responses in the US to the French Government's refusal to support a US attack on Iraq? They differ widely.

by Rob Gowland

Progressive opinion put forward proposals such as everyone buying a bottle of French wine regularly and drinking a toast to France (and sending an email to President Chirac congratulating France and encouraging him to go on resisting US pressure).

On the other hand, right-wing opinion, under a heavy mantle of patriotism, reacted by ceasing to advertise potato chips as "French Fries". Instead, they have rechristened them "Freedom Fries"!

Bound to catch on, don't you think?

...

My record collection includes only three LPs on the distinctive *Folkways* label. I say distinctive because *Folkways* records came in stiff double sleeves of heavy cardboard. One pocket contained the actual LP, the other contained a booklet of eight pages or so with the notes on the songs.

Even in 1950s, *Folkways* Records had a substantial catalogue of American folk music together with much English, Irish and Scottish folk music. But their catalogue included a vast array of ethnic music from Greece, Asia, the Pacific, Eastern Europe.

The following consecutive entries in *Folkways*' 1957 catalogue will give an idea of the label's extraordinary range and variety:

Folk Music of Pakistan; Spanish Music of New Mexico; Folk Music of the Western Congo; Songs of the Watutsi; Folk music of Japan.

Indeed, *Folkways* had it all: from jazz to *Scottish War Ballads*, from songs, folk tales and historical items for children to readings from Bret Harte and James Joyce, from *Union Songs* sung by Pete Seeger to *Dante's Inferno in Italian*.

Founded by Moses Asch in the 1940s, *Folkways* was a mainstay of the folksong revival of the '50s and '60s. Unlike most other labels, however, *Folkways* did not abandon the form when the folksong craze waned, overwhelmed by the intense commercial promotion of rock'n'roll.

Music From Western Samoa: From Conch Shell to Disco was added to the catalogue as recently as 1984. Asch died shortly thereafter.

He had always been concerned at the way other record companies only kept recordings in their catalogues for relatively short periods. As soon as their sales dropped off, they would be withdrawn. Once withdrawn a recording was unlikely to be reissued.

According to an article in *The New York Times* earlier this month, Asch was wont to ask if Q would be dropped from the alphabet just because it wasn't used as much as the rest of the letters.

The entire *Folkways* inventory of some 2168 titles beginning in 1948 was bought from Asch's estate by the famous museum of technology and Americana, the Smithsonian Institution in 1987. A condition of the sale was that the museum agree to keep every title in stock.

The New York Times notes that "Initially, requests for rare, out-of-stock albums were fulfilled with dubbed cassettes". Now, however, a museum employee burns five copies on to recordable CDs, one for the customer requesting the item and four to put on the shelf for future orders.



Lean cuisine – Chirac continues resisting US pressure

The irony here, as the *NY Times* article noted, is that the commercial record industry is dead set opposed to recordable CDs, claiming that they will (shock, horror) allow people to record their own discs instead of buying the commercially available ones.

You want a copy of *American Industrial Ballads* sung by Pete Seeger or *Folk Songs of the Canadian Folk Woods*? Well, for US\$19.95 plus postage, Smithsonian *Folkways* Recordings as it is now called will forward a CD-R "burned" with the original album, "along with a standard cardboard slipcase that includes a folded photocopy of the original liner notes".

While the Smithsonian's use of recordable CDs (CD-Rs) allows the museum to keep faith with its

obligation to keep everything "in stock", it is, as the *NY Times* is quick to point out, "a labour-intensive solution that would be inefficient for the higher-demand catalogues of the major labels".

Which is a jargon-filled way of saying it would eat into their profits.

However, to overcome this problem with the more popular titles in their catalogue, Smithsonian *Folkways* is venturing into the manufacture of CDs (as opposed to their in-house CD-Rs), using a "print-on-demand" company American Disc.

"These *Collector's Series* discs come with full-colour booklets and are identical in quality to commercial releases, but are sold only through the Smithsonian *Folkways* Web site (www.si.edu/folkways)."

The Museum expects to sell significantly more copies of these CDs than their typical CD-R's, but still fewer than full-blown commercial retail releases.

What the *New York Times* article does not point out is that the reason the Smithsonian can produce records in this highly specialised way is because it is that rare creature in the US, a not-for-profit public institution.

If the vast US "record industry" was run by similar Government-supported public bodies, their truly enormous back catalogues of music, sound and spoken word could also be made available free from commercial constraints.

The Smithsonian is showing the US people the way new technology *should* be applied. ☺

Rob Gowland previews

ABC & SBS public television programs

Sun March 9 ~
~ Sat March 15

When did humans first begin to disperse from Africa? Early in their evolution, when they were still *Homo Erectus*, or later when they had evolved into *Homo Sapiens*? Or perhaps there were various migrations at different stages of evolution?

Exodus, this week's final episode of *Ape Man: Adventures In Human Evolution* (ABC 5.00pm Sunday) looks at this question and why it was that these early African beach-dwelling humans left their homeland to colonise other continents.

Twenty years ago, when I was with Quality Films, we tried unsuccessfully to interest television here in a series from Ireland called *The Atlanteans*. Made by the progressive Irish filmmaker Bob Quinn, the series examined the cultural and historical origins of the Irish people, and in particular whether they were in fact Celts.

On the basis of a variety of clues, Quinn postulated that the Irish came originally from the Mediterranean by way of the Portuguese and Spanish coasts. It was an interesting and well-argued theory, but no station here wanted it.

Now, SBS is presenting a "three-part documentary series [that] encompasses a period of 3000 years in the search for the roots of Irish identity and culture", *In Search Of Ancient Ireland*, (SBS 7.30pm Sundays).

The new series also questions the popular view that the Irish are Celtic. "No archaeological evidence of any kind has been found for an invasion of Celtic people.

"The strongest evidence for a Celtic presence in Ireland lies in the Irish Celtic language. This is the conundrum of early Ireland: the Celtic culture and language arrived but it is possible that no Celtic settlers came."

Starting in approximately 2000BC and continuing until the

Norman invasion of 1167AD, the series attempts to unravel Irish history, piecing it together from archaeological evidence and a wealth of pagan Celtic folklore and Christian legends.

A few weeks ago, the photo that accompanies this edition of *Worth Watching* appeared here identified as a still from the Regency naval adventure series *Hornblower*. The anachronistic presence of a bicycle and Edwardian fashions probably alerted most readers to the fact that gremlins had caused the wrong photo to appear.

Well, finally the forthcoming new adaptation of D H Lawrence's autobiographical novel *Sons And Lovers* (ABC 8.30pm Sundays) is here.

David Herbert Lawrence was born in 1885. His father was a miner, his mother had been a school-teacher. There were five children and the family lived in poverty.

At 15, David had to leave school and get a job, but he persevered with his studies and eventually got a scholarship to study for a teacher's certificate at Nottingham University College.

He published his first novel (*The White Peacock*) in 1911 followed by *The Trespasser* in 1912. *Sons And Lovers*, published in 1913, is a faithful autobiographical account of those early years of his life.

His next novel, *The Rainbow*, would be seized by the police as obscene. He was as intolerant of "middle class morality" as George Bernard Shaw was, but he confronted it head on. His frankness about sex and his use of four-letter words would delay the publication of some of his novels, such as *Women In Love*, for years.

Lady Chatterley's Lover was not published in an unexpurgated version in Britain or the US until more than 30 years after it was written.

Despite his popular reputation as an "immoral" writer, Lawrence was in fact a moralist, believing that "modern man was in danger of losing his ability to experience the quality of life".

Besides his novels, he wrote much poetry, travel books, volumes of short stories and such disparate works of non-fiction as *Movements in European History*, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*.



Captures the period with some success (*Sons and Lovers*)

That said, I must acknowledge here that I am not a Lawrence fan. His novels are too pessimistic for my taste (the evidence of that miserable German Nietzsche being all too obvious).

Nevertheless, as literary adaptations go, *Sons And Lovers* is well scripted, well acted and well directed. Made for British commercial network ITV, it catches the period with some success even if the poverty seems just a little genteel and less grubby than it probably was.

Everybody these days is aware of just what a raw deal black American actors used to get in Hollywood (and although it's better now it's still not as good as it could be).

But there are other ethnic groups that Hollywood treated just as badly. Native Americans are one. Latinos are another.

The Bronze Screen, screening in *Masterpiece* (SBS 9.30pm Sunday), is a remarkable, entertaining and largely untold story of the history of Latinos in the Hollywood motion picture industry.

Where would the Hollywood Western have been without fat, stupid Mexican ranch-hands for comic relief or ugly, leering, lecherous Mexican bandits? Latinas

generally had to play prostitutes or Indian squaws, or showgirls tied up with gangsters (often Puerto Ricans themselves). Racial stereotypes have always been big in Hollywood.

And yet Latinos have made movie history. This documentary brings this to life as it deconstructs Hollywood's history and prejudices.

It tells the stories of the Latinos in Hollywood in their own voices, including the continuous fight against being typecast. Among those interviewed are Jimmy Smits, Raquel Welch, Ruben Blades, Edward James Olmos, Ricardo Montalban, Rita Moreno, Caesar Romero and John Leguizamo.

The Bronze Screen uses extensive film footage, much of it never seen by contemporary audiences, to track the progression of Hollywood's distorted screen image, from the early silent movies to contemporary urban gang movies.

Before you read about the next program take heed of this warning: *The Cutting Edge: The War Behind Closed Doors* (SBS 8.30pm Tuesday) is not a satire, it is not a comedy, nor is it a spoof. It is a serious documentary.

It will also have you rolling on the floor in helpless disbelief. Made by the once well-

respected US Public Broadcasting Service's *Frontline* team, it purports to be an investigation into "the roots of a new American policy toward Iraq and the development of what is called 'The Bush Doctrine'".

According to the program "some members of the Washington foreign policy establishment have been formulating a new American view of its place in the world.

"That group, now in power as part of the Bush Administration, lobbied the President to face down Saddam, remake Iraq and send a forceful message to the rest of the world - America will not tolerate terrorists or tyrants."

Note the incredible language: "face down Saddam", as though he is threatening them. "Remake Iraq". Pardon me? Who gave the USA the right to "remake" countries? And just what does that encompass anyway?

And above all, that wonderful affirmation of US policy: "America will not tolerate terrorists or tyrants". Unless they are allies and/or puppets of the US Government, in which case it will not only tolerate them, it will arm them, finance them, advise them and protect them.

The murderous Bush Doctrine is of course no laughing matter. Programs that solemnly try to defend it, however, are... ☹

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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

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

March 21

IS AUSTRALIA'S DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT?
Justice John Dowd, International Commission of Jurists
Paul White, Researcher, Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney Uni

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.
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International Women's Day Activist, Organiser, Educator

On the occasion of International Women's Day, *The Guardian* spoke to Rebecca Reilly about the issues she has faced as a female union organiser and the experiences and problems facing women workers in the liquor and hospitality industry.

After leaving school Rebecca did a Diploma in hospitality and tourism management and started out as a rank and file hotel worker at a five-star international hotel.

"I was only about 18 at the time. It was a hotel made up of a lot of young workers and management thought that they could take advantage of us.

"As a young woman wanting to have a voice and be heard, I faced a fair amount of discrimination. I found that management preferred to deal with the older male workers in the company rather than the young women.

"We suffered from bullying, and sexual harassment by guests and senior managers.

"It was becoming a huge problem and initially we didn't think there was anything we could do about it.

"What we did without really knowing what we were doing was to get together and talk about the issues that we faced and collectively address management.

"We then negotiated enterprise agreements, with the assistance of the union office, to improve our wages and conditions."

Rebecca became very active in her union – the Australian Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union (LHMU) – and was eventually asked to work for them.

She started as a trainee, went through the ACTU's Organising Works program, and has continued to work with the union as an organiser. She also sat on the ACTU executive as a Youth representative.

"I was 22 when I first started working for the union and to be taken seriously was a big thing, with hotel bosses and quite often within the union structures themselves.

"It was often extremely difficult – a young activist that was not university educated and wasn't in the ALP. I thought that you weren't taken seriously and generally young men were taken a lot more seriously, so you had to break down barriers.

"I found a number of different people within the union movement who actually supported a lot of young women. They were generally our trainers. They would talk to us and go through the issues which gave us a lot of strength."

Organising NESB women

"I've found that women, particularly from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, have jumped at the opportunity to join unions", said Rebecca.

"They generally understand the importance of unions, they generally have been in a union before and actually see that as the only way they can maintain any sort of respect or dignity in their workplaces."

"It is extremely difficult for many of them", said Rebecca. "They are brilliant and very hard working, but they generally face a lot more discrimination."

"They are often considered lowly-skilled workers, when actually a lot of them are very highly skilled. They've worked in all sorts of different occupations in the countries where they lived and were born.

"One of the strategies in trying to organise the women is to give them confidence, by way of helping them with the English language, making sure that interpreters are at hand when needed and giving them the skills and confidence to be able to talk about their main concerns.

"It is low-paid work, so a lot of the women have to work two jobs at the same time as trying to manage the family unit. This makes it extremely difficult for them to actually be active within their own union", Rebecca said.

"We have to be more creative and also to be extremely aware about their concerns and how frightened they are.

"We also try to get the union structures to acknowledge that generally working women cannot come to the union office to attend meetings.

"We actually visit their homes and talk to them in a space in which they are comfortable, and it has to be at a time convenient for them, not so much as to what's convenient for us."

The issues that women face in hospitality and in the workforce are quite often different issues to those that men face.

Sexual harassment

Rebecca spoke of the problems that the room attendants who clean guest rooms in hotels face on a daily basis.

"There is a lot of harassment, particularly sexual harassment from guests. It can be very difficult to get management to take this issue seriously but there have been some major wins in convincing hotels that they have an obligation to provide a safe workplace for everyone, not just men."

Rebecca gives an example of a recent win.

"He was a long-term guest at a major hotel. He was sexually harassing one of the room attendants. That guest is now totally barred from the hotel and won't be allowed to stay there at all.

"It does not sound like a big win but it is for the industry because they are service-oriented and the guests can do no wrong."

Hotels did not have policies in place for women or people trained to handle such situations. Where there was someone the women



Rebecca Reilly

could report to, it was generally a male.

"It has taken a long time to educate these hotels that that's not the most appropriate way.

"They [the women affected] are extremely upset about what's happened and they feel extremely violated. So they may not necessarily want to speak to another man directly after a man has just assaulted them in this way."

Casualisation

Casualisation is a huge issue in the hospitality industry.

"More and more women are actually finding it more difficult to survive being classified as casual employees.

"That generally means that the boss has got the upper hand. They wave a carrot in front of the women basically saying to them that 'you either work the shifts at the last moment or you won't get any in the future', which makes it extremely difficult for them to organise childcare and other family situations.

"We are running a case, a convergence argument with the Hotels Discrimination Resorts Award so that a casual employee who has been working regular shifts in a hotel for six months would be automatically offered a permanent position.

"In preparing the case we had to go and speak to a lot of casual workers, particularly women. Some of their stories are actually horrifying."

In one case, a middle aged woman has been a casual room attendant for five years, has regularly worked four to five permanent shifts a week, is permanently on a roster and also has a permanent floor in which she cleans in a hotel.

"Everything suggests that this woman should be permanent but of course the employers use some of the awards in their interests rather than the employees'.

"It takes a lot for one of these female workers to actually

approach management to try and be converted to permanent. When they do get the confidence to be able to do that it's met with a lot of resistance.

"Management says, 'we'll think about it later', 'you do this shift for me and I might think about it'.

"There's a huge amount of broken promises given to casual employees.

"This particular woman I was referring to has not been able to have a break for five years because she cannot afford not to have an income.

"She is not entitled to annual leave at all, she is not entitled to sick leave. She has a medical condition and needs to go to a hospital every six months for two days, which creates a huge burden on her financial situation.

"When she returns after her two days in hospital she generally tries to work seven days to make up for those two days that she had to take off."

Stand-over tactics

A casual worker's income is totally dependent on how well they get on with management and also how flexible they can be.

Some casuals will start 7.30 or 8.00 o'clock in the morning and do not know at what time they will finish that day.

"It creates all sorts of problems within their own families, within their own social networks. Their lives totally depend on whether the telephone rings – if they need to go to work or not.

"If they do say 'no' to a request, that they have already had arrangements made, they are punished and may not get a shift for at least a week or longer."

Shift work is a huge problem, particularly for women. That is why many women work in the back house areas of the hotel where there are more daytime hours. These are generally the low-paid areas such as

cleaning rooms and the public areas of the hotel.

Campaigns

A yearly staff turnover rate of over 30 per cent is only one of the problems the union faces when trying to recruit members and run campaigns in the hospitality industry.

It is particularly hard to organise campaigns amongst young workers from Anglo-Australian backgrounds. Says Rebecca, "They've been convinced from high school that hospitality is the industry of the future and that unions will only hinder their career progression".

The union has also had to cope with the hotel closures and massive layoffs since the Olympics.

"We've had some of our major union sites close down which created a huge burden on the number of activists that we have got left in the industry.

"A lot of our work at the moment is to try and improve redundancy packages and try to place workers into other hotels to continue with their employment."

The union has campaigned strongly for paid maternity leave. They won six weeks paid leave in the 2002 enterprise agreement at Star City Casino in Sydney. This was a first for an employer in the hospitality industry.

Another campaign the union is working on at the moment is the upcoming Rugby World Cup.

"It's going to be extremely busy. Workers are actually terrified for that period, particularly the room attendants.

"There have been newspaper reports that the hotels will be charging as much as \$600 a night over that period, or certainly as much as they can get.

"Massive profits will be made by those hotels, and we are trying to negotiate a share of that for our workers." ❖