

Solomons intervention DANGEROUS STEP

A meeting held last Monday of Foreign Ministers of the countries that make up the Pacific Forum endorsed the Australian and New Zealand sponsored proposal for a police and military force to intervene in the Solomon Islands supposedly to restore "law and order".

This decision will not come as any surprise. With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, the Pacific Island states are small, have very little economic or political power, and even less military strength. Furthermore, Australia over many years, has built up a core of government administrators and business connections that owe much to Australia's political and economic machine.

The immediate intention is to send a contingent of about 150 Australian and New Zealand police, backed up by a military force of up to 2000 members, to the Solomon Islands.

According to the blueprint for the occupation of the Solomon Islands prepared by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the police will "impose a policy of zero tolerance for violence and intimidation, and be prepared and willing to use significant force, including lethal force, to do so."

This follows the implementation by the United States, Australia and Britain of a "pre-emptive strike" policy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Needless to say, the Solomon Islands does not possess any weapons of mass destruction or chemical and biological weapons but, is at the present time, experiencing some instability. It is, according to the Australian Government a "failing state" and, therefore, qualifies to be taken over and run by an "ad hoc" administration that will be appointed by the Australian and New Zealand Governments.

The approval of the governments making up the Pacific Forum and consent from either "the Solomon Islands Government or perhaps from some other highly credible group ... of Solomon Islanders" is to be used as the excuse for the Australian and New Zealand Governments to undertake their intervention.

New aggressive foreign policy

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in an address to the National Press Club last week outlined Australia's new aggressive foreign policy. Previous foreign policy documents had asserted respect for the independence and sovereignty of Pacific Island states. This commitment has now been swept away.

Downer asserted, "... outcomes are more important than blind faith in principals (sic) of non-intervention, sovereignty and multilateralism" and "we look for outcomes not just empty form and posturing". He said that, "Sovereignty in our view is not absolute" while self-righteously claiming that "Acting for the benefit of humanity is more important".

Following the lead given by the Bush administration the Australian Government is moving strongly to undermine the United Nations. In the case of the Solomons it is clear that the Australian Government will do no more than "inform" the UN of its action.

Downer claimed when speaking about Iraq that, "When the UN balked, yet again, at enforcing its will, we had to decide what Australia's best policy option would be. We decided that disarming Iraq, through the use of force, would deliver the outcome that Australia and the international community required."

In this case, the "international community" is limited to the US, Britain, Poland and Australia and a small number of other states that supported the military invasion of Iraq.

No weapons of mass destruction

The invasion and occupation, which had been decided long ago



by the US leaders, took place despite the fact that the UN weapons inspectors had not found weapons of mass destruction and none have been found since the war.

In what must be a grim warning to the Australian people, Alexander Downer declared that, "Our interests are global..." The implication is that the Australian Government will follow the United States and Britain into any actions they may undertake in Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and even in Europe.

His speech is embellished with statements such as "maverick states", "states that cheat", and "unacceptable" behaviour. Downer said that Australia "can not afford to spend time and effort on processes and institutions that are marginal to our interests" and that while "Our commitment to the WTO is unswerving, we will not allow it to deny us other trading opportunities".

Disregard UN

It is clear that the Australian Government does not intend to comply with the decisions of any institution – the United Nations or its agencies or even the World Trade Organisation – if they make

decisions with which the Australian Government does not agree.

This has already been indicated by the Government's refusal to accept the Kyoto protocols regarding global warming gas emissions or the processes adopted by the United Nations Security Council regarding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Downer said, "... increasingly multilateralism is a synonym for an ineffective and unfocused policy involving internationalism of the lowest common denominator". Presumably this would also apply to the Pacific Forum should this body also refuse to be cajoled into supporting the Australian Government's decisions.

Downer announced the formation of a "Proliferation Security Initiative" that was formed by 11 countries meeting in Madrid in June. It is a body set up outside the United Nations and is considering "how we might together interdict and disrupt – directly if necessary – the transfer of materials to and from states suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction."

This obviously follows allegations against North Korea and the attempt of the US navy to "interdict" a ship carrying missiles from North Korea to Yemen last year.

Of course, this does not apply to weapons that may be shipped from the United States to Israel or any other state to which the US arms manufacturers choose to send weapons.

Again indicating the unrestrained arrogance of the present Australian Government Downer concluded, "Our choice is whether we want [to] lead rather than follow the international community in responding to a new and rapidly changing international environment. I think we should lead..." In this case, Downer refers to the "international community" that he regards as employing "empty form and posturing".

The Australian Government has embarked on an extremely dangerous foreign policy that will inevitably involve the use of Australian forces not only in the Iraq, Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands but in other Pacific Island states as well. Aggression, intervention and occupation are also being planned against North Korea, Iran, Syria and wherever else the coalition of aggressor states decides to go.

Downer said: "The coalition's actions in Iraq [have] ... potentially created new strategic opportunities in the region that should be seized".

Labor leadership's swing to the right

When the Australian Labor Party was formed in the early 1880s, it could legitimately claim to be a workers' party. It was formed by the trade unions of that time and it included in its policy platform many very progressive objectives. They included the creation of a publicly owned commonwealth bank, the nationalisation of monopolies, proportional representation, civil equality for men and women, old age and invalid pensions (that did not exist at that time), and navigation laws to protect Australian shipping.

Together with these progressive policies there was the racist and discriminatory White Australia Policy that continued to be advocated by some leaders of the ALP until the 1960s.

Over the years Labor Governments implemented a number of these policies. The Commonwealth Bank was established together with a national shipping line (ANL). A number of other public enterprises were established although this did not amount to a policy of nationalisation of monopolies.

The Whitlam Government introduced Medicare and free tertiary education. The Technical and Further Education (TAFE) was developed, opening up new educational opportunities to migrants, women, Indigenous Australians and many working class people. There were a number of other welcome social reforms. The Whitlam Government was however the last of the Labor Party Governments that was committed to generally progressive social reforms.

Things changed fundamentally under Hawke and Keating. They adopted the social and economic policies of the economic rationalists that amounted to a steady but far-reaching attack on social welfare policies and particularly the reversal of support for public enterprise. A policy of corporatisation and privatisation was introduced. The Commonwealth Bank, Qantas and other public assets were sold off. The sale of Telstra began. This signalled the beginning of a course that continues to be pushed by State Labor Governments and the Coalition Federal Government.

Labor gave private schools massive support, and failed to maintain adequate funding for the public education system. Its refusal to oppose outright the payment of an estimated \$4 billion for the Government's support to the private health insurance industry makes a mockery of its pledge to support Medicare. Similarly, the support for the Howard Government's legislation on ASIO, irrespective of some minor amendments, makes a mockery of any pretence of defending democratic rights. The legislation makes ASIO a totally unaccountable, political police force with powers that contravene international law.

The Labor Party under Beazley's leadership failed to condemn and expose the "children overboard" episode, in effect, supporting the racist exclusion of certain refugee groups.

Acceptance of these policies by the Parliamentary Labor Party and the Labor Party's leadership confirm that the Party has shifted sharply and fundamentally to the right and has thrown overboard the original policies advocated by the founders of the ALP.

The ALP leadership is now bowing down to the social, economic and foreign policies demanded by the real rulers of Australia, the big corporations and financial institutions of Australian and overseas capital. Any genuine commitment to the needs of the working people has been effectively abandoned.

There is now very little real difference between the policies and the practice of the Labor Party leadership and that of the conservative parties.

This is not what the majority of the rank and file members and ALP supporters want. Although their voice is often heard at Labor Party conferences the Parliamentarians ignore it.

This change is not a simple question of Labor Party leadership but is inherent in the make up of social democratic parties throughout the world – in France, Britain, Germany, New Zealand and other countries where such parties are found. They have all moved to the right because social democracy is now and has at best always been fundamentally a party of compromise with capitalism.

Capitalism is rushing headlong into crisis. All it has to offer is instability and increasing attacks on the progressive social and economic policies that were introduced in earlier times. The social democratic parties as part of the two-party system of government have become a part of this process.

The time has arrived when many long-time supporters of social democratic parties are reconsidering their membership and support. That is a very healthy development and the Communist Party encourages it and welcomes those who conclude that it is time for a serious change.

PRESS FUND

The Howard Government is blaming dodgy intelligence for participating in the invasion of Iraq. Sounds like the children overboard affair: you pile lies upon deceit in order to justify an appalling act, and afterwards blame the information supplied by someone else. You can help to oppose the government's outrageous policies by sending us a Press Fund contribution for the next issue. Incidentally, the Fund fell seriously short of its target this week. Come on, party members and supporters, it's time to man the pumps! Our sincere thanks go to both this week's contributors, as follows:

S Montsos \$8, "Round Figure" \$12.

This week's total: \$20. Progressive total: \$5795

Renewed push for Telstra sell-off

The Federal Government has put the sale of the Commonwealth's remaining 50.1 per cent stake in Telstra back on the agenda with the introduction of legislation into the Parliament last week. The move still faces defeat in the Senate if Labor and the minor parties maintain their long-standing opposition. The Bill is one of a number previously defeated Bills that the Coalition is resurrecting. If they are defeated this time around, Howard may go for a double dissolution election. If he is re-elected, then the Telstra and other Bills could be passed by a joint sitting of Parliament.

by Bob Briton

The Government has included a \$181 million package of upgrades in the current legislation as a parting gift to the people of rural and regional Australia who, in future, may have to rely on "market forces" to meet their telecommunications needs.

The package represents a compromise made within the Coalition after a marathon debate last week.

The latest proposal includes spending of \$16 million on mobile phone towers, \$5 million on an extension to the satellite phone scheme, \$10 million on regional IT training, \$24 million on the expansion of the availability of broadband internet services and a further \$100 million plus in subsidies to telcos to provide greater broadband access in the bush.

At best they would result in some short-term assistance, which would be quickly overrun by new technological advances. They contain no guarantees for the long term.

The Government claims that these items will be provided whether or not the sale is concluded. This undertaking is not as impressive as it may seem. The carrier already spends approximately \$250 million a year in maintaining its universal service obligations. Its total capital expenditure budget next financial year is expected to be over \$3 billion.

Deregulation inevitable

The other half of the pact worked out by the Coalition involves the imposition of regulations on a fully privatised Telstra. If the Government can be believed, Telstra will have to fix its worst exchanges straight away, ensure that everyone in the country will have an internet access speed of at least 19.2 kbps, replace radio networks in remote Australia, maintain a regional presence with services like Telstra CountryWide and undergo regular reviews of services to the bush.

Federal Communications

Minister Richard Alston told the media last week in another sop to the public that governments can regulate the operations of enterprises like Telstra whether or not they own a controlling interest in them.

Elsewhere, on the subject of cross-media ownership, the Howard Government is arguing strongly against government regulation or intervention. It also argues strongly against cross-subsidisation which is to be ruled out under Competition Policy.

Despite "undertakings" in the latest Bill that would commit future governments to Telstra-watching duties, it is not hard to imagine Richard Alston or some similarly motivated successor bemoaning government meddling in the telecommunications market.

Promises

You can almost hear the promises of world-class services and cheaper prices already!

Under World Trade Organisation rules presently being negotiated for the services sector, it would only be a matter of time before the government was forced to offer all Telstra's competitors similar subsidies or to cut the subsidies and leave people in the bush high and dry.

Universal service obligations would be phased out and rural and regional Australians forced to pay the full cost (plus corporate profits) for their services.

There are already private competitors in the highly profitable areas which Telstra presently relies on to subsidise the more expensive remote services. These competitors operate in select areas of the market and have no need to cross-subsidise other services. They can drive prices down in their niche areas to a point where Telstra cannot afford to cross-subsidise.

Even with its promise of subsidies and government monitoring, not all Coalition MPs could be won over to the latest Telstra plan. Several National Party MPs have reserved the right to vote against the legislation.

The National Farmers'

Federation has welcomed some of the undertakings of the Government but insists that it needs to look further at the proposal.

Over-extended

There is even some caution over the idea in the corporate world. Telstra CEO Ziggy Switkowski is confident that the proposed extension to the corporation's activities can be incorporated within existing budgets.

Citigroup Smith Barney has apparently identified \$1.43 billion worth of capital and operational expenditure savings for the future, fully private telco. Macquarie Equities expects good news for the sagging telco market as major outlays begin to be recouped and price/earning ratios start to look healthy again.

Others, however, have seen fit to rain on the Government's parade. One fund manager expressed scepticism in *The Australian Financial Review* about the possible savings to be made by private telco masters.

"Look at how many staff Telstra has cut already and I don't believe the regulator would be any tougher on Telstra if the company wasn't part government-owned. It's pretty arms length now."

Telstra workers will certainly identify with these remarks.

Other market watchers are concerned about the effect that a third tranche or even a series of offerings of Telstra shares could have on stock prices.

The Federal Government says that it wants to retire its debt of \$32.4 billion. The Budget papers suggested that the T3 sell-off would fetch \$34 billion if Telstra share prices lifted to \$5.25. Such a price has not been achieved since mid 2001. In fact, Telstra shares have fallen from \$8.90 in 1999 to just \$4.44 last week.

There is only one way of retaining universal services at affordable prices, that is to restore Telstra to full public ownership and democratic control.

To do this we need to build a left and progressive political force that is committed to the public ownership of Telstra and the public sector. The forthcoming elections provide an excellent opportunity for all those concerned for Telstra, along with Medicare, education, peace, and trade union and democratic rights, to build a movement and provide the electorate with a genuine alternative. ☺

Professor Doug Rokke

Will speak on
the impact of

DEPLETED URANIUM

Prof Rokke's scientific training and his first-hand experience with DU contamination led him to speak out regarding the cover-up of Gulf War casualties and depleted uranium.

He calls use of DU a "war crime"

SYDNEY

Thursday 3rd July 7-9 pm

Tom Mann Theatre 136 Chalmers St Surry Hills
Also Rev Dr Ann Wansbrough speaking on the Australian connection

FREMANTLE

Saturday 5th July 1-4pm

Fremantle Town Hall

Also short film "Hidden Wars of Desert Storm"

LANCELIN WA

Sunday 6th July 9.30 am

Lancelin Angling and Aquatic Club Hopkins St

SUBIACO WA

Monday 7th July 7.30 pm

McDonald Lecture Theatre Princess Margaret Hospital

ADELAIDE

Wednesday 9th July 7.30 pm

Cynthia Poulton Hall adj St Peter's Nth Adelaide
Also David Noonan Australian Conservation Foundation

Whose "family values?"

The Australian family appears to be the latest arena to be identified for the Federal Government's cynical "reforming" touch. Last week Howard asked the Parliament's family and community affairs committee to look at the assumptions underpinning decisions of the Family Court. The happiness of millions of Australians is at stake in the issues to be considered: an estimated 55,000 children will be caught up in marriage break-ups this year alone and the self-described advocates of non-interfering government feel obliged to step in.

by Bob Briton

The Family Court has long been the target of derision and bile from conservative, right-wing forces since it was formed during the years of the Whitlam Labor Government. The right accuse its non-adversarial methods for settling problems of being anti-family. For example, the Court provides contact details for free legal services and advises families on mediation/counselling services. It does not rule on the sanctity or otherwise of marriage vows. Nor does it make orders forcing people to remain in relationships, based on value judgements.

That is the ideological stamping ground of the Howard Government, driven as it is by fundamentalist Christian dogma. "Blind faith in doctrine for all" is their reactionary catchcry. These "family values", of course, do not apply to asylum seekers, who are locked away – men, women (even if pregnant) and chil-

dren – and families forcibly split up. The hypocrisy would be staggering if it were not so inhuman.

Few would doubt our Prime Minister's ability to profit and survive by exploiting and promoting reactionary political trends in the Australian electorate. His Government rode into a third successive term on the back of post-September 11 security concerns and the vigorously promoted perception that tough action was needed to stop masses of queue-jumping undesirables from landing on our shores.

Of course, the role of the Australian Government and its allies in producing these various human tragedies is not an acceptable topic in mainstream political discourse. As could be predicted, the chosen "responses" and "solutions" to these crises do nothing but throw up new victims and casualties.

Liberal MP Chris Pyne first raised ideas like shared custody

– where the 50/50 sharing of custody of children will be presumed unless a strong case can be made in "rebuttal" – in a Coalition party room meeting last year.

NSW National Party MP Kay Hull will now be given the job of chairing the committee to examine the proposals. The Prime Minister would even like the issue of access to children by grandparents to be examined. It is hoped that the committee will be able to recommend legislation when it reports at the end of December.

The Prime Minister says that his main concern in all this is that boys should have male role models in their lives. "If they do not have older brothers or uncles they closely relate to – and with an overwhelming number of teachers being female in primary schools in particular – many young Australian boys are at the age of 15 or 16 before they have a male role model with whom they can identify."

Not all the PM's usual supporters and advisors are backing his latest choice of populist vehicle. Attorney-General Daryl Williams does not support it. The Howard-appointed Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Pru Goward, believes that it is too late to start talking about a 50/50 split of responsibility when a couple has decided on divorce. In distancing herself from beliefs underpinning the inquiry, she did quip that discussion about enforcing such a division of labour in the family prior to divorce might spark a "feminist revolution". Nobody is expecting this type of radicalism from the inquiry.

Family Court Chief Justice Alistair Nicholson says that the removal of discretionary powers from the courts and the insistence on "shared parenting" could be harmful to children:



"Shared parenting can work perfectly well if parents live close to one another, if there is little or no hostility between them, if they both have excellent parenting skills, and if there is no history of abuse by either parent. If all or most of these prerequisites are not present, shared parenting can be both disruptive and detrimental to the children involved."

Child protection advocate and former Family Court judge John Fogarty agrees: "The concept of a child covers everyone from babies to teenagers, and what this would mean is that they've got to pack up all their things every fortnight or few months to go from Werribee to Hampton or Ballarat, and change their school, styles of living and leave friends behind".

Thankfully, while Labor has said that they will co-operate with the inquiry, it is not attracted to it or the ideas it is investigating.

The "shared parenting" push from the Government is not a serious attempt to help Australian families. It is a grandstanding exercise that shows just how influenced our Federal Government is by US think-tanks, US "research" and US daytime television. They are wagering a bit of their credibility that the Australian people are similarly affected by those institutions.

Experience suggests that we don't need the Coalition's moralising intervention. Only half of the couples deciding to split in Australia take the matter to the Family Court.

Most of those eventually sort out their own contact and residency arrangements.

Only five per cent end up before a judge or judicial registrar and only a portion of those end up with a court-imposed settlement. The defenders of family values couldn't care less that their "reforms" could push thousands of these people back into the courts to establish that the other party is unworthy of 50/50 custody.

The linking of maintenance to the "shared parenting" project opens up a new minefield of acrimonious complication that, similarly, need not be created.

Meanwhile – getting back to matters that the Federal Government might realistically have some chance of improving – the ING-Melbourne Institute's latest report was released last week.

It showed that only 40 per cent of Australian households managed to save anything last year. One in 20 is running into debt to survive. Credit cards were the most common form of debt. Latest Reserve Bank figures put credit card debt at a record \$23.3 billion. One in 50 Australian households is using more than 75 per cent of their income to service debt.

Maybe, just maybe, if a parliamentary inquiry would genuinely look at ways to fix the cash flow problems of Australian families, fewer of them would succumb to pressures that lead to marriage break-up. ☺

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Indigenous rights under attack

The Howard Government has seized upon a critical review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to argue for its emasculation or even its total abolition. The Government has suggested abolishing ATSIC and handing over its entire program to regional authorities or regional councils. The move would seriously damage the ability of Indigenous Australians to control matters directly affecting them on a national level.

by Peter Mac

A survey conducted by the review team revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the current ATSIC Board, amounting to a "crisis of confidence" in the Board's chairman Geoff Clark and its deputy chairman Ray Robinson.

The review team surveyed more than 50 individuals and organisations. However, the review constitutes a survey of attitudes concerning ATSIC's performance, not an analysis of its activities. Geoff Clark and Ray Robertson are not ATSIC; they are two of its elected leaders. The Government's and media's character assassination of them is part of the Government's aim to gut the organisation.

Moreover, the Government has largely ignored the review's recommendations, which include direct election of national leaders, compulsory voting and initiatives to improve the prospects of women seeking election to the Board.

Despite the review's criticisms of him, Geoff Clark has largely welcomed the review's recommendations for improving

ATSIC's performance. He commented: "We need to design this so the Aboriginal people fully endorse the concept and believe the organisation has the capacity to represent their interests".

Ironically, the review criticises the ATSIC Board for its "waning influence over government decisions and cabinet submissions, its inability to secure better services and resources for indigenous people..." These are all matters for which the Government, not the ATSIC Board, bears the principal responsibility.

ATSIC has ongoing problems because the Government refuses to properly fund the organisation and because both state and federal governments have dumped areas of government responsibility onto ATSIC's already huge workload.

Indeed, the review admits that ATSIC is frequently blamed for the failings of other government departments and agencies. It notes: "Time and again ATSIC has been used as a scapegoat for poor indigenous affairs outcomes even when the program concerned did not belong to ATSIC."

The ATSIC Board itself commented that the Review panel's discussion paper "...makes it crystal clear that governments, particularly state and territory, bear primary responsibility for the delivery of services and addressing chronic problems such as health and family violence".

The Board also deplored the "shallow, biased and distorted" media coverage of the review.

The ATSIC Board has now agreed to the transfer of functions to a new organisation, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS). The current ATSIC administrator, Wayne Gibbons, is to continue to function as chief executive of both organisations.

The ATSIC controversy does demand an inquiry. However, it is already clear that the real issue concerns the future role and activities of ATSIC, which has long been a thorn in the side of the Government because of its support for issues such as Aboriginal land rights, and its demand for an apology over the "Stolen Generations".

The Government's hostility towards ATSIC, and particularly its threat to abolish the organisation altogether in the aftermath of the review, is a reflection of the Howard agenda to wipe out Indigenous rights. This is the fundamental issue at stake, not the performance of ATSIC officials. ☺

Perth

What Future For Cuba in the New American Century?

Guest speakers
Eva Seoane
 Vice-President of the Cuban Institute for Friendship With the Peoples, ICAP
Alicia Corredera
 Director of the Asia and Oceania Section of ICAP
Sicilia Fernandez
 Consul-General of the Republic of Cuba, Sydney

Sunday 6th July 4.30pm
Alexander Library Theatre, Northbridge
Entry gold coin donation

Organised by
 NOWAR Alliance & Australia Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS)

Cuban visitors now granted visas by Australian Government!

Save the NSW Working Women's Centre

A community Alliance has been formed to support the NSW Working Women's Centre. It is under threat of closure after ten years of service, because the Howard Government has withheld its funding. The Working Women's Centre Alliance has a broad spectrum of supporters across the community.

"We support the NSW Working Women's Centre because it is a non-profit organisation that provides specialised, professional information, advice and assistance to women on their rights, obligations and entitlements at work", said an Alliance statement.

"The women who contact and use this service are often disadvantaged in their employment, and do not have access to other forums for advice and assistance."

Service

The Centre is the only service of its kind in NSW, providing free, specialised industrial and workplace relations advice, information and assistance to women in NSW. The Centre provides these services to women who are vulnerable in their employment - particularly women from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women, women with family responsibilities, those in precarious or casual employment, or with a disability.

In workplaces where there is a limited union presence, the service provided by the Centre is critical. The women who rely on the Centre are experiencing difficulties in relation to work, such as struggling to balance their work and family

commitments or are in an employment environment where the rules are changing rapidly.

Advocacy Service

The Centre also provides an Advocacy Service to represent women who are in need of further assistance and have no other means of representation.

Matters in the public interest are also top priority. They include maternity entitlements and discrimination (including based on pregnancy, carer's responsibilities, sex, race or disability). These issues are resolved appropriately through the legal and industrial relations systems.

Legal practitioners will often act for Working Women's Centre clients pro bono if the Centre has referred them. In other instances, the Centre refers clients to another agency or organisation that can best help them to resolve their problems.

In addition, the Centre has a community education function and has been in direct contract with over 15,000 women since 1994 through workshops and seminars on employment rights information, both in Sydney and around the State, and to a variety of different audiences. The Centre also holds

stalls and information sessions on employment rights at community and commercial events.

InfoLine

The Working Women's Centre also runs an InfoLine and over 12,000 women have contacted this service since it began in 1994. Women who contact the InfoLine come from diverse backgrounds, workplaces and occupations but have one thing in common - they need advice or information about a work-related issue.

The Centre's work in regional areas is a high priority. Its advocates and community educators having visited many areas of regional NSW in recent years, including Dubbo, Broken Hill, Wagga Wagga, the South Coast, the Central Coast, the Illawarra region and the far North Coast of NSW.

Issues

Some of the issues the service is currently dealing with include:

- assistance to women returning from maternity leave in negotiating family-friendly and part-time work arrangements with their employer.
- assistance with an Unfair Dismissal application for a woman who speaks very little English
- assistance with the resolution of harassment and discrimination complaints, including before the Anti-Discrimination Board and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

The Centre also undertakes a community education program and has a broader systemic advocacy function, contributing to public awareness and debate about the issues faced by women at work.

Help keep this critical service

There has been widespread attention in the media on such issues as the conflicting pressures of work and family, longer working hours,



The women who contact the service are often disadvantaged in their employment

higher workloads and increasing work demands, and about increasing levels of casual and insecure employment.

These issues affect everyone but the Working Women's Centre Alliance knows that these issues impact in a specific way on women because:

- women are more likely to bear the primary responsibility for the care of family members;
- women are much more likely to use part-time work than any other arrangement to balance their carer's responsibilities;
- women are more likely to earn less, and work in casual employment;
- women continue to encounter

discrimination at work - particularly in relation to pregnancy and motherhood, or sexual harassment.

There are also women with particular needs in relation to employment. Women from non-English speaking backgrounds are often vulnerable because they do not have the language skills or resources to access information about their rights at work.

Aboriginal women have difficulty finding employment - and those who have found work often face prejudice. There are also specific difficulties experienced by women with family commitments, those with a disability, or whose employment is particularly precarious.

The Working Women's Centre Alliance says that the Centre provides a critical service, helping to ensure that women have access to information and advice and can make choices about the issues that affect them at work. Now, more than ever, the need for the NSW Working Women's Centre is crucial. ☘

LABOUR NOTES

Encouraged by Tony Abbott's anti-union approach to industrial relations, Ballarat company FMP Group has locked out its workforce in response to a union demand for the protection of workers' entitlements. FMP, which produces brake pads, has locked out 550 workers for a month and refused to negotiate with their union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Organiser Victor Jose said the company had deliberately slowed EBA negotiations and would only discuss items on their own agenda which included the casualisation of 30 per cent of the workforce and abolition of award leave entitlements.

Staff at Telstra are stepping up their opposition to management plans to axe 3000 jobs. According to the Community and Public Sector Union's Trevor Veenendaal, this latest round of cuts would seriously erode Telstra's ability to meet its current workloads. "What we are seeing here is corporate anorexia. Over the last ten years fifty thousand jobs have been cut from Telstra. Core business is being damaged and opportunities for new business are being squandered because Telstra has lost too many experienced staff", explained Mr Veenendaal. Members of the community are being encouraged to contact Telstra Board members and ask them to vote against the latest cuts.

"If the Australian community want to keep Medicare as we have known it for so many years then they need to tell the Federal Government now!" stated Unions ACT secretary Peter Malone. "Otherwise we will wake up one morning later this year and find it's not there any more." Representatives of the ACT trade union movement and the ACT Council of Social Service have launched a petition and community campaign to oppose the Federal Government's attempt to destroy Australia's universal health system. In a statement, Mr Malone said "Medicare must be strengthened, not weakened! Instead of creating a two-tiered US style health system where the poor won't get access to the same high standard of service as the wealthy, we must look at ways of continuing to publicly fund a fair and excellent quality system that is available to all Australians." The Communist Party is also running a campaign to "Stop Howard wrecking Medicare". Visit the CPA's website www.cpa.org.au or call our office to find out ways to be involved in this important campaign. Phone (02) 9212 6855.

As *The Guardian* goes to press we have been informed that the campaign to restore the Working Women's Centre's funding has been won.

For more information go to:
www.workingwomenscentre.com.au

MUA elections

The results of the Maritime Union of Australia elections were declared last week after a two-month-long election period. There was a vigorous contest with 51 candidates standing for 21 positions.

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin who was re-elected unopposed said that "MUA elections have historically been robust, we have one of the highest voter turnouts in the country (65 per cent this ballot), reflecting a strong and active involvement of members in the union and all its affairs".

All members of the MUA national leadership were re-elected. In several of the Branch ballots new officials were elected.

In Melbourne only one former official remains and in Western Australia, incumbent Branch Secretary, Wally Pritchard was defeated by Chris Cain. Cain ran on a "rank and file" ticket whose campaign website was adorned with

excessive degrees of vilification and slander against incumbent officials.

All current officials were returned in Brisbane as they were in South Australia.

For the Sydney (Central NSW) Branch Warren Smith, who stood for a vacant position, topped the poll for the position of Assistant Branch Secretary with 46 per cent of the vote in a seven-candidate field.

Retiring Sydney Deputy Secretary John Garrett's son, Paul, was also elected as an Assistant Secretary. Robert Coombs, was re-elected Branch Secretary. However, two retiring Branch officials were defeated. A former wharfie official Glen Wood was elected as deputy Secretary.

In all, six incumbent officials were defeated and 18 current Branch officials were re-elected.

The Guardian spoke to Warren Smith and asked him what he thought was the message from the election. "The message I received from the jobs was that members want to see their officials on the job more often. I heard this from every area I campaigned in. The members also responded to strong fighting policies and generally rejected campaigns based upon denigrating or criticising other people.

"MUA members love their union and are prepared for the challenges that will surely face them during the next four-year term of office. The unity between the officials and the members will be of utmost importance if we are to win the many battles that lie ahead." ☘

Locals fight coal polluter

At the end of 2001 the local community of the Murrurundi Shire, north-west of Sydney in the Hunter Valley, heard a rumour of plans for a coal mine in the area. It transpired that a company had a mining licence to do tests. The company – a small operator – then bought land and set up the Bickham Coal Company. By October 2002 Bickham Coal had tabled its review of environmental factors (REF) with the Department of Mineral Resources.

by Tom Pearson

This was an REF to remove a 25,000 tonne bulk coal extract. Also included in the REF was the extraction of up to 250,000 megalitres of water from the Pages River, a tributary of the Hunter River system, at the top of the Hunter River catchment.

The mine site is south of two towns – Murrurundi and Blanford – and below the town of Gundy. When the locals protested Bickham Coal said it would still take the water but drill a hole further south and pour it into an aquifer (subterranean layer of water) after washing the coal.

This has profound implications for the environment, including the level of pollution of the mine water being poured back into the underground system and the flow-on effect to other waterways.

The mine owners then claimed that the aquifer was separate from the river, that it was not connected in any way.

By this time the Bickham Coal Action Group, a local community organisation, had been established and was running a campaign around the issues involved.

The Group enlisted the services of a geologist, who informed them that, as the bulk extract was just 100 metres from the river, the process could lead to the river being diverted down the hole drilled into the aquifer.

The Pages River has its own problems. It has been put under environmental stress over a long period. An unregulated stream

now in a drought stricken area, it is already over-allocated for water usage. So the proposed interference in the aquifer, which actually feeds the river, set alarm bells ringing.

The planned coal extract would create a two-hectare hole that would go deeper than the river. The Bickham Coal Action Group demanded to know why such a huge extract was needed to do a test. The coal from the extract would be sent to Japan to be burnt so as to ascertain its quality.

This scenario made no sense to the local people. It would create another coal mine at the head of the Hunter catchment, next to an unregulated stream that is over-allocated; the creation of a gaping pit deeper than the river with the risk of the river being diverted into the pit; all with the aim of coal exports to Japan.

The local community says simply, "We don't need it".

Further to these crucial questions, the mine company initially claimed that, following the extraction of the sample, it would produce only 25 million tonnes, their argument being that it is only a small, short-term operation that would not have an impact on the river anyhow.

But the coal seam cuts across the Pages River.

Added to this is the struggling economy of the Murrurundi Shire. The Murrurundi township has a population of 900; the Shire altogether has 2000 people. The council supported the mine when it was first proposed, with the hope that it would create some jobs.

The community however, saw it from another angle: over 300 people wrote to the Department of Mineral Resources expressing their concerns about the impact on the environment and 100 Murrurundi residents signed a petition against the project.

The issue also goes beyond the local area. If the river gets diverted or polluted by the mine everyone downstream will be effected. There has been strong opposition from those areas as well.

The Mayor of the nearby Scone Shire has also expressed strong concerns.

Like most rural communities, the area has high unemployment. Some people even travel south to work in the coal mines in the Muswelbrook Shire.

Although coal mines have closed in the area and the coal supplies are not as easily accessible as they once were, coal prices are still strong. From the company's point of view it is a viable economic proposition.

The fact that it is a small company does not exclude the involvement further down the track of a big transnational miner. Quite often the mode of operation for the smaller mines is that once they are set in motion the bigger companies such as Coal and Allied step in and take over the operation.

At the time of writing the whole thing is up in the air. While it was thought that the release of a second REF by the company was imminent, Bickham Coal management has hedged its bets, saying there would be a new REF. It then announced that there would be only more information added to the current REF.

Whatever form it takes, the document will have to be made available for public scrutiny for 28 days. In theory it should address all the concerns raised by the community. That remains to be seen. ☘



Drought-stricken Murrurundi Shire – the mine would further contaminate scarce water supplies.



Want to get into university? First, become the chairman of a transnational tobacco company. Nick Greiner, former NSW Liberal Premier and the current chairman of British American Tobacco in Australia, was last week appointed by the University of Sydney as chair of the Uni's new Graduate School of Government. As official policy the University of Sydney has, for the past 20 years, barred any connection with big tobacco. University chancellor Kim Santow denied there was a corporate agenda in the appointment, saying it "has no connection whatsoever with any tobacco company or any role Mr Greiner may have on the board of such a company". The University's professor of Public Health, Simon Chapman, doesn't see it that way, pointing out that Greiner has the final say on the policies and goals of British American Tobacco. The president of the Public Health Association, Professor Peter Sainsbury, called the appointment "implicit support for the tobacco industry".

In the US and Britain hard questions are being asked about the weapons of mass destruction that were the pretext for war against Iraq. Last week the chief UN weapons inspector, who led the team that searched for months for the weapons and found none, said that the Howard Government appeared to have been "influenced by intelligence that their brethren bought up in the UK and US", evidence that "did not turn out to be very impressive". The words "immoral" and "illegal" come to mind.

Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch are the main beneficiaries of the National Rugby League competition, having divided the game up between themselves after tearing it apart a few years back. The State of Origin series is the most demanding level rugby league is played at, and it brings in tens of millions of dollars in advertising alone. Each of the three-game series grosses more than \$5 million through gate receipts and the sale of items at the ground. Now the Origin players want some of the profits they create, but the powers that be in the League, which is run by Murdoch, have knocked back their pay claim. By way of explanation, Murdoch's hand puppet in charge of the League, David Gallop, said, "There are areas in the game that are neglected."

CAPITALIST HOG(S) OF THE WEEK: are ... Packer and Murdoch. Changes to the cross-media ownership rules that are being pushed by the Howard Government will give them even more power and influence than they already have. Currently Brisbane, Perth, Hobart and Adelaide have only one daily paper, owned by Murdoch. Packer will go after Fairfax, the only other major newspaper corporation and Murdoch will be able to buy television stations as well as own papers in the same cities. Control of information is control of ideas and a massive boon for profits. Fortunately the Senate has held up the legislation so these hogs may not get their way after all.

Opposing intervention in the Solomon Islands

A resolution adopted by the Sydney District Conference of the Communist Party held on Sunday, June 29 condemned the announced decision of the Australian Government to intervene militarily, politically and economically in the sovereign State of the Solomon Islands.

"In this process, the Government is disregarding and violating the Charter of the United Nations and specifically weakening, by its actions, this organisation that was specifically set up to regulate international relations between sovereign states and to preserve peace", said the statement.

"We see the Australian Government's action as an attempt to recolonise the Solomon Islands and subsequently to intervene in the internal affairs of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Island states.

"The foreign policies outlined by Foreign Minister, Alexander

Downer, will inevitably bring Australia into conflict with the overwhelming number of nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and even in Europe.

"This policy represents a major departure from the foreign policies adopted by Australia since WW2 and the establishment of the UN.

"We reject this fundamental foreign policy change and will oppose it in every way possible. It will not enhance Australia's security but undermine it", said the resolution. ☘



Lunch for Cuba
At the
Australia Greek Welfare Society
7 Union Street, Brunswick
(near Sydney Road)

Date: Sunday 27 July **Time:** 1.00-4.00 pm

Cost: \$15/\$12

Lunch served: BYO drinks

Latin American Music

Come join us for a great day

Commemorate the Moncada uprising
Support Cuba

Bookings and Enquiries:

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Organised by the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Proceeds to fund our micro-hydro electric scheme "Almendral"

Out of their own mouths (Part 2) Justifying the unjust

American leaders and the various "think tanks" that provide them with strategic plans to achieve their objective of world domination, often find it hard to justify the unjustifiable. *The Guardian* brings more statements of these institutes that graphically illustrate the thinking behind their theories for "pre-emptive strikes" and military intervention.

See *The Guardian* 25/6/03 for Part 1, of this series. In that issue see also *The Power Brokers*, an article on the institutes and main spokespersons involved, and detailing their government and other connections.

by Anna Pha

"Without a 'clear and present danger' such as the Axis Powers in 1941 or, later, the Soviet Union to coalesce public agreement on the threat, it is difficult to construct a supporting strategy that can be effective either in setting priorities or objectives."

The quote is from a strategy document called *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, which was published by the powerful right-wing think-tank, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).

The JINSA document tackles this question: "In assessing the future utility and applicability of Rapid Dominance, it is crucial to consider the political context in which force is likely to be employed. As we enter the next century, the probability is low that an overriding, massive, direct threat posed by a peer-competitor to the U.S. will emerge in the near term. Without compelling reasons, public tolerance toward American sacrifice abroad will remain low and may even decrease."

"This reluctance on the part of Americans to tolerate pain is directly correlated to perceptions of threat to U.S. interests."

"Americans have always appreciated rapid and decisive military solutions. But, many challenges or crises in the future are likely to be marginal to U.S. interests and therefore may not be resolvable before American political staying power is exhausted."

"Americans prefer not to intervene, especially when the direct threat to the U.S. is ambiguous, tenuous, or difficult to define. Therefore, when intervention is necessary there is likely to be both a political and practical imperative to have allied or international involvement or at least the political cover of the UN, NATO, or appropriate NGOs..."

These words of caution have now been thrown to the winds.

"We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth in defence of our great nation."

Bush and those like the Australian Government that support "pre-emptive strike" and the "failed state" theory have been provided with the causes to justify their actions. They are the "war against terrorism", "weapons of mass destruction" and "regime change" to be used against selected targets defined by "those who are not with us are against us".

Although American propaganda still seeks to convince the world that the US is motivated by benevolent attitudes the reality is different.

Bob Woodward has graphically illustrated the reality in his book *Bush at War* in describing a scene in Afghanistan. He writes: "On February 5, 2002, about 25 men representing three different Special Forces units and three CIA paramilitary teams gathered outside Gardez in Afghanistan..."

"The men stood or knelt on this desolate site in front of a helicopter. An American flag was standing in the background. There was a pile of rocks arranged as a tombstone. One of the men read a prayer. Then he said, 'We consecrate this spot as an everlasting memorial to brave Americans who died on September 11, so that all who would seek to do her harm will know that America will not stand by and watch terror prevail.'"

"We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth in defence of our great nation."

Two approaches

The war hawks at the Pentagon are quite intolerant of different views, even to those that predominate the US State Department.

"There are two world views in conflict about [US] foreign policy. One world view is of process, politeness and accommodation. The other world view is a world view of facts, values and outcomes", says Newt Gingrich the former Republican Speaker of the US House of Representatives and a

rabid war hawk and extreme conservative.

"President Bush clearly represents the latter world view, with his focus on facts, values and outcomes. The State Department, as an institution, and the Foreign Service, as a culture, clearly represents the former, with a focus on process, politeness and accommodation..." (Gingrich, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) transcript April 22, 2003)

"From President Bush's clear choice between two worlds, the State Department had descended into a murky game in which the players were deceptive and the rules were stacked against the United States. The State Department's Communications Program failed during these five months to such a degree that 95 percent of the Turkish people opposed the American [war against Iraq]".

Gingrich goes on to describe the State Department's communications as a failure, "as a result of which the South Korean people regarded the United States as more dangerous than North Korea and a vast majority of French and German citizens favored policies that opposed the United States."

"As the State Department remained ineffective and incoherent, the French launched a worldwide campaign to undermine the American position and make the replacement of the Saddam dictatorship very difficult." (Gingrich, AEI April 22, 2003)

Iraq – US there to stay

When speaking to the public, the US war hawks would have us believe that they are motivated by good intentions towards their victims: "For the first time in decades, the wealth of Iraq will be devoted to the welfare of its people, not to palaces and armies and instruments of repression. Economic development will require the protection of Iraq's natural resources and infrastructure", said Paul Wolfowitz (AEI transcript, April 10, 2003).

"Much has been achieved already but additional efforts are underway to protect Iraq's oil fields and preserve them as a national asset, and to restore oil production as quickly as possible to provide the Iraqi people with the primary source of revenue."

"While the coalition will be involved at the outset, the goal is to have production and marketing responsibility in the hands of a stable Iraqi authority as soon as possible."

Richard Perle, one of the leading ideologues behind the Bush attack on Iraq, is more honest about their real intentions.

When speaking at an AEI forum he said, "Iraq, fortunately, has a continuing revenue stream from the production of oil, which should go a long way toward financing the reconstruction of the country. And whether there will be private financing, to make



US export – an Iraqi baby beside its mother, both killed by US missiles

that money available immediately against future revenues is one way to do it, or by international contributions, I don't know."

"I don't know that there's any judgment on that. But private companies will end up doing the work almost certainly, as there is simply no other way of doing it." (Perle, AEI transcript, March 21, 2003)

While they are talking, the Americans are drawing up Iraq's constitution and handing over oil production to US oil corporations. In the main, US corporations are being given contracts to rebuild the infrastructure they destroyed using the Iraqi people's oil to fund this "aid".

If their occupation is successful, the US can be expected to pull Iraq out of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and put the US dollar back in control. (Iraq had converted to the Euro during Saddam Hussein's rule.)

"We do not want a replay of the [first] Gulf War. This time we must fight for keeps." (Michael Ledeen, *The American Enterprise Magazine*, (AEI) December 2001)

But, "Iraq is not the war"

"And ... [what] I've said from the beginning, is that this is a battle in a longer war. Iraq is not the war. And the war is a regional war, and we cannot be successful in Iraq if we only do Iraq alone. And I think that the terror countries bordering Iraq, namely, Iran and Syria, know that", says Ledeen. (AEI, transcript, March 21, 2003)

Ledeen continues: "I think that the Iranians and the Syrians fully intend to do everything in their power to destabilize our efforts in Iraq once the war is over and once we're in stable positions on the ground. And there are two models

for that. One is Lebanon in the 1980s and Afghanistan today."

"You probably noticed that at the same time the war is going on in Iraq, we have launched many hundreds if not thousands of soldiers in attacks against Iranian-sponsored terrorists in Afghanistan, who are trying to make sure that we don't have success there."

The new crusades

Pulitzer prize-winning Charles Krauthammer confirms it is not just about Iraq. Krauthammer is from the American Enterprise Institute and columnist for the *Washington Post*.

He told the AEI: "I would argue that we have now lived through the 19 months, which stand on an equal plain in their audacity, success and revolutionary nature. The 19 months, of course, are from September 11, 2001, to April 9, 2003, a period which, in responding to an attack out of the blue, this administration has redefined the world, reoriented American foreign policy and put in place a profound new approach..."

"The main reason that we are doing this is for protection of the United States and America at home and abroad."

"Our only hope of eradicating the kind of hatred, enmity and fanaticism which gave us a 9/11 is to see a revolution in the Arab World, and this will not be overnight, but to try to change the cauldron in which that radicalism, anti-Americanism, hatred and fanaticism has been bred. And you start that by democratizing societies, bringing in a decent society, decent education, and I think that is the long-run project. That's the meaning of the war on Iraq." (Krauthammer, AEI April 22, 2003)

"We ought to make the Syrians think that anything is possible. We

Part 2) Justifiable



that order, and the true alternative to the anarchy of the abject failure of the United Nations. (Perle, *The Spectator*, March 29, 2003)

Pre-emption

Krauthammer pushes the concept of pre-emption which has been long practiced by US administrations, but not normally openly declared as policy – well, not until George W came to office.

"[W]e know that we can be attacked out of the blue, in the context of a world where we have democratized the knowledge of how to make and acquire weapons of mass destruction. We cannot afford to wait to be attacked again because if we are attacked again with weapons of mass destruction, the results would be so catastrophic as to be unimaginable. Therefore, we must, necessarily, have a policy of pre-emption."

"Now, the problem is that preemption is an uncomfortable idea, not because of moral or legal reasons. Morally, I think it is unsalable, and in terms of international law, international law is useful in regulating the fishery rights off Newfoundland, but they have nothing to say about matters of war and peace, particularly between civilized states and terrorist states." (Krauthammer, AEI, April 22, 2003)

Krauthammer ignores the Charter of the United Nations that provides in detail how relations between states are to be regulated and international law applied.

"There must also be an appropriate political context that justifies the use of preemptive force, as opposed to less destructive or non-lethal types of sanctions (e.g., responses to terrorism in the case of Libya, invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, exports of WMD to a threatening country such as Iran, the North Korean threat to South Korea and Japan)." (JINSA *Shock & Awe*)

"The struggle against global terrorism is different from any other war in our history. It will be fought on many fronts against a particularly elusive enemy over an extended period of time", warns the strategy document, quoting from a government document, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002.

And when there are no weapons of mass destruction or regime changes to justify intervention there is always the idea of "failed states". Some political or economic instability, some serious conflict between social groups, some ethnic conflict can be used to justify a claim of "failed state".

This is what the Australian Government is using for its intended occupation and re-colonisation of the Solomon Islands. The Australian Government's blueprint is outlined in a report called *Our Failing Neighbour* which was produced by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute – a government-funded "independent" think-tank.

All quotes are available on the organisations' websites. Continued next week. ☺

South Africa: COSATU rejects Terror Bill

In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, governments around the world rushed to pass "Terrorism" legislation through their parliaments. Without exception these laws have greatly impinged upon hard-won democratic rights and processes. Such legislation has now been introduced by the ANC Government into the South African Parliament. The Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – which operates in electoral alliance with the ANC – strongly opposes this "terror" Bill. COSATU issued the following statement on the Bill:

Significantly, it was exactly 48 years ago, on 26 June 1955, that people from all corners of our country came to Kliptown to sign the Freedom Charter. It became the textbook for the liberation struggle in which millions fought and thousands sacrificed their lives.

The Freedom Charter is particularly strong on human rights, declaring: "All shall be equal before the law" and "All shall enjoy Human Rights!" It was drafted when the vicious apartheid state machinery was being strengthened and consolidated, with laws to allow arbitrary arrest, imprisonment without trial, torture and even murder to silence its opponents.

The democratic movement was clear that there must be no such abuse of human rights in the liberated South Africa.

The Freedom Charter demanded that no-one should be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial, or condemned by the order of any Government official. It declared that the law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, organise, meet together, publish, preach, worship and educate their children, and that the privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law.

Many of these rights are now enshrined in our Constitution, which overturned the repressive structures set up under apartheid.

In contrast, the draft Anti-Terrorism Bill conflicts with

virtually every demand in the Freedom Charter's section on democratic rights.

We acknowledge the responsibility and obligation of the Government to give effect to the relevant United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement and African Union's conventions, protocols and resolutions relating to terrorism. The citizens of South Africa have a right to safety and rightly expect the government to protect them from acts of terrorism. We have good grounds for fearing terrorism, as was underscored most recently by the right-wing bombings in Soweto.

In its current form, however, the Anti-Terrorism Bill is likely to erode the human rights established in the Freedom Charter and our Constitution, without adequately targeting the perpetrators of violent acts.

Even the word "terrorism" is highly subjective, emotive and contested. Vervoerd, Vorster and Botha [South Africa's apartheid-era Prime Ministers] all used the threat of "terrorism" to justify their most brutal and repressive laws. Bush and Blair also use the "terrorist threat" to justify their invasion of Iraq. Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel, routinely refers to the leader of PLO, Yasser Arafat, and the struggles of the Palestinians people as "terrorist".

If enacted in its current form the

Bill is likely to make serious inroads into Constitutional rights and freedoms. The broad definition of what constitutes a "terrorist act" poses a serious threat to our hard won democracy, allowing for legitimate mass action by workers or other social movements at some time in the future to be demonised and categorised as "terrorist".

For example the Bill defines any activity that might result in the "disruption of essential public services" as a "terrorist" act. For unions in the public sector, this is a worryingly vague clause. Would the threatened wildcat strike in Johannesburg's emergency services be classed as "terrorism"?

Accordingly, COSATU is bound to reject the Bill as currently drafted. To maintain the democratic gains of the past nine years, it must be fundamentally amended or withdrawn and a new bill presented that would not flout the provisions of the Freedom Charter.

Prior to the enactment of new security legislation, a comprehensive review of existing security legislation should be conducted to assess compliance with the Constitution, the adequacy of existing legislation to deal with legitimate concerns about threats posed to public safety and the extent to which reform is required.

Taking into account the wide ranging human rights implications and political significance of the Bill, we believe that such a review should be conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and should involve a Parliamentary Committee specially set up for that purpose.

Accordingly, we are calling for the withdrawal of the Bill and the suspension of the current Parliamentary process pending the outcome of the proposed review.

www.cosatu.org.za ☺



The freedom charter is strong on human rights – an anti-privatisation rally in South Africa last year

are in a position, after the shock and awe of this war, of influencing the behavior, if not the composition, of regimes in Iran, Syria and elsewhere.

"We ought to use the uncertainty in the region to try to impose changes in behavior on regimes like that in Damascus and leave them wondering and thinking." (Krauthammer, AEI April 22, 2003)

"The common denominator of our enemies in the Middle East is tyranny. The terror masters are all tyrants. So Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, and Iraq are all tyrannies. And I believe until these tyrannies are brought down we will continue to have terrorism." (Ledeen, Fox News Channel interview May 10, 2002)

"The Saudis finance all the terror. The Iranians design it, the Iraqis support it, and the Saudis finance it. And the Saudis are the producers of the basic non-Shiite doctrine.

"There are two schools of Islam, so there are two kinds of terrorism, there's Shiite terrorism and Sunni terrorism. Wahabi terrorism is Saudi, it's a Saudi invention, it's a Saudi product, it's preached in Saudi mosques, it's spread around the world in Saudi textbooks, even in the United States." (Ledeen, Ibid)

"This new century now challenges the hopes for a new world order in new ways. We will not defeat or even contain fanatical terror unless we can carry the war to the territories from which it is launched. This will sometimes require that we use force against states that harbour terrorists, as we did in destroying the Taliban regime in Afghanistan." (Perle, *The Spectator*, March 29, 2003)

The United Nations Perle said, "Is simply not up to the task."

"We are left with coalitions of the willing. Far from disparaging them as a threat to a new world order, we should recognize that they are, by default, the best hope for

India and China deepen ties

The visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to China, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in a decade, has resulted in significant measures to deepen ties between the two giant Asian countries and neighbours.

For the first time, the two countries have signed a joint declaration. Nine agreements were signed covering cross border trade, easing visa restrictions, judicial co-operation, for setting up cultural centres and co-operation in renewable energy resources. The joint declaration on principles for relations and comprehensive co-operation signifies an important stage in the relations between the two countries.

The joint declaration spells out the framework for friendship and co-operation which is to promote the socio-economic development of both countries; maintain peace and stability regionally and globally; strengthen multi-polarity at the international level and to enhance the positive features of globalisation.

The declaration proceeds to set out the principles for co-operative partnership based on the panchsheel principles and states that the common interests of the two sides outweigh their differences.

The two countries are not a threat to each other. This sentence should help extinguish the talk of China being a threat to India's security.

In order to help resolve the border dispute the two sides

decided to appoint a special representative each to provide a political perspective to the overall bilateral relationship to arrive at a framework for a boundary settlement. As part of this decision, Brijesh Mishra, the principal secretary to the Prime Minister and Dai Bingguo, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs have been appointed.

The discussions between the Indian Prime Minister and the Chinese leadership consisting of Premier Wen Jiabao, President Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, Chairman of the Central Military Commission and other leaders displayed the determination of the two sides to pursue strengthening of relations and co-operation.

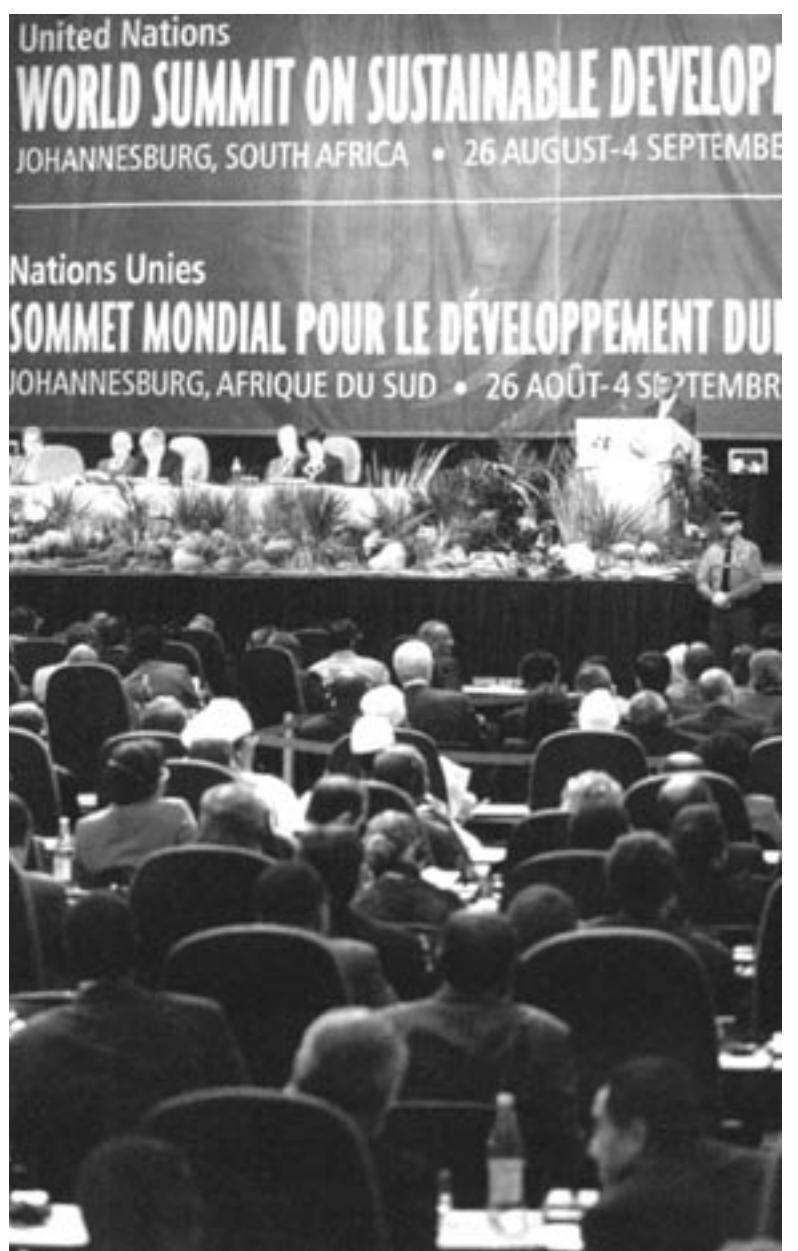
The agreement on cross border trade through the Nathula pass in Sikkim is one such step. While India has always maintained that Tibet is a part of the People's Republic of China, the assertion in the joint declaration that India does not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India should help clear any misunderstanding on this issue. The acceptance by China of border trade through Sikkim is also an acknowledgement of India's concerns on Sikkim.

The most promising outcome of the visit are the vistas of economic co-operation. Last year trade between India and China was worth US\$5 billion and in the first four months of this year alone that trade grew by 70 per cent. Though the basis for this growth has been rather low, it shows the potential for how the two countries can benefit from the complementarities that exist between the two economies. In this connection the Vajpayee visit has led to a joint study group being set up of economists and officials to identify new areas of economic co-operation.

In the context of the present world situation with the growing aggressiveness and unilateralism of the United States in its quest for global hegemony, strengthening of ties between India and China is extremely important.

It will be in India's interests to seriously build upon the initiatives taken during the Vajpayee visit. But for this, the BJP-led Government has to desist from its one-sided pro-American world view. It should realise that India's interests lie in the development of a multi-polar world and to go towards such a situation the growing co-operation and common understanding between India and China is an important element.

People's Democracy Editorial
Communist Party of India
(Marxist) ✪



For the first time India and China have signed a renewable energy agreement

African nations say "No GM crops!"

African nations have challenged mounting pressure as the US Bush administration attempts to force them to accept genetically modified crops.

Faced with a ban on GM products by the European Union, George W Bush went to the World Trade Organisation and filed a formal complaint against the EU saying that it was depriving Africa's starving who could be better fed with GM crops.

African nations strongly disagree, saying that Bush has no right to speak for them and that it had been scientifically proven that genetically modified crops would not solve the problem of hunger.

Amadou C Kanoute, the regional director of the African Office of Consumers International said at a conference in Washington that the real reason for the US claim is that it produces a full two-

thirds of the planet's GM crops and sees Africa as an important market. It is not, he said, so concerned by the starving millions on the continent.

Mr Kanoute added that GM crops have been proven to destroy traditional farming techniques that can lead to further food problems.

Lori Wallach of the NGO Public Citizen, which organised the Washington conference, commented that it was not poverty in Africa that concerned the Bush administration but business considerations on behalf of the US technology and agricultural sector.

In a statement issued by the Southern African Bishop's Conference the notion of a GM

miracle was strongly challenged. "We do not believe that agro-companies or gene technologies will help our farmers to produce the food that is needed in the 21st century", said the statement.

"On the contrary, we think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves."

Along with the EU and other nations representing over half the population of the planet, Zambia has completely rejected any GM crops and has announced that it will double this year's grain harvest of traditional crops, while Mozambique and Zimbabwe have only accepted milled GM corn to avoid GM seeds polluting regional crops. ✪

Solidarity with Korea

WFTU declaration: In accordance with the resolution adopted by the 14th World Trade Union Congress, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) appeals to trade unions and peace forces all over the world to observe a Month of Solidarity with the Workers and People of Korea from June 23 to July 25, 2003.

Peace and security of the workers and people of Korea are threatened by the continuing hostile policies of the US administration which has been maintaining military bases armed with nuclear weapons in South Korea preventing the peaceful reunification of the country in the spirit of the June 15 North South Joint Declaration.

Provocative military exercises are held with threats of a US pre-emptive military attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in gross violation

of international law and the UN Charter.

The UN and the international community should take immediate actions to maintain peace and security in the Korean peninsula by ensuring the removal of US military bases in South Korea.

The Korean peninsula should be declared as a nuclear-free zone. The United States Administration should discard its hostile policy against Korea and make efforts to resolve the pressing issues of Korean reunification. All arbitrary sanctions

imposed by the US and its allies against the DPRK should be lifted immediately.

In the framework of the Month of Solidarity, the WFTU also appeals for the further strengthening of solidarity with the struggle of the working people and trade unions of South Korea for their demands for better wages and working conditions, trade union rights, democratic liberties and especially the immediate release of all imprisoned trade unionists.

Solidarity messages may be sent to:
General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea,
PO Box 333,
Pyongyang, DPRK
fax +850 2 3814427 ✪

Health of US children gets failing grade

In the annual Report Card on Children's Health released by the American Health Foundation, the US received a "D" rating for its children's health, down from a "C" last year.

by H Salari

Here we are, not talking about the plight of hundreds of millions of children who are dying yearly of hunger, diseases, violence and war all around the world – a calamity that is directly related to the greedy acts of imperialism.

But we can clearly see the continuously increasing misery of the children of the US, the leading imperialist country.

A study prepared for Kaiser Permanente by Oakland's Children Now found that large numbers of young people feared for their personal safety. Small children fear death, violence or abuse, while teenagers report that they or their peers are increasingly suicidal.

A Columbia University report shows that child poverty is increasing in the US and one in four children live in poverty.

In Clay County, West Virginia, the majority of people are living under the poverty line and the majority of their children satisfy their hunger with free food provided by their schools, without which they would go to bed hungry.

The US ABC Network News reported last year that 28 percent of Hispanic children and 30 percent of African American children

(about 12 million) live in absolute poverty, hungry and deprived of health care and education.

New York City had a 60 percent increase in the number of homeless people from 2001 to 2002. Every night, about 35,000 homeless people, of which 15,000 are children, line up to spend the night at a shelter, with mice, cockroaches, and fear of violence.

In many states child welfare benefits are being cut to meet budget deficits – Florida, New York, North Carolina and California are examples. Access to Medicare is denied and children are left defenceless against the simplest diseases. Recently, even child foster care funding has been decreased dramatically. And last but not least, subsidised daycare for many children is being cut this year.

We are witnessing a rapid increase in the misery of the people, all around the world, coinciding with the growing aggressiveness and greed of imperialism. This blind system of exploitation hits the most vulnerable – the children – most severely. It is a trend that will continue with the existence of capitalism.
Peoples' Weekly World ✪

USA

Pro-Chavez women's meeting attacked

Two women were physically attacked at a meeting in a Philadelphia church by people from a group of 20 who support the discredited and defeated white racist elite in Venezuela. Having failed to overthrow the elected government there, they attempted violently to censor the truth about Venezuela today.

Last month's meeting, "Venezuela Report Back – One Year After an Uprising Reversed the Coup", was organised by the Global Women's Strike.

The disrupters, stationed within and outside of the Tabernacle Church, harassed the multi-racial crowd, which included several older women, a wheelchair user, youth, as well as church members.

"We in the US have a hard enough time finding out what is really happening in Venezuela, since the mainstream press is biased against President Chavez.

"Though [President Chavez was] elected by a landslide, the US Government is hostile to his refusal to privatise oil or allow the oil revenue to be siphoned to the US, and because he encourages grassroots people taking charge of their own society – the kind of democracy we in the US have not known for many moons", said event co-ordinator, Phoebe Jones Schellenberg of the Global Women's Strike and the Germantown (Quaker) Meeting Peace & Social Concerns Committee which endorsed the event.

"When people got together to hear what we saw on our April visit, the first anniversary of the popular reversal of the coup, we were physically attacked.

"They behaved just like their counterparts in Venezuela, to prevent US people finding out what is being accomplished there, and what we can learn from it."

Despite Venezuela supplying 14 percent of US oil needs, 80 percent of Venezuelans live in extreme poverty. People have organised themselves into neighbourhood groups, co-operatives and unions to organise for the housing, education and food they need.

Venezuelan Dozthor Zurlent, one of the speakers, said the opposition is increasingly desperate and violent, having twice now failed to overthrow President Chavez who has emerged from the latest failed attempt – a so-called strike – stronger than ever.

Los Angeles-based Margaret Prescod of Global Women of Color WinWages, who also reported on her Venezuelan visit, said: "The attackers were laughing when I spoke as a woman of African

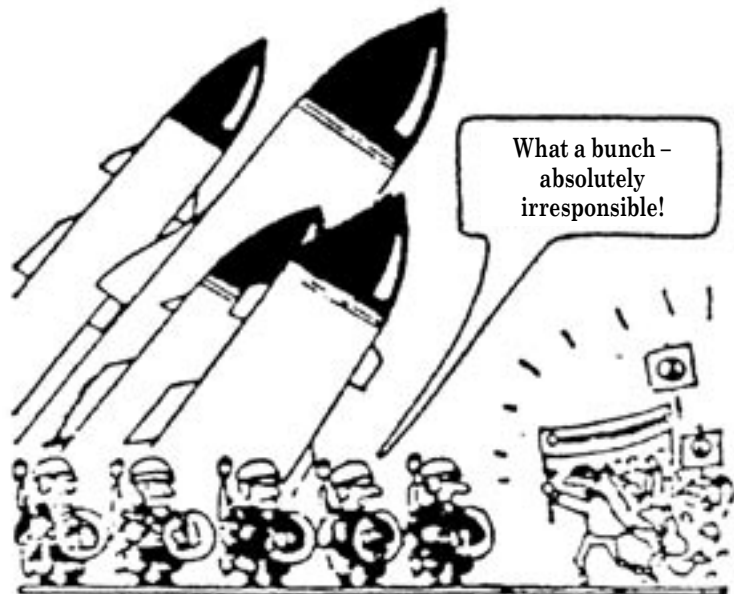
descent about the impact of slavery. They attempted to silence a man of African descent who opposed them in the meeting.

"This is the crude racism of the pre-civil rights movement, when Black people needed security outside meetings to protect ourselves.

The meeting launched the acclaimed video, *Venezuela – a 21st Century Revolution*, featuring grassroots Venezuelan women and men, as well as the head of the Women's Development Bank and the head of the oil workers' trade union, all speaking for themselves.

The new video shows the role women have played: they were key to reversing the coup in April 2002, when they poured onto the streets bringing the whole community with them and working with grassroots soldiers to get back their President and constitution – that recognises housework as productive, entitling housewives to health care and a pension, that gives land and housing to rural and homeless people beginning with single mothers, and that promotes pay equity between women and men.

Just one day before the meeting, approximately 30 supporters of President Chavez were shot by opposition police in Caracas. **Phila Crossroads Women's Center (abridged)** ☘



A wind of protest sweeping Europe

From Paris to Berlin, through Vienna and Athens, Madrid, Rome and Lisbon, hundreds of thousands of wage-earners have taken to the streets to fight the plans of their respective governments to undermine the right of wage earners to a pension.

"Albeit with local variations, plans are being put into effect aimed at postponing the retiring age, reducing benefits and giving strong incentives to the creation of investment-based pension funds, subject to all the whims of the stock exchange", nine European left parties warned in a joint declaration issued last month.

The declaration was signed by leaders of: French Communist Party, Austrian Communist Party, Communist Refoundation Party (Italy), Portuguese Communist Party, Party of Italian Communists, Left Party of Sweden, United Left (Spain), Synaspismos (Greece), and Democratic Left Party (Germany).

The EU governments and

employers depict the situation as being disastrous in the long run, and present their "liberal" remedies as the only way to check the scourge of an ageing population.

The real motives for the pension changes are:

- * the obsession with lowering wage costs, the refusal to develop and promote job security, training and wages, which are, nevertheless, the basis of pension systems based on sharing;

- * to expand the financial market capitalising the pensions funds so as to increase the paper profitability of capital;

- * to lower public and social expenditure, strait-jacketed in the Stability Pact, to protect the independence of the Central European Bank so that it can be made exclusively to serve the rate of profit.

No consideration was given to any alternative aimed at maintaining the pay-as-you-go pension system.

The governments ignore the question of reforming the system of the employers' social security contributions and their rates in such a way as to give incentives to firms that invest in more stable and qualified jobs, more training and better wages.

"We declare our complete solidarity with wage-earners and their trade union organisations that are opposing these catastrophic measures and are proposing alternatives that strengthen the wage-earners' retirement rights.

"Everywhere, we are acting and will act to make the governments of Europe renounce this retreat from civilisation. We will carry forward these proposals in the European election campaigns in 2004.

"Because another Europe is possible, because the word solidarity is not, in our view, obsolete", the statement concluded. ☘

Road map leads to free trade zone

Just after the dramatically-performed "road map" proclamations, more blood was spilled than in any other week during the past 30 months of the Palestinian Intifada uprising against the Israeli military occupation. This increased bloodshed from the Israeli military and terrorist actions, plus the motives of Sharon's government and their "greater-Israel" policies, have called into question the legitimacy of the road map.

by Hans Lebrecht

Astonishingly, what has been almost the entirely left out of the road map equation is George W Bush's message, calling for the establishment of a US-Middle East "Free Trade Zone." This zone would be dominated by US monopoly corporations, and set-up to oust the European Union, particularly Germany and France, from their current position of being the main trading partners in the region. Bush's real aim is to strengthen the "New World Order" globalisation policy in the interests of the leading capitalist power and its big corporations.

According to the Agence France-Presse, Bush's "move to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is part of a wider policy to redraw the political map of the Middle East

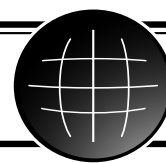
after the US victory in Iraq and his war on terrorism."

In addition to moving toward a regional free-trade area, similar to one contemplated for Central and South America, the US would also lobby on behalf of some Middle Eastern countries that want to join the World Trade Organisation, according to CNN.

Although Bush's words about "free trade" bringing peace and democracy to the region sound nice, the reality faced by many workers around the world is that "free trade" means more exploitation, war and insecurity with the erosion of wages, jobs, workers rights and environmental protection.

Terry Albano contributed to this article.

People's Weekly World
www.pww.org ☘



Global briefs

USA: The US air force is investigating whether there may be radioactive waste underneath more than 80 past and present air bases around the United States. The air force responded to a written question from a reporter by saying that burial sites would not pose a health risk if undisturbed. But many of the sites have already been approved for public use. One of the sites, in Atwater, California, hosts a federal prison. Previously, the site held munitions that the Air Force Safety Centre suspects included nuclear arms. A 1972 internal air force survey named 46 bases where radioactive waste was known to exist. The air force, however, said that it had become aware of the waste a few years ago.

AFGHANISTAN: The Taliban are calling on the army and the police to join it in its campaign against President Hamid Karzai and United States forces. Taliban guerrillas and sympathisers are growing in number and confidence in the south and southeast of the country. The police and army numbers are dwindling because of unpaid salaries since the arrival of Mr Karzai shortly after the fall of Taliban in late 2001.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: On June the 24th, Antigua and Barbuda made its first request to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), for the establishment of a panel to look at the United States' actions regarding the cross-border supply of betting and gambling services.

McDONALDS is asking its meat suppliers around the world to phase out the use of antibiotics in animals by the year 2004 over concerns that it lessens the drugs' effectiveness in humans. "McDonald's is asking producers that supply over 2.5 billion pound (more than one billion kilos) of chicken, beef and pork annually to take actions that will ultimately help protect public health", a statement from a senior vice-president said. The company seems to have embarked on a big advertising campaign to prove that its product is "healthy". McDonalds had one of its worst years on record last year. It shut 630 stores and in the final three months of 2002 lost almost \$515 million – its first ever quarterly loss.

BULGARIA: US weapon makers, including Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Systems and General Dynamics Corp, are ready to profit from Bulgaria's accession to NATO. The American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria announced that Bulgaria had plans to spend US\$1 billion to equip its army along the standards of NATO in the next five years and US companies could offer it "advantageous schemes of military procurement". While the present rulers of Bulgaria seem to be able to find the money for weapons they do not need, a total of 47 per cent of the Bulgarians live below the poverty line. This trend is common to all Eastern European countries, where the number of people who live below the minimum existence level reached a staggering 97 million.

Some proposals regarding a People's Budget

"A people's budget" (*Guardian*, 11-6-03) proposes a wide range of policies that can provide the basis for discussions with people and organisations willing to join forces with the CPA to work for the election of a People's Government.

There will be many who won't agree that these policies "are realistic". For example, take the cost of providing a free university education at between \$40,000 and \$150,000 per student. In 2002, 170,000 students gained entry to university. If we add the estimated 17,000 who failed to gain entry (and not count those who are studying at private universities) the cost of getting all of these students through university would fall

somewhere between \$7 billion and \$28 billion.

A newly elected People's Government would have difficulty finding this sort of money in addition to financing primary and secondary education, TAFE, health, housing and social welfare, not to mention the huge amounts of investment needed to create jobs.

A policy of free education from cradle to grave could only be adopted and gradually implemented by a People's Government after it has been in power for some time and the sources of income are not restricted to taxation, whether it is income tax, corporate tax or the GST.

True, the CPA is proposing the return to public ownership of enterprises once owned by the government. This radical proposal is not realistic in present-day political conditions and can only be achieved by a People's Government that would agree to adopt this CPA policy.

The mere assertion that the

policies "are realistic" will not be sufficient to persuade people and their organisations to join forces to fight for a People's Government which would then implement them.

At present people are not rallying in great numbers to join or support the CPA. They do not consider the CPA to be an effective instrument of change and prefer the Greens or to be independent.

The points in the CPA draft budget, that are its specific contribution to the struggle for change and that can rally the working people of Australia to support it, are the general principle that "the public sector is central to any budget that is going to tackle economic development and job creation" and the call for a national investment policy.

The CPA needs to do some work in this area, work out where the money can come from right now, and how it could be invested effectively to create jobs.

A National Development Fund could be established with funds coming from the profits of public income-producing enterprises still in the hands of the government, superannuation funds and increased company tax.

These funds could then be invested in areas that would not only create jobs but would also strengthen the Australian economy. Investment as also all so-called government "help" to industry should be in the form of equity and not in the form of hand-outs.

This means that the public sector could consist of joint enterprises. If the Chinese can do it successfully, there is no reason why we should not be able to cope with the economic and political implications of such a step.

Which brings up another important point. The CPA proposes that a People's Government would "encourage the participation of people in their own government by

creating community and neighbourhood committees".

This proposal should be extended and brought forward. There should also be action committees in factories and workplaces and they should be established immediately by the alliance formed to work together to elect a People's Government.

And a final point. I object to a People's Government subsidising the rich to get a free education, particularly as the resources in the public schools severely hampers students coming from families on low incomes in their endeavours to matriculate.

I propose a people's budget should also adopt a scheme charging fees. Students would be means-tested. The funds gained from those able to pay would then be used to provide scholarships for the needy.

Bob Saltis
Adelaide, SA

Sydney

Exhibition Isle of Refuge

Highlights the plight of asylum seekers in detention centres in Australia and the South Pacific.

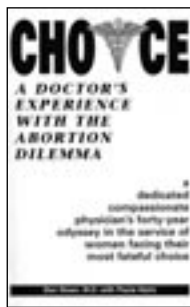
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until 19 July

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Gordon Bennett Watch Tower 2002

Bookshelf



Choice. A doctor's experience with the Abortion dilemma \$16 (p&p \$3)
By Don Sloan MD

Since 1992, America has witnessed a rash of violence toward abortion providers and clinics, including bombings and shootings that left two doctors, a nurse, and a clinic receptionist in different parts of the country dead and many others wounded. Still others have been forced to live and work under siege, behind razor wire and protected by armed guards, operating under persistent threats. As a result, the number of professionals willing to provide abortion services has been dwindling. As a result, there is a rash of newborns left in dumpsters or toilets, often by teenagers. Don Sloan has spent over 30 years in New York City as an obstetrician and gynaecologist, as well as a sex and marital therapist. He offers facts and insight in a candid, moving account of the case for choice.

Orders to SPA Books, 65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. Payment by cheque, money order or Credit Card (give the name on the card, the number, the type and the expiry date).

Christian terrorist

The man accused of bombing two abortion clinics, a gay nightclub, and an Olympic celebration in Atlanta wasn't just a madman allegedly acting out of rage. Police and specialists on religious hate crime in the United States believe that he was moved to act by his long embrace of a radical Christian movement that holds Jews, blacks, and gays to be less than human.

Rudolph reads the same Bible as the average worshiper in the pew on Sunday morning, but he was a member of a loosely knit congregation whose creed leads to violence, whose interpretation of God's word allegedly drove him to set off bombs and then flee into the North Carolina mountains.

"Eric Rudolph was quite clearly driven by wildly extreme readings of theology", said Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center. "He was essentially religiously driven."

Potok, whose centre in Montgomery, Alabama, tracks the nation's 708 known hate groups, has had his ear to a phone since Rudolph's arrest on May 31 behind a Save-A-Lot grocery store in Murphy, North Carolina. He's been fielding 40 calls a day from reporters wanting to understand Rudolph's religious upbringing and motivation.

Rudolph, 36, has had a long association with the Christian Identity movement, which proclaims that whites are God's chosen people. In the early 1980s,

Rudolph's mother, Patricia, took him to live with the Church of Israel, a Missouri congregation that espoused the Christian Identity ideology.

Potok said the group's estimated 50,000 adherents generally believe that Jews are descendants of Satan and that people of colour are subhuman. Those who believe in Christian Identity – it's more a belief system than an organised group, said Potok – consider abortion to be a Jewish plot to destroy the white race. They believe that homosexuality is a "Jewish-inflicted perversion", said Potok.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, Rudolph – whose former sister-in-law said he cultivated and smoked pot – would watch "Cheech and Chong" comedies while getting high and scream epithets about Jews.

He also wrote an essay in high school claiming the Holocaust never took place.

Later, he became a follower of Christian Identity leader Nord Davis Jr, who lived in Andrews, near Murphy. Before his death in 1997, Davis was involved in training militia and publishing anti-Semitic and anti-gay literature.

The *Washington Post* reported that federal investigators said that Rudolph also made contact over the years with another racist, extremist group, the Idaho-based Aryan Nations.



These days, said Potok, Jews have replaced blacks as the primary enemy of extremist groups.

Rudolph isn't the first to hide his hatred behind the banner of a particular religion.

Loy Witherspoon, professor emeritus of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, cited the Ku Klux Klan and its violent mix of racism and Christianity. He also spoke of Muslim terrorists who pervert the Koran for political gain.

Witherspoon, ordained in the United Methodist Church, said that "Christian terrorist" sounds like an oxymoron. But that's what can happen, he said, when someone pulls out one Bible verse and uses it to fuel a narrow political agenda.

Witherspoon teaches his students to try to understand all of Scripture, to put it into context, to

embrace what he calls "a grander vision of God".

Terrorists who act in the name of their version of God?

"People get caught up in these groups", said Witherspoon, "and become convinced".

Rudolph, now in an Alabama jail awaiting trial, still has a following.

One website calls itself the Christian Gallery News Service. It features grotesque pictures purporting to show the body parts of aborted babies. The site speculates that authorities in Birmingham are not adequately protecting Rudolph in retribution for the death of an off-duty officer in one of the bombings.

Within hours of the arrest, the Reverend Patrick Garrett of Murphy Church of God said there was little sympathy for Rudolph's violent tactics. But there was sympathy for his condemnation of abortion

and homosexuality. He added there might have been some around town whose sympathy led them to help Rudolph elude capture for five years.

Many others, though, want no part of the man, his beliefs, or what he is charged with doing in the name of those beliefs. When Rudolph first took flight in the mountains five years ago, the Reverend Alan Wildsmith of Murphy Presbyterian Church joined other local pastors in a public statement condemning violence.

Today, with Rudolph behind bars and the world trying to make sense of what he is accused of doing and why, Wildsmith's conviction hasn't waned. Murder in the name of God is still murder.

"I do feel he's hiding behind the cloak of religion", said Wildsmith. "It has no part in Christianity."

Internet Anti-Fascist

Rob Gowland
is on leave
– Culture & Life
will return next
week.

**ABC & SBS
public television
programs**

**Sun July 6 ~
~ Sat July 12**

Henri Cartier-Bresson is truly a "man of lights", in every sense of the phrase. At 92 years of age, the eye and word of the master photographer are still very acute. The Masterpiece documentary *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Just Plain Love* (Sunday 9.30pm, SBS) profiles this most prestigious photographer, a rare testimony on one who accepted the challenge, for once, to stand in front of the camera. He coined the phrase "the decisive moment" to describe what he tries to achieve in his pictures, which are mostly shot with a minimum of preparation and a maximum spontaneity.

Born in 1908, Henri Cartier-Bresson studied painting with André Lhote in the late 1920s and made a serious commitment to photography in the early 1930s. He returned to Spain in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War to make a documentary film on hospitals in Republican Spain.

In 1940 he was captured by the Germans, and he spent three years in prisoner-of-war camps before escaping. He then worked with the Paris underground, and filmed a documentary on the homecoming of French prisoners of war.

In 1946, Cartier-Bresson returned to the United States to complete a "posthumous" exhibition which the Museum of Modern Art had begun in the belief that he had disappeared in the war.

With Robert Capa, David Seymour and others he founded the renowned photography agency Magnum in 1947. In 1966 he left Magnum, and has since devoted himself to drawing and painting.

In 1973 the Menil Foundation of Houston commissioned

Cartier-Bresson to go through his lifework and make a choice of his best photographs. Complete sets of the 385 photographs that he selected are in the collection of the Menil Foundation, Houston; the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Fine Arts University of Osaka, Japan.

"To photograph is, in the same instant and in a fraction of a second, to recognize a fact and to organize rigorously the visually perceived forms that express and signify this fact ... to place head, heart and eye along the same line of sight", says Henri Cartier-Bresson.

When the Taliban was ousted in 2001, the women of Afghanistan who had all suffered under house arrest for five years believed their living nightmare was over. But uncertainty remains.

Canadian journalist Sally Armstrong reports on the lives of four women and one young girl as they pursue their dreams of liberation in the CBC documentary *Daughters of Afghanistan* (Tuesday at 8.30pm, SBS).

Armstrong, author of *Veiled Threat: The Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan*, was one of the first writers to document the stories of Afghan women during the Taliban's regime.

A year after the US began their bombing and ten months after the naming of a provisional government Armstrong returns to find out how women's lives have changed since the Taliban left power and looks at what still needs to be done.

The documentary begins with Dr Sima Samar, a woman who thumbed her nose at the Taliban. She risked death by defying the Taliban's demand that she close her schools for girls and health clinics for women.

Recently appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Women's Affairs in the new government, she takes us inside the corridors of power where she is forced to walk a political tightrope.

We also meet Soghra a single mother of seven, whose harrowing tale of survival is both inspiring and shocking; Hamida, a gutsy school principal who is determined to lead her students to powerful posi-

tions within the community; and Camellah, the quintessential Afghan woman, who knows instinctively that the rules of her country make her a sex slave to her husband. And finally Lima, a young girl who has already lost her childhood to the war that ravished her village.

How many Australians would know that the first Australian representative sporting team to travel overseas was black? It was the 1860s and 13 Aboriginal cricketers forged a place for themselves in the history of Australia – but an opportunity to harmonise black and white relations was lost.

A Fine Body of Gentlemen (True Stories, Thursday 8.10pm SBS) looks at the three-year odyssey of these sportsmen, their love of the game of cricket and at the white men who encouraged their skills. Their great adventure saw them challenge and play most teams in the western districts of Victoria and then go on to play and win in Melbourne and Sydney against the best white teams of the day.

In 1868, the team travelled to England and were feted by the English aristocracy, played and dined with the best English cricket teams and were lionised by some of the English press. The team became renowned for their style, skill, attitude and personality and presence both on and off the field.

On their return to Australia the team was confronted by the introduction of laws forbidding Aborigines to travel out of their designated areas without written government approval. The game has since withered and almost died as a sport taken up by Aboriginal people and today there is not one Aboriginal cricket club.

A Fine Body of Gentlemen features interviews with descendants of English cricketers the Marquis of Anglesey, the Viscount Downe, Major Crofton of Her Majesty's Household Brigade (members of which played the Aboriginal team at Lords) and descendants of two of the black cricketers, Vicky and Ivor Cousins and Jack Kennedy, great-great-grandson of the legendary Dick-a-Dick.

Also featured are interviews with descendants of sheepstation owners, on whose properties the



A man of lights (Henri Cartier-Bresson: *Just Plain Love*)

Aboriginal players first learned the game.

Rare and fascinating archival photographs, etchings, paintings and artefacts add insight to an almost forgotten event in 19th century Australian history.

The Demon Fault (About Us, SBS, 8.30pm Friday) is Elizabeth Tadic's fascinating documentary on the relationships between small communities and their heritage, and big companies.

For many years stories have existed of a curse on the gold in the Timbarra Plateau of Tenterfield, Northern NSW, but now a gold mine has commenced operation in the pristine wilderness and the community is thrown into chaos as land owners, activists, local leaders and the mining company commence war over whether the mine will continue operation.

Bronwyn Petrie, a landowner on the doorstep of the mine, supports its activities in a drought stricken region. She takes a hard line with the protesting greenies and actively campaigns to keep them off her land. However, along with an extraordinary twist in events her allegiances are suddenly changed.

The activists she campaigns

against are engaged in their own renegade protests including road blockades and reconnaissance missions into surrounding bushland. Karen Reilly has taken time out of her environmental studies course to set up base camp and begin the protest. Eventually, faced with the futility of the cause, she abandons it and heads home.

As the battle ensues in the forests of Tenterfield, scruffy bush lawyer Al Oshlack has taken the fight to the law courts of NSW. In his pin-stripe suit, sneakers and ponytail, he is prosecuting various parties for the poisoning of waterways and destruction of habitat and sacred Aboriginal land.

Meanwhile, another local landowner, Peter Stanford, is driving around doing his own water testing and fighting to preserve the precious resource.

Intimidation, double-dealing and activist protests slow the mine's operation until torrential rain finally shuts it down. But now the surrounding area is threatened with a flood of cyanide deposits and Bronwyn Petrie's cattle are threatened with poisoning. Another mining company buys the site but operations are not recommenced. ☘



ALEIDA GUEVARA

Aleida Guevara is Che Guevara's eldest daughter. She is a Cuban-based pediatrician who has served as an international doctor in both Nicaragua and Angola in the 1980s. She has emerged as a prominent figure in the anti-globalisation movement, and will be speaking in Australia for the first time.

"Che Guevara, War and the Fight for Global Justice"

Sydney: Saturday 5th July 7pm

Eastern Avenue Auditorium

University of Sydney, City Road Entrance

Entry by donation \$6

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Phone: (02) 9212 6855

Fax: (02) 9281 5795

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Sydney
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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

July 4

THE RISE OR DEMISE OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

Humphrey McQueen, author, commentator;

Ian Bickerton, School of History Uni NSW

July 11

THE US FREE TRADE AGREEMENT. WILL IT THREATEN

AUSTRALIA'S INDEPENDENCE?

Pat Randal, Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Convenor AFTINET;

Richard Harris, Head of Australian Screen Directors Association;

Jose Borghino, Australian Society of Authors

July 18

MODERNISATION OF CHINA – THE WAKING PANDA

Hans Heindrichske, Ass Prof Uni NSW,

Chinese & Indonesian Studies

David Goodman, Director International Studies, UTS

Peter King, Dept of Govt, Sydney Uni

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

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

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

www.politicsinthepub.org

Provocation disguised as retaliation

Why would the Israeli Government led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon attempt to assassinate a leader of a major Palestinian resistance movement just days after the start of a new US-sponsored "peace process"? After all, wouldn't such a move guarantee a new round of attacks inside Israel? And together, couldn't these developments signal the end of Bush's "road map" before the journey had even gotten underway?

by Richard Becker

On June 4, President George W Bush had flown to Aqaba, Jordan, to meet with Sharon and the new Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas. The meeting was heralded as the beginning of a new day for the Middle East.

Bush's "road map" was unveiled in the aftermath of the US military victory and occupation of Iraq. In the first two-and-a-half years of his presidency, Bush had refused to speak to any PNA leaders, while meeting on eight occasions with Sharon.

The US decision to open new negotiations now was based on two factors.

On the one hand the Palestinian resistance has not been broken, despite overwhelming Israeli repression backed by the US. On the other, the defeat of Iraq has weakened the Arab world as a whole and further isolated the Palestinians, as well as the Arab states which are resisting US domination of the region.

The "road map" offers very little to the Palestinians while demanding that they make enormous concessions, concessions viewed by many Palestinians as constituting the termination of their national cause.

The Palestinian "state" supposedly agreed to by Sharon and Bush would emerge in 2005. But Sharon's office has leaked maps of the "state" that it envisions to the Israeli media. It is comprised of four pieces of disconnected territory; about half of the West Bank and Gaza. The West Bank and Gaza were conquered by Israel in the 1967 war, and together make up only 22 percent of historic Palestine.

Sharon stands for Israeli domination of all of historic Palestine. His position remains unchanged from those expressed in a July 21, 2000, interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, several months before he became Prime Minister.

In the interview, Sharon called for Israel to "retain greater Jerusalem, united and undivided ... under full Israeli sovereignty". This refers to the Palestinian Old City and all of the surrounding areas that Israel illegally annexed after the 1967 war.

"Israel will retain under its full control sufficiently wide security zones - in both the East and West. The Jordan Valley, in its broadest sense, as defined by the Allon Plan,

will be the eastern security zone of Israel."

In July 2000, Sharon called for large areas of the illegally occupied West Bank to be annexed. Today, his government is building a 200-mile-long militarised wall through the West Bank, surrounding the main Palestinian populated areas.

"Jewish towns, villages and communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as well as access roads leading to them ... will remain under full Israeli control", Sharon continued in the 2000 interview. "Judea and Samaria" is the Israeli settler name for the West Bank.

"Israel does not accept under any circumstances the Palestinian demand for the right [of refugees] to return. Israel bears no moral responsibility for the refugees' predicament."

"... Israel must continue to control the underground fresh water aquifers in western Samaria [the West Bank] ... The Palestinians are obligated to prevent contamination of Israel's water resources".

"All the territories under control of the Palestinian Authority will be demilitarised. The Palestinians will not have an army, only a police force. Israel will maintain complete control of the whole air space over Judea, Samaria and Gaza."

With only 6.5 million people, Israel possesses the world's fourth or fifth most powerful military, thanks to the unparalleled support it receives from the Pentagon.

Why Sharon agreed

The only change in Sharon's position since his July 2000 interview is that now he is willing to say the words "Palestinian state". Even this came as a big shock to many in his extreme right-wing government and its popular base. A heated exchange took place inside the Israeli Government before acceptance of the "road map" was narrowly approved.

Why would Sharon now agree to even a truncated Palestinian state? First, there was heavy pressure from Washington. The Bush administration is seeking to use the conquest of Iraq as a springboard for the reorganisation of the entire Middle East.

The dismantling of the Palestinian Resistance is seen as a necessary pre-condition for the extension of Washington's hegemony



Sharon, Bush and Abbas - their road map offers little to Palestinians

over the Middle East. The "road map" is conceived of by the administration as a means to liquidate the Palestinian struggle. Sharon, like all Israeli leaders, knows that directly defying Washington is not advisable, particularly given the immense and indispensable aid that flows to Israel every year from the US.

Secondly, if the "road map" process goes forward, Sharon intends to annex half of the West Bank and to relegate the Palestinians to disconnected chunks of land, surrounded by Israeli military power. Under such circumstances, the Palestinians would in reality become "self-governing" labour colonies for Israeli big business.

Sharon sheds Israeli blood

Sharon has long been practised in the art of derailing peace negotiations, while making it appear that the other side is to blame. Or, at least in making it appear that way to the US public, the only foreign opinion that really matters to Israeli leaders.

Just days after the Aqaba summit, the Israeli military carried out an attempted assassination by missile of Dr Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, leader of the political wing of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

The attack on Rantisi was supposedly "retaliation" for an attack on Israeli occupation troops at the Erez Crossing in Gaza. In the battle that followed, five Israeli troops and five Palestinian fighters had been killed. Resisting occupation forces

by armed means is legal under international law.

Rantisi has long been the primary political spokesperson for Hamas, and has lived openly in Gaza. This was the first known targeting of Rantisi by the Israeli military and secret police, who have assassinated hundreds of Palestinians in the past three years.

The timing of the hit on Rantisi, which had to have been approved by Sharon, is more than suspect.

The assassinations of Palestinian leaders in the past have invariably been followed by retaliation attacks in the streets of Israeli cities. Killing or attempting to kill a Hamas leader of Rantisi's stature, Sharon knew, would quickly be followed by an attack inside Israel, and the wait was not a long one.

The next day, June 11, a bus bomb in Jerusalem killed 17 Israelis and wounded more than 70. The following days saw several more deadly Israeli missile attacks in Gaza. In the 10 days after the June 4 summit, more than 60 people were killed and hundreds wounded, the majority Palestinian.

Why would Sharon want to see Israeli blood shed? Because he well knows that Palestinian casualties by themselves are never sufficient for racist US officials and media to declare that the peace process has been aborted. "Derailing the peace process" requires Israeli casualties, and Sharon was only too glad to accommodate.

A main Israeli tactic was called "retaliation". In response to recently expelled Palestinians coming across the borders back into their homeland, the Israeli army (IDF) would carry out large-scale attacks and massacres.

"Retaliation" was really provocation; the intent was to get Jordan or Egypt to react militarily to the massacres, which could then be used by Israel as a pretext for a new war of conquest.

"Major Ariel ('Arik') Sharon, the Israeli officer who came to embody the 'retaliatory policy,' was placed in charge of the new Unit 101, designed especially for such actions.

"On October 14, 1953, Unit 101 attacked Qibya, a small border village, and wiped out its population of more than 60 people. Many of the villagers were burned alive inside their homes. There were no IDF casualties." (From *Righteous Victims*, Benny Morris, Knopf Pub., 1999, New York, pp. 277-8)

Sharon was then the "favourite officer" of Israeli General Moshe Dayan, later Defence Minister, who was a major proponent of the "retaliation" policy.

The Israeli Government continued with this policy leading up to the 1956 Suez war, when, in alliance with the British and French imperialists, they temporarily conquered the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula.

Bush, the Democrats & Sharon

The motivation for the attempted assassination of Rantisi was so transparent that even Bush issued a mild criticism of the Israeli action as "troubling".

Leading Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, issued a criticism, too - not of Sharon, but of Bush. Thirty-four Democrats signed a letter to the President saying that they were "deeply disturbed" by his criticism of Israel.

By that time, the White House had changed its tune, as well, and issued calls for the wiping out of Hamas and the entire Palestinian Resistance, whom it labels "terrorists".

Virtually the entire spectrum of the Palestinian Resistance have joined together in rejecting the "road map" and pledge to continue the struggle.

Elias Rashmawi, a spokesperson for the Free Palestine Alliance-US, said of the plan: "The road map is the ultimate formulation by the US to fully end all forms of resistance and fragment the Palestinian national unity.

"In reality, this is a 'security plan' designed to destroy resistance on all fronts".

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Communist Party of Australia

Central Committee:
General Secretary: Peter Symon
President: Hannah Middleton
Australian Marxist Review:
Executive Editor: Hannah Middleton
65 Campbell St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: (02) 9212 6855 Fax: (02) 92815795
Sydney District Committee:
Rob Gowland, 65 Campbell St,
Surry Hills 2010 Phone: (02) 9212 6855
Newcastle Branch: 303 Hunter St
Phone: ah (02) 4926 1752

Wollongong Branch:
Leanne Lindsay
PO Box 276 Corramal 2518
Phone (02) 4225 1339
Riverina: Geoff Lawler
PO Box 1016 Wagga 2650
Phone: (02) 6921 4316
Fax: (02) 6921 6873
Victorian State Committee:
Andrew Irving PO Box 3 Room 0
Trades Hall Lygon St Carlton South 3053
Ph: (03) 9639 1550 Fax: (03) 9639 4199

Brisbane Branch:
David Matters
PO Box 2148 Salisbury East 4107
Phone: (07) 3398 9623
South Australian State Committee:
Marie Lean
Room 5, 1st floor, 149 Flinders St,
Adelaide 5000 Ph: (08) 8232 8200
West Australian Branch:
Vic Williams
5B Jemerson St Willagee Perth 6156
Phone: (08) 9337 1074

Website: <http://www.cpa.org.au> Email: cpa@cpa.org.au