

The whole world says Stop the war NOW!

Since the massive bombardment of Iraq commenced on Thursday last week, millions of people around the world have taken to the streets to stop the war. Never before have so many people from so many countries united in such strong opposition to a war. In total disregard of the will of the people, and in total disregard for the thousands or possibly hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, the US and British Governments with their Australian lackey in tow, went ahead with their murderous, illegal and morally unjustifiable war on the people of Iraq.

In Australia hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in mass actions.

Anti-war marches in **Perth** climaxed last Saturday with 20,000 people rallying and marching through the city streets. On the day the war began 6000 protested in Forrest Place and marched to the UN Consulate, blocking St George's Terrace.

More than 2000 Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) members downed tools and joined the action. Unions WA Assistant Secretary Dave Robinson called on the union movement to maintain the pressure and drive the Howard Government from office.

Maritime Union of Australia State Secretary Wally Prichard said: "Bush says he has Saddam in his sights. We have Howard in our sights. We will have regime change."

Greens MLC Dee Margetts said the Greens had walked out of Parliament at the news of the war.

"The strategy of Bush, Blair and Howard will backfire", she said.

Other speakers in Perth came from the Uniting Church and the No War Alliance.

In **Sydney** 70,000 to 100,000 people marched from Belmore Park to The Domain on the Sunday to deliver another powerful message to the Howard Government to "Stop the War on Iraq, Bring the Troops Home" and "Howard's War - Bloody Outrage"

As in other centres, there was a wide cross-section of the community, with trade union, church, ethnic, student, political and other groups participating. Many of the recently formed local peace groups took part as well as families and other individuals and even a few pets.

Thousands of unionists rallied and marched against the war in **Melbourne** on Friday, March 21, joining with around 25,000 protesters. The union anti-war rally, organised by the Victorian Trades Hall Council, demanded an end to



Part of the Adelaide action

Photo: Avante Media Australia

the war in Iraq and called on the Howard Government to bring the troops home.

The Victorian Trades Hall Council is calling on union members to attend the up-coming anti-war actions, including a day of action against the war on Thursday, March 27, and a rally on Saturday March 29 at the State Library.

There are meetings of the Workers Against War on Wednesday nights at 6.30pm at the VTHC. There will be another action this Saturday, March 29, beginning at the State Library at 1pm.

Seasoned peace advocates and a growing core of new activists have had a hectic week in **Adelaide** including marches, rallies and candlelit vigils in several public parks and beaches.

Five Hundred people gathered on the steps of parliament house on the day the aggression was announced and a thousand gathered there again at 5pm on the day of the first bombing and the invasion.

Then on Sunday over 15,000 people crowded into Victoria Square before marching on the State Parliament. FA18 fighter jets

"entertaining" spectators at the Clipsal 500 car race on the other side of the city added some rather frightening background shrieks to the event.

Mike Khazam of the NOWAR coalition that organised the rally surely echoed the upbeat mood of the people with his comments: "Do not despair. Do not be despondent. We won't stop and we won't forgive our government!"

ment of the attack on Iraq more than 6000 people, with a good trade union presence, gathered in King George's Square and on Saturday another 6000-plus crowd protested.

There were protests also when the war began and with follow up actions on the weekend in **Darwin, Hobart, Geelong, Wollongong, Newcastle** and in cities and country towns around the country.

"The Vietnam War was stopped in the streets and we'll make sure this one will be, too."

Yasmine Ahmed of the Islamic Foundation emphasised the potential political power of movements like the one that has sprung up in opposition to the war in Iraq. "The Vietnam War was stopped in the streets and we'll make sure this one will be, too."

In **Brisbane** at the commence-

The actions continue as *The Guardian* goes to press. The Books not Bombs coalition against war have organised another national student strike for this Wednesday, March 26. Palm Sunday, April 13, is shaping up to be another big day of Australia-wide actions.

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Michael Moore's "Best Documentary" Oscar acceptance speech

On behalf of our producers Kathleen Glynn and Michael Donovan from Canada, I'd like to thank the Academy for this. I have invited my fellow documentary nominees on the stage with us, and we would like to - they're here in solidarity with me because we like non-fiction.

We like non-fiction and we live in fictitious times.

We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious President.

We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons.

Whether it's the fiction of duct tape or fiction of orange alerts we are against this war, Mr. Bush.

Shame on you, Mr. Bush, shame on you.

And any time you got the Pope and the Dixie Chicks against you, your time is up.

Thank you very much.

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a bust for many**
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Zoran Djindjic?**
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Lies rejected

The farrago of lies told by Howard, Blair, Bush and their supporters to justify war against Iraq has not swayed millions of people in Australia and around the world. People are demonstrating their rejection of these lies.

Government leaders lied about weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq had links with al-Qaida, about the legality of their invasion, about the rightness of the cause, about regime change, that Australia is threatened by Iraq and that it is in Australia's national interest to go to war.

Faced with these failures the government and supporters of war are now attempting to hide behind the cry – "support our boys". Howard, Blair and even Crean are beating this drum as a desperate and backdoor means of pushing the Australian people into supporting an illegal, unjustified and criminal war. If those who now demand support for war were concerned about the well-being of the troops, they would never have sent them to Iraq in the first place. If the war is wrong and illegal then what the troops are being ordered to do in Iraq is also wrong and illegal.

The Australian troops are not defending Australia. They are involved in a war of blatant aggression against a sovereign country for illegal objectives. The invasion of Iraq is already an international crime.

The so-called "allied" troops – three countries out of 192 – are bringing death and destruction to one of the oldest centres of civilisation, highly cultured and highly educated.

The bombers, cruise missiles and attack helicopters are killing from a great height. The TV images that follow the missiles to their targets do not show the mangled bodies. This is what war is all about and this is what it is for – killing people, occupying another nation's land and seizing its resources.

Soldiers are trained to kill other human beings and that is what the invading forces are doing – killing civilians and Iraqi soldiers defending the sovereignty of their own country even though Iraq has been virtually disarmed compared with the technology arraigned against them.

Consideration is now being given to charging Howard and others responsible with war crimes (See story page 2) Russian President Vladimir Putin has also hinted at similar moves.

When threatening the Iraqi leadership and military that they would be charged as war criminals unless they surrendered, George Bush declared that it would be no defence to say: "I was just following orders". This must also apply to others.

All these considerations mean nothing to those who run Australia's Government and the military and strategic analysts who regard war as a parlour game of tanks, planes, guided missiles. They do not speak about the people whose lives, children, and hopes are blighted.

These experts are joined by prostitute journalists of the ABC, CNN and other TV channels and the mass media who record their "on-the-spot" comments – an essential element in the service of the war machine. The consequences for the Iraqi people will be rapidly forgotten once their war game is over.

Many supporters of war have also invoked God on the side of war. "Godspeed" screamed Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* front page while Bush repeatedly intones, "God bless America" as though there is no other country in the world other than the USA.

"God bless America, Australia and Britain", wrote one correspondent to the *Daily Telegraph*. Another wrote, "May God be your protector". They call on a God to bless those whose job is killing. Their God is actually Mars, the Greek God of war.

The troops are also declared "freedom fighters" by the same media and politicians who savagely restrict the democratic rights of the people with so-called anti-terrorist legislation and, in some countries, violently suppress anti-war protests.

They will not liberate Iraq but impose an American occupation and a government that is totally subservient to US dictates as has already been done in Afghanistan.

The oil resources of Iraq will be stolen by the US and British corporations.

Millions of Iraqi families will be decimated, lives lost, homes destroyed, turned into refugees – thanks to the "allied" war machine in violation of international law.

That is why the demand to "Stop the War" is ringing out around the world.

PRESS FUND

For our shameful involvement in the Iraqi war John Howard wants a new trade deal with America. US officials have demanded the complete destruction of the Australian Wheat Board, which has saved many Australian farmers from the savage fluctuations of the international markets, the lifting of all remaining restrictions on foreign investment in Australia, lifting of rules governing media ownership and local content. Who will benefit? The US transnationals whose war we are fighting in Iraq. At times like these, *The Guardian* is needed more than ever, and so are your contributions to the Press Fund. Our thanks go to this week's contributors, as follows:

Ron Reed, in memory of Brother Bob, \$100

In honour of Jack McPhillips 93rd birthday \$20

T Bartlett \$100, Ted Lawes \$10.

This week's total: \$230. Progressive total: \$3105

Anti-Discrimination Board slams media racism

Media coverage of the infamous "Children overboard" affair allegedly showed asylum seekers threatening to throw their children overboard so as to force the Howard Government into granting them asylum.

by Peter Mac

Howard immediately declared in outraged tones that Australians wouldn't want "people like that" here. Although a subsequent Senate enquiry revealed the asylum seekers were actually abandoning their sinking ship, newspapers such as Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* dropped further serious coverage of the story.

Overt racism is now frequently replaced by more subtle forms, or by the demonisation of prominent individuals, frequently involving racial stereotyping.

Thus media depiction of Osama bin Laden (a former ally of the US), invariably emphasised cultural and racial differences. His alleged involvement in the S11 attack and his presence in Afghanistan, were subsequently used by the US to justify a war aimed at facilitating transport of Caspian Sea oil across Afghanistan to a Pakistan port.

(Doubtless if the policy of the Pakistani leadership were to threaten the pipeline, the US would "discover" that Pakistan's Musharraf Government is a ruthless military dictatorship, and Muslim to boot.)

In the light of all of these developments a new study, *Race for Headlines*, by the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board is very timely.

The report expresses deep concern about racism in reporting.

It notes that media coverage of September 11, the Bali bombing, the international "war on terror", the prospect of US-led attacks on Iraq, the Tampa dispute, Australia's policies regarding asylum seekers, and the ongoing debates about law and order have generated a "moral panic" in Australia.

"The central feature linking ... and blurring these debates is race, encompassing ethnicity, culture, religion and nationality", often with blatant racially inflammatory reporting, racist reactions, and 'Islamophobia'."

The study comments that media "debates ... about asylum seekers, terrorism and local crime became linked ... and led to a damaging environment of anti-Arabic and anti-Muslim sentiment. Australians perceived to be 'Arabic' or 'Middle Eastern' and Muslim in particular have experienced abuse, harassment and vilification ..."

Overt racism is now avoided by most Western governments, and much of the media, as counter-productive. However, the study pointed out that "... with multiculturalism replacing assimilation

as government policy in Australia, ... 'ethnicity' and 'culture' replaced race in much official and public discourse. (This) has led to the emergence of a 'new' racism ... which distinguishes between groups of people not on visible racial characteristics, but ... on actual or perceived cultural beliefs and values."

With regard to asylum seekers, the study noted that within Australia "over the past 18 months, asylum seekers were constantly referred to as 'illegal immigrants', 'human cargo', 'boat people' and 'queue jumpers' ... This drew on fear of racial, cultural and religious differences, and provided (media) justification for ... mandatory detention and harsh treatment of asylum seekers."

The Board's study also criticised media coverage of the recent horrific rape of seven young Sydney women.

It noted that "... allegations that the rapists were Lebanese Muslim Australians and their targets ... 'Australian' women received particular (media) attention", even though the backgrounds of two of the victims were Italian, another two Greek, and another Aboriginal.

The Board has now made a number of recommendations concerning the conduct of the media and police in dealing with racism and discrimination.

These recommendations mostly involve incentives, rather than penalties for non-compliance with the guidelines suggested. Nevertheless, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* has, predictably, rejected the recommendations, saying that the Board ignored racial aspects of the assailants' behaviour in the rape case.

This is incorrect. In fact, the Board chose to look at this crime, and other examples of racism, in relation to not only the terrible experiences of the victims and their families, but also the media's responsibilities in reporting issues of race-related violence and discrimination.

The *Telegraph* justified its reporting of the case with loud, salacious and grossly insensitive repetitions of statements made by the assailants when committing the crime. Its rejection of the broader implications of media responsibility in reporting race-related matters effectively confirmed the case made against it by the Board.

As the study notes: "... negative views of certain groups in our community succeed when the media either facilitate or promote such characterisations, or at the very least do nothing to challenge or refute them." ❖



Howard put on notice over war crimes

The Victorian law firm Slater and Gordon has written to the Prime Minister advising him that under the International Criminal Court Statute it is a war crime to intentionally launch an attack "in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated".

Many of Australia's foremost experts in international law have expressed concern that attacking Iraq may involve committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The letter explained that a committee of Australian legal experts will be set up to assess any evidence of complicity in any US war crimes or crimes against humanity.

The firm is acting for a broad range of church, humanitarian, civil liberties, trade union and community organisations in Victoria who are warning Prime Minister John

Howard that he may be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court if US forces are involved in the excessive and unjustifiable death of Iraqi civilians or the devastation of non-military infrastructure.

If that occurs, and given that the Australian Government has committed our forces to assist the Americans, the Victorian Peace Network affiliates are putting Mr Howard on notice that they will seek to have him and senior Ministers investigated and, if appropriate, prosecuted for complicity in war crimes. ❖

Sydney

Walk against the war coalition
No war on Iraq
No Australian involvement

Iraq Peace Vigil

Every Friday 5.30 – 7.30 pm
Sydney Town Hall

March for Peace

Palm Sunday 13th April
Belmore Park

Contact: Bruce Childs 9386 1240
Nick Everett 0409 762 081
John Hallam 02 9567 7533

Housing boom is a bust for many

The rising cost of housing, steep rents and stagnant levels of public housing construction have been highlighted as a major cause of poverty in Australia. The Anglicare *Australia's State of the Family 2003* report was so damning of the Federal Government that Family and Community Services Minister Amanda Vanstone pulled out of its launch.

The report shows that the Howard Government has failed the Australian people miserably, with increasing numbers sleeping in homeless shelters, living in caravan parks or in friend's lounge rooms.

"We have a crisis in housing across Australia that is clearly exacerbating poverty and disadvantage", Anglicare Victoria CEO, Dr Ray Cleary said.

The report says rising rental costs are locking many young Australian families out of the private rental market despite Commonwealth Rent Assistance, and public housing stock is not being constructed or replaced to meet anywhere near the demand.

In the eight years to June 2000, less than 10,000 houses were added to existing public stock in Australia yet over 200,000 people are languishing on waiting lists.

At the Federal level, the Government may cut funding for housing by \$100 million in 2003/04 because of withdrawal of the GST compensation money.

"This continuing under-funding of public housing must be reversed to save our children from an abyss leading into intergenerational poverty cycles", Dr Cleary said.

Anglicare's *State of the Family Report 2003* found that areas of disadvantage are locationally focussed – while some regions grow and prosper, others are left behind.

In Victoria, Melbourne's northern region was identified by Anglicare as an area of concern and future welfare service need, due to the rapid construction of new housing estates.

"Already our case managers are taking calls from distressed parents attracted to cheap housing on the urban fringe who feel isolated and disconnected from services, education and employment", Dr Cleary said.

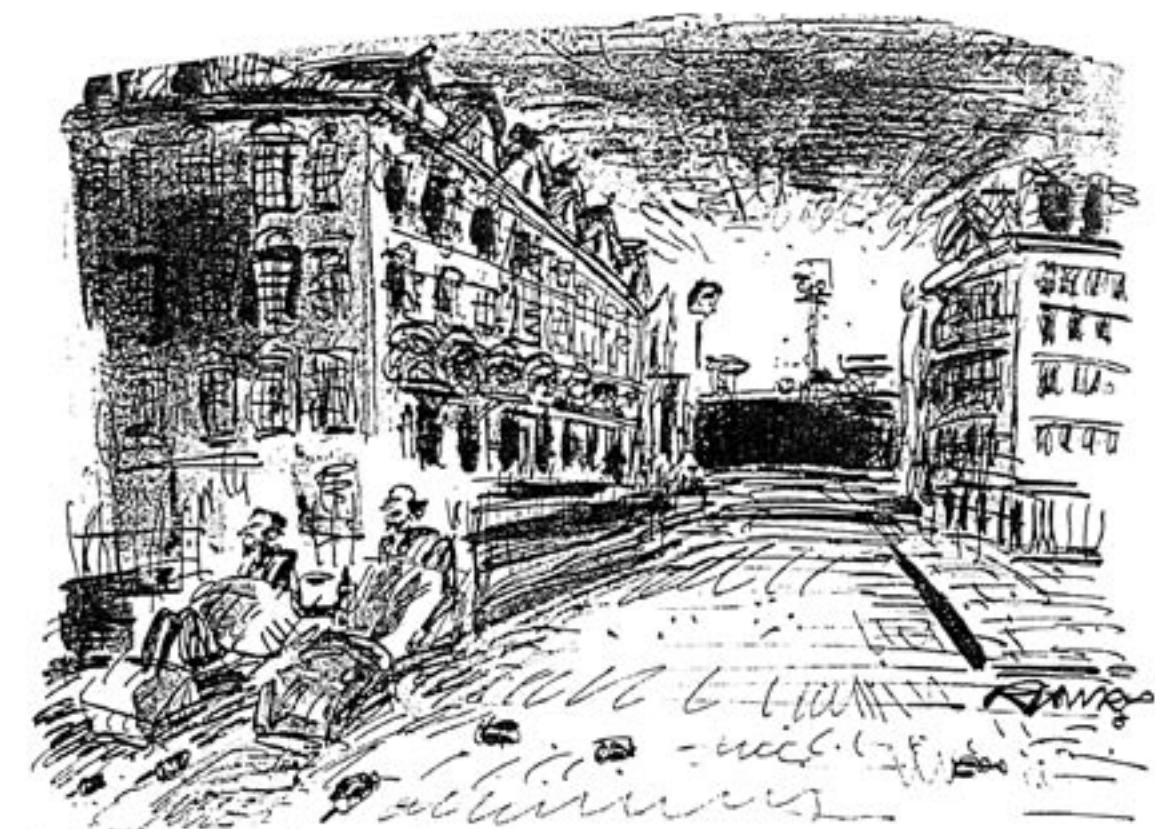
"Boom" stress

Many of Anglicare's findings were strongly similar to those in a Brotherhood of St Laurence report launched a month ago: *Housing Stress: How have low-income households fared during the housing boom?*

The *Housing Stress* report indicates people who are working poor or unemployed are experiencing more distress and debt as affordable housing becomes harder and harder to find.

The stress then becomes compounded when families end up in isolated housing projects away from employment prospects and other services, with many people developing mental illness as a result.

"People have told us they are paying up to 62 per cent of their incomes on housing, meaning they can't afford the medicines



"Same here — I can't get to sleep for the racket from that bloody concert in aid of the homeless and the destitute."

they need, the paediatrician's appointments their kids need, or even food", said Brotherhood of St Laurence researcher, Sally Jope.

"Although the Federal Government directs a whopping \$21 billion to a range of current housing subsidies, only \$2.6 billion of this targets those who need it most."

The reports tells that 250,000 Australians on low incomes pay more than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs, with this estimated to rise to one million by 2020. ✪

Greens make headway in NSW elections

While the return of the Carr Government in the NSW elections was never in doubt, it was the success of the Greens that captured the attention of commentators and analysts.

Andrew Jackson

Another remarkable feature of the campaign was how a popular local councillor can make a strong weapon against the major parties.

Independent numbers in the Lower House have increased from five to seven at this election, providing a slightly larger wedge against the two-party system.

Independents now represent three inner-Sydney seats and four based on regional cities: Tamworth, Armidale, Dubbo and Port Macquarie.

The Greens, as expected, polled well – doubling their Lower House vote to 8%, and nearly trebling their Upper House vote to 8.1%.

These across-the-state figures hide the spectacular success the Greens had in individual seats.

Jamie Parker, Deputy Mayor of Leichhardt Council, easily claimed second place in Port Jackson with 29%, and scored 42.5% of the two-party preferred.

Mr Parker had been touted as a possible upset winner over Labor Minister Sandra Nori.

Strong local campaigns against unpopular State Government decisions, such as school closures and the sale of Callan Park to property developers, worked against Ms Nori, who suffered an overall 17% swing against her.

Again building on local successes, the Greens performed spectacularly well in Marrickville.

In the Lower House seat of

Marrickville Colin Hesse duplicated the Port Jackson result – 28% of the primary vote, and 42% two-party preferred.

Mr Hesse's campaign was run against Deputy Premier Andrew Refshauge, who is widely criticised as being an "invisible man" within the Carr Government.

The Greens have three seats on Marrickville Council, one held by Sylvia Hale who was the number two on the Greens Upper House ticket.

Ms Hale has been easily elected to the Upper House, taking overall numbers to three with Ian Cohen (re-elected) and Lee Rhiannon.

In the seat of Keira, which lies within the Greens-held Federal seat of Cunningham, Michael Sergent ran second with 27% two-party preferred.

Although media polls predicted the Greens would poll anywhere up to 18% during the last weeks of the campaign, MLC Lee Rhiannon told *The Guardian* just two weeks ago they were expecting just 8-9%.

Some pundits in the mainstream media said the Greens had failed to capitalise on the "anti-war" vote. It was not mentioned that the Greens polled well in spite of a very strong campaign against them, particularly by *The Daily Telegraph*.

Three weeks before the election the *Telegraph* launched a scathing attack on The Greens in their

Editorial, which then escalated over ensuing weeks.

Among the many distorted truths, flawed analyses and contradictory statements peddled by Murdoch's tabloid, they hit an all-time low in a series of "shock-horror" exposé articles claiming The Greens supported over-the-counter retail sale of recreational drugs.

If the Greens did attract an anti-war vote, it is also quite possible they suffered due to the media smear-campaign.

(Of interest: the post election analysis in *The Telegraph* on Monday 24 was so void of any mention of the Greens you would be forgiven for thinking they didn't run.)

Overall, the Lower House results of the election once again exposed the need for changes in the electoral system. The ALP won 43% of the vote, but holds 60% of the seats. The Greens won 8% yet holds no seats.

In the Upper House, which is based on proportional representation (as against single seat electorates) there was a far higher correspondence of seats to votes.

Recent Labor/Liberal "reforms" to the electoral have made it far more difficult for smaller parties without seats to register and compete with the major parties.

NB: At the time of going to press, two Upper House seats were still undecided. Among the minor party contenders are Unity, the Democrats, the Shooters Party, David Oldfield's One Nation, and Pauline Hanson's Group L. ✪

SA electricity suppliers "punished"

Operators of several South Australian power plants were fined recently by the National Electricity Tribunal for failing to provide clear and accurate information about the availability of power during the Moomba gas crisis in January.

by Bob Briton

At one stage during a disruption to gas supplies, it appeared that gas-fired plants would be forced to cease production and cause a crippling electricity shortage in SA. Rapid repairs to the Moomba plant prevented such an eventuality.

Questions arose, however, about the behaviour of a number of power generators during the crisis. State Treasurer Kevin Foley accused NRG Flinders of profiteering by withholding 170 MW of electricity from the market and raising its asking price for power from \$269 a megawatt hour to \$9697.

Last week the Tribunal imposed a fine of \$25,000 on NRG for providing inadequate or misleading information about the availability of electricity from its two Port Augusta plants. The body held back from finding that the company was "gaming" the system and, for this reason, did not impose a heavier fine.

Origin Energy was hit with a \$50,000 fine for similar offences involving its Ladbroke Grove plant while International Power had already been penalised to the tune of \$10,000 for providing unclear information about the availability of supplies from its Dry Creek and Minarto power stations.

The National Electricity Code Administrator, SA's Essential Services Commissioner and state Energy Minister Pat Conlon have all expressed their concern at the lightness of the penalties.

Adelaide's daily *Advertiser* went so far as to suggest in an editorial that the present maximum penalty of \$100,000 for these sorts of practices should be increased to "\$1 million at least!"

None of the parties listed above were reported as questioning the Tribunal's findings, which did not hold the operators guilty of trying to make huge windfall profits during the gas crisis.

Perhaps the recent behaviour of NRG Flinders, for example, is being excused on the occasion in question because it didn't get any buyers for its electricity at its massively inflated price.

The recent transgressions of the electricity code follow a pattern going back to the day the utility was privatised. On one notable occasion – December 17 last year – NRG was able to withhold supply and force up the spot price of electricity from \$59 MW/hour to \$3012 MW/hour.

This produced earnings of \$2.17 million in one afternoon. A \$10,000 fine could be paid out of the petty cash tin of an operation like that. A million dollar fine could even be factored in if returns like that of December 17 can be had.

It is hardly surprising that more and more commentators are starting to give voice to what SA's electricity consumers have been saying for some time – the state's electricity utility should never have been privatised and that it should be put back into public ownership as soon as possible. ✪

Ritual debate over SA trading hours

One of the rituals of South Australian political life is currently being played out again. The looming Easter and Anzac Day public holidays have again revived calls for extended shop trading hours from the usual quarters. Once more the public is being told that its wishes are being thwarted, fortunes are being lost, jobs opportunities are being passed up and tourists are set to stay away in droves from our dowdy State.

by Bob Briton

At present the bigger city stores may open Friday night and Sunday and the suburban stores Thursday nights.

Added to the usual list of apocalyptic visions this year is the threat that we will miss out on a \$57 million worth of incentives from the Commonwealth's National Competition Council. Monies from this body are handed over to the States when they meet certain standards in "deregulating" things like electricity, the water supply and transport.

"Deregulation" in this context is a thinly disguised, neo-liberal code word for the handing over of parts of the economy to the complete control of big business. While South Australian governments of different persuasions have been outstanding in helping the privatisation and "deregulation" project along, shop trading hours remain as a blot on the State's copy book.

SA has until June 30 to get into line on the issue or forgo its reward for good behaviour.

Another unusual feature of the debate this year is that it is the Rann Labor Government behind the push to extend shopping hours and

it is the Liberal opposition in the Legislative Council or upper house of parliament that is thwarting its efforts.

The bosses have duly noted Labor's performance.

The proposal to extend late night shopping to six nights a week and to allow up to ten Sunday trading days per year was described in an *Advertiser* editorial as a "laudable, yet minor, attempt to change shopping hours".

The first anniversary of Labor's election victory has given rise to a spate of report cards on the Rann Government. Not surprisingly, 90 per cent of Liberal voters see the government as doing a good job.

Bosses' peak council Business SA has declared itself generally satisfied with Labor but has warned that the honeymoon is over and that it is time to deliver on issues like extended shop-trading hours.

Other heavyweight spokespersons are adding to the pressure. Stirling Griff of the Australian Retailers Association, Robert Atkins of the Harris Scarfe chain of department stores and John Samartzis of David Jones have all chimed in about their frustration at the present state of affairs.

A number of larger retailers are attempting to establish defacto deregulation of the retailing industry by opening their doors in defiance of current legislation.

It is estimated that up to 100 stores are already trading illegally.

Curiously, or perhaps not so curiously, despite 81 site visits by government inspectors in the past 12 months, only two retailers have been prosecuted. Electrical retailer Gamblect Pty Ltd of Mount Gambier was fined \$2950 plus costs and timber store Momentum Brand Management of Norwood was fined \$2000.

John Brownsea is the executive director of the State Retailers Association, which represents smaller retailers who are opposed to extended hours for their transnational competitors. He says that some firms were trading illegally and were prepared to pay fines in order to bring the hours issue to a head.

This is the current state of play in the shop trading hours debate in South Australia. Largely absent from media treatment of the issue is the future of the "micro-businesses" (like the distinctive Adelaide corner "deli's") set to be wiped out by big business or the matter of convenience for local shoppers from among an ageing population.



The Rann Government is behind the push to extend shopping hours

The quality of the low paid McJobs to be created in a deregulated retail sector is also ignored. Of course, the notion of holidays where most of the community takes time out to rest and socialise together is considered passé by big business.

By the way, the Liberals'

big business credentials are still intact despite the fact that they voted down Labor's trading hours legislation. They were unwilling to support it while questions like pay rates remain to be tackled. They want industrial "reform" to be added to the bosses' shopping trolley, as well! ☘

South Australia Aged care workers see red

Nursing in general is a particularly gruelling occupation, and particularly badly paid. Within recent years industrial action has won pay increases, but many Australian state governments have still had to mount special recruitment campaigns to overcome critical nursing staff shortages.

by Peter Mac

Much of the public image of nursing has been generated by television fiction, which frequently depicts nursing as a difficult occupation, but exciting and even, at times, romantic. The reality could hardly be more different, particularly for nurses caring for the aged.

Many members of the public are largely unaware of what's involved in aged care nursing. The work is physically arduous, since the patients are often weak but heavy, and require frequent lifting and turning.

Aged care nurses deal with a wide range of medical problems including a high proportion of ailments associated with ageing, such as Alzheimer's disease and incontinence. Many aged patients require treatment for high levels of ongoing pain.

Because most patients are in their care for very long periods of time, nursing staff must also organise a wide range of social activities for them.

And, unlike hospital nurses, aged care nurses must also face the traumatic prospect that most of their patients will die in their care.

Nevertheless, pay and conditions for aged care nurses are even worse than for general nurses. For example, nurses in South Australia

currently earn between 14 and 21 percent less than hospital nurses.

The number of Registered nurses in SA fell from 1502 to 1398, between June 2001 and June 2002.

Last week South Australian aged care nurses held an "I see red" day of action as part of their campaign for fair pay, safer staffing levels, greater resources and support, and to raise community awareness of issues involved in their work.

Lee Thomas, South Australian State Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation, pointed out that it was the first time aged care nurses and personal care assistants had mounted such a campaign.

She commented: "If aged care employers do not take the issues of fair pay and safe staffing seriously, we are likely to see a further decline in the number of nurses working in this sector."

Despite the critical shortage of aged care nurses in SA, private employers are still resisting demands for improvements in pay, particularly regarding wage parity with the public sector.

Ms Thomas added: "We have been very clear with Aged Care employers. The agreement struck between the ANF and the State Government in the public sector, is the benchmark. Our members will accept nothing less." ☘

Unions oppose privatisation

Unions are calling on the ACT Labor Government to honour its election commitments not to privatise government assets. The unions are particularly concerned about reports that the Government has decided to sell its service company Totalcare.

by Janice Hamilton

Totalcare repairs and maintains roads and bridges, erects road signs, provides non-medical health services (e.g. linen and sterilising services for public hospitals), offers fleet management for passenger and commercial vehicles, property management for the ACT Government and other organisations, preservation of monuments and other services.

It was corporatised by the previous Liberal Government in 1992.

Cabinet has already established a working party to examine the viability of selling the company.

The ACT Unions have asked the Government to widen the scope of

the review to consider other options for its future.

According to a statement received by *The Guardian*, Labor Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said there was no breach to the Party's platform, "which while opposed to privatisation recognises that in some circumstances it is an appropriate course of action.

"Significantly, the platform acknowledges that privatisation has to be considered if government businesses are not undertaking core government functions, or if they are a drain on the government purse

"Totalcare workers have for years been faced uncertainty about their future largely caused by the poor management decisions of the

previous Liberal Government", said Mr Malone.

Totalcare has already undertaken significant restructuring in readiness for privatisation. It has paid out more than \$1.5 million in redundancy costs in the two financial years.

"If Totalcare is not to continue as a separate agency, then the preferred option is that all its current functions are reabsorbed into the public sector", said Mr Malone.

The Chief Minister has other ideas. He says workers' entitlements would be met where parts of the company are sold off or closed down. There are no guarantees of job security.

"After years of dedicated service to the ACT Government and local community, Totalcare workers deserve to be treated fairly and honestly", said the Secretary of ACT Unions Peter Malone. ☘

The whole world says Stop the war NOW

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International

In Germany, more than 80,000 school children, many with their faces painted with "No War" and peace signs, protested in the capital Berlin and the cities of Stuttgart, Cologne, Munich and Hanover.

More than 60,000 people took the streets in Austria with 30,000 marching through Vienna.

Swiss police attacked protesters who marched on the US diplomatic mission in Geneva. Spanish police in riot gear fired rubber bullets at protesters gathered in central Madrid in protest at Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar's support for the US attack on Iraq.

Anti-war demonstrations took place in more than 30 other cities across France.

In Britain, around one million rallied around the country demand-

ing an end to the bloodshed in Iraq. Police used force against students on a sit-down strike in Parliament Square.

In New York City, 300,000 people of all ages and from all walks of life protested, with other actions taking place in cities across the USA. Protests are continuing in San Francisco in the face of violent attacks and arrests by police.

More than 100,000 people, many of them high school and university students, marched on the US Embassy in Athens on the weekend, in the first of two mass demonstrations organised by labour activists, students and teacher unions.

In Bangladesh there was a nationwide strike against the US war. People from all sections of society came onto the streets to voice their opposition to the war. The capital, Dhaka, came to a standstill.

There was a mass protest march on the US Embassy in New Delhi. Thousands of workers, teachers, artists, and people from all walks of life in India joined the protest. Though blocked by a police cordon, 22 protestors slipped behind police lines and chained themselves to the highly fortified Embassy fence.

All speakers condemned the deadly bombardment and demanded that the Indian Government also condemn the attack.

In Afghanistan around 1000 people took to the streets to protests against the war, chanting slogans against the US and its supporters.

There were also protests in Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea, Japan (against US bases), Ireland, Pakistan, Indonesia, The Netherlands (80,000), Malaysia, across the Middle East and elsewhere. ☘

More obstacles for nuclear dump

Opinion polls showing overwhelming opposition of the people of South Australia are not the only problems facing the Commonwealth's proposal for a nuclear waste dump in the north of the State.

by Bob Briton

Last month the Kokotha, Kuyani and Barngala Indigenous communities rejected an offer from the Federal Government of a one-off payment of \$90,000 to drop their native title claims over land that was favoured to become the site for the dump.

Kokotha Land Council representative Andrew Starkey summed up the attitudes of the communities when he told the media: "Our heritage is not for sale".

Site 52a in the military's Woomera Prohibited Area has encountered resistance from other quarters. The Japanese space industry, the Australian Space Research Institute Ltd and the Department of Defence expressed their quite reasonable concern that the Commonwealth's proposal would put the dump just three kilometres from Range E missile target area.

Environment Minister David Kemp stepped in to order a review of the radiation hazards posed by the proximity of a military bombing range. "Independent advice" was called for. It seems that the site, vigorously promoted by Science Minister Peter McGauran, will quietly be forgotten.

Other sites have other problems. Site 40a is actually part of Arcoona – a working sheep station in SA's north. Any decision to put the nuclear dump on the station will involve the spending of an extra \$1 million on infrastructure and security.

Another drawback is that the owner of the property, Andrew Pobke, has gone public with his opposition to the proposal. "I would be concerned if they just came in and set up a dump and it interfered with the operation of my property", Mr Pobke told *The Advertiser* last week.

Site 45a is another short listed location. It is to be found on Andamooka station – a property currently leased by WMC Resources. The giant mining corporation is also opposed to sharing its life with a nuclear waste dump and it is unlikely that the Federal Government will go against its wishes.

Peter McGauran was recently obliged to deny that land near Broken Hill was being considered as a location for the dump. The Science Minister was responding to claims by Campaign Against Nuclear Dumping spokesperson Dr Jim Green who said that Broken Hill was listed among a number of "suitable" sites in several States and Territories.

McGauran insists that Broken Hill's nomination was ruled out on scientific grounds, as were many of the other locations contained in a 1997 federal government report.

Despite the fact that Broken Hill declared itself nuclear free 20 years ago, under Commonwealth plans 1690 cubic metres (or 170 truckloads) of radioactive waste

is set to be carted through Broken Hill and several other settlements along the Barrier and Stuart Highways. Semi-trailer rollovers are common on both these routes.

In NSW, Greens MP Ian Cohen has called on Premier Bob Carr to ban the transport of nuclear waste from the reactor at Lucas Heights through Sydney's streets and regional towns.

Communities living around the reactor and in the Blue Mountains are concerned at the prospect of 250 truckloads of low to medium level waste being hauled through their settlements. Mr Cohen has said that Bob Carr refuses to comment on the issue until after the state election.

The United Trades and Labor Council of SA recently voted to ban work on the project and supply products or services needed for its construction. Thirty UTLC affiliates now join the CFMEU in refusing to work on the dump.

Last week the State Government finally delivered long promised legislation to ban construction of a dump in SA and the transport of radioactive waste in the state. All but a few Liberal members of the Legislative Council voted for the legislation.

The Bill had a troubled path through the Upper House. The original had to have several amendments to make it legally sound and even the final version of the Bill contained a sunset clause requiring new, more effective legislation to be introduced after July 19th this year.

Of course, the Commonwealth could push ahead with the waste



Photo: Avante Media Australia

There is widespread community opposition to the dump

dump project by overriding state laws and assuming control of land through the Land Acquisition Act.

However, given the breadth of opposition to the dump, persistence on the issue could be very damaging politically.

The Federal Government is set to announce its intentions on some of these matters this week. Its decisions will show whether it is listening to the voice of the people or pressing ahead with another project on behalf of rich and powerful interests like the would-be operators of a free enterprise nuclear waste dump. ☹



Corporate offensive #1. As if they didn't already get away with highway robbery. The Howard Government is planning to introduce legislation, along the lines of that in the US, to allow corporations even more leeway to duck their responsibilities when they go to the wall. Chapter 11 law in the US lets companies trade their way out of bankruptcy. In other words, legalise what they do already i.e. continue operating while insolvent. That's what Stan Howard, brother of the PM, did as chairman of National Textiles, Stan and his fellow board members paying themselves a huge bonus in the process. Of course, they sacked all their workers and told them there was no money left for their entitlements. So it has been with HIH, Ansett, One.Tel, et al.

Corporate offensive #2. Company collapses continue today and will into the future as the capitalist economy slides deeper into crisis. And so it is that in Victoria, Australian Gas Technology Services (AGTS) was officially liquidated on March 14, owing its employees \$2 million in entitlements. AGTS was privatised during the Kennett Government's slash and burn years. The government took no measures to ensure that the workers' entitlements were protected. In 2000 AGTS was merged into a consortium of gas companies which chewed it up and has now spat it out.

Corporate offensive #3. At SPC Ardmona, the contemptuous treatment of workers will take the form of a shut down of operations. The canning company has announced it will shut one of its plants for the two thirds of the year – in the off-peak fruit processing period – to cut costs. SPC Ardmona was the product of a merger in 2001 and made a net profit of \$24.3 million in 2002. The company won't say how many of its 3500 workers will get laid off, but look out for an advertising campaign under the slogan The Great Australian Food Company.

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is Greg Clarke, the Chief Executive of real estate parasite Lend Lease. Clarke is a master bull artist, highly proficient in hypocrisy, cynicism and double talk. His aim is to make everyone happy. "You have to make them all [customers, shareholders, staff] happy. Over the long term you have to keep the interests of those three groups in harmony", Clarke told an interviewer in the *Financial Review*. To the question "Why are you making people redundant?" he answered: "I have to take the tough decisions that are in the interests of most of the customers, most of the shareholders and most of the staff." Well, aside from the ones being sacked.

Straight from His Master's Voice

Last week when speaking to the National Press Club John Howard delivered some powerful rhetoric against the regime of Saddam Hussein.

He said: "We're talking about a regime that will gouge out the eyes of a child to force a confession from the child's parents. This is a regime that will burn a person's limbs in order to force a confession or compliance. This is a regime that in 2000 decreed the crime of criticising it would be punished by the amputation of tongues."

Those grim words were quoted on all the network news that night and next day in page 1 stories in *The Advertiser*, *The Financial Review*, *The Herald Sun*, *The Mercury*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Telegraph*. But they were not the Prime Minister's own words. They're taken from the book *The Threatening Storm: The case for invading Iraq* by Kenneth M Pollack.

Pollack is a Middle East expert who's worked with the CIA, the US National Security Council and the Brookings Institute. His case for invading Iraq is remarkably similar to John Howard's.

This is what Pollack wrote on p123 of his book:

"This is a regime that will gouge out the eyes of children to force confessions from their parents..."

"This is a regime that will burn a person's limbs off to force him to confess or comply..."

"This is a regime that in 2000 decreed that the crime of criticising the regime would be punished by cutting out the offender's tongue."

Curious about the Prime Minister's speechwriting, Margaret Simon of the *Sydney Morning Herald* rang the Prime Minister's office. She said:

"I rang John Howard's office to ask who wrote his speeches. I was told that nobody wrote for him: He talks to his advisers to gather facts, but he either speaks without a script or writes his speeches himself. (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 15-16, 2003)

Acknowledgement to ABC Media Watch ☹

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THE GUARDIAN

A season of cruelty

Cracks are appearing in the foundation stones of our civilisation. Long-standing taboos about national sovereignty have already fallen. Apart from the sovereignty of the megapower, all other sovereignty is qualified, if not abrogated. The universal prohibition of torture is now another victim.

by Ken Coates

On January 11, the *Economist* opened its lead story with the question: "Is torture ever justified?"

With some diffidence, the magazine answered No. But perhaps, it thought, sleep deprivation, lengthy interrogations and the use of the truth serum might be defined as falling outside the domain of torture.

What provoked the *Economist* to think these thoughts? There has been a controversy in the *Washington Post*, triggered by an important article which appeared on December 26 last year.

The article alleged quite specifically that unjustifiable interrogation techniques were being used at the US bases of Bagram in Afghanistan and on Diego Garcia.

"Deep inside the forbidden zone at the US-occupied Bagram air base in Afghanistan, around the corner from the detention centre and beyond the segregated clandestine military units, sits a cluster of metal shipping containers protected by a triple layer of concertina wire", it said.

"The containers hold the most valuable prizes in the war on terrorism – captured Al-Qaeda operatives and Taliban commanders."

This valuable cargo seems to have been made for ill-treatment.

Non-co-operators are kept standing or kneeling for hours on end, hooded or clad in spray-painted goggles.

Deprived of sleep

At times, they are held in painful or awkward positions and deprived of sleep with a 24-hour bombardment of lights under "stress and duress" technique.

By contrast, co-operators are given modest creature comforts, friendly interrogators and, "in some cases, money".

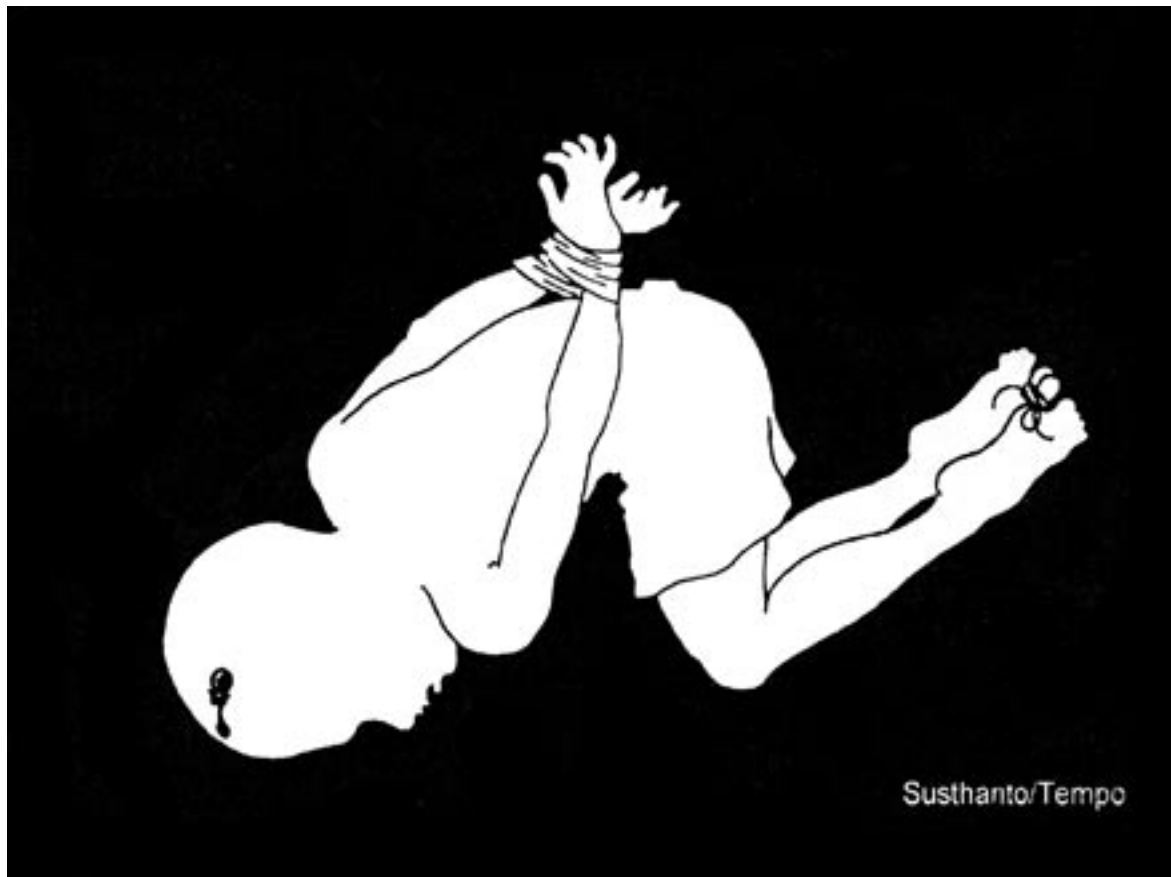
Some of the non-co-operators are handed over to foreign intelligence services which are far less squeamish about torture than the United States is supposed to be.

This process of handover is called "rendering". Not all non-co-operating prisoners need to be "rendered" because the US maintains a number of detention centres where the due process which should rule in the rest of the US does not hold sway.

When I raised this question in the British press, Foreign Office Minister Baroness Amos denied that it was possible for Diego Garcia to be used for interrogation since the US forces had never asked permission for such use.

I sought a response from the *Washington Post* and was told by one of those responsible for the original article that they saw no reason to modify their story.

Further checking reveals that



there is no British civilian administration on Diego Garcia.

The island usually has a small compliment of less than 50 naval personnel under a Royal Navy commander who also acts as the representative of the British Foreign Office.

According to the *Washington Post*, US officials superintend most of the interrogations, especially those of senior captives.

Smaller fry are handed over to less squeamish interrogators in Jordan, Egypt or Morocco, together with the lists of the questions to which the CIA requires answers.

These "extraordinary renditions" are subject to no legal controls, although the appointed torturers have frequently been the subject of angry denunciations by US human rights organisations.

"According to US officials, nearly 3000 suspected Al-Qaeda members and their supporters have been detained world-wide since September 11, 2001. About 625 are at the US military's confinement facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Some officials estimated that fewer than 100 captives have been rendered to third countries. Thousands have been arrested and held with US assistance in countries known for brutal treatment of prisoners, the officials said."

Cofer Black, who heads the CIA counter-terrorist centre, said: "There was a before 9/11 and an after 9/11."

"After 9/11 the gloves come off." Part of the glove stripping process is that of rendering. We don't kick the shit out of them. We send them to other countries so they can kick the shit out of them."

Mind altering drugs

Mind-altering drugs are by no means the only devices employed in the administration of such kickings.

Systematic deprivation of sleep, selective withholding of pain-killing drugs for wounded people and other more or less "acceptable" cruelties are among the other standard treatment for rendered victims.

Before they are rendered, reports the *Washington Post*, captives are often softened up by military police and US army special forces troops who beat them up and confine them in tiny rooms.

Commonly, they are blindfolded and thrown into walls, tied up in painful postures, exposed to loud noises and unremitting intimidation.

How does rendering proceed? Sometimes, for instance in Saudi Arabia, "we are able to observe through one-way mirrors the live interrogations", said a senior US official.

"In others, we usually get summaries. We will feed questions to the investigators."

The Saudis have been very helpful with US enquiries, as was acknowledged by CIA head George Tenet in his speech of December 11, 2002.

Rendition to Jordan is comparatively common because the Jordanians are considered very professional interrogators.

"The most frequently alleged methods of torture include sleep deprivation, beating on the soles of the feet, prolonged suspension with ropes in contorted positions and extended solitary confinement", said the 2001 report of the State Department on Human Rights in Jordan.

Morocco is another popular centre for rendition, notwithstanding a recent official ban on torture, which human rights organisations believe to be more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Prominent among the contributors to this report was Professor Alan Dershowitz, who called for the legalisation of torture to enable it to be controlled.

Dershowitz is a civil libertarian who wishes to put an end to the blindfold culture of US interrogators, forcing them to apply for a torture order or warrant in each individual case where tortures are to be applied.

The argument for such control is based on the presumption that

illicit torture has been widespread and continuing.

Since the CIA has, beyond doubt, been involved in training torturers in Latin America and further afield, what Dershowitz said will ring true for many people.

But Dershowitz fails to consider that the legitimisation of torture would undoubtedly mean an exponential increase in its use, given the present culture of rabid irrationalism.

What is known to everyone who has worked in the field of rehabilitation of victims of torture is that the torture is not about the pursuit of information but the humiliation of its victims.

Dehumanising the torturers

This purpose does not take account of or comprehend its result, which is the dehumanisation of the torturers themselves and those who employ them.

It would be unwise to say that no truthful information is ever extracted by the administration of pain.

But what is absolutely plain is that torture normally generates false confessions because people will say anything to stop the pain, even if only intermittently.

After the war on Iraq, there will be many more prisoners in line to be tortured, whether by "our own" specialists or by suitable foreign volunteers from among the lackeys who are willing to assist in rendition.

Cruelty will be in season. How will this conduce to the restoration of peace or the development of human rights or the growth of civilisation?

We are about to establish new schools of brutality, to which the only antidote known to us at this time is human sympathy and solidarity.

This will be generated in the peace movement or, failing that, nowhere at all.

Acknowledgement to *Morning Star* ☛

And the torture is already happening – in Israel

The Campaign to Free Marwan Barghout has issued a statement calling for the release of Palestinian political prisoners. The appeal says:

"The Palestinian MP Marwan Barghout is still in solitary confinement For 44 days now he has been placed in isolation and under extremely inhumane conditions.

Barghouti described his current Israeli prison cell as "his grave", without sunlight or ventilation – but plenty of pests.

Mr Barghouti is confined every day for 13 hours, and is only allowed to leave his cell for an hour a day with his hands and feet cuffed.

He is not allowed to speak to any person other than his jailers.

These conditions have caused Mr Barghouti's health to deteriorate alarmingly in the past couple of weeks. He is now suffering from chest pains and breathing difficulties.

Failing to provide proper medical treatment to Barghouti, the Israeli authorities have also denied his family physician the right to see him.

They have turned down his lawyer's request to have him admitted to hospital. By doing so, Israel has violated numerous articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Israeli record of ill treatment of sick Palestinian political prisoners is well documented by reputable human rights organisations around the world.

Just two weeks ago Walid Amer died in the distant Natha prison, after being denied medical treatment by the prison authorities.

With all the attention focused on Iraq, we fear that the conditions under which Palestinian prisoners are held do not receive the much needed media coverage.

We demand the immediate release of Marwan Barghout and all other Palestinian prisoners, who were illegally arrested.

We condemn all Israeli measures against Marwan Barghout and his fellow prisoners.

We urge all human rights organisations to pressurise Israel to comply with international law and international human rights conventions, especially those concerning the treatment of political prisoners", says the Appeal.

And in Afghanistan

A murder investigation is going on into the deaths of two prisoners held at a US military base in Afghanistan after a military pathologist said they had been beaten to death. The deaths have led to calls for an inquiry into interrogation methods at the base. Former detainees claim that prisoners are chained to the ceiling, shackled so tightly that the blood flow stops, kept naked and hooded and kicked to keep them awake for days on end.

Reinventing McDonald's

In August last year the World Food Program launched an international appeal to feed millions of starving people in Southern Africa. More than 10 million people were at risk of starvation across six countries. At the time an estimated seven million people required food immediately with that number to reach 12.8 million by March this year. Meanwhile, in Norway, McDonald's fast food chain was launching its latest marketing innovation, the "McAfrika" sandwich: beef, cheese, tomato and salad on pita bread, "based on an authentic African recipe".

by Marcus Browning

McDonald's is attempting to reinvent itself to climb out of a slump that threatens its very existence. Competition in the form of home-grown fast food outlets selling variations of national cuisines plus ongoing opposition in some countries to its food imperialism are helping to deepen this slump.

To push its interests, McDonald's has become a partner in UNICEF and the United Nations Children's Fund that launched the annual World Children's Day at McDonald's last year. This is also part of the attempt of US corporations to corporatise the United Nations and turn it into a business enterprise.

They are in this new venture with the likes of Microsoft's Bill Gates, the Credit Suisse Group of Switzerland, the Conrad Hilton Foundation, Cisco Systems and Procter and Gamble.

These and other corporations have been in discussions with the UN with the aim of setting up Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), to make private profit at public expense.

UNICEF and McDonald's already have a PPP in the form of the marketing exercise World Children's Day At McDonald's.

As part of this exercise, on Halloween in the US last year 20 million UNICEF trick-or-treat boxes were distributed through McDonald's.

Major promotional events were staged in Asia. In China access to concerts broadcast over the internet came via the purchase of a Big Mac burger, with a tiny percentage of sales being hived off to UNICEF. In Hong Kong McDonald's put on a "Love for our future with UNICEF" promotion, with money going to UNICEF through the sale of post-cards at Hong Kong McDonald's outlets.

In terms of children's programs, representatives from governments, NGOs, the UN and corporations last year began a "dialogue" to "discuss the role of such partnerships in achieving A World Fit For Children".

In May 2002, these groups adopted a statement in which "business leaders agreed in principal to work to widen the participation of corporate support to children; to recognise business responsibilities to children and the social and environmental impacts business operations can have on children; ensure no corporate exploitation of children; and to promote a fair market place that builds healthy communities".

Nice principals, but what is the reality?

In a letter sent to UNICEF executive director Carol Bellamy, children's rights activists, health experts, doctors and public health advocates attacked the fast food giant's involvement in UN children's programs.

"McDonald's is a global leader in the marketing of junk food that is creating soaring rates of childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes", said the letter, "and that is disrupting traditional ways of food preparation in families and cultures.

"It is truly a challenge to see how this partnership with McDonald's is consistent with UNICEF's claim to promote 'good nutrition' to the world's children. As you know, McDonald's markets precisely the high-added-fat, high-added-sugar junk food that undermines good nutrition for the world's children."

Though the move into China is a grab for the world's biggest market, the McDonald's/UNICEF World's Children's Day is a global PR exercise marked down for Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, USA, France, Mexico, Japan and Brazil.

Public relations and advertising have been fundamental to the growth of McDonald's. Its image is everything because its content is worse than nothing. So it was that Britain's Food Commission condemned network GMTV's recent sponsorship deal with McDonald's for its *Diggit* cartoon spot.

Adverts show three-to-eight-year-olds (the program's target audience) eating a McDonald's birthday party meal which includes cheeseburger, French-fries, Coke and cake.

Based on the recommended daily intake (RDI) for the target age group, this meal contains 60 per cent more saturated fat; 79 per cent more sugar and 128 per cent more salt than the RDI.

The "caring" McDonald's clearly has an unspoken motto: get them early and they're yours for life.

Growth of a food monopoly

McDonald's attempt to reinvent itself is not only driven by the need to rescue its image but, like all transnational corporations, it has an insatiable hunger for profits.

Late last year McDonald's share price was the lowest in seven years. In December it admitted that, due to a protracted fall in sales, it would be forced to announce, for the first time



in its 47-year history, a quarterly loss.

The slump is the result of many waking up to the reality of McDonald's as a major global food monopoly. It is also being hit by the growth of rival monopolies and the general economic crisis of capitalism.

As a statement from its headquarters in the US state of Illinois coyly put it, "It's fair to say that McDonald's is playing to win in a competitive marketplace, and is taking necessary actions to move the business forward".

Like other global agri-business monopolies, McDonald's cleaned up on the bonanza that came out of exploitative agricultural programs that culminated in a wholesale corporate take-over of agriculture in the underdeveloped nations in the 1970s; the so-called Green Revolution.

Supported by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation, it involved the introduction of supposedly hardy, easy-to-grow strains of grain and crops such as maize. The program was promoted as the saviour of the poor and hungry (along the lines that GM food is being touted today).

In fact it was used by big agribusiness to ruthlessly appropriate primary food production – the precursor of today's drive to force genetically modified farming methods on the world. The Green Revolution ushered in seed-fertiliser-insecticide dependence and the imposition of cash crop farming on an unprecedented scale.

It gave monopolies like Monsanto absolute control over a nation's agriculture.

This is how it worked. The farmer had to buy seed from Monsanto that responded only to Monsanto's fertiliser and raised crops that could only be protected from pests by Monsanto's pesticides.

Agricultural diversity – mixed crop farming meant primarily for local consumption – was in many

cases undermined and replaced with single cash crops (an extension of the mono-culture nature of what is today known as corporate globalisation).

This gave rise to a classic version of capitalist overproduction, with people going hungry while across their farmlands thousands of hectares of cash crops ripened in preparation for harvest and export.

Such a frenzied and ruthless grab for the world's agricultural resources made ideal pickings for McDonald's, the most blatantly mono-cultural food corporation in the world.

In the process it has been responsible for devastating environmental destruction. Vast tracts of land were cleared with resulting soil and water degradation to allow for cattle growing to satisfy its demand for beef.

Its demand for cash crops such as wheat and potatoes keeps a steel grip on farmers by perpetuating their dependence on McDonald's, farmers that McDonald's can abandon the instant a cheaper price is on offer elsewhere.

Breaking that grip requires consideration of fundamental questions, including the sovereignty of nations and their economic independence from the dictates of transnational corporations, and the rights of all human beings to basic needs, including food and water.

There are now millions of children in the developed wealthy nations facing major health problems due to obesity from bad diets foisted on them by fast food pushers. At the same time, tens of millions go hungry and suffer malnutrition in the underdeveloped nations.

That such a ludicrous situation can exist is further proof – if any is needed – of the utter failure of capitalism – a system based on exploitation, lying and theft.

It is now striving to dominate everywhere, using any means to save it from its final rejection and collapse. ☘

The Death of Ronald or Suddenly Last Summer

He claps his gloved hands, face a plaster cast death mask, little does he know it. "Now boys and girls ... (the target; squeezing every red cent from their upturned faces, exposing their throats to him – from their perspective he is all teeth and mouth and nostrils).

Then, suddenly so it seemed - "We've had enough. Sloppy nonsense" And they point to the dawn of a new day grinding their teeth, saying in unison "no more, no more".

They turn on him with rage in them rising all those years of abuse, aware of themselves at last.

Alarmed, Ronald retreats collapses in on himself and at the edge of a sea of cattle bones, on the shore of a treeless dustbowl, beneath a bald mountain, he expires, is buried, stiff as a board as he always was. They wash their hands of him, his flame-red juice sloshed away. "And they'd better not send any more of 'em".

Tom Pearson

Pentagon threatens to kill journalists

The Pentagon has threatened to fire on the satellite uplink positions of independent journalists in Iraq, according to veteran BBC war correspondent, Kate Adie. In an interview with Irish radio, Ms Adie said that when questioned about the consequences of such potentially fatal actions, a senior Pentagon officer had said: "Who cares. They've been warned".

by Fintan Dunne

According to Ms Adie, who twelve years ago covered the last Gulf War, the Pentagon attitude is "entirely hostile to the free spread of information."

"I am enormously pessimistic of the chance of decent on-the-spot reporting as the war occurs."

Ms Adie made the startling revelations during a discussion of media freedom issues in the likely upcoming war in Iraq. She also warned that the Pentagon is vetting journalists according to their stance on the war, and intends to take control of US journalists' satellite equipment – in order to control access to the airwaves.

Another guest on the show, war author Phillip Knightley, reported that the Pentagon has also threatened they "may find it necessary to bomb areas in which war correspondents are attempting to report from the Iraqi side".

Abbreviated transcript:

Guests: Kate Adie, BBC; Phillip Knightley, author of *The First Casualty*, a history of war correspondents and propaganda; Chris Hedges, award winning human rights journalist, and former *Irish Times* Editor Connor Brady.

Tom McGurk: Now, Kate

Adie, you join us from the BBC in London. I suppose you are watching with a mixture of emotions this war beginning to happen, because you are not going to be covering it.

Kate Adie: Oh I will be. And what actually appals me is the difference between twelve years ago and now. I've seen a complete erosion of any kind of acknowledgment that reporters should be able to report as they witness.

The Americans ... and I've been talking to the Pentagon ... take the attitude which is entirely hostile to the free spread of information.

I was told by a senior officer in the Pentagon, that if uplinks – that is the television signals out of Baghdad, for example – were detected by any planes electronic media ... mediums, of the military above Baghdad ... they'd be fired down on. Even if they were journalists.

Tom McGurk: Kate, sorry to interrupt you. Just to explain for our listeners. Uplinks is where you have your own satellite telephone method of distributing information.

Kate Adie: The telephones and the television signals.

Tom McGurk: And they would be fired on?

Kate Adie: Yes. They would be 'targeted down,' said the officer.

Tom McGurk: Extraordinary!

Kate Adie: Shameless! He said,

'Well ... they know this ... they've been warned'.

This is threatening freedom of information, before you even get to a war. The second thing is there was a massive news blackout imposed. In the last Gulf war, where I was one of the pool correspondents with the British Army, we effectively had very, very light touch when it came to any kind of censorship.

We were told that anything which was going to endanger troops lives which we understood we shouldn't broadcast. But other than that, we were relatively free. Unlike our American colleagues, who immediately left their pool, after about 48 hours, having just had enough of it.

And this time the Americans are asking journalists who go with them, whether they ... have feelings against the war.

And if you have views that are sceptical, then you are not to be acceptable. Secondly, they are intending to take control of the Americans' technical equipment – those uplinks and satellite phones I was talking about. And control access to the airwaves.

And then on top of everything else, there is now a blackout (which was imposed, during the last war, at the beginning of the war), ordered by one Mr Dick Cheney, who is in charge of this.

I am enormously pessimistic of the chance of decent on-the-spot reporting, as the war occurs. You will get it later.

www.gulfuture.com



Broadway musicians strike a new tune

When you think of organised labour's power, you probably don't picture workers playing clarinets, trombones and French horns. But the 300-plus members of American Federation of Musicians Local 802 have just flexed their muscles in a big way.

by Greg Butterfield

On March 7, a multinational group of women and men who provide live entertainment nightly to thousands of Broadway theatregoers in New York went on strike against the League of American Theaters and Producers.

After a powerful rally near Times Square members set up picket lines in front of 18 Broadway musicals, including hits like "The Lion King", "The Producers", "Mamma Mia", "Hairspray" and "42nd Street".

Local 802 members said they were fighting for their jobs and the very survival of their union.

Broadway bosses made their union-busting intentions plain in contract talks. They wanted to abolish the union's hard-won guaranteed minimum of 24-26 live musicians for each Broadway musical. Producers wanted to cut the minimum to just six musicians.

The union said this is just the start of the theatre bosses' plan to do away with live music on Broadway and replace live orchestras with pre-recorded soundtracks.

As the strike deadline neared, production companies like Walt Disney Co – with three musicals on Broadway, "Lion King", "Beauty and the Beast" and "Aida" – forced actors, stage hands, dressers and others to rehearse the shows to canned music.

"New York is the pinnacle of live music", said Brad Gemeinhardt, a musician picketing outside "Thoroughly Modern Millie".

"We can't really stand for them lowering the quality of the product at all."

Actors and other Broadway workers agree. They joined Local 802 in a petition campaign to "Keep

music alive on Broadway". The campaign won support from famous actors like Bebe Neuwirth, Bette Midler, Chita Rivera and Joel Grey.

Local 802 had authorised a strike starting on March 1, but held off almost a week in hopes of reaching an agreement. Then on March 7 the bosses handed President Bill Moriarity a "final offer" demanding that the minimum number of musicians be cut to 15 per show.

The strike was on.

To the bosses' surprise, other Broadway unions, including Actors Equity and the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees, refused to cross the Musicians picket lines. Instead they took up signs and picketed alongside their union sisters and brothers.

It was a new and exciting kind of production for Broadway workers, who've been forced to accept many take-backs since the 9/11 attacks, all to save profits for theatres and producers.

The League of American Theaters and Producers was forced to cancel all weekend shows for 18 musicals on the weekend of March 7 - 9, costing them an estimated \$US4.5 million in lost revenue. Management's stonewalling also cost area restaurants, stores and hotels an estimated \$US7 million in the strike's first three days.

On Monday negotiations resumed and by Tuesday morning a settlement was announced. The minimum number of musicians in 13 key shows was set at 18 to 19. Most important, however, was the timetable. While the contract is for four years, this minimum holds for 10 years.

The musicians are now playing "Solidarity Forever".

Open letter from Communist Party USA to all Communist and Workers' Parties

March 19, 2003

The present moment holds the gravest dangers for a world challenged by the most aggressive, rapacious segment of US imperialism, represented by the administration of George W. Bush, now poised to attack Iraq in defiance of the world's great peace majority.

Since its inception, this administration has pursued unilateral actions to build still further a war machine that has already outstripped the rest of the world combined. It has scrapped any international agreement that hinders it in further tightening its strategic grasp and its control of energy resources around the globe, and assuring ever greater profits for the US transnational corporate sector.

But hope that a very different world can be won springs from the unprecedented and ever-growing global resistance to the Bush

administration's drive for perpetual war. We may never know how many millions poured into the streets on every continent, in the great February 15 upsurge. The drumbeat continues with actions big and small. A spectrum of class and social forces is coming together in broad all-people's coalitions. Strongly rooted in the working class, these formations increasingly reach into the middle strata and even segments of ruling circles in many countries.

The worldwide communist and workers' party movement is fully engaged in building these all people's coalitions, which alone are the bulwark against the most dangerous imperialism ever. Our parties have much to learn from each other about this mobilizing process.

The broad anti war movements have also played a key role, along with economic considerations and inter-imperialist rivalries, in the unprecedented resistance by UN Security Council members including France, Germany and Russia, joined by China. While the positions of bourgeois governments

can shift quickly under the impact of perceived national interests and pressure from Washington, their opposition to the U.S. war drive against Iraq provides a clue to the scope of forces that can be drawn into the anti-war movement.

The Bush administration's drive for perpetual war – now focusing on Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but global in its outlook – will unleash harrowing human and environmental consequences, imperilling struggles everywhere for economic and social justice, freedom and democracy. Peoples the world over, including the USA, will suffer diversion of precious resources to war as well as environmental destruction and widespread devastation. This drive for domination takes place in the context of a worsening worldwide economic crisis whose already devastating effects will be greatly multiplied by war.

The CPUSA believes it is greatly in the interest of the broad anti-war struggle, and indeed of humanity's very future, that our parties exchange views and experiences on this great process of coalition building which seeks to dam the torrent unleashed by US imperialism's most dangerous elements.

With warm comradesly regards,
National Committee,
Communist Party USA

Brisbane
Tropical Dance Night Fiesta
Sat 12th April Ukranian Hall
70 Cordelia St South Brisbane
Salvatorean Folkloric Dance Group,
Gabriela Villatoro, D J Lennie,
Night Moves
\$12 @ door; \$10 Prepaid; \$8 Mem
Tickets: Ricardo 3899 2076;
DJLennie 0410 65 45 90
djlennie@yahoo.com
www.djinterlude.freehomepage.com
All proceeds go to El Salvador &
Guatemala projects

Who was Zoran Djindjic?

Zoran Djindjic began as an anti-communist opponent of the Tito government in old Yugoslavia. In 1974 he was jailed for trying to organise an anti-communist students' group at Belgrade University. After his release he resumed his studies in West Germany returning to Belgrade in 1989 to co-found the Democratic Party. In 1996 he formed the right-wing Zajedno (Together) bloc with some Serb nationalists and other opponents of Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian Socialist Party.

Djindjic briefly held the post of Mayor of Belgrade and in 1999, during the US-led war he fled to Montenegro – safe from the bombs falling on Belgrade.

He returned when the fighting ended to launch the American-backed demonstrations that eventually forced Milosevic out of office and propelled himself to power.

In February 2001 he was installed as prime minister by the same Western powers that had bombed Yugoslavia. The US, Germany and other Western powers bankrolled his campaign to the tune of more than \$US77 million dollars. It is not surprising that the same people lament him now as a great "democrat" and "reformer".

His legacy

Djindjic proceeded to tear apart what remained of Yugoslavia, a sovereign nation since 1918 and a founding member of the United Nations Organisation and the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the past two-and-a-half years Djindjic's gangster regime has plunged the Serbian people into the worst economic, social and political crises ever known.

Djindjic is being presented in the western media as a popular leader. Serbs know better. His support dropped to only 8 per cent before his assassination.

Djindjic set up his own mafia gangs which were linked to US intelligence and carried out a series

of political assassinations. The Defence Minister and the head of Yugoslav Airlines were among the victims.

Economic reforms

Zoran Djindjic swiftly proceeded with "economic reforms", that is privatisation of state assets at bargain prices to western multinationals. Former laws provided that companies could be sold only if 60 per cent of the shares were allocated to workers. Djindjic changed the law and the sell-off began. Thousands of socially owned enterprises have been sold.

The so-called reforms resulted in a huge jump in unemployment (over 30 per cent), soaring utility prices and a 20 per cent fall in real wages. Over two-thirds of Serbs now live below the poverty line.

Regime change

Yugoslavia was the first country bombed into a "regime change". Promises sounded great, the results



Belgrade under NATO bombing, aided and abetted by Djindjic

of Yugoslavia – a traitor and a Quisling. (The word Quisling comes from the name of the traitor that betrayed Norway to Hitler's Nazi occupation during WW 2.)

Zoran Djindjic will be remembered for what he was in the history

of Yugoslavia – a traitor and a Quisling. (The word Quisling comes from the name of the traitor that betrayed Norway to Hitler's Nazi occupation during WW 2.)

The murder of Rachel Corrie

On March 16, Rachel Corrie, a 23-year old American woman from Olympia, Washington, was killed by the Israeli Army. She was in Rafah, on the Gaza Strip as a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement.

Rachel was standing in the path of a bulldozer as it advanced towards her. When the bulldozer refused to stop or turn aside she climbed up onto a mound of dirt and rubble being gathered in front of it. She was wearing a fluorescent jacket to look directly at the driver who kept on advancing until the bulldozer was completely on top of her. The driver did not lift the bulldozer blade and she was crushed beneath it.

Then the driver backed up – effectively running over her again. Seven other ISM activists

taking part in the action rushed to dig out her body. An ambulance rushed her to Al-Najar Hospital where she died.

The Israeli Army consistently bulldozes Palestinian homes, particularly in Rafah, where over 100 homes have been demolished in the last two years. The International Solidarity Movement – both Palestinian and international citizens – calls upon the international community to break the silence around Israel's grotesque human rights abuses.

International civilians are in the

Occupied Palestinian Territories attempting to protect Palestinian human rights and lives because formal international bodies have refused to take action to do so. Dozens of Palestinian civilians are being systematically murdered weekly, and today a conscientious American defender of human rights was killed trying to protect the home of a Palestinian family.

This murder, along with Israel's continued destruction of Palestinian homes must be strongly condemned by the United States and the United Nations and they must insist that Israel abide by international law and UN Resolutions.

The International Solidarity Movement also calls upon the United States to take responsibility for the manner in which the Israeli government is using the \$US2.2 billion in military aid that it grants to Israel per year.

This money and US-made weaponry is being used daily by the Israeli military against innocent civilians. The bulldozer that killed Rachel Corrie was an American-made Caterpillar D-9 bulldozer.

The murder of Rachel Corrie was clearly NOT an accident. Eyewitnesses report that the bulldozer driver was able to see Rachel, and that they were shouting to the driver to stop. The Israeli government and army continue to blame the victims of violence carried out by the Israeli Army for their own suffering.

Israel must be made accountable for this criminal act and all criminal acts it is carrying out on a daily basis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The International Solidarity Movement greatly mourns the loss of Rachel Corrie and extends its heartfelt condolences to her family and friends. ✪

Pass it on!

When you've finished this issue share it with someone else. Help The Guardian get around.

Two Proclamations

Proclamation by Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Reich, to the German Army, September 1, 1939.

The Polish State has refused the peaceful settlement of relations which I desired, and has appealed to arms. Germans in Poland are persecuted with bloody terror and driven from their houses. A series of violations of the frontier, intolerable to a great Power, prove that Poland is no longer willing to respect the frontier of the Reich.

In order to put an end to this lunacy, I have no other choice than to meet force with force from now on.

The German Army will fight the battle for the honour and the vital rights of reborn Germany with hard determination. I expect that every soldier, mindful of the great traditions of eternal German soldiery, will ever remain conscious that he is a representative of the National-Socialist Greater Germany.

Long live our people and our Reich!

Words of war from George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, March 20, 2003

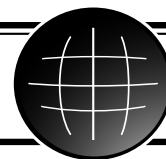
At this hour American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger.

In this conflict, America faces an enemy who has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality...

The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of murder.

We will meet that threat now with our army, airforce, navy, coast guard and marines... I assure you, this will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory.

May God bless our country and all who defend her. ✪



Global briefs

RUSSIA: The Russian Parliament (Duma) put back a vote on ratification of a US-Russia nuclear arms treaty because of differences over the Iraq crisis, a parliamentary official said. Deputies had been due to discuss ratification of the so-called Moscow Treaty (agreed last May). The Treaty calls on the United States and Russia to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals by about two-thirds to 1,700 to 2,200 deployed warheads by 2012. The discussion is postponed at least until the beginning of April. The decision by the Duma has been taken because of "unprecedented pressure" exerted on Russia and other countries seeking a peaceful settlement to the Iraq crisis.

MEXICO: Some 80 per cent Mexicans are against supporting the US war against Iraq. With 85 per cent of Mexico's export going to the United States, however Mexico found itself in a difficult position when it refused to go along and support the US' war on Iraq.

President Bush even suggested in an interview that Mexico's refusal would cost it dearly and Mexicans might find themselves targets of US businesses and ordinary Americans. He said, "I don't expect for there to be a significant retribution from the US government. But if Mexico or other countries don't toe the line, there will be a certain sense of discipline." Earlier the *Economist* magazine reported that a US diplomat had warned that a No vote could "stir up feelings" against Mexicans in the United States. The unnamed diplomat referred to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War 2 and questioned whether Mexico "wants to stir the fires of jingoism during a war".

SWITZERLAND: Top officials at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are worried about the effect of US unilateralism on international trade. They fear that the war in Iraq would weaken respect for international rules and lead to serious economic consequences. In the past several months the United States has violated a number of trade rules and has single-handedly blocked an agreement to provide medicines for the world's poorest nations. Developing nations had pinned their hopes on this agreement to help fight AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases. The United States, with the strong support of the American pharmaceutical industry, exercised a veto that destroyed the deal. European officials have complained about the US breaking trade rules. Europe was awarded the right to impose \$US4 billion worth of trade sanctions against the United States for giving tax breaks (subsidies) to American exporters through foreign sales corporations. European officials say they are tired of waiting for Congress to approve new laws prohibiting these subsidies, and that they may impose 100 percent duties on items like precious stones, sporting goods and agricultural products.

Brutalisation

In a recent TV program I witnessed with horror the modern training methods "perfected" by American military trainers and used on their troops on the eve of the invasion of Iraq.

A fully equipped US soldier stabs again and again the prone dummy, maybe a civilian, with ferocious killing skills and ferocious facial expressions.

A second commercial was even worse if anything could be. A dummy is killed in armed combat, his "body" smashed to smithereens and left beyond recognition, dummy or not. This could be a living human being.

Anyone seeing these nightmare commercials would decide, as I did, to do more than ever to stop the fiendish war on Iraq by Bush, Blair and Howard.

The peace movement, powerful and worldwide, has the responsibility to get the United Nations, or an elected body of anti-war patriots, to begin an investigation into the stockpile of US biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

This is the biggest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction in the world and they are a danger to the whole world. They must be destroyed if the world is to become safe. We must demand total disarmament of all countries of these weapons

Phyllis Johnson,
Padstow, NSW

Human shields and human casualties

I was in Iraq in 1991 and December 2002 with the Iraq Peace team to try and stop both proposed wars. There are currently 6 Australians and over 100 international Human shields in Iraq who have vowed to stay even if the bombs start to drop.

Kathy Kelly from the Iraq Peace team in Baghdad wrote saying "According to a UN document she was handed for the planning of humanitarian relief, the expected outcomes of a US campaign of bombing and invasion includes:

- 500,000 civilian casualties,
- 2,000,000 people homeless,
- 10,000,000 people without enough to eat,
- 18,000,000 without access to clean water, and
- more than 1,000,000 children

under the age of 5, at risk of death from malnutrition.

War plans released by the US military state that more than 3,000 bombs and missiles will fall on Iraq, more than used in the entire Gulf War, in the first 48 hours of the campaign. The *New York Times* quoted Pentagon officials as saying, "There will be no place in Baghdad that will be safe." Baghdad is a city of 4,500,000 people half of them are children".

This is the level of carnage (liberation) the Coalition Government wants to wish on the innocent Iraqi People. Would we feel liberated to watch our children and loved ones die in front of our eyes?

John Howard [has involved] Australia in this illegal and immoral war even though over 70 percent of Australians oppose it. Now is the time to let him and his silent government representatives know how you feel.

Dean Jefferys
NSW.

Email the PM

Send an email to the Prime Minister: www.pm.gov.au

Better still, don't stop at one email, but do it regularly and as often as you can.

**Tell him you why oppose the war.
Tell him to bring back Australia's troops.**

Encourage others to do the same, your family, friends, & colleagues.

If emailing is not possible, then write to him at
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

PEACE ACTIONS

VICTORIA

Stop the War Rally Saturday 29th March 1pm State Library
Palm Sunday Major Rally Sunday 13th April 2pm
Rally for peace, human rights and justice
More details to come

ADELAIDE

Palm Sunday Rally 13th April 2pm
Gathering in Elder Park after rallying
from Victoria Square or St Peter's Cathedral

Culture & Life

The Moscow trials and Walter Krivitsky

Regular readers of this column will remember that the current little series on the rebirth of anti-Sovietism began two weeks ago. It followed the appearance on SBS of the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda piece *As It Happened: Secrets, Lies and Atomic Spies*.

It also followed the publication a few weeks later in *The Australian Financial Review* of a very retrogressive article by one Paul Monk on "the role of defectors in exposing the crimes of Stalin and Saddam".

In the first article in the series I dealt with the historic role and function of anti-Sovietism, how it is at once anti-democratic and anti-Communist. I also dealt with the link between anti-Sovietism and pro-Nazism, and the way anti-Soviet groups in countries like the USA joined with the capitalist appeasers of the Nazis to try to foment war with the USSR.

In the second article I looked at the sorry record of one of the main US outlets for this pro-Nazi, anti-Soviet propaganda, the Special Congressional Committee to investigate un-American activity, headed by Representative Martin Dies of Texas (and popularly known as the "Dies Committee").

I detailed some of the "expert witnesses" on Communism and the "Red Threat to America" called by Dies: union racketeers and labour spies, local Nazis, Gestapo agents, common criminals for whom being a paid witness was lucrative work, and of course émigré Whiteguards

who had ignominiously lost the Civil War against the Bolsheviks.

The last-named group (or groups) still dreamed of riding into Moscow or Kiev at the head of an avenging army with a Red hanging from every telegraph pole along the way.

The Nazis actually made a concerted effort to recruit a former Whiteguard leader to fulfil in Russia the same role as Pétain in France or Quisling in Norway. Curiously, they failed, no former White leader of national stature (such as General Denikin or former Provisional Government leader Kerensky) being willing to take the role of Germany's puppet ruler in Russia.

On the other hand, the fiercely anti-Communist émigré Ukrainian nationalist leader "Hetman Skoropadski", who had fled to Berlin in the '20s, was quite prepared to co-operate with Hitler against the Soviet system.

When Germany did finally invade the USSR, Skoropadski's Ukrainian nationalists collaborated with the invaders, helped to round up "Reds" and Jews, provided guards for concentration camps as well as police and soldiers for the Reich in the east.

For their part, the Nazis did their best to exterminate every Communist they could find in all the territories they occupied. The links between Skoropadski's organisation in Berlin and the Dies Committee were referred to last week.

Since the assassination of Sergei Kirov, the Leningrad Party Secretary, in 1934, the CPSU and the Soviet Government had been investigating the conspiracy of which that assassination had been part.

Stage by stage, over four years through a succession of investigations, arrests and trials (the famous "show trials" as Western propaganda has always tried to label them), a highly-organised conspiracy against the Soviet



There was a highly organised conspiracy, not only against Stalin, but the Soviet Government

government (not just against Stalin as Monk maintains) was uncovered and exposed.

As successive layers were peeled away, it was seen to include first a grouping of left and right opportunists within the Party, then members of the military and security services and finally agents of Berlin and Tokyo.

A military coup had actually been prepared for the middle of 1937, but in May of that year, as feverish last-minute preparations were being made for it, the Communist Party and the Soviet government struck first.

Marshall Tukachevsky and seven generals were arrested. A nationwide round-up of suspected fifth columnists was launched.

But the "Generals' trial" was still not the end of the investigation. The links between the fascist intelligence services and the remnants of the various white-guard and other anti-Soviet groups in the USSR were extensive and of long standing.

By early 1938, however, the Soviet authorities were ready to

Who supplied the chemical and bio weapons?

Was Australia unaware that Britain and America were equipping Saddam Hussein with the means of waging bacteriological and chemical warfare in the 1980s? Britain built a mustard and nerve gas production plant near Baghdad which is now targeted by the US ("Britain kept deadly plant secret from US", *SMH*, March 8-9) while America supplied Saddam with a variety of lethal micro-organisms, according to a 1994 US Senate report.

The UK, US and Australia all ratified the 1925 Gas Protocol which outlaws "the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases" and prohibits the use of bacteriological methods of warfare. It states that the civilised world has

condemned such methods of warfare and that "The High Contracting Parties will exert every effort to induce other States to accede to the present Protocol".

Downing Street and the Whitehouse dismissed this clear evidence of international criminality by saying that past administrations were responsible. Mr Howard has made no comment. Shouldn't the same criteria for pursuing Nazi war criminals apply here? What law provides a statute of limitations of only 18 years for crimes as high as these?

Claims by Howard, Blair and Bush that the war on Iraq is just, must account for the evil complicity of their own past administrations and their current criminal neglect in bringing those responsible before the International Court of Justice. They stand as surely accused as Saddam Hussein and the whole world knows it. Just who is the mob, Mr Howard?

Gareth W R Smith

PEACE ACTIONS

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More details to come

ADELAIDE

Palm Sunday Rally 13th April 2pm
Gathering in Elder Park after rallying
from Victoria Square or St Peter's Cathedral

Vichy France, was a "patriot" who, by surrendering France to the Nazis had thereby saved his country from Communism.

Predictably, once in the USA Krivitsky wrote the obligatory, lurid anti-Soviet (and no doubt heavily ghost-written) autobiography, *I Was Stalin's Agent*, which the vehemently anti-Soviet *Reader's Digest* just as predictably serialised.

In the book, Krivitsky claimed to have survived "repeated" attempts on his life by Stalin's roving assassins and gave the same sort of hair-raising "testimony" to the Martin Dies' committee.

Then, in February 1941, when the German High Command was completing its preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union, he committed suicide, leaving a note explaining his act as atonement for his "great sins".

According to Paul Monk, Krivitsky is one of the "more notable defections from Stalin's regime".

Next week, Alexander Orlov and confirmation of the anti-Soviet coup attempt. ☛

Rob Gowland
previews

ABC & SBS public television programs

Sun March 30 ~
~ Sat April 5

When I was a boy, human evolution was reasonably straight forward: humans evolved from apes (or "monkeys") into homo sapiens and set out to occupy the world. There were the awkward pre-human fossils to explain away, such as Pekin Man and Java Man, but it seemed to make sense.

There was even a "missing link" between apes and humans, Piltown Man. Or there was until Piltown Man was shown to be a deliberate hoax.

Today, thanks to the extraordinary amount of work done in the Rift Valley of Kenya and in China, we know that the ancestors of human beings not only began to walk upright about three million years ago, but that they also began their expansion out of Africa before the appearance of *homo sapiens*.

In fact, as the three-part documentary series *The Human Odyssey* (SBS 7.30pm Sunday) shows, "mankind did not develop along a single, linear route; often different species lived alongside one another".

Episode one, *It Began in Africa*, deals with the origins of mankind as a species in the African Savannah. Episode two, next week, looks at Pekin Man, an early hominid, an ancestor of *homo sapiens'* predecessor *homo erectus*, who left Africa about two million years ago and headed for China.

This week's episode of *Mark Twain* (ABC 9.30 pm Sundays), Ken Burns' four-

part tribute to the great American author, humorist and social satirist, takes up the story of Samuel Clemens at age 32.

Clemens, having worked as a Mississippi riverboat pilot, prospector, lecturer and newspaper reporter was just starting to make a name for himself as Mark Twain.

When he returned from a trip to Europe in 1867 he had two new ambitions: he wanted to publish his first book, and he hoped to finally find someone to marry. These he achieved when he married the beautiful Olivia Langdon and had "*The Innocents Abroad*" published.

His 1873 novel *The Gilded Age* was a biting satire on the greed and get-rich-quick fever of the era, and yet in many ways Clemens own life personified it: He loved money and the comfort and luxury it could buy.

Next he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a celebration of boyhood in a small Southern town in the time of slavery, superstition, riverboats and dreams of adventure.

Then followed *Life on the Mississippi*, *A Tramp Abroad*, *The Prince and the Pauper* and in 1883 his masterpiece, *Huckleberry Finn*.

Cultural genocide has always been understood by imperialism as a particularly potent weapon. The English Kings in their conquest of the rest of the British Isles certainly appreciated it.

As a result of their efforts to stamp out the culture of the various conquered parts of Britain and Ireland, languages like Manx and Cornish have already died and Gaelic has shrunk back into its island heartland.

The ten-part documentary series *The Sea Kingdoms* (SBS 7.30pm Tuesdays) explores how the connecting sea has helped shape the distinctive character of the inhabitants around the western coast of the British Isles from Stornoway in the Hebrides to the west of Wales, Ireland and Cornwall.



Bambi suddenly realises she is a mammal in *The Life Of Mammals*

Two-thousand years ago the farms, fortresses and harbours of these islands echoed to the speech of the Celts and it is this rich culture and history which forms the focus of this series narrated by writer Alistair Moffat.

I still find the new series of *The Office* (ABC 10:00pm Tuesdays) more unpleasant than funny (its depiction of a thoroughly obnoxious office manager is too true to be amusing - he makes you wince or cringe rather than laugh).

I realise, however, that this may be a generational thing: my eldest son (aged 33, "into" film and media, no mean slouch himself as a film critic) tells me that "*The Office* is the best thing on TV". So you had better watch it for yourselves.

Continuing this week's evolutionary bent, *Insect Hunters*, the second episode of David Attenborough's *The Life Of Mammals* (ABC 8:30pm Wednes-

days), deals with the way the first placental mammals evolved, as shrew-like insect eaters.

About 50 million years ago some mammals broadened their diet like today's hedgehogs and armadillos that mix their insects with fruit and birds' eggs.

This program also looks at how one mammal - probably when the dinosaurs still roamed - took to the air. Today, the earth holds a bewildering array of insect eating bats including one, in New Zealand, that has retraced its origins and returned to the ground to forage like a shrew.

The nuclear danger of the 1950s produced an intriguing array of films from Hollywood: there were right-wing paranoid fantasies like *It Conquered The World* (if I remember correctly that's the one where the military officer who has been "taken over" by the alien gets past the armed soldier on the gate of an army base in the desert by simply announcing "There's been an uprising of Communists in this area. Don't let anyone in!").

There were bizarre warnings against the dangers of nuclear testing such as *Them!* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, and there were even pleas for tolerance, understanding and peace (backed up by threats of our total destruction if we did not comply) such as *The Day The Earth Stood Still*.

And there were films that simply fed on the prevailing paranoia, films like Howard Hawks'

brilliant 1951 production, *The Thing From Another World* (ABC 10.30pm Saturday).

The film is based very loosely on John W Campbell Jr's prize-winning short story *Who Goes There?* In the original the alien is able to change shape at will and mimic perfectly the various members of the crew it has killed, so that the survivors do not know who is friend and who is murderous alien.

In the film, still set on an isolated Arctic research station peopled by scientists and military personnel, the alien is a seven foot tall humanoid, a blood-drinking member of the carrot family no less, played by James Arness.

Former Editor Christian Nyby is credited as director, but the film abounds in touches characteristic of the directing style of producer Hawks: "rapid-fire overlapping dialogue; humour in the midst of turmoil; a male universe where men respect each other's talents and rank".

There's a typically Hawksian heroine, "an intelligent, strong, funny woman (Margaret Sheridan) who's passed the test and is allowed to pal around with the boys"; and a typically Hawksian setting, "men working together under pressure, with each (professionals all) contributing his singular skills to get the difficult task done" (Danny Peary, *Guide for the Film Fanatic*).

Most Hawks films are well worth watching. This is one of them. ☼

The US war against Iraq - Some perspectives \$6 (p&p \$2)

This special issue of *Third World Resurgence* was reviewed in last week's *Guardian* by Anna Pha. It's extremely well informed writers and commentators have written background articles on Bush's war against Iraq. "The problem that the globe faces today is not Iraq, but the United States", writes Claude Alvares. "Iraq has been fundamentally disarmed", says former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter. This special issue is not to be missed. (pp 72)

My country, the world \$10 (p&p \$1.50) by Justina Williams

This booklet of poems by Justina Williams moves easily in the Australian environment, equally at home in the city or country, building her poems on a wide range of experience, people and places. Justina Williams is a sensitive voice for women, especially those who are becoming more deeply involved in the issues of peace or war. She handles simply and compassionately the reaction of the individual to love and birth, suffering and death. (p 68)

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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 28
UNDERSTANDING ISLAM
Maha Abdo President Muslim Women's Association;
Keysar Trad Adviser to the Mufti,
Director of Lebanese Muslim Association

April 11
FINANCING THE STATE OF THE NATION
- WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD DEBT?
Frank Stilwell, Prof Economics, Sydney Uni
Ingrid Schraner, Uni W Sydney
John Rappell, Australian Financial Markets Association

April 18
Good Friday
April 25
Anzac Day

The Gaelic Club, like all clubs, is required to have non members sign in. To avoid queues you may wish to become a social member for \$5. Inq: Pat Toms 9358 4834 pbtoms@bigpond.com; Jan O'Leary 9818 3737, jol@pnc.com.au PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039; Win Childs Fax 9660 6554

A better world is possible

A vast movement of the people for peace and against war has swept the world. It is a movement never seen before in human history. Very broad sections of the community have taken to the streets and taken many other actions against the war on Iraq.

Behind the war are the forces of international capital and imperialism. They have become more and more ferocious and desperate as the movement against war and opposition to the economic and social policies of the IMF and the transnational corporations increase.

The leaders and giant corporations of the United States head the drive to war and oppression. Their aim is the reimposition of colonial regimes everywhere.

In desperation, they have now thrown all caution to the wind and torn up long established norms of behaviour and international law. The war camp is no longer able to achieve its objectives by economic and political means and is more and more resorting to brute military force – invasion, occupation, the direct appointment of governments and the suppression of popular people's movements.

As *The Guardian* goes to press it is not possible to determine the immediate or longer term outcome of the war against Iraq, but the long range plans of the US are known. The US has plans for a series of wars in the Middle East, Africa and in Asia.

The war drive is meeting strong opposition which will continue to grow.

The US, Britain and Australia took unilateral action in launching the attack, usurping the processes under way in the Security Council, including the requirements of Resolution 1441.

The chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix was denied the

opportunity of presenting his final report, and the US backed off with its attempt to gain endorsement for its war, recognising that it could not gain the necessary votes.

Most recently, the UN Security Council majority refused to be stampeded by a British Government-led connivance to have the Security Council support a UN role in a post-war occupation of Iraq.

The US and Britain hope that a cowed and subservient United Nations would be involved in administering Iraq under the dictates of the United States while the world community via the UN provides money and resources in an "aid" program.

Acceptance of the British resolution would also have been a post-dated endorsement of war.

Having devastated Iraq, the US and Britain hope that other countries will pick up the pieces and be responsible for reconstruction so that the US military machine can move on to other military targets. The cynicism of those prosecuting war has no limit.

The role played by UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan in the Iraqi conflict again confirms him as a stooge of the United States. He unilaterally ordered the withdrawal of the weapons inspectors from Iraq before they had completed their work and withdrew the UN peacekeepers that have patrolled the Iraqi/Kuwaiti border for many years.

Their purpose was to prevent war.

Kofi Annan failed to reflect the



Part of the march in Sydney

Photo: Anna Pha

majority opinion of the Security Council and his actions facilitated the US invasion of Iraq. The blood of the Iraqi people is also on his head.

Kofi Annan was personally selected for the UN post by Madeleine Albright, the former US Secretary of State. He was the UN officer responsible for the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from Rwanda just as the massacre of Rwandans was unleashed in that country.

Call for UN General Assembly to meet

Many organisations are now calling for the UN General Assembly to convene to give all nations a chance to voice opposition to the illegal war against Iraq. An international petition has been organised and may be signed at <http://www.ufp.ht.st>

The petition says in part, "We, the citizens of the countries whose governments have ratified the institutions and mission of the UN, urge all member states to use the authority given them by the UN Charter, in order to restore the authority of the UN and its mission, and especially to request the immediate convening of the General Assembly, according to the regulations of the Charter and of Resolution 377 of November 3, 1950, which are known under the rubric 'Uniting for Peace'".

The President of Brazil and the Russian Duma have supported this call.

But the US is again threatening other countries in an effort to prevent the General Assembly meeting. The US fears a vote by the majority of countries condemning the invasion of Iraq.

Cuba's Foreign Minister Felipe Roque said, "... there is a common danger facing us all: the attempt to impose a world dictatorship at the service of the mighty superpower, which has clearly stated that you are either with it or against it."

He went on, "Do not the countries in the West, which up until yesterday were allies of the United States in a bipolar world but today are victims as are we of this dangerous and unsustainable order it is trying to impose, think that the time has come to defend our rights together?"

"Why not try to form a new alliance for a future of peace, security and justice for all? Why not try to form a coalition that will once again proclaim on its flag the aspiration of freedom, equality and brotherhood for all people? Why not think that a better world is possible?"

Media machine

The media has been effectively muzzled by the needs of the war machine, including public broadcasters ABC and SBS.

The panel of so-called "experts" giving their views on the ABC's *7.30 Report* all come from the military establishment.

The media is overwhelmed by the reports churned out by the military handouts and the US media – a powerful lie-spreading machine.

Reports of the demonstrations taking place around the world are minimal. In some instances, even the actions in Australian cities are virtually ignored.

The work and views of the UN Security Council and the efforts to convene a meeting of the UN General Assembly are not widely reported.

President Bush, echoed faithfully by Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, has condemned the showing of US prisoners of war on Al Jazeera TV. However, Australian newspapers have given front-page coverage to pictures of alleged Iraqi POWs.

While demanding adherence to the Geneva conventions in relation to POWs (in Iraq), the politicians and correspondents ignore the inhuman and illegal treatment of

Afghani prisoners held in Guantanamo.

Lies and double standards have become the norm for the capitalist media and government politicians.

Almost all media outlets reported the departure of the Iraqi Ambassador in Canberra, but ignored that this was demanded by the US of many countries and that Australia was one of a small number of other countries complying.

It again showed the extraordinary subservience of the Australian Liberal Party Government to every requirement put forward by the Bush administration.

The performance of ALP leader Simon Crean is pitiful. He blindly accepts the "war on terrorism" and that Iraq threatens the world with weapons of mass destruction.

He dropped the demand, adopted by the Labor Party caucus, that Australian troops be withdrawn and dropped the criticism of the war as being unjustified and illegal.

He criticised the Government for not upgrading its "security" warning, going even further down the propaganda track than the Howard Government. The reality is that Crean is a captive of the "American alliance" and supports the US war and Australia's participation in it.

He limits his criticism to minor and relatively unimportant differences. While many ALP members and even branches have taken a strong and principled stand against the war, Crean has not adopted any position of principle.

The struggle between the opponents and supporters of war will continue to dominate the international situation. This struggle will go on for a long time and its eventual outcome will determine world politics for generations.

It will be conducted on many fronts – political, economic, social, cultural and military.

The anti-war people's movement, combined with the environmental and anti-globalisation movements will continue to grow throughout the world and all progressive-minded people have a place and a responsibility to take part to save humanity from the disaster of endless wars planned by the US leaders. ☸



One of many images not shown on our television networks

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