



CPA 11th National Congress

The Party for the Future holds course

“The future of humanity and the planet requires a radical change of policies and political direction. Our goal is the creation of a society that will resolve the problems inherent in capitalism – war, exploitation, environmental destruction, oppression, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, racism and injustice,” CPA General Secretary Dr Hannah Middleton told delegates and guests at the opening of the Party’s 11th National Congress.

“The old system has failed again and again while socialist China, Cuba and Vietnam lead the way in human, economic and environmental responsibility. Socialism is essential for our survival, for our future. That is why we call the Communist Party *The Party for the Future.*”

The failure of capitalism and the need for socialism was a recurring theme during the Congress which was held in Sydney from October 2-5.

The opening was a resounding success. CPA President Vinnie Molina set the scene welcoming guests and delegates. Well known Aboriginal activist Judy Chester welcomed delegates and guests to Country. She recalled the consistent role that the Communist Party has played in supporting Indigenous Australians; the old CPA was the first political party to take up the struggle. She urged comrades not to let up in their support.

Guests included diplomatic representatives from China, Cuba, Vietnam and Venezuela; representatives of fraternal parties in Lebanon and Iraq, the Search Foundation, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Australian Cuba Friendship Society, Maritime Unions Socialist Activities Association, the Honduran resistance, trade unions and individuals from the Latin American, Greek, Arab and other communities.

Ovideo Orellana whose family

originally came from Guatemala, and the young Chilean singer of rising fame, Atilio Villegas, treated the gathering to political songs from their respective homelands.

There were two, very moving and powerful poetry readings. Xanthoula Sgouris read a poem by Greek poet Yiannis Ritsos while Kylie Salisbury read *Hold To Your Course* by communist veteran and poet Vic Williams whose health unfortunately prevented him making the trip from Perth to attend the Congress.

The final lines of the poem read: *“Take the guns from the hands of the killers, the spoils from the robbers, For the sacked, the evicted, the prisoned to make world of the future. Hold to your course, my Party, our world will prevail!”*

Fitting lines for the commencement of the Party Congress, the first Congress without the Party’s founding General Secretary, Peter Symon. And that is what delegates set out to do.

Over the next three days, around 60 delegates met along with a number of observers from the party membership. They came from around Australia and a range of ethnic backgrounds. For a substantial number of delegates it was their first Congress. There was an increase in the number of younger delegates, including student activists, which was also reflected in the composition of the new Central Committee that Congress elected. There was also an increase in the number of delegates who held trade union positions.

One of the highlights of the Congress was the anti-privatisation march and rally on the Sunday lunchtime when delegates and observers were joined by other party members and supporters. They marched through the centre of Sydney from Unions NSW to Energy



Photo: Bob Britton

One of the highlights of the Congress was the anti-privatisation march and rally held in Sydney’s CBD.

Australia, carrying placards and flags, and shouting “Stop the theft of people’s assets – no privatisation”. Passing cars honked in support of the evidently popular demand.

On the Saturday morning, Hannah Middleton presented the report on the work of the outgoing Central Committee. She pointed to a general worsening of the position of the working class in developed capitalist countries and highlighted some of the developments since the last Congress in 2005.

These include the defeat of the Howard government on November 24, 2007, the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008 and the great loss experienced with the death of our General Secretary Peter Symon on December 18, 2008.

“We show our respect for Comrade Peter best by building on his legacy, by turning a great loss into a launching pad for changes and improvements in our Party,” Dr Middleton said.

“There is enormous potential in

our Party – but there are also some glaring weaknesses.” The report took up the work and functioning of the Party – organisation, planning, campaigning, finances, *The Guardian*, party education, work with migrant communists, solidarity work, recruitment, and emphasised the need for better planning.

She proposed three areas of focus – economy, environment and peace – and the need to go beyond the defensive, to go on the counter attack.

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Photo: Anna Pha

The Guardian

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Up they go again!

Interest rates, up they go again. The big banks and finance sector have been clamouring for a hike in interest rates and last week the Reserve Bank of Australia delivered the first instalment. The banks had already factored in the higher interest rates into new home loans. The RBA raised the official cash rate from 3 percent to 3.25 percent and foreshadowed further increases in coming months. If market forecasts are any indication, they could hit five percent by the end of next year, adding around \$300 per month to the repayments on a typical \$300,000 home loan in the major capital cities.

Of course, all of this is based on the premise that the economic crisis is over and recession has passed – and no one can guarantee that. This conclusion is based on housing prices which have been sustained; fears of inflation taking off; and resurgence in the stock market index. The official unemployment figures are better than expected, another statistic being used to justify the rate rise.

It is true that housing prices have been sustained, despite the crisis. There is a massive shortfall in housing, and those on lowest incomes have been squeezed out. They cannot be used as a gauge of recovery. Australia has a rapidly growing population, up by 2.1 percent in the 12 months to March. More than half of this is due to an intake of 278,000 new migrants.

The increase in the first-home owners grant in the government's stimulus package also contributed to demand. With the withdrawal of this assistance, it will become even more difficult for those on lower and middle incomes to purchase a home and it will drive up the cost of rental accommodation.

The unemployment figures hide the reality of the impact of the crisis on jobs. In contrast to recent recessions many employers have shortened hours or work and reduced wages rather than sack workers. In some instances this was through the initiative of trade unions, in other cases it was forced on workers. The government's definition of employment is so broad that it ropes in thousands of unemployed who might have picked up an hour or two of paid work in the past few weeks.

The latest employment figures, while showing a small increase in the number, confirm the prevalence of under-employment, another indicator that the recession is not over for many ordinary working people. Job creation is not keeping up with the influx of immigrants.

On the ground, in the workplace and family homes, the recession is not over, and both the RBA and government expect unemployment to continue to rise. Industry is still operating at well below capacity and exports declined further in the last quarter. As interest rates rise, mortgage repayments, credit card debt and the cost of investment for business will continue to rise. Pushing up interest rates threatens economic recovery or at best slows. It is an extremely regressive move.

For the banks, the big finance houses and insurance companies that brought it all on, the recovery is here and it is business as usual. Personal and business bankruptcies are still on the rise, exports are still falling and industry operating well below capacity. That means nothing to the financial institutions. They have consolidated their position, benefited from government (taxpayer) guarantees and favourable treatment.

As for the threat of inflation, it does not arise from supply being unable to match demand which would drive up prices. It has more to do with monopoly pricing. The biggest monopolies of all are the four major banks. They have come out of the crisis more powerful than ever. Never mind the businesses they sent to the wall, the workers who were sacked and robbed of their entitlements as a result of their credit squeeze. Westpac, NAB, ANZ and the Commonwealth Bank have routed their competitors. They now hold 73.8 percent of outstanding mortgages, up from 56.8 percent in 2007. They are picking up an even larger percentage of new mortgages and have a similar monopoly over savings accounts and fixed term deposits on the retail market.

What is needed is a public bank, a People's Bank, with a social charter that serves society: a bank which provides a banking service, which lends and holds savings at responsible interest rates. A bank whose aim is to serve the people and business, where profit is not the one and only driving motive or reason for being.

PRESS FUND

Competition is particularly stimulating when you're involved in two competitions at once. Malcolm Turnbull and his backers are competing with the Rudd government to appear willing to do everything possible to counter climate change, while intending to do little or nothing. At the same time they're in competition with other Liberals and the National Party, who don't want any change to the status quo, who deny that human activity has anything to do with the weather, and who don't want to do anything at all. Turnbull certainly must be checking the numbers at the moment. Talking of which, the numbers of contributions for this edition are not numerous, even though we've had an extra week because we missed an edition last week. Come on everybody! We really need your help, so send us in something for the next issue if you possibly can. Many thanks to the following supporters for their contributions this week:

C R Greer \$40, "Round Figure" \$10, Mark Window \$20

This week's total: \$70 Progressive total: \$11,920

11th Congress Appeal

Congress is over and the work is before us. The collection on the Opening Night, ably conducted by David Matters, saw delegates and guests dig deep into their purses and wallets and fill the collection trays that were being passed around. Party branches also brought along the money they had raised. A total of \$4,909 was raised on the night and during Congress. Some of these contributions are acknowledged below, most were contributed anonymously. It is your support that makes it possible to bring delegates from around Australia and to meet the many expenses involved in organising a Congress. We set a target of \$10,000 for the Special Congress Appeal. We are close to it. So, if you wish to make a second contribution or have not yet made one, it is not too late! Our warmest thanks to everyone who supported the Appeal. We appreciate every contribution.

This week's contributions:

Michael Perth \$100

P A Robb \$10

R Girvan \$20

Contributions from

Opening Night include:

Auburn Branch CPA \$500

WA Branch CPA \$400

Tom Costa \$100

Sydney Central Branch \$200

Donna \$100

David Matters \$200

MUSAA National \$500

Penny & Con Costa \$200

C P of Iraq \$100

Blue Mountains Branch \$50

This week's total: \$5,039.00

Progressive total: \$8,054.00.

The Party for the Future holds course

Continued from page 1

"We have to develop policies and propaganda that include but go beyond changes in government to the level of winning support for a change in class power," she said.

Political Resolution

The main document before Congress was the Political Resolution. It was circulated throughout the party membership six months ago for discussion and amendment. CC Executive member and South Australian State Secretary Bob Briton presented the Resolution.

"The Draft Political Resolution has several main authors and I have been impressed to see our democratic centralist principles applied to the task of producing a comprehensive report on the period we have just traversed and the tasks that the current situation sets before us.

"It was a massive, complex task involving Branch discussions, large numbers of amendments and even virtual rewrites of parts of the document. State and district conferences devoted a lot of attention to it. Few members challenged the main thrust of its arguments though there were differences over approach."

Bob took up some of the issues that had stimulated debate such as the changes in Latin America, the trend away from a uni-polar world, the causes and nature of the global economic crisis, the value of emissions trading schemes, and the economic crisis.

"There is a longer than usual treatment in the Draft Political Resolution of Australia's foreign policy and our role in the region," Bob said. "This is understandable given

the further development of Australia's role beyond that of a humble 'deputy sheriff' in the Asia Pacific.

"Australia had a major troop commitment in Iraq and has an expanding one in Afghanistan. We host US bases and joint military exercises with the US and its allies on our territory and the Rudd government is committed to a huge increase in military spending. The spending is directed to projects designed to enhance 'interoperability' with US forces. We are taking up a more prominent role in the aggressive US objective of encircling China with hostile forces..."

"The Party needs to stress this anti-imperialist analysis within the peace movement and renew the call for an independent foreign policy."

Bob briefly outlined the main thrust of the Resolution's treatment of social, economic and political questions facing the working class of Australia and highlighted the section on the Party.

"Throughout the Party, including the CC, there has been an awareness of a growing interest in Marxism in general and our Party in particular in the media and in the community. This would appear to have been sparked by the economic crisis and the glaring failures of capitalism. Many members believe we should mobilise to take advantage of this upsurge in interest. Moreover, there is a mood for renewal, for greater discipline and professionalism in the Party. There is a recognition that we must become a Party of activists and not remain simply a Party with some activists in it."

In concluding his report, Bob said: "I believe the Political Resolution will

be a valuable guide for the work of the incoming CC and the Party generally. It defines the main questions before our movement at the present – a long list of priorities that we have to find the resources and energies to tackle."

More than 35 delegates took part in the general discussion. They took up issues in the CC Report, the Political Resolution, and many spoke on their political activities, the work of their branches, analysed the work of the Party and made proposals to strengthen that work. (See page 7)

Special resolutions were adopted in solidarity with struggle in Honduras and Colombia and for the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Guatemala. In another act of international solidarity, delegates gathered around a banner featuring the Cuban 5 for a photo to be taken and sent as a greeting to the Five from Congress.

In another special resolution, Congress congratulated Denis Doherty on the excellent role that he has played as National Organiser since the re-establishment of the position earlier this year. "Congress supports Denis going forward in this role and wishes him continued success in the position," the resolution said.

Throughout Congress greetings were read from communist and workers' parties from around the world, reflecting the importance that the Party places on internationalism.

The newly elected Central Committee now has the task of ensuring that the Party puts the Political Resolution into action and responds to the lines of the poem *Hold To Your Course*.

See centre four pages for more Congress. ★



The Preparatory Committee whose hard work contributed to the smooth running and success of Congress – a big thank you and congratulations to Hannah, Denis, Amber, Cecilia and Donna.

Asylum seekers face redneck revival

Peter Mac

Some federal parliamentarians are reviving the public antipathy towards asylum seekers that reached its height under the former Howard government during the infamous Tampa incident.

Senate leader of the National Party, Barnaby Joyce, is reported to have claimed that many Christmas Island detainees are "economic migrants" rather than refugees, because they are "very happy here", and "health conscious". Apparently, the implication is that because they were not emaciated they had not really suffered from persecution, and because they are now "happy" they intend to take the Australian people for a ride – or possibly even to take over the country!

Ms Zhi Yan, acting national coordinator of migrant support group A Just Australia, commented:

"I am appalled that Senator Joyce judges a person's need for protection on that person's apparent mood and health status. People become refugees not because of how sad or sick they are but because they have real protection needs. ... Wouldn't you be happy if you escaped a situation of death and violence, and managed to make it to the relative (albeit precarious) safety of Christmas Island?"

The government line

Last week the Rudd government abolished the outrageous legislation under which immigration detainees were charged for the time they spent imprisoned in detention centres.

This development was very welcome. However, it took two years to

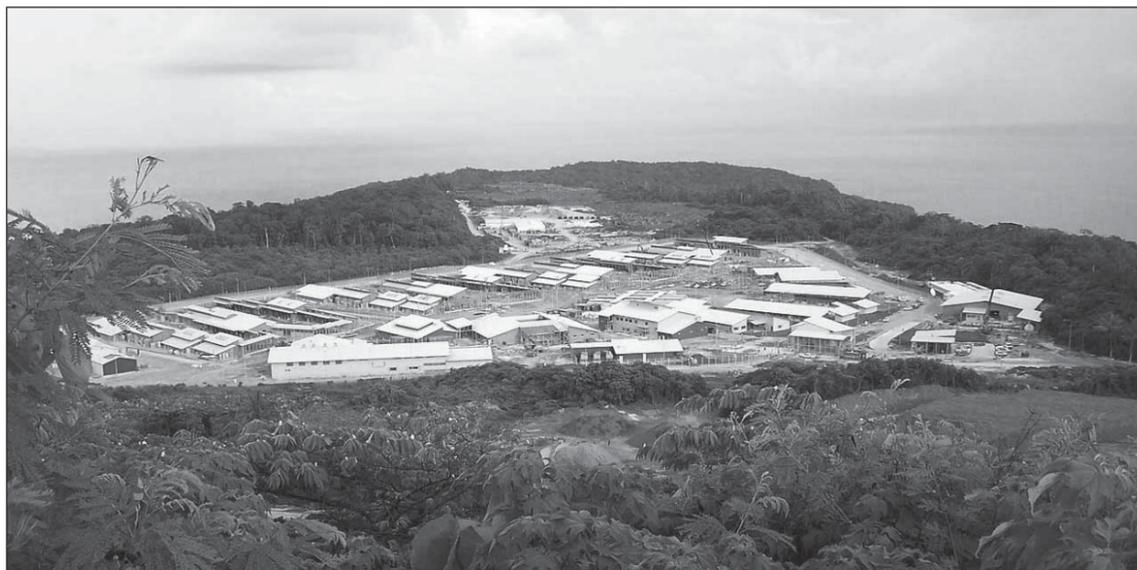
happen, and now, for the first time since the Howard regime lost office, the government has taken a decision to forcibly deport asylum seekers, i.e. nine Sri Lankans, who arrived with three others by boat at Shark Bay on the mainland last November.

Because they arrived on the mainland, they were entitled to full access to legal services, unlike those who are intercepted at sea. Nevertheless, their appeals were rejected, and the Minister for Immigration, Senator Chris Evans, declared that: "all irregular maritime arrivals found not to be owed protection and with no other basis to remain in Australia will be removed." The policy regarding "maritime arrivals" will presumably not be applied to others, particularly Anglo-Saxons, who arrive unexpectedly by other means.

The fate of the nine deportees is now precarious. The Sri Lankan government has expressed the view that many of its nationals who seek asylum in Australia are former members of the separatist Tamil Tiger organisation.

The Rudd government has listed the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organisation. Even though membership of the organisation is not proscribed under Australian law, the government is said to be treating all young asylum seekers who have wounds consistent with combat, and who do early morning group exercises, with suspicion.

However, the war against the Tamil Tigers, is said to have claimed the lives of 7,000 civilians in the first four months of this year alone, and injuries from gunfire and other weapons were widespread among the Sri Lankan community. As for early



On a remote island in the Indian Ocean, living in barracks with tin roofs and dirt playgrounds surrounded by razor wire, Senator Barnaby Joyce describes the refugees as "very happy" and "health conscious".

morning exercises, they're a common practice in every country on Earth. (And how ironic that such suspicions should be raised in Australia, where the previous PM exercised at the break of day!)

What of the future?

Ms Yan pointed out: "Asylum seeker numbers have shot up in the last two years because of grave situations like Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, so it's hardly surprising that asylum seeker numbers are increasing in Australia as well. We're part of the world. Aren't we?"

In fact, despite a sharp increase in regional conflict, the 1,500 asylum seekers who reached our shores in

2008 represented only 0.3 percent of the total number of people who sought asylum throughout the world that year.

As Ms Yan concluded: "In the last two years we've seen some significant reforms to Australia's asylum policies, bringing them back into line with our international human rights obligations. Don't let fear tactics and political point-scoring drag us back to a time where we can't be proud to be Australian because of the way Australia treats people in need."

That suggestion is likely to be of even greater significance in future. At the moment the only grounds under which "boat people" can claim refugee status in Australia is fear of persecution in their country

of origin. But what of other perils? The number of asylum seekers is certain to escalate because of climate change, particularly rising sea levels, which will result in the flooding of many Pacific Islands and low-lying countries like Bangladesh. Over the next half-century millions of people will be forced to seek refuge in other countries.

The Howard government rejected pleas for asylum from many threatened people, and that rejection still stands. If we don't develop new, more humane policies for helping these refugees, many will be condemned to a terrible fate by our callous indifference. ☹

Doing "something" about water

Bob Briton

The federal government is keen to be seen to be doing "something" about the disastrous state of the Murray-Darling river system. It has a "no regrets" attitude to the buybacks it has already made of water entitlements from irrigators and other users throughout the system. Climate Change and Water Minister Penny Wong insists she had to start spending the \$3.1 billion earmarked for entitlement buyback over the next decade to make some impact on the looming disaster.

Despite the splashing of cash and the impending release of various plans

and reports, experts are concerned at the lack of a unified approach and the tip-toeing around big economic interests.

Minister Wong says the buybacks were guided by the CSIRO's Sustainable Yields Report and Sustainable Rivers Audit. Farmers have been relocated to more viable locations. Others have got out of their previous business altogether. They have been "willing sellers in an open market". Since the scheme was introduced in February 2008, 545 gigalitres* worth of entitlements have been bought and restored to environmental flows. It should be noted that the actual water available only amounted to

approximately 343 gigalitres but, given that Sydney Harbour contains around 500 gigalitres, it is still a lot of water.

Wong reports that the level of interest in selling entitlements has been so high that the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has had to rein in the spending. Some irrigated properties are more sustainable than others. The CSIRO estimates that if the least viable farms were closed and irrigation was focussed on the best locations, the value of agricultural production could actually increase by 24 percent despite less water being made available.

A wide range of groups, including the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), want a more targeted approach than has been taken with the \$840 million spent so far. Eventually a limit to the supply of "willing sellers" will be met and the strength of the will of the governments involved will be tested.

Nerves are on edge as that day looms. The Victorian government's Northern Victoria Irrigation Project trialled a "traffic light" project. "Red" irrigation properties were deemed non-viable, "green" ones were said to be viable. The "red" category was renamed "yellow" so as to calm the growing anxiety in communities reliant on irrigation. Doubts are growing that the federal buyback scheme and the \$5.8 billion promised for more efficient irrigation equipment will be enough to complete the environmental fix.

In order to save the Murray it is estimated that a further 600 gigalitres will have to reach the Murray Mouth (where the system exits to the sea) every year. Where is that water going to come from?

The South Australian government is building a desalination plant at Port Stanvac to take pressure off the ailing river. Victoria is getting one at Wonthaggi. A billion dollar north-south pipeline is being built to take water from the already stressed Goulburn basin to Melbourne's Sugarloaf reservoir.

"The economic rationalist vision driving this water is one water market, which puts towns and regions in competition with each other to allow water to move to its highest value use," *Age* columnist Kenneth Davidson wrote recently. "The north-south pipeline will allow for privatised water markets in the non-agricultural sector. Water from Eildon Weir would be sold into a 5 million population market ranging from Ballarat and Bendigo in the north through Melbourne and Geelong in the south".

The stakes are high. The irrigation areas in question produce \$9 billion in farm gate revenue. A quarter of the country's GDP relies on the health of the river system. The region is considered our "foodbowl". A calamity here would impact poorer Australians with crippling increases in the weekly food bill. This process might start if acidification moves up the Murray to take out areas of the Riverland.

In the meantime, the scattergun approach continues. The Victorian government has just renewed 9,200 permits for cattle to roam freely along 17,000 kilometres of river banks along the Murray, Goulburn and Thomson rivers. Health experts warn of the effects of erosion and animal waste entering drinking water supplies. The National Water Commission (NWC) is arguing before a parliamentary committee for a review of the effect of mining on surface and ground water. "Future developments, including mining in the Namoi and coal-seam methane gas extraction in Southern Queensland could, if not adequately regulated, impact on the surface and groundwater systems at both the local and regional scales," the NWC warns. The pro-mining NSW Minerals Council insists current regulations are fine.

As the Productivity Commission and the Murray Darling Basin Authority finish off their reports to the federal government on aspects of the water crisis, it is already clear that a truly coordinated, centralised approach that puts the needs of the environment and communities first is needed. It is way past time for the federal government to come clean with the community about what steps will be needed to deal with the problems besetting the Murray-Darling and to put mining, agribusiness and other corporate interests back in their box.

*A gigalitre is a billion litres ☹

Pete's Corner



Plea read out in Parliament

The cousin of Ngaanyatjarra Elder Mr Ward who died last year in prison custody in the Goldfields region of Western Australia has had a speech she gave on the steps of the WA Parliament read into the institution's Hansard record.

Daisy Ward spoke on behalf of Mr Ward's family at a rally outside Parliament last month where a petition signed by more than 5,000 people demanding the full implementation of the Coroner's recommendations into his death was delivered. A fully transcribed copy of the speech was read into the Parliamentary record by Deputy Opposition Leader Roger Cook on September 22 at the conclusion of a debate about how the Parliament could make "positive changes" to the lives of Aboriginal people in WA.

After some discussion about the Royalties for Regions policy adopted by the Liberal and National Parties as part of the agreement to form government last year, Mr Cook said he wanted to read the speech "which

went to the heart of the issues being discussed".

At the start of her speech, Ms Ward gave a clear and detailed account of what happened to her cousin (his death in the van), the subsequent Coroner's investigation and recommendations and the community's frustration and anger at government inaction.

"My brother fought strongly for his family, his culture and his lands, the Ngaanyatjarra lands of the Gibson Desert," she said.

"He wanted us to have the title for the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve, and he spoke up with our own Law men or Eiders, with our community leaders working out the future for our children.

"He spoke to non-Aboriginal staff and tried to educate them in our ways through cultural awareness. He encouraged the children to be proud of their culture, to stand tall. He checked up on the teenagers to help them respect themselves and their families. "He guided them away from

substance abuse and into their cultural inheritance."

During her speech, Ms Ward also made some general demands on behalf of her people.

Demands

"I don't want alcohol and leaded petrol to flow across the desert any more," she said. "Please! And hospitals are sick of death, and so are we. For the sake of my brother I am demanding the right to live in the community on the lands where we have lived for thousands of years.

"The right to speak in our own language and be educated in our own language ... and that my people are treated fairly and respectfully with human dignity by the justice system."

After reading the speech, Mr Cook said Ms Ward's plea to the government must be heard and heeded if there was to be the "paradigm shift" needed for the government to engage effectively with communities.

The Koori Mail ★

WA government responds over Ward death

Ken Boase

The West Australian government has declined to terminate the contract of the private prisoner transport company responsible for the vehicle in which Ngaanyatjarra Elder Mr Ward died in custody last year.

Mr Ward's family and the WA Deaths in Custody Watch Committee (DICWC) had demanded that G4S (formerly GSL) prisoner transport operations be terminated following the coronial inquest into Mr Ward's death in the back of a van during heatwave conditions in WA.

Western Australian Attorney-General Christian Porter instead ordered a general review of the transport system as part of his response last week to Coroner Alistair Hope's recommendations.

Mr Porter had claimed to have supported all 15 recommendations from the Coroner.

The WA government has already announced wider powers for the Inspector of Custodial Services in response to two of the Coroner's recommendations, and Mr Porter said that will give added protection to prisoners in custody awaiting a court appearance.

"The enhanced powers will allow the Inspector to audit the passage of persons through the custodial system to ensure that they are treated safely and humanely at every stage of their contact with the custodial aspects of the criminal justice system," he said.

"A key feature of such an

auditing process would be the creation of a statutory power for the Inspector to issue 'Show Cause' notices to the Department of Corrective Services (DCS), and to require responses where the audit process has disclosed risks to the health, well-being and safety of persons in custody."

Mr Porter has also agreed with calls for police to have a better understanding of the WA Bail Act and appropriate training, including cultural-awareness training, for Justices of the Peace hearing bail applications.

"What we want to do is conduct a complete review of the Bail Act because a great number of people who enter the criminal justice system are being denied bail in circumstances where they're then later acquitted, or they're convicted and don't get a term of imprisonment," he said.

"So it seems to me that there are a group of individuals who are spending time, perhaps needlessly, in incarceration because they've been denied bail."

The Attorney-General also agreed that video conferencing be used where possible for bail hearings and other court procedures to minimise the need for prisoner transportation.

Calls by the WA Deaths in Custody Watch Committee for the prisoner transport fleet to be immediately replaced qualified support from Mr Porter who said a replacement fleet would not be available until the end of next year.

Mr Porter said the fleet would

be completely replaced every 10 years.

While the Attorney General said the contract with G4S would not be terminated at this time, prisoner transport contracts in the future would be "completely different" to those negotiated in the past.

These included full approval by DCS before implementation by a private contractor, and significantly upgraded monitoring procedures for prisoner transportation.

DICWC Chairman Marc Newhouse said that while he welcomed the spirit of the government's response, he felt it wasn't strong enough and decisions should be made over the future of prisoner transportation in WA.

"It's encouraging that they're not discounting bringing back prisoner transportation to government responsibility," he said.

"We're a bit cautious about this idea that it's on the table. We think it's quite a simple question. It's either in or out."

Mr Newhouse also said that issues around bail hearings should be made clearer.

"We believe there needs to be some significant amendments to the Bail Act," he said. "We believe that JPs should not be dealing with bail matters, but those matters should be dealt with by magistrates.

"We support the issue of video conferencing and we also support the idea of having magistrates sit outside traditional hours. Anything that's going to reduce the need to transport people."

The Koori Mail ★



Daisy Ward

Photo: The Koori Mail

Parklea Prison privatisation Wrong in principle, wrong in practice

Sylvia Hale, NSW Greens spokesperson on corrective services, has condemned the awarding of the Parklea Prison contract to the GEO Group and questioned forecasts by Corrective Services Minister John Robertson that it would lead to \$60 million in savings.

"The privatisation of prisons is wrong in principle. The awarding of the Parklea prison contract to GEO is equally wrong in practice," Ms Hale said.

She said that the state consigns people to prison and it is the state that should be directly and constantly accountable for how prisoners are treated. "Rather than being siphoned off into the coffers of a private company motivated solely by the desire to make a profit, any surplus should be fed back into the prison system to promote the rehabilitation of prisoners."

Parklea is an old jail. The Greens say the only way GEO will generate profits there will be by prison officers either losing their jobs or working fewer hours and by a reduction in services for prisoners.

"It is shameful that a former secretary of Unions NSW should actively promote a company such as

GEO whose practice is to casualise its staff. John Robertson knows that this is a sure-fire way to erode working conditions and undermine unions."

She said it was equally shameful that the contract should have gone to GEO which is part of a worldwide corrections group that includes G4S and Wackenhut, companies whose record around Australia and around the world is deplorable. Only last week G4S was criticised by the Perth Deaths in Custody Watch Committee over the death of prominent aboriginal elder, Mr Ward.

"It is extraordinary that the state government is employing a company that in the case of Mr Ward has been criticised by the Western Australian coroner for operating a van that was not fit for humans."

Ms Hale also called on the Minister to implement the recommendations of the Legislative Council inquiry into the privatisation of prisons and prison related services.

"At the very least the private operation of Parklea must be fully accountable to the public, and must offer no lesser standards of operation than publicly operated prisons," said Ms Hale. ★

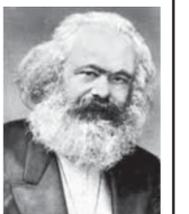
Interview with Peter Symon – DVD offer

The Guardian is very happy to offer a very special DVD – an interview with Peter Symon which was recorded in Sydney in 1994 by Avante Media Australia. The duration of the interview is 1 hour 35 minutes. Comrade Symon talks about domestic and international politics, the role of the Party, trade unions and lots of other issues.

Peter Symon was the founding General Secretary of our Party and held that position for 37 years until his death in December 2008. Over those years he was closely involved with The Guardian – writing articles and many editorials, assisting with its production as well as picking it up from the printers, sending parcels interstate and overseas. So it is fitting that the proceeds of the DVD sales will be going to *The Guardian* Press Fund.

To get your copy of the DVD, you can phone the Party office on (02) 9699 8844, email Cecilia cecilia@cpa.org.au, or drop in or send your order with cheque, postal order or credit card details to 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. The price is \$25 – no extra charge for p&h.

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for further information - Bob Briton 0418 894 366
fundraiser for the Communist Party of Australia's SA election campaign



The 21st century – the century of socialism

Speech given by CPA General Secretary Dr Hannah Middleton to the Opening of Congress. This is an abridged version. The full text will be available on the CPA website.

I wish to first acknowledge the enormous debt we all owe to Comrade Peter Symon.

This is our first Congress without our founding and only General Secretary and in some ways it is a difficult time. We hope - and we are working to ensure - that we carry on his legacy and fight effectively for the working class of this country and for a sustainable, peaceful, democratic socialist Australia.

Capitalism is killing humanity and killing the planet. It is a system which prefers to let people starve and go homeless in the streets rather than cut profits by providing the necessities of life. And this has been exposed for all to see.

The future of humanity and the planet requires a radical change of policies and political direction. Our goal is the creation of a society that will resolve the problems inherent in capitalism - war, exploitation, environmental destruction, oppression, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, racism and injustice.

The old system has failed again and again while socialist China, Cuba and Vietnam lead the way in human, economic and environmental responsibility.

Socialism is essential for our survival, for our future.

That is why we call the Communist Party "The Party for the Future".

The cost of capitalism

Under capitalism, we face not just the global economic crisis and the resultant social consequences, but a food crisis threatening the lives and health of hundreds of millions of people, an environmental crisis threatening the future of life on our planet, and the possibility of new wars.

About one billion people suffer chronic hunger and 100,000 die every day as a direct or indirect result of malnutrition. Add to that the millions who do not have access to safe drinking water, health services, education and other essential services.

The present crisis confirms what Marx and Engels wrote 160 years ago in the *Communist Manifesto*

- a situation which brings no joy to Communists amidst the human suffering and tragedy involved.

The endless pursuit of larger and larger profits, of new sources of profit gouging and profit accumulation by whatever means possible, including war and brutal dictatorships, has resulted in economic chaos and human suffering on an appalling scale.

In more than 70 underdeveloped countries per capita income has fallen sharply in the past 20 years. Wealth has accumulated in private hands to such a degree that the 200 richest people in the world own more wealth than 40 percent of all the people in the world.

The drive to war

To protect the plunder and profits of the huge corporations, governments divert immense resources to the military and away from people's needs. The massive armed forces that are being continually built up are the military arm of globalisation.

An estimated US\$1 trillion are spent every year globally on weapons. This exceeds the income of half of the planet's entire population. The US military budget is larger than the whole Australian economy, while global poverty and inequality are getting worse. The United States now has military bases in more than 100 countries, a fact which threatens the independence and sovereignty of all countries without exception.

Capitalism is a threat to the future of humanity.

Demands for change

The election of President Obama by US voters demanding change may lead to a reordering of some priorities and some easing of tensions, but the overall strategy of US imperialism to extend its control over the entire globe will continue.

The election of the Rudd government in Australia in response to similar demands for change has delivered only very limited variation to the overall approach of the former Howard government.

In both cases it is clear that social democracy cannot and will not challenge capitalism.

Following the United States lead, in May this year the Rudd government released its Defence White Paper, announcing the largest military

build-up in Australia since World War II with an unprecedented increase in sea and air power.

This was done despite the wishes of most Australians. Opinion polls in 2008 showed that 70 percent of the community oppose spending more money on the military.

The Rudd government has made it clear that the US alliance remains central to Australia's foreign policy and military strategy, and that Australia's new military muscle is targeted at China, in support of US long-term plans.

Australia will now spend about \$70 million every day on the military, stealing the resources needed to provide human and social needs and to stimulate the economy in the face of the deepening recession.

Capitalism in Australia, expressed through both Liberal and Labor government policies, extracts a huge price from working men and women:

- our public health and public education systems are starved of funds
- our public transport systems are being run down and privatised by stealth
- workers' wages and conditions are under constant attack
- privatisation is rampant
- rural and regional Australia is neglected
- the social welfare system is being dismantled
- Indigenous Australians are denied their rights
- democratic, workers' and trade union rights are under attack
- our environment is suffering massive and in some cases irreversible damage.

Socialism

This situation cannot continue if we are to have a future.

The only economies to have eliminated the economic cycle over the past 200 years have been socialist. Socialist production is not a slave to capitalist market economics and its vicious frenetic cycle of competition, advertising, consumerism and waste. Socialism aims at satisfying needs through a planned economy.

Socialist Cuba is the world's most sustainable economy. Cuba's planning has produced stunning results because it focuses on human needs, not profit.

Of course their development



CPA General Secretary Dr Hannah Middleton.

has not been even or easy; they are not utopias and problems arise. But socialism is a proven better economic, political and social system than capitalism. Socialism is committed to meet the needs of the people and not the selfish interests of exploiters. It means jobs, genuine democratic rights, public ownership, environmental protection, better education and health services, more for young people and real economic and social equality for women.

This alternative society is the vision of the CPA and of communists around the world, a genuine, proven alternative to the failed capitalist model.

The massive response of US electors in November 2008 to a call for change, the left and progressive changes taking place in Central and South America, and the defeat of the ultra-conservative Howard government are all expressions of the strong desire of the people for real change, for policies that put people before profits.

All around the globe people are in struggle against capitalist policies and imperialist war. In a significant number of countries, capitalism itself is under challenge like never before.

Reactionary governments have been overthrown and national liberation and people's movements have made significant advances. Anti-globalisation struggles are developing in every corner of the earth. The struggle for peace, against war and imperialist plunder, has swept every continent.

Urgent action is needed to halt and, where possible, reverse the impact of capitalism's exploitation and destruction of the environment.

Lasting peace with justice will only be guaranteed when the underlying causes of war - the drive for private profit and the racism, nationalism, poverty and oppression that the profit motive creates - are eliminated.

We have to fight for policies and support struggles which can reduce the danger of war significantly and rescue some of the current military budget of \$70 million a day for environmental and social needs projects.

Fight together

The next period has considerable potential for radical, even revolutionary, breakthroughs in the struggle for more just and democratic economic development and socialism. There are greater possibilities for resistance and social progress.

People need change and they want real change. They want a better world. And they have the power, inherent in the working class, with its allies, to bring about change.

We must build a popular democratic movement, diverse and unified, and committed to mass action if we are to take advantage of this potential and achieve the necessary change in the conditions of our lives.

The well planned and coordinated Your Rights at Work campaign in opposition to the Howard government is an example of the capacity to unite. The wide array of social forces and political groupings in that campaign shows that co-operation around issues is not only possible but immensely effective. When people with different political, religious, ethnic and occupational backgrounds join hands to achieve an objective that all agree on, it is a powerful force to be reckoned with and it is the means to ensure positive social change in Australia.

The potential exists to build a political force capable of forming a new type of government which would implement policies to substantially curb the power of the big corporations and increase the democratic rights of the people.

The aim of the Communist Party of Australia is the establishment of a society that is fairer, co-operative, more democratic and far more enriching for the people than the present society. Such a society can only be a socialist one.

The profound crisis of the capitalist system provides the necessity and the basis for fundamental change.

We invite you to be part of the growing resistance to capitalism that will become the revolutionary movement that makes the 21st Century the century of socialism. ✪



Delegates to Congress stood to give a standing ovation to retiring Central Committee member Marie Lean. Marie joined the Party in 1951 after having been active in the Eureka Youth League. She has served on the Party's Central Committee since the early 1990s and has always been noted for her thoughtful contributions and comradely attitude. Party President Vinnie Molina spoke to the Congress about her lifelong commitment and pointed out that she will be continuing in her role on the South Australian State Committee and in the West Adelaide Branch.



Report on the Draft Political Resolution

The following is an abridged version of the report given by Bob Briton to the Congress moving adoption of the Political Resolution. The full text will be available on the CPA website.

International context

The first thing we had to consider is the overall context, the global backdrop to current developments. In our last Political Resolution we emphasised the trend away from a unipolar world – the break-up of the economic and military dominance of the US. We noted the coming together of economic and even military formations determined to steer a course independent of US imperialism.

This trend was correctly identified and we now recognise that the process has been consolidated and deepened. For example, Brazil, Russia, India and China are emerging as a mighty economic counterweight to the established global economic powers. Other developing countries are joining trade organisations to fend off attacks on their sovereignty and sustainability. The most notable of these is ALBA – the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America. Nine Latin American and Caribbean nations have now joined Cuba and Venezuela in the trade organisation based on principles of mutual benefit and solidarity.

These developments are not without their contradictions. There was considerable debate about the nature of the various groupings brought together outside US control. Russia and India are capitalist countries pursuing a neo-liberal domestic agenda and a foreign policy that does not always favour progressive forces. Can a grouping that includes these countries be considered to be playing a progressive role internationally?

Can their consolidation provide an opening for workers and other exploited people to further their aspirations? These aren't simple questions but ultimately, objectively we concluded that yes, these developments are blows to the global plans of US imperialism. They will assist the millions of people being brought into struggle against neo-liberalism, capitalist globalisation and capitalism; people struggling for socialism.

Global economic crisis

The preparation of the Draft Political Resolution was a chance to clarify the questions surrounding the economic crisis and to emphasise that, while its onset at this time was triggered and accelerated by a crisis in the financial sector, its underlying causes are to be found in the class exploitative nature of capitalist society, the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private expropriation of the products; in the creation of surplus from the labour power of workers. It is another of the inevitable cyclical crises of overproduction that beset capitalism.

We have identified two approaches to the crisis – a destructive one and a constructive one. The destructive one is applied in such a way so as not to disrupt the neo-liberal economic agenda. That is the one being applied in

Australia. Despite the rhetoric from leaders like Kevin Rudd and some overdue infrastructure spending, the underlying policies of privatisation, trade liberalisation and deregulation are still in place. The ideological challenge of neo-liberalism is still with us as well as the practical task of uniting more people in opposition to it. A constructive approach to the crisis would put people's wellbeing and job security at its centre.

Climate change and the environment

The Draft Political Resolution strongly rejects the government's proposed emissions trading scheme that subsidises the major polluters to continue their current practices. It is for this reason that we oppose the ETS and support other more targeted government regulation to curb emissions and boost alternative energy sources, reduce resource usage and re-employ workers currently involved in highly polluting industries. We paid particular attention to the question of protecting livelihoods for workers employed in industries that need to be reined in. We understand there will be an ongoing need for coal in industry but also that its use must be reduced significantly and quickly.

We recognise that only a thorough reorganisation of the global economy can have any chance of removing the climate threat. Measures are possible and necessary within the framework of capitalism but more than ever before humanity is faced with a clear alternative – a socialist future or no future.

Internationally the uranium industry is seeking to use concern over climate change to revitalise the nuclear power industry. Australian governments are falling into line by agreeing to grant more mining licences and massively expand uranium exports.

We do not accept that safe means of storage of nuclear waste have been devised and we remain concerned about the linkage between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. Uranium is a finite resource usually extracted from lands sacred to the original inhabitants of the country.

Foreign policy and the region

There is a longer than usual treatment in the Draft Political Resolution of Australia's foreign policy and our role in the region. This is understandable given the further development of Australia's role beyond that of a humble "deputy sheriff" in the Asia-Pacific. Australia had a major troop commitment in Iraq and has an expanding one in Afghanistan. We host US bases and joint military exercises with the US and its allies on our territory and the Rudd government is committed to a huge increase in military spending. The spending is directed to projects designed to enhance "interoperability" with US forces. We are taking up a more prominent role in the aggressive US objective of encircling China with hostile forces.

The Party needs to stress this anti-imperialist



Bob Briton (left) with Congress delegate Jirri Booth.

analysis within the peace movement and renew the call for an independent foreign policy.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

We faced a contradiction that while the Rudd government finally apologised on behalf of the Commonwealth for past outrages against the Aboriginal people including the Stolen Generations, the original inhabitants still suffer massive inequality, discrimination and dispossession.

The Howard government's Northern Territory Intervention is still in place and its principles have now been expanded beyond the original remote communities that were targeted. Uranium and other mining are its main interest in the land now inhabited by Aboriginal communities. Deaths in custody still occur. We have witnessed the jailing of Lex Wotton from Palm Island and the excusing of those responsible for the death of Mulrunji Doomagee.

There is still no replacement for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission [ATSIC] as a national elected representative body for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The huge task facing their communities will require support from a powerful movement uniting them with the non-Aboriginal working class, the trade unions and the broader community.

Democratic rights

Australians have grown complacent about the erosion of their hard-won democratic rights. The "war on terror" has been used to convert ASIO into a fully-fledged secret police and rob people of basic rights such as the right to remain silent, the presumption of innocence, the right of an accused person and their legal representative to see the evidence being used against them, and so on.

Recently, the criminal activities of biker gangs have been used by state governments to introduce anti-democratic legislation with potential to be used against political opposition. The Party has joined others in calling for the repeal of this body of repressive legislation and for the introduction of a bill or charter enshrining the basic rights of the Australian people. The resolution sets out what we believe to be the key demands for basic human rights.

Trade unions

There was agreement that the Rudd/Gillard Fair Work Act carries forward the bulk of the anti-union measures of its Howard era predecessor. And, of course, there was anger that the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC] with its police state powers, is being preserved, albeit with a new name and within a new structure.

The Party welcomes the growth of an independent attitude towards the ALP in some sectors of the trade union movement. It criticises the tendency among some sectarians to label all trade union leaderships as "bureaucrats" and "careerists".

The Draft Political Resolution contains a list of principles and demands that must be taken up by the trade union movement.

Health

The long process of privatisation of health has been pursued step by step with major tipping points like the introduction of the Private Health Insurance Rebate being achieved along the way. Medicare Select with its individual "health and hospital plans" is the next major step. We are confronted with the concept of "e-health" and a smart card containing not only medical information about the holder but also linked to tax and other government records on the individual. This is an ID card, an Australia Card by stealth.

Education

A similar process of privatisation by stealth is being carried out in the field of education. Public education has been starved of funds by state and federal governments – funds that have been diverted to private schools. The ultimate objective of the changes we have witnessed and warned about is privatisation through a "voucher" system in which parents are granted an amount to spend on their children's education that they can take wherever they "choose" and pay a gap to the provider for the remainder of the fees. It would be the final blow to the concept of the provision of free, universal, secular education and usher in unprecedented inequality in education. TAFE and universities have been subjected to a similar process aimed at converting them into businesses in a marketplace for education and training to meet the needs of the bosses.

The Party

The Draft Political Resolution deals with questions facing our Party in more depth than usual. Throughout the Party including the CC there has been an awareness of a growing interest in Marxism in general and our Party in particular in the media and in the community. This would appear to have been sparked by the economic crisis and the glaring failures of capitalism. There is a mood for renewal, for greater discipline and professionalism in the Party.

The document re-emphasised the need to build branches in the workplace – a very difficult task in the current climate but one which must be put on a project basis. It also emphasises the need to plan Branch involvement in Party campaigns, to involve others in the community so that we can enhance our effectiveness. ✪





Delegates Speak: workers' rights

More than 35 delegates made a contribution during Congress, covering a wide range of issues. Some spoke about their party branch and the struggles they are involved in, others addressed issues in the draft Political Resolution or took up broader political and ideological questions. Many devoted time to improving party work and building the Party. High amongst the issues discussed was the struggle of workers for their rights.

ABCC

Dean Holland, a delegate from the Brisbane Branch of the CPA works in the construction industry, and spoke forcefully about the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). Dean's message was clear: "Abolish the ABCC now!"

"The ABCC, from the time of its entry into the building industry has tried to cripple and tear away from workers long-earned rights, wages and conditions... This unmitigated police force of the construction industry that accuses union members and officials of coercion and illegal entry and denies them the right to address such matters as safety issues, wages and conditions must be stopped now. Building and construction workers have always stood in the shadows of uncertainty, at risk of injury and fatal accidents."

The construction employers will not let up in their attacks or support for the ABCC. It will take total unity on a national scale to defeat the legislation, Dean said. The struggle under the Your Rights @ Work banner that saw the defeat of the Howard government demonstrates what is possible.

Dean made some comparisons with the anti-terrorism laws which give suspected terrorists more rights than those of a building worker under the ABCC's powers of coercive interrogation.



Dean Holland.

He recalled the 1980s, the erosion of trade union rights and conditions commenced under the Hawke Labor government. This was picked up by union-bashing, barrister Peter Costello, a minister in the John Howard government and is continues today under the leadership of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.

In the 1990s, Trouble Shooters and other labour hire firms made inroads into the industry, with workers being bought and sold on the national labour market. "Today we have the national agreement preserving the state award. This keeps a labour hire company from being tied to an enterprise bargaining agreement.

"Labour hire; human beings for sale or hire. Welcome to the 21st century of indentured labour, hence labour hire!" Dean concluded my making a comparison with the trade in human labour and companies paying to pollute under an emissions trading scheme.

Union Solidarity

Dean Turner, an unemployed worker from the Melbourne Branch of the CPA, also took up the question of trade union struggle. He spoke about the experiences and lessons gained from involvement in the organisation known as Union Solidarity.

Union Solidarity was an activist organisation

which grew up from the grass roots level to counteract the Howard government's anti-union WorkChoices and ABCC legislation. "The new laws prevented unions from supporting their members in the usual ways, so the community assembly was born. Union Solidarity would be told of disputes breaking out... and would then approach the workers in the dispute with offers of solidarity and assistance. They proved quite effective in assisting the conventional unions with their activities..."

Dean Turner spoke about the activities of his local branch and questioned why, once the Howard government had been defeated and Labor came to office, the Union Solidarity groups were wound up. Those unions that had given financial backing, he said, withdrew their support.

"There were some very positive outcomes," Dean said. "The first is that when workers at one site were supported by Union Solidarity, they would then become aware of struggles at other sites, and would often offer their support... Many participants drew inspiration from this. Another positive outcome was that some real progress has been made towards unity between the various left groupings."

Stolen wages

Another delegate, a legal worker in the field, addressed the exploitation of Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians since colonisation have been subject to discriminatory and restrictive policies.

"Under Aboriginal protectionist acts, various state and federal authorities restricted and controlled the movements, marriages, children, communities, employment and money of Indigenous peoples," she told Congress.

In the remote Northern Territory areas, they were removed forcibly by police and government officials from their lands and put to work on cattle stations, the predominant employer of Indigenous people living in remote areas of the Northern Territory.

"Often, whole families were made to work on the stations in various roles, including as stockworkers, fencers, gardeners, irrigators, road and infrastructure builders, domestic servants and sex workers. Everyone from children to the elderly had a role in the upkeep of cattle stations. On occasions, this removal policy also went hand in hand with the policy of child removal responsible for the 'Stolen Generations'."

Some Indigenous workers were not paid at all, others had their income held in government accounts – under the Aboriginal Protection Acts.

"The placement of Indigenous workers' income in government accounts or as credit on station stores meant they rarely saw any money at all. This contrasted with their non-Indigenous counterparts on the cattle stations who were often paid above-award wages, as well as provided with their keep.

"The policy of withholding wages kept Indigenous people subservient and at the mercy of governments and employers who controlled what they ate and how they were clothed and ensured they were bound to the government and employer."

The Howard government's Northern Territory Intervention effectively reinvented policies that existed under the Protection Acts and which had led to many of the existing problems in Indigenous communities. "A key feature of the Intervention is the blanket quarantining of Indigenous welfare income in prescribed Indigenous communities. This policy echoes those of past governments responsible for the 'stolen wages' of Aboriginal people.

"The essence of the income control legislation is that it automatically assigns 50 percent of Indigenous peoples' welfare money to a government account that can be reimbursed by the government. Centrelink staff determine the 'priority needs' of welfare recipients, their family and dependants, and regulate spending accordingly.

"At the same time, the federal government continues to dismiss arguments for repaying Indigenous stolen wages. It's vital that as communists we see Indigenous rights as not separate to but intimately related to workers' rights."



Penny Costa (right) with newly elected CC members Thalia and Dora.

Deaths in custody

Richard Titelius, a union delegate in the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association and member of the Perth Branch of the CPA is actively involved in supporting Aboriginal people in their struggles for compensation for abuse suffered as members of the Stolen Generations (as a member of the Bringing them Home Committee) and Black Deaths in Custody.

He reminded delegates of Mulrunji Doomadgee on Palm Island, of a Noongar man from Katanning who died from injuries suffered while being taken into custody in Perth and the most recent death in custody which occurred to a respected Aboriginal Elder while being transported in oppressive heat in a prison van.

"The community activism of which I was a part with the Party and other community groups succeeded in applying pressure to have a coronial inquest and then having the government earnestly implement the recommendations of the Coroner," he said.



Richard Titelius.

Indian students

The violent attacks on students from India hit the media worldwide. There are more than 30,000 Indian students in Australia, a considerable source of cheap and vulnerable labour and an important source of "export income" in the form of course fees.

Dahni, one of several Indian students at Congress, pointed out that about nine months ago the Australian government started making restrictions on who could come here to study. The government is focusing on richer students for India and Asia who, he said, the government expects will become part of the capitalist class and not join the left in Australia.

The government's strategy is "acting against working class students from Third World countries, if you are poor you shouldn't come here."

Media publicity of the attacks is affecting student intake. Approximately 50 percent are reconsidering coming here and now students are becoming involved in left politics, Dhani said.

There is a great deal the Party can do in the Indian community to expose the situation and to give support to the community.



Dahni.

Migrant communities

Several delegates talked about work in the migrant communities. "Most come to Australia because of economic and political reasons, because of war," said Penny Costa, a school teacher and member of the Cypriot Branch. "They are marginalised, down trodden, given the worst jobs, and are low paid. It is important to build bridges with migrant organisations."

The Greek Orthodox Community has been around for 110 years and left and progressive forces have worked hard in it to promote progressive Greek culture and the rights of migrants, Penny said.

Unemployed

Allan Hamilton, a pensioner from Cootamundra (south-west of Sydney), took up the question the unemployed in regional Australia where the recession has hit hard. He assists unemployed workers in their battles for their rights. "Some unemployed can go 10 weeks with no income because of the actions of some bureaucrat," he said. "We need to assist these workers."

Allan pointed to the need for a national unemployed union to cover victims of the crisis across Australia.

Andrew Hayward from the Perth Branch also stressed the importance of organising the unemployed. He pointed to the many newly unemployed who are facing the reality of capitalism for the first time. "They will be wanting change."

There will be further coverage of Congress discussion in next week's *Guardian*. ✪



Greetings

COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND

Dear comrades,
We wish you every success at your 11th Congress and we are confident your congress will mark another important stage in the building of a stronger Communist Party of Australia and a stronger more united world communist movement.

We Irish communists salute you. We express our heartfelt greetings to you all and believe that Australian communists will continue to make a most valuable contribution to the national life of Australia and to mobilise a most proud and militant working class as you have done in the past. At this time we Irish communists along with other anti-imperialist and democratic forces are engaged in a tremendous struggle against both the Irish establishment and the imperialist entity called the EU. It has fallen to the Irish working class and democratic forces to challenge European transnational capital in the struggle around the Lisbon Treaty.

The outcome of this struggle will be known on October 3 during the course of your congress. The Irish working class, small and medium farming and fishing communities have risen to the challenge. We will let your congress know the result of this battle. Regardless of the outcome the struggle against imperialism continues to grow.

Once again we salute you.

For anti-imperialist working class unity
Eugene Mc Cartan
General Secretary
Communist Party of Ireland

We wish your Congress successful work and the implementation of the outlined plans.

With fraternal greetings,

Presidium of the CPRF
CC Communist Party of
The Russian Federation

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL

Dear Comrades

On the occasion of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, the Central Committee the Communist Party of Israel conveys its heartfelt comradely greetings and congratulations to your party members.

Once more, no capitalist force, whatsoever may be its strength, can bring down the force of the communist movement, a valuable lesson especially timely today in the conditions of increasing capitalist aggressiveness.

The emergence and development of popular, social and labour movements and struggles that tend to touch on the full spectrum of capitalist policies poses new opportunities and challenges to communists all over the world.

We would like to reiterate once more our firm solidarity with your efforts to boost social justice in Australia and defend your workers' achievements in today's unfavourable conditions, against the undermining activity of capitalists and the unjust world economic order.

With fraternal greetings,

Muhammad Nafa'h,
General Secretary
Communist Party of Israel

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BANGLADESH

Dear Comrades

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, we congratulate you on this historic occasion of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia.

We want to recall our traditional friendship with your Party, Progressives and pro-people forces of your country and wish them all successes in accomplishing the task of bringing peace and advancing towards a socialist future.

We also firmly believe that the Communist Party of Australia will continue its relentless struggle against capitalist policies and imperialist war which have caused mass-killing, impoverishment and severe environmental devastation worldwide.

Currently the Communist Party of Bangladesh is fighting against imperialism, capitalist plunder and for revolutionary democratic change. Our party considers the unity of communists of all countries is essential to fight against imperialist hegemony and intrigue.

On this historic occasion we would like to recall the great memory of Comrade Peter Symon, the founding General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia. His tremendous



At the conclusion of the Congress Delegates gathered around a banner featuring the Cuban 5 and the photo was sent to them as a show of solidarity.

contribution to build a strong communist movement in your country and for international solidarity is still a source of inspiration for us.

We hope and believe that the friendship between our two Parties will be further strengthened in the coming days.

Long live the Communist Party of Australia and its fraternal ties with our party.

With revolutionary greetings,

Mujahidul Islam Selim
General Secretary
Communist Party of Bangladesh

COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE

Dear comrades,

The CC of the KKE extends warm comradely greetings to the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia. Our parties are linked with lasting bonds of solidarity and cooperation, with joint struggles for the rights of the working people for the defence of the communist identity and the strengthening of the international communist movement.

Nowadays, the most important element of developments is the economic crisis that manifests itself in the capitalist world and intensifies the inter-imperialist competitions and rivalries. The positions and the facts that communists promoted for years are now confirmed. The issues of workers' power, the socialisation of the basic means of production, the relevance of socialism appear now more distinctly.

In Greece, the fact that the reputation of both parties of bourgeois power, ND and PASOK, with the spread of the view that there are not substantial differences between them, shows

that nowadays they are not able to assimilate the popular masses as easily as they did in the past.

It is very important to reveal and reject the misleading views spread by capital, the bourgeois and opportunist political forces regarding the "regulation", "rationalisation" and "humanisation" of capitalism. The reactionary role of the imperialist organisations and the measures they promote must be revealed. In addition, it is particularly important to promote the communist perspective and repel the current anti-communist wave.

The acceleration of the process for the regroupment of the labour movement, the social alliance with the self-employed and the small and medium sized peasants remains a crucial issue; likewise the effectiveness of the ideological struggle in order to weaken bourgeois concepts and strike a blow at the opportunist and reformist forces.

The KKE will steadily and more effectively continue co-operating with other Communist and Workers' parties for the continuance and enhancement of the International and Regional Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties, for the promotion of joint action and the coordination of their activities, for the strengthening of the anti-imperialist struggle, against imperialist wars and interventions, against poverty and hunger, for the environment. In this framework, we focus on the 11th International Meeting of Communist and Worker's Parties that will take place in November, in India.

With the hope of developing further the fraternal bilateral relations between our parties we wish success to your 11th Congress.

The Central Committee of the KKE
More greetings will be published in *The Guardian* next week. ✚

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation we warmly welcome you, the delegates of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, as well as all Australian Communists.

This Congress is particularly important. It is the first one to be convened after the death of Comrade Peter Symon, an outstanding figure of the international communist movement, who headed your party for many years. You will have to define the strategy and tactics of the party for the coming years, to find ways to consolidate communists around the newly elected collective governing body of the party.

We are well aware of the Australian Communists' struggle for workers' rights, for genuine democracy. We believe that only solidarity and mutual support of communists will be able to protect working people who are the main victims of the global financial and economic crisis.

The CPRF highly values the relations of friendship and solidarity between our parties. We are confident that your decisions will contribute to strengthening the party ranks and raising the party prestige in the society.

Resolutions

Honduras

This 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) energetically condemns the military coup perpetrated against the democratically elected government of President Manuel Zelaya.

Delegates to this Congress believe that some of the triggers for this were the decisions by President Manuel Zelaya that Honduras should become a signatory to the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, ALBA, and his intention to convert the US base at Soto Cano to an international airport.

The CPA delegates assembled at this Congress express their solidarity with the people of Honduras and demand the return of President Manuel Zelaya to power.

This Congress calls on the Rudd government to press the de facto government to stop the repression against the Honduran people and to reinstate the legitimate government.

Resolutions

Guatemala, PGT (Guatemalan Party of Labour)

This 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) salutes the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Communist Party of Guatemala on September 28, 1949.

Since its formation, the PGT was an influential political force that gave leadership to both workers' federations in Guatemala.

The Communist Party of Guatemala is considered to be one of the most persecuted parties in the world. Successive dictatorships in the country took the lives of the entire politburo and two general secretaries.

The party was involved in the underground struggle that ended with the signing of the peace accords on 29 December 1996.

Warmest greetings to all members of the Communist Party of Guatemala, PGT.

(The PGT was formerly known as the Communist Party of Guatemala)



Al-Walajah, a symbol of Israeli ethnic cleansing

Hasan Abu Nimah

While American officials continue to claim that the mission of US Middle East Envoy George Mitchell is by no means over, and that he will still pursue his efforts to convince the Israeli government to agree to some sort of settlement freeze, Israeli plans for further colonisation of Palestinian land continue undisturbed. The latest Israeli plans call for the destruction of the West Bank village of al-Walajah for the second time in six decades.

According to Israeli press reports, Israel is planning a massive new settlement in the vicinity of Jerusalem, on land owned by Palestinians of al-Walajah. The project, expected to be approved by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, could become the single most populous settlement built in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967 according to the Israeli daily *Maariv*. The project plans prepared by the Ministry of the Interior and the Jerusalem municipality call for 14,000 housing units for 40,000 settlers on 3,000 dunums of land which would require the demolition of al-Walajah residents' homes, according to the paper.

The original village of al-Walajah was located on the opposite side of its current location, on a mountain slope facing east, just about six kilometres south of Jerusalem. It was very close to Battir, the village in which I was born and brought up. The two villages were separated by a valley, with Battir on the opposite slope from al-Walajah, though a little further south and were very closely linked.

The railway from Jerusalem to the Palestinian coastal city of Jaffa ran right through that valley, which also marks the 1949 armistice line following the end of the 1948 war (also known as the "Green Line").

During October 1948, Zionist forces attacked and occupied al-Walajah. Its roughly 1,800 inhabitants

were scattered in every direction, sharing the fate of Palestinians from hundreds of other towns and villages ethnically cleansed in the same period.

I have strong memories of visiting al-Walajah as a young child, which was walking distance from my village. Often when I was dispatched by one of my parents to purchase something for the house from the only shop in our village, I was advised to try the shop in al-Walajah if the item was not to be found in Battir.

There was active social interaction and intermarriage between the small, tight-knit populations of al-Walajah and Battir. There were daily exchanges of visits and sharing of most kinds of public events. That also applied to many other villages which were within walking distance from Battir such as Beit Safafa, al-Malhah, al-Jawrah, Ain Karem, al-Qabou and Sataf; all were occupied and ethnically cleansed in that first war.

That kind of cosy relationship amongst the small populations of Palestinian villages was all but destroyed by the 1948 war. When the inhabitants of Battir returned home after several months of forced refuge elsewhere when the village during the war came under direct fire, al-Walajah, which used to bustle with life, was now silent and deserted.

The demarcation line delineated following the 1949 armistice had left al-Walajah just west of the line, on the Israeli side. Battir was barely saved with the barbed wire running through the village cutting most of the village agricultural land, some houses and the boys' school. Later, we watched as the Israeli army started to demolish al-Walajah, house by house. We would see a cloud of smoke and dust shoot up into the air over a house, followed by the sound of an explosion, leaving nothing but a heap of rubble. Al-Walajah was completely destroyed before Israel built the settlement of Aminadav and a park where Israelis picnic on its lands.

Apparently the people of



A remnant of the town of al-Walajah destroyed in 1948. A new Israeli settlement can already be seen glistening in the sun across the ridge in the background.

al-Walajah owned land across the hills to the east, well within the West Bank, and that is where they decided to settle temporarily for the awaited hope of justice and redemption from the United Nations, which like many Palestinians, they still thought would come.

But time passed and justice never visited them, so they started to build homes and created a new al-Walajah. This new town is the one now threatened with ethnic cleansing. Of course the standard Israeli excuse for destroying Palestinians homes is that they were built "without permission."

The irony is that the Israelis have all along permitted themselves to massacre, ethnically cleanse, occupy, confiscate, destroy and commit every sort of crime against their Palestinian victims while Palestinians are severely punished for building on their land in their country. Al-Walajah in 1948 and now, bears witness to Israel's insatiable appetite for Palestinian land.

Israel's brazen acceleration of settlement construction on occupied Palestinian land is unquestionably a result of international, and particularly American, policy failures and the refusal to hold Israel accountable under international law.

While we have constantly witnessed the so-called "international community" relentlessly tracking down alleged violations and violators in Iran, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon, Kenya, Burma and among Palestinians not affiliated with US-backed Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas, Israel is offered unconditional impunity.

It doesn't stop there; Israel is not only exempt from punishment but routinely rewarded for its crimes. After six months of defiant rejection of American requests to stop settlement construction, the Americans were the ones who finally dropped the demand and put pressure instead on the Palestinian Authority (PA) to drop its conditions to restart "negotiations."

Last month's New York summit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and PA leader Mahmoud Abbas, hosted by US President Barack Obama, was Netanyahu's first great diplomatic victory. Following the growing public outrage at the PA's shelving of the Goldstone report into Israel's war crimes in Gaza, it emerged that Abbas agreed in New York to drop the Palestinian effort to have the report forwarded to the Security Council for further action.

This is a second major Israeli

victory. Netanyahu, it should be recalled, had dwelled heavily on the Goldstone report in his address to the UN General Assembly rejecting the report as a serious obstacle to peace. Abbas on his part ignored any mere mention of the report in his own UN speech. This indicates that Abbas had already acquiesced to public and private American and Israeli demands to shelve the Goldstone report.

Israel's third victory is the revelation that the Obama administration, like all its predecessors, has agreed to help Israel continue to hide its nuclear weapons arsenal that threatens the region and all of humanity, while the US and its allies escalate their pressure on Iran in response to Israeli incitement.

All of these events are directly linked to what happens to people in al-Walajah – and indeed all over Palestine from Galilee to Gaza – who from 1948 until now, continue steadfastly and stubbornly to defend their rights and existence even as they still hope for international justice that has yet to come.

Hasan Abu Nimah is the former permanent representative of Jordan at the United Nations. *The Electronic Intifada* ✪

Murder of Honduran resistance members condemned

The Honduran resistance and human rights organisations have condemned the murder of teacher Mario Contreras, vice principal of the Abelardo Fortín Institute, and Lenca leader Antonio Leiva, two members of the resistance allegedly killed by hired assassins.

According to a preliminary report from the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees in Honduras (COFADEH), Contreras was shot twice in the face 100 metres from his home by two unknown men on a motorcycle. He was taken to hospital but died shortly after arriving, Telesur reports.

The Centre for the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and their Families affirmed that "according to witness statements provided by relatives, it is presumed that the attacks were perpetrated by hired killers, given that none of

the victim's belongings were missing, ruling out the possibility of robbery."

Another member of the resistance front, Lenca leader Antonio Leiva, was also found dead in Santa Bárbara, in the west of the country. According to sources close to the victim, he was kidnapped in the morning and his body was discovered in the afternoon in a village in the area.

COFADEH President Berta Oliva informed the international media that several opposition leaders have received anonymous death threats and her organisation fears for their safety.

Among those threatened, she mentioned presidential candidate Carlos Reyes, agricultural leader Rafael Alegría, labour leader Juan Barahona, left-wing Deputy Silvia Ayala and human rights activist Andrés Pavón. *Granma* ✪

Global effort in support of Bangladeshi shipbreakers

The International Metalworkers' Federation has joined a global campaign calling on G20 heads of state to protect workers in one of the world's most dangerous industries - shipbreaking.

A new report produced by the US-based National Labour Committee titled *Shipbreaking in Bangladesh & The Failure of Global Institutions to Protect Worker Rights*, documents conditions for some 30,000 workers, many of them children just 10 to 13 years old, who break apart massive decommissioned tanker ships, 650 to 1,000 feet long and 20 stories high, which are run up onto the

beaches of Bangladesh. According to the report, the shipbreakers are forced to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for wages of just 22 to 32 cents an hour, doing one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Workers, who often lack even the most minimal safety protections, are injured and maimed every day and on average a worker is killed every three weeks.

As part of the global effort to raise standards in Bangladesh ship-breaking yards, unions are signing on to an electronic petition which will be sent to this year's chair of the G20, Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, with a copy to US

President Barack Obama.

The petition calls for an end to child labour, the enforcement of basic labour law protections in Bangladesh shipyards and the implementation of basic safety provisions.

"The ten countries – many G20 members – and ten shipping companies that dominate global merchant cargo trade must guarantee that all toxic waste will be removed before ships are sent to Bangladesh – or India, Pakistan, China or Turkey – for scrapping," reads part of the petition signed by the International Metalworkers' Federation. ✪

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



email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

AFP needs oversight

The investigation of the murder of the Balibo Five journalists is now in the hands of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). This is the same AFP that has just let Guy Campos leave Australia, despite the wealth of evidence implicating him in torture and killings in East Timor.

Much of the work on the Guy Campos case was done by Channel 7 journalist with *Today Tonight*, James Thomas. Should one also mention the behaviour of the AFP in the Bali Nine case, or the sinking of refugee boats? Scott Rush of the Bali Nine is on death row in Indonesia because the AFP allowed him to travel to Indonesia as a drug mule, instead of intercepting him here.

So the AFP need some oversight, if the Balibo Five investigation is to come to anything. We suggest that

the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) does its best to do this. The Balibo Five journalists, and Roger East, would certainly have been members of the Journalists' Association, which later became the MEAA.

As well as the MEAA, we could all keep our eyes wide open, to see what the AFP does with the investigation.

Stephen Langford
Secretary
Australia East Timor Assoc NSW

Letter to Obama from Michael Moore

Dear President Obama,
How outstanding that you've been recognised today as a man of peace. Your swift, early pronouncements – you will close Guantánamo, you will bring the troops home from Iraq, you want a nuclear weapon-free world, you admitted to the Iranians that we overthrew their democratically-elected president in 1953, you made that great speech to the Islamic world in Cairo, you've eliminated that useless term "The War on Terror," you've put an end to torture – these have all made us and the rest of the world feel a bit more safe considering the disaster of the past eight years. In eight months you have done an

about face and taken this country in a much more sane direction.

But...
The irony that you have been awarded this prize on the second day of the ninth year of our war in Afghanistan is not lost on anyone. You are truly at a crossroads now. You can listen to the generals and expand the war (only to result in a far-too-predictable defeat) or you can declare Bush's wars over, and bring all the troops home. Now.

That's what a true man of peace would do.

There is nothing wrong with you doing what the last guy failed to do – capture the man or men responsible for the mass murder of 3,000 people on 9/11. BUT YOU CANNOT DO THAT WITH TANKS AND TROOPS. You are pursuing a criminal, not an army. You do not use a stick of dynamite to get rid of a mouse.

The Taliban is another matter. That is a problem for the people of Afghanistan to resolve – just as we did in 1776, the French did in 1789, the Cubans did in 1959 and the Nicaraguans did in 1979. One thing is certain through all revolutions by people who wish to be free – they ultimately have to bring about that freedom themselves. Others can be supportive, but freedom can not be delivered from the front seat of someone else's Humvee.

You have to end our involvement in Afghanistan now. If you don't, you'll have no choice but to return the prize to Oslo.

Yours,
Michael Moore
www.MichaelMoore.com

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HAVE YOUR SAY

Write a letter to the Editor

Culture & Life

by

Rob Gowland

The land of opportunity – NOT

Not long ago, the Party branch to which I belong screened an American documentary film that used the reminiscences of former slaves (recorded in the 1930s) to tell the real story of slavery in the USA. The film, from cable channel HBO, was called *Unchained Memories: Readings From The Slave Narratives*.

If you ever get the chance, have a look at it: it's a fine piece of work, with the reminiscences of the elderly ex-slaves read by leading African-American actors, including Oprah Winfrey.

It is fashionable among sections of the Left to sneer at Oprah, because she has achieved fame and celebrity status and her popular talk show tends to be very superficial. But that is hardly Oprah's fault: if it wasn't superficial no US network would touch it.

Capitalism runs network TV and capitalism does not want the masses to concern themselves with the ills of capitalist society. But those ills have become so glaringly obvious that they are forcing their way into the spotlight despite the wishes of the big corporations.

Last week, Oprah devoted a

segment on her show to the upsurge in homelessness in the USA caused by the economic recession. For most of her viewers, I am sure the feature that stood out was the sheer extent of the problem.

Tent cities have sprung up on vacant land on the outskirts of most (if not all) US cities. And not just a few: there are dozens of these settlements around every city in the South and Midwest. The inhabitants are families and individuals who have had their homes, their cars and even their furniture seized by banks and other finance companies for unpaid debts.

Now, with almost no belongings and with the official shelters full to overflowing, these casualties of capitalism's crisis are living under scraps of canvas. Their settlements are illegal, but there are so many of them, and their plight is so real and urgent, that many US cities have changed their rules to make the tent settlements legal.

The young woman reporting on this situation for Oprah's program interviewed a number of people in several of these tent settlements. They all told variants of the same story: their jobs disappeared in the "economic downturn", they were unable to sustain their credit card debt or their rent, and heartless institutions seized everything they had.

These were workers (in blue- and white-collar jobs) or middle class people. They had thought, as they were meant to, that (providing they worked hard) capitalist America would provide them with a living, a home and a future.

They had discovered they were wrong; and they were in shock.

Also in shock was Oprah's audience (if not Oprah herself). She kept turning to the camera and, indicating the images on the screen in the studio, she would exclaim: "Do you see this?"

The resemblance to the shantytowns of African or South American slums was obvious to anyone. But Oprah made sure her audience got the



Tent city outside of Sacramento, the state capital of California.

point: "This isn't in some third-world country. This is right here in the USA, right now!"

More people probably had their consciousness raised on this question by Oprah's "superficial" but widely seen program than any number of specialised PBS documentaries on the same subject could do.

But don't get me wrong: awareness of the social impacts of the economic plight of the USA is not restricted to Oprah Winfrey. Anne Davies, Washington correspondent of the *Business Day* supplement of *The Sydney Morning Herald* on September 21 this year also reported on joblessness and homelessness in the USA (beside a photo of "a tent city in California").

Ms Davies noted that "even in the affluent US capital, a city that's been relatively insulated from the worst recession since the Great Depression,

the beggars are visible. They sleep on the street just a block from the White House and at big intersections they wait for fellow Americans to come to a standstill and spare a dollar or two.

"Many carry signs telling their story: laid off, returned Iraq vet, lost the house and the job, got sick and no health care.

"A year after the US financial markets went into a tailspin, the US economy is showing tentative signs of a weak recovery but jobless numbers are continuing to rise, though not at the terrifying rate of six months ago, when 600,000 people a month were joining the unemployment lines....

"The jobless rate rose to 9.7 percent in August and is expected to peak above ten per cent in the months ahead. It's already there in at least 15 states and some economists predict it could be five years before the US economy generates enough jobs to

overcome those lost and to employ the new workers entering the labour force....

"The number of home foreclosures ... [is] still running at levels that are 18 percent above a year ago. In Nevada, the state with the highest foreclosure rate, one in every 62 houses is in foreclosure....

"The huge falls in house prices – in some markets it is as much as 50 percent – means that many Americans (perhaps as many as one quarter of those with mortgages) owe more on their homes than they are worth."

To call this situation an economic crisis seem inadequate. "Economic catastrophe" would seem more appropriate.

One thing is certain: the US people are likely to see more tent cities as the capitalist "American Dream" turns sour. ☘



Sun 18 Oct –
Sat 24 Oct

The way culture has become a commodity is the real subject of *The Great Contemporary Art Bubble* (ABC2 Sunday October 18 at 8.30pm repeated on ABC1 Sunday October 25 at 3.00pm).

As financiers buy modern art to store in their warehouses as a hedge against inflation and recessions, the big name artists churn out works of meaningless "art" for a well-heeled clientele that has made art the one bubble that – so far – has not burst.

The program's presenter doesn't say it, but this is a capsule portrait of capitalism, and in its way worthy of study.

When I was a boy, the adventure-spy novels of John Buchan were still extremely popular, especially the best of them, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and its sequel *Greenmantle*, even though the former had been published 40 years before.

A Scottish diplomat, barrister, journalist, historian, poet, and novelist, Buchan was the quintessential British imperialist. He became Director of Intelligence towards the end of WW1, later a Tory MP and later still Governor General of Canada.

He was also a prolific writer, publishing his first novel while still a student at Oxford. Before he was 25 he had published eight books. *The Thirty-Nine Steps* in 1915 was his

27th book. It has been filmed several times, for cinema or TV, but never once have the scriptwriters adhered to Buchan's original.

Alfred Hitchcock's film version, made in 1935, is ranked as one of the director's best works, but it began the practice (which all subsequent versions have copied) of introducing a "love interest".

Buchan published nearly 30 novels and seven collections of short stories, but he never became adept at showing men and women interacting emotionally. His love scenes are stilted, stiff and mushy at the same time. The author is clearly embarrassed by this kind of scene. One can almost hear him saying to himself: "A gentleman shouldn't talk about this sort of thing!"

This week's TV adaptation of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (ABC1 Sunday October 18 at 8.30pm), although it restores some of Buchan's details that Hitchcock et al dispensed with, still feels the need to give his hero, Richard Hannay, a beautiful woman (played by Lydia Leonard) to share his adventure.

Hannay is played woodenly by Rupert Penry-Jones from *Spooks* who was apparently chosen as part of a plan to "modernise" the story. The producer Lynn Horsford said: "With this adaptation we wanted to stay faithful to the spirit and period of the book, but asked the writer Lizzie Mickery to feel free to re-imagine it for a modern audience more familiar with James Bond and Jason Bourne."

Such concerns showed only that the producers had failed to grasp the qualities of Buchan's original that have made it a long-lasting classic.

Nor did they have much respect for their audience, assuming that viewers would not be able to tell if they fudged the period details or other aspects of the setting. The result was innumerable complaints in and to the

press about historical and geographical inaccuracies.

The film is set in 1914, a few months before WW1, but the cars used so prominently in it include a 1924 Morris Oxford, a 1926 Darracq, and a 1927 Wolseley. The biplane which chases Hannay is from 1916, his apartment is in an Art Deco building and 1950s rail carriages are being pulled by a steam train built in 1927. (The BBC's excuse? The cars from 1914 were too slow.)

Scots viewers understandably howled when the German submarine near the end surfaces in a fresh-water loch (neat trick!).

Shown by the BBC at the end of 2008, the film received mostly negative reviews from the British press, which complained that it didn't match up to Hitchcock's 1935 film version. Sam Wollaston of the British *Guardian* lamented that "It doesn't have the pace, the moodiness or the wit."

Damien Love of the *Sunday Herald* felt that "As Hannay, Penry-Jones is not at his best, and more reminiscent of a well-stuffed armchair on wheels." Mick Hume of *The Times* said, "The overall effect was to turn Buchan's blood and thunder tale into a pallid politically correct Enid Blyton story." Alasdair McKay of *The Herald* damned it with faint praise: "it was all rather spiffing and well-mannered".

The most glaring fault is the contrived coda in the railway station at the end: we have seen Victoria shot in the back and fall into the loch, to disappear into deep water. No explanation is offered for her reappearance four months later. Because no explanation would be convincing, so they just don't bother.

Which typifies the script throughout.

***The Sphinx Unmasked* (ABC1 Tuesday October 20 at**



Rupert Penry-Jones (Richard Hannay) and Lydia Leonard (Victoria Sinclair) in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (ABC1 Sunday October 18 at 8.30pm).

8.30pm) is an appallingly badly made program from US cable outfit, the Discovery Channel. It is on a potentially very interesting subject, a French Egyptologist who believes he has uncovered the identity of the builder of the Sphinx.

It is however loaded with portentous waffle and repetition and makes no attempt to give its chosen expert any credibility, or the viewer any way of judging whether his claim is in fact credible.

***The Australian documentary Catching Cancer* (ABC1 Thursday October 22 at 8.30pm)** is in marked contrast to *The Sphinx Unmasked*: it is succinct, informative and instructive.

Its subject is also very interesting: the extent of our present understanding of the role of viruses as causal agents for cancer.

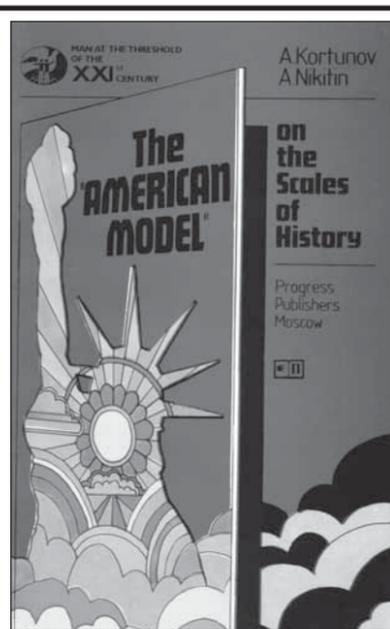
Paradoxically, the program also

shows that, however scary we may find the idea that you can "catch" cancer, it does in fact open up ways of treating or even better preventing the disease.

We have known of infectious forms of cancer (such as feline infectious anemia which killed a number of our pet cats) for decades. And most people in Australia today are probably aware of the devastation being wreaked among our Tasmanian Devil population by a *contagious* form of cancer.

It is clear that the term "cancer" covers a multiplicity of related diseases and conditions. But, as this program shows, scientists are in hot pursuit of all the various causal agents, and our knowledge is growing all the time.

We can be confident, cancer *will* be licked. ☘



The "American Model" on the Scales of History

by Andrei Kortunov & Alexander Nikitin

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Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

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**Commercialisation & regulation of the internet –
virtual friendships & all too real censorship**

Jason Wilson, lecturer Digital Communications, Uni of Wollongong
Barry Saunders, e-democracy researcher, Centre for Policy Development

October 23

**Rudd's restructuring of Australia's health system –
what will it deliver?**

Stephen Leeder, Prof, Director Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Uni of Syd
Steven Childs, Senior Psychologist D&A services

October 30

The rise of India & China: its meaning for the world

Devleena Ghosh, Prof, Social Inquiry, UTS
David Goodman, Chinese Politics, University of Sydney

6th of November 6

**Banking after the financial crisis –
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John Quiggin, economist, University Queensland
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Film Review by Richard Titelius

Capitalism: A love story

Directed by Michael Moore

Michael Moore has been making films which have touched on the issue of the corporate malfeasance of capitalism since his first foray into film making in 1989 with *Roger & Me* where he examined why General Motors had decided to close their plant in his hometown of Flint Michigan.

Bowling for Columbine, *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Sicko* followed, though none really examined or discussed socialism as an alternative system, leaving those hoping that Moore might actually issue a challenge to the system with a sense of frustration and disappointment.

Capitalism comes tantalizingly close and for some critics may have actually got there – though not with the melodramatic shenanigans at the conclusion of the movie with the citizens arrest around the New York Stock Exchange or the armoured car pulling up outside AIG or Merrill Lynch. It comes instead before that with old black and white film footage of ailing US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposing a second Bill of Rights in his January 11, 1944, State of the Union address.

In it he called for a bill to secure amongst other rights, "The right of every family to a decent home, the right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health and the right to a good education... All of these rights spell security."

The moments like the one mentioned above occur regularly throughout the movie and one is struck by how much research Moore has done in the preparation of this tour de force through the maladies of contemporary capitalism in the USA. It culminates with the financial crisis of 2008 and the election of Barack Obama as President at the end of that turbulent year.

The movie starts in spectacular style with excerpts from various video surveillance footage tapes of armed and hooded hold-ups of various financial institutions highlighting what some people will do to fulfil the American dream of obtaining material wealth (the movie concludes with a cabaret rendition of *The Internationale*).

The film moves then to those doing it hard in the US heartland where homeowners await the Sheriff who has come to evict them from their home as part of the millions that have followed this exodus since the financial crisis started in 2007.

However, there is an opportunist born every minute in the US, ready to prop up the capitalist system just when it seems to be failing. We see the managing principle of Condo Vultures who, as a "bottom feeder (in the food chain), goes in there and cleans off the carcass they are dealing with which has so many germs they will have to vomit on themselves." This leads to the simple difference



between him and a real vulture; he doesn't vomit on himself. Yeessss. Interesting!

We meet Moore's father at the site of the spark plug factory where we see a large flat building site being cleared of the last of the rubble of that factory and the memories of what unionised life and work was like there.

There are interviews with the airline pilots, some of whom earn less than a manager of a Taco Bell fast food outlet. We are reminded of the union-busting tactics of capital in that land of the free and prosperous for some.

There are many more tales: a love affair gone astray, lies, abuse, betrayal and hundreds of thousands of jobs lost each month. Moore's tale here echoes that other anti-capitalist doco from 2006, *The Corporation* which looked at the corporation as a psychopath and finds some surprisingly similar behaviours or traits being exposed as capital's misbehaviour is laid bare.

However, those hoping for a Marxist-Leninist examination of the

crisis and a call to revolution may be disappointed – though curiously the concept of revolt gets mentioned a few times and we do see *isolated* incidences of successful revolts or victories against some of the worst excesses of capital.

We see also during the 2008 US presidential election campaign where the Republican team of John McCain and Sarah Palin, in their attempts to paint Democrat candidate Barack Obama as a maverick, lamented that his policies sounded like socialism.

Unfortunately for the Republicans, the US people who were in the grips of the financial crisis thought that socialism was starting to sound pretty good compared to what they were experiencing under capitalism and so the polls for Obama rose with each mention of socialism.

Finally, as we are aware, capitalists can come up with cunning strategies to strip surplus value from the labour of workers and so it is perhaps not surprising that occasionally

they will even borrow some Marxist analysis to describe some of their work. So it was with Dead Peasant Policies which initially started out as "Key Man Insurance" policies but soon evolved into something despicable – insurance policies taken out by corporations on the lives of thousands of their workers, usually without the workers' knowledge and consent.

Moore in his film examines one case where an employer was able to claim over \$5 million on the premature death of an employee while the surviving husband and family received nothing – a case of employees being more valuable dead than alive to the capitalist.

If you visit Google you'll see the significant amount of activity which this "love story" gone astray has begun to stir in the US. Hopefully the more people who see it the more it will raise the consciousness of those who have fallen out of love with capitalism and realise that a better world is not only possible but inevitable. ✖

PERTH WHEN THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLE

Documentary presented by Friends of Guatemala as part of the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the Guatemalan Revolution

For 65 years the U.S.-backed military junta in Guatemala has tortured and slaughtered the Guatemalan people after overthrowing the Democratically-elected Government.

Thurs. 15th October at 12:30pm
Murdoch University - Hill Lecture Theatre
Education & Humanities Building
For info contact Oliver 0423 789 436

ABOLISH THE ABCC

Ark Tribe is a rigger and rank and file member of the CFMEU in South Australia. He was working on the Hindmarsh job at Flinders University when a safety dispute arose last year. Ark was summoned for questioning by the ABCC. The ABCC charged Ark for failing to attend the interview at the appointed time. Ark Tribe is to face court of the 30th October 2009 for the third time. If found guilty, he may face a six months jail sentence.



SUPPORT ARK, JOIN THE SYDNEY PROTEST:

Friday, 30th October 10am

Assembly point: Trades Hall Auditorium, 377 Sussex St Sydney



Communist Party of Australia

Website: www.cpa.org.au
Email: cpa@cpa.org.au

The Guardian

Website: www.cpa.org.au/guardian
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

Central Committee:
General Secretary: Dr Hannah Middleton
Party President: Vinnie Molina
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Sydney District Committee:
Tony Oldfield
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833

Newcastle Branch:
303 Hunter St
Newcastle NSW 2300
Ph: ah 02 4926 1752
Riverina Branch:
Allan Hamilton
2/57 Cooper St Cootamundra 2590
Ph: 02 6942 6728

Melbourne Branch:
Andrew Irving
PO Box 3 Room 0 Trades Hall
Lygon St Carlton Sth 3053
Ph: 03 9639 1550 Fax: 03 9639 4199
West Australian Branch:
Mark Hayward
PO Box 98 North Perth 6906

Brisbane Branch: David Matters
PO Box 33, Camp Hill, Qld 4152
Ph: 0419 769 129
cpabris@live.com.au
South Australian State Committee:
Bob Briton, PO Box 612, Port Adelaide BC,
SA 5015 Ph: 0418 894 366
www.cpas.blogspot.com
sa@cpa.org.au