



# Hiroshima Day

## Ban all nuclear weapons

Anna Pha

**On August 6, 1945, a US B-29 bomber dropped a uranium bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. It was the first nuclear weapon tested on a civilian population. On August 9 a plutonium bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The immediate death toll of the two bombings was over 200,000 with many thousands injured and thousands more experiencing slow and painful deaths over the years to come.**

The 66th anniversary is a time to remember the victims and raise awareness of the current dangers posed by the proliferation and build-up of far more powerful and sophisticated nuclear weapons. The nuclear meltdown at Fukushima is also a grim reminder of the dangers of the nuclear industry.

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not necessary to defeat the Japanese or end the Second World War. That is a lie used to cover up the cold-blooded barbarity of nuclear tests on civilian populations when the war was all but over.

The dropping of bombs was "an unnecessary experiment," according to Admiral William "Bull" Hasley, commander of the US Third Fleet that fought Japanese forces.

Far from learning from the horrors and dangers of the use of nuclear weapons, US imperialism has over the following decades continued to build arsenals of ever more sophisticated and deadly nuclear weapons capable of destroying human life on this planet many times over. Its most recent additions to its arsenal include mini-nukes, bunker busters and weapons designed for use in space.

The US's nuclear build-up precipitated a nuclear arms race over the decades since Hiroshima. The world is on the brink, facing the threat of a nuclear conflict in Asia or the Middle East, as well as a high risk of an accidental nuclear war. There is also the very real possibility of nuclear weapons getting into the hands of terrorists.

The US remains prepared to use nuclear weapons against any state in a first strike or "pre-emptive" capacity, even where that state does not possess nuclear weapons.

### Huge cost to humanity

The cost of developing, producing and testing nuclear weapons has been and continues to be enormous – in both human and economic terms, as well as causing considerable environmental damage.

Nuclear testing in the Pacific and on Indigenous lands in Australia has displaced whole populations, taken many lives and left many people very sick. Today, the US continues to carry out non-explosive testing in flagrant breach of international law banning all tests.

The arms race has taken a huge toll diverting government budgets from social to military spending, none more so than in the US.

Yet Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* (07-07-2011) is calling for a larger military budget to take on "the challenge of a rising China" and ensure US domination in Asia. In an article titled, "Asia Needs a Larger US Defense Budget", Dan Blumenthal and Michael Massa from the powerful, right-wing American Enterprise Institute, refer to China's "aggressive build-up" in Asia. They claim that "China's military rise is changing the balance of power in its neighbourhood."

They refer to the US Defence Department's new military concept, called AirSea Battle, for the expansion of operations in the Asian region. They compare the number of attack nuclear submarines the US has operating in Asia with the number of China's submarines. They bemoan the fact that "unlike the US, which spreads its fleet among the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, China operates all of its boats in Asia."

China's military forces, its subs and equipment are focused on defending China. Their presence in the region is not "aggressive". The authors are correct in that China does not have subs on the other side of the globe. Its military is not focused on global or even regional domination. Purely self-defence. On the other hand the US, in pursuit of global domination, has over-stretched its resources with wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and countless other military operations and bases around the world.

The US military have had a blank



cheque, expenditure continuing to rocket to the point that it consumed more than half the US federal budget two years ago. In 2010 it had been contained to 48 percent of the US budget according to the War Resisters League's calculations. Military-related spending cost taxpayers US\$1.372 trillion in 2010. To put that figure into perspective, it is larger than the national income (GDP) of Australia (\$1.2tr) in the same year! Australia has the 12th largest GDP in the world.

No economy can sustain that level of parasitic spending. Crunch time is fast approaching, the small cuts to military spending being attempted by the Obama administration are too little and too late. The people of the US have paid heavily with cuts and chronic under-funding of essential services and are being told to pay even more by the finance sector and ratings agencies that are making it difficult for the government to extend its debts.

### Nuclear war no winners

The US is preparing for war, for more than one war. China, Venezuela, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are all in its sights and it is prepared to use nuclear weapons. The US has subsidised Israel's massive

military build-up, including nuclear weapons. Israel is prepared to use them in a Middle East war. A small provocation or accident is all that it would take to trigger a nuclear war.

Despite US president Obama's expressed support for the abolition of nuclear weapons, it is still business as usual at the Pentagon. The war hawks continue with their plans to weaponise space in their pursuit of global military domination and have not abandoned their preparedness to use a pre-emptive nuclear strike. They believe there is such a thing as a "winnable nuclear war." The US Space Command openly admits its role is to dominate "the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment".

There are no winners in a nuclear war. Abolition of all nuclear weapons would make the world a far safer place and the billions of dollars saved could be directed to feeding the world's hungry, providing medical services, safe drinking water, housing and creating jobs.

### End US Alliance

The Rudd government's 2010 Defence White Paper outlines plans for a huge and relatively rapid build-up in Australia's military capability like nothing seen since the Second World War. It involves a massive

increase in combat power, military infrastructure and personnel, further integration with US military and a greater presence of US military on Australian territory.

The focus is on raising Australia's marine capability for off-shore offensive action as an integral part of the US's military operations and further integrating Australia's military with US forces. The presence of an increasing number of US military forces, the US's satellite spying activities, training facilities and logistical support raise the level of mistrust and insecurity and fuel the arms race and the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Australia hosts a number of key US military bases, including Pine Gap which is one of largest and most sophisticated satellite communications and spy stations in the world and an integral part of the US's military operations.

Australia's military expenditure is nothing short of criminal – \$86 million a day. The Gillard government continues to insulate military spending from the tough budgetary measures being imposed on public health, education, housing, social welfare and other vital social services.

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# The Guardian

Issue 1512

August 3, 2011

## US debt ceiling – train wreck postponed, not averted

A deal has been brokered and it appears the US administration will be able to go further into debt to repay its creditors and carry on the business of government. As *The Guardian* goes to press the relevant legislation will be before the Congress. The compromise package is likely to be carried and share markets have rebounded modestly in response. Public servants and the military will get their pay packets as usual next week. But despite the sighs and nervous smiles, this is a crisis postponed, not averted.

In announcing the deal, US President Obama said the compromise beaten out by Democrats and Republicans is less palatable for ordinary Americans than he had hoped. In order to placate sufficient numbers of Republicans – particularly the extremist Tea Party element – US\$2.4 trillion will be slashed from expenditure over the next decade. One trillion will have to be slashed straight away. Details are not provided but it has been indicated the Medicare budget will be slashed. By November, special commissions will be established with the role of triggering more cuts; more pain for the growing ranks of less privileged US citizens.

The result should come as no surprise. The capitalist ruling class calls the shots and they are committed to squeezing every advantage out of any disaster, including the US debt crisis. Token cuts may eventually be made but the military will continue to be massively funded as will the vast network of military bases around the world.

The hugely expensive US health system will continue to drain the treasury, not because it serves the health needs of the population well but because it guarantees super profits to big pharmaceutical corporations and insurance companies. Low taxes for the corporate sector and wealthy individuals will still be sacrosanct. The billions spent on finance sector bailouts have been swallowed up and the banks have shed the veil of false humility they felt obliged to wear for a while after the financial crisis broke in 2008.

Workers and other less privileged sections of the US population will be forced to pay to alleviate the current debt crisis on behalf of their exploiters. Citizens on the bottom of the heap didn't cause this latest cyclical crisis of capitalism or any previous one but they will pay through higher unemployment, lower standards of living, declining services and crumbling infrastructure. The privatisation of education will gather pace.

Workers' hard earned dollars will buy a breathing space for the debt-ridden US economy but they can't buy a "solution". Strictly speaking, debt is not the problem for the US economy but rather a lack of capacity to repay. Globalisation and other neo-liberal policies have been disastrous for the US – homeland of the late Milton Friedman and the policy scourge associated with his name. The US has lost large sections of its manufacturing base. The government has been stripped of many of the levers of regulation over the economy. Low taxes have shrunk government's ability to provide services to the population.

The lifting of the borrowing limit to US \$14.3 trillion does not provide answers to fundamental questions. What will the effect be of millions more US citizens being forced into poverty as a result of this fiscal "medicine"? Will the cuts shore up or hinder the economy's ability to repay its creditors? Given the current policy direction, the prognosis is grim.

Recent US experience has many lessons for Australia. Obviously, the economies of the two countries are very different. Australia's is now desperately dependant on the export of resources but the effects of the privatising, low corporate taxing, deregulating neo-liberal agenda are evident here, as well. The range of responses available to the Australian government in the event of adversity is limited, as in the US and other neo-liberalised economies.

Clearly it is time for working people to start thinking outside the capitalist square. It is no use advocating a return to a pre-neoliberal status quo ante. That phase exhausted itself and delivered neoliberalism in its stead. The people of Latin America have shown the way with the success in country after country of their struggles to move beyond the twisted capitalist "logic" of forcing the poor to pay over and over for the privileges of the wealthy. Sooner rather than later, that is the path the whole world will have to travel along.

### PRESS FUND

Australia only has about one third of one percent of the world's population, but we have 20 percent of its poker machines! If you think our national gambling problem reflects this disproportion, you're probably right. However, let's turn our attention to the Press Fund, whose statistics are on a rather less frightening scale. As of last week we were about where we needed to be in order to reach our annual target of \$14,000, but this week, alas, we haven't made three figures. Never mind, we can still get there with your help, so please send us a contribution for the next issue. This week our thanks go to the following, for their valued support:

J R Allen \$10, C Durston \$10, Bassam Oaher \$12, "Round Figure" \$16, Bob Treasure \$32

This week's total: \$80 Progressive total: \$9,750

## Eulogy

# Gordon Thomas Horn Life member MUA

**To Gordon's family who in his own words, he loved and appreciated so much, please allow me on behalf of all of us here, the Maritime Union of Australia and their Veterans' Association to extend our sincere condolences to you all.**

Gordon touched so many of us in so many ways, whether a kind word, personal advice, a rousing working class speech, listening to him on the radio airing his views or telling one of his many jokes.

He was a truly committed, caring person to his family, workmates and for all, through his love of people.

Gordon had the uncanny ability to bring people along with him in his endeavours to better the lives of (as he called them) his beloved working class friends and comrades.

Gordon was born in Winton on the December 14, 1927. His mother Ruby and father Robert or Bob as he was known, had a family of 11 with six boys and five girls. Gordon attended Longreach state school. At the age of eight Gordon was struck down with "Infantile Paralysis" (polio). He was flown to Brisbane where he was to spend the next six months.

During that six months and on his return to Longreach Gordon first showed the tenacity and commitment that would remain with him throughout his life, to overcome that terrible illness, astounding his doctors in the process.

Such was his recovery that he took up boxing and, apart from Longreach, had quite a few bouts at the old Brisbane stadium.

Gordon's first job at 13 was as messenger boy at Butler's garage in Adelaide Street Brisbane.

Nine months latter at age 14 Gordon and his twin brother Raymond headed for the shearing sheds commencing on boys' wages, but not for long. In Gordon's own words: "The work Raymond and I were doing was much busier and active than the work performed by the adult roustabouts. Some of the kind and strong-minded union men decided us boys should get full wages and called a meeting behind the Longreach barber shop.

"The shearers pledged support for the boys and victory became the order of the day, not long after, boys' wages were abolished."

This work and comradeship in these his formative years, set the foundation for his principles of unity,

fairness and empathy for all human-kind. Gordon left the shearing sheds for the iron and steel sheds in Port Kembla where he joined the Iron Workers Union.

He was inspired by the then Communist leadership of the union who, in his own words were supposed to be bad people, but Gordon found them to be inspirational, in the way they spoke, acted and turned the word unity into something more than a word.

It was through this unity that Gordon met so many wonderful caring people from the working class and told me: "The common goal that the Communist leadership espoused – unity, solidarity and fairness – made me realise that it was the party more like the true genuine workers' party that I had been searching for."

In Port Kembla he joined the Communist Party. Gordon spent three years working for Lysaghts and living in the company's hostel, an old army camp. But on returning from a trip to the Warsaw Peace Conference as a delegate for the Iron Workers Union Gordon found he had no job and nowhere to live as he was not allowed back into the hostel.

At this time in Australia the anti-communist crusade was very strong, so when Gordon asked why, all he got from the manager was, "Well Gordon you know the reason as well as I do".

For Gordon Horn jobs dried up in Port Kembla. In desperation he applied for a job at Metal Manufacturers and approached the gatekeeper who again in Gordon's own words said: "Awe gee mate its five past four and they usually only see you till four. But they're crying out for blokes so I'll find out if they will see you.

"Well I got the interview and was told to wait outside, after a while a young lad came out and said sorry Mr Horn there's nothing here for you."

Gordon was then employed by the Ironworkers Union for a time to speak to unionists in all manner of industries.

After his work with the Ironworkers Union Gordon found his way to Sydney where, in 1954 he joined the Waterside Workers Federation.

He often said to be a waterside worker in Sydney in the 1950s was an inspiration to all, and spoke about the principles of men like Jim Healy, Tom Nelson, Stan Moran, Ivo Barrett,

Dutchy Young and Alby Graham and many others and, that it was something you rarely see these days.

Those were days of the Hungry Mile when the employers picked men on brute strength, compliance or favouritism with no regard for safety and no loyalty whatsoever.

Gordon transferred to Brisbane in 1956 and once again was an active delegate and became a well respected official of the branch with a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Naturally during his time with the Waterside Workers' Federation, Gordon was involved in many disputes and industrial campaigns that helped shape work practices and conditions that members enjoy today. These, along with actions for peace and disarmament, laid the foundations for many social changes, not only in Australia but around the world. On that we should all reflect, as it was people such as Gordon that left the world a better place.

Gordon retired in 1991, but while he retired from the workforce he did not retire from the struggle and was an active member of the then Retired Waterside Workers' Association and the now Maritime Union Veterans' Association.

Gordon always had a point of view and raised all manner of issues at the MUA Veterans meetings, he found great joy in addressing young unionists by way of the ACTU's "Organising Works" program, and was extremely well received when he addressed the MUA youth conference here in Brisbane in November 2009, so much so in fact, that they produced a DVD of his presentation.

It was quite fitting that at our 2010 Veteran's Christmas function they presented Gordon with a plaque for services rendered to the union and its Veterans Association.

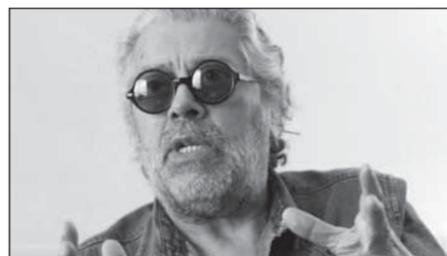
Gordon never wavered in his activism. In fact, when I visited him in hospital recently, although he was very sick, he asked about the recent union elections and why they were so close.

Gordon you were a true son of the working class and an inspiration to all who knew you. Your contribution to the union movement, especially the Maritime Union of Australia, was unsurpassed and along with many others I am proud to have known you as a mate and a comrade.

Vale Comrade  
Col Davies ☘

Brisbane

### Homage & tribute night Facundo Cabral & Alfonso "Poncho" Bauer Paiz



7:00pm Friday August 5

Spanish Centre (Acacia Ridge Sports Complex) – 244 Mortimer Road Acacia Ridge

Facundo Cabral – Well known Argentinian singer and poet who was assassinated in Guatemala. His assassination has outraged many people not only in Latin America but also around the world.

Alfonso "Poncho" Bauer Paiz was revered as an exemplary citizen and the last of an outstanding generation. During the 1944 and 1954 revolutionary governments he held several official posts and because of this he was exiled for many years after de US led coup in 1954. He participated in the Latin American revolutionary processes in Chile, Nicaragua and Cuba.

Also come and celebrate and discuss the victory of Ollanta Humala for a Democratic Change in Peru. There will be space for discussion.

Music by: Juan Zepeda, Ovidio Orellana and Guatemalan Singing group TIKAL

Poems by Amabilia Orellana Entry by Donation

Food and beverages on sale at the Spanish Centre

For more info: 0414 733 537

Australian Solidarity with Latin America – ASLA



# Polluters mount campaign against climate action

Peter Mac

**The Australian Trade and Industry Alliance, an industrial coalition headed by the coal industry, is launching a strident public relations campaign against the Gillard government's carbon tax package, arguing that it won't affect greenhouse gas emissions and will cost thousands of jobs.**

These polluting industries have media and parliamentary spokesmen. Recently, while Tony Abbott was barnstorming on his nationwide "big bad tax" tour, rabid right-wing Sydney radio broadcaster Allan Jones declared that those responsible for the tax should be put in a hessian sack, taken out to sea and dropped overboard.

Former Howard government minister Senator Eric Abetz was questioned about this during ABC TV's Q&A program. Instead of saying that such a statement should result in a prosecution regardless of who says it, he merely said he wouldn't express an opinion because he himself hadn't heard what Jones said.

The statement has certainly been taken as an encouragement to violence, and Jones' seeming immunity from prosecution has created an impression that almost anything goes in opposing climate change action.

Recently a public call was made to take up arms, quite literally, against the carbon tax. At a public meeting where most of the audience opposed the tax, a courageous Greens Party member declared her support for it but was shouted down, harassed until she left the venue and then pursued down the street until she called the police for protection – all on national TV.

## A significant beginning

The polluters' campaign against the carbon tax program may seem like a gross overreaction, in view of its restricted application to 500 companies, its exemption of vehicle emissions and other weaknesses (See *Guardian* July 13 and 20). However, the package's provisions to fund renewable energy development and close Hazlewood and Playford, the nation's dirtiest coal-fired power



stations, are actually excellent initiatives which the polluters hate.

It is also possible that the taxation measures will have some impact on the profitability of certain industries, thus motivating them to begin seeking less polluting methods of production. For example, corporations involved in aluminum and steel smelting, two of the worst polluting industries, may decide not to pass on the tax to purchasers.

Then there is the corporations operating coal-fired power stations, which produce almost half of Australia's carbon emissions. Most of the carbon tax on these corporations will be passed on in higher prices, because consumers lack alternative energy sources, and because there are no government price controls, so the compensation offered to consumers is a standing invitation to the corporations to jack up their prices by at least an equivalent amount.

Some households may decide to convert to gas for cooking and hot water, but gas companies are also likely to pass on any tax they incur to consumers. Installing solar panels to generate power is not feasible for most people, because of the high

installation costs and poor returns on the investment.

In the past, state governments have offered grants and rebates to encourage consumers to "go solar", but when these schemes flourished the financial incentives were reduced or the schemes were terminated.

One of the most notorious of these backflips was the attempt by the NSW O'Farrell government to discontinue a solar rebate scheme for new applicants. The scheme had been very successful because the rebate was 60 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), and even in the colder April to July quarter ten solar panels in Sydney are likely to generate 320 kWh, earning a total rebate of \$210.

The government also declared it would reduce the rebate for people who had already subscribed to the scheme from 60 cents per kWh to 40 cents, but backed down after enraged subscribers threatened to mount a legal class action.

Nevertheless, the government has now spitefully decreed that if subscribers who still get the original 60 cents rebate add extra panels to their solar arrays, the new panels will receive only the 40 cent rebate – and

the rebate for the original panels will also drop down to 40 cents!

This and similar stories from other states demonstrate the subordination of conservative governments to the interests of the fossil fuel industry. The governments might be keen to win green votes, but when the chips are down their allegiance remains with the polluters.

## Everything solid melts into air

At the moment the electricity generation industry is fractured between various conservative state governments and the profit-obsessed private sector. The national grid demands a national approach to energy generation, which is crucial for our national development and our contribution to the global climate change struggle – and that means nationalisation of the industry.

In contrast, the coal and power generation industries reject climate change science, and want no change whatsoever to the arrangements under which they have reaped astronomical profits.

These industries are reacting

not just to aspects of the carbon tax program that would definitely reduce carbon emissions, i.e. closure of dirty power stations and the development of renewable energy, but also to the fact that the package sets a precedent for more vigorous action in future.

Moreover, they're terrified at the tectonic shift that is beginning to take place in Australian politics, as new alliances develop between left and progressive political parties and other organisations, for example between farmers and the Greens in opposition to development of coal seam gas fields.

There are even splits occurring within the Liberal Party, as demonstrated by Malcolm Turnbull's sharply pointed statement about the need to reject the claims of climate change deniers.

The power and coal mining corporations bitterly resent any loss of profits, even from something as frail as the carbon taxation measures. They also see the proposed winding down of Australia's dirtiest power stations as a portent of the end of their grimy stranglehold on power production. Let's hope they're right. And let's work towards that objective. ♣

Pete's Corner



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# Hiroshima Day 2011



## Hobart

### Hiroshima Day event Memorial Vigil

12:00 - 13:00 Saturday August 6  
Parliament house lawn, Hobart

*Hobart MAPW's Tasmanian branch (MedAct) invite you to a peaceful rally held on the lawn of parliament house*

Interested people and groups are encouraged to bring banners to attend this important event.

## Broken Hill

### Hiroshima Day event Broken Hill Community Voices

Broken Hill Community Voices will be singing songs to raise awareness about Hiroshima Day and the dangers posed not just by nuclear weapons, but also by nuclear power reactors. The choir sings a range of social justice songs and world music. At this event there will be a particular focus on peace songs, such as the moving song "Sadako from Hiroshima" by Australian songwriter, Robin Mann.

Come along and learn how to make a paper crane!

**3:00pm Saturday August 6**  
**Bells Milk Bar**

**Patton Street (opposite the park) South Broken Hill**

## Hiroshima Never Again Sydney

### Hiroshima Day Saturday August 6

**Ban Nuclear Weapons, Troops Home Now, No Uranium Mining!**

#### Forum

11:00am Teachers Federation NSW Building  
23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW

Speakers:

Intro by John Hallam, PND UN lobbyist  
Chaired by Radhika Raju, CFMEU  
Hans Kristensen, Nuclear Weapons Expert (USA)  
Prof. Richard Broinowski, Author, Fact or Fission  
Donna Mulhearn, Peace activist  
Performance by Ecopella

#### March and Rally

2:00pm Belmore Park  
(near Central Station)

Speakers:

Welcome by Aunty Millie Ingram  
Kiyo Takahashi, Japanese community speaker (311 Group)  
Andre Lariviere & Francois Mativet, Sortir De Nucleaire (France)  
Lee Rhiannon, Greens Senator for NSW  
Dr Wahid Kazi, Afghani academic  
Warren Smith, Maritime Union of Australia  
Kiyo Takahashi, 311 Sydney campaign group  
Councillor John McInerney, Sydney City Council  
Natalie Wasley, Beyond Nuclear Initiative  
Performance by Soleluna, Rindou (Taiko drum) and  
Hokkai Soran (dance)

More information: [www.hiroshimacommittee.org](http://www.hiroshimacommittee.org)

## Perth

### Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day Film screening and origami workshop

Saturday August 6

Northbridge Piazza – Cnr James and Lake St Northbridge

1:00pm – Short Speeches

1:30pm – Film screening – Flashes of Hope

2:30pm – Origami workshop

66 years after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
Japan experiences a new nuclear crisis at Fukushima.

Come and hear messages of hope, survival and the vision for a nuclear free future.

[ufc@ccwa.org.au](mailto:ufc@ccwa.org.au)

## Melbourne

### Hiroshima Day event – Memorial Vigil

1:00pm - 2:00pm Saturday August 6

GPO, Bourke and Elizabeth

You are invited to a vigil to mark the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.  
Afterwards heading to the Hiroshima Day Peace Concert at the State Library Theatre

### Hiroshima Day event – Peace Concert 2011

3:00pm - 5:00pm Saturday August 6

State Library, Village Roadshow Theatre

Tickets at door: \$15/\$10 conc.

MC: Rod Quantock

Performers: Lily and King, Folk/Jazz/Roots King Kadu and the Sunshine Sisters, Aboriginal Music Tom Bolton Band, Acoustic Folk Fuefukuro, Japanese Drums & Bamboo Flute

Speakers: Felicity Hill, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Phillip White, Formerly of Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, Japan

Proceeds from the concert will go towards the victims of Japan's earthquake and tsunami.

We hope you can join us!

Presented by Japanese for Peace

### Hiroshima Day event – Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki

5:30pm - 7:00pm, followed by Japanese tea Tuesday August 9

The Wheeler Centre, Little Lonsdale Street (State Library building)

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki – The urgent question of nuclear disarmament

Two eminent world experts discuss this topic on Nagasaki Day 2011.

Professor Gareth Evans AO QC is now Chancellor of the Australian National University. He previously led global conflict prevention organisation, the International Crisis Group; and co-chaired the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

Dr Hans Kristensen from the Federation of American Scientists is one of the world's foremost experts on nuclear weapons expert, and is speaking in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki days.

Co-sponsored by MAPW, ICAN, the Red Cross and Japanese for Peace - who will host tea after the meeting.

## Adelaide

### Hiroshima Day – Observance

Saturday August 6

8:10am for 8:15am observance of silence then a short ceremony

Hiroshima monument at Peace Park on War Memorial Drive Adelaide

(opposite entrance of Women's and Children's Hospital).

Further info Joyce on 08 8232 0048

## Brisbane

### HIROSHIMA DAY RALLY and MARCH

Saturday 6th August – Reddcliffe Place (opposite Treasury Casino)

1pm Rally 2.15pm Peace March

Speakers • Songs • Poetry • Stalls

**FUKUSHIMA - The Nuclear Incident what can we / must we learn from it.**

"The Fukushima disaster reinforces some of the perils of nuclear power. The magnitude of the damage has been covered up and public health jeopardised for the sake of the industry"  
(Dr Sue Wareham OAM Medical Association for the Prevention of War)

**COME ALONG AND JOIN US – HELP TO REINFORCE THE MESSAGE  
NUCLEAR HAS TO GO – THE COST IS TOO HIGH – THE THREAT TOO REAL**

Contact Joan ph 07 3855 9497 [jshears28@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jshears28@yahoo.com.au)

Rally for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Inc

# Qantas: slippery slope of privatisation

Anna Pha

**ABC TV's *Lateline* program last week revealed Jetstar crew from Thailand were employed on slave wages, working shifts in excess of 20 hours in fear of huge financial penalties and the sack if they didn't. Jetstar is a wholly owned subsidiary of Qantas. Jetstar went quickly into damage control, laying the blame at the door of a body hire company in Thailand – a company which is 37 percent owned by Qantas.**

Following its privatisation in 1993, Qantas launched an all out war on its unionised workforce. It has tried all the dirty capitalist tricks in the world to cut costs and boost profits: "independent" subsidiaries, individual employment contracts, labour hire firms, low paid overseas labour, offshore maintenance and deunionisation.

It is not surprising that there appear to be an increasing number of flight "incidents", or that staff in Australia are presently taking or voting on taking industrial action.

In pursuit of higher profits, Qantas set up its "independent" budget airline Jetstar in 2003. Jetstar, like its parent, set about off-shoring labour and maintenance and taking a host of other cost-cutting measures. They paid their Australian-based crew lower wages than Qantas, while Qantas further cut costs by transferring many of its flights to Jetstar.

Qantas directly or indirectly through Jetstar, hires staff based in London, Auckland, Bangkok, Singapore and elsewhere, exploiting non-union workforces on lower wages and inferior working conditions. Through such means it also avoids paying employee entitlements (superannuation, sick leave, annual leave, etc).

It closed its heavy maintenance site in Sydney in 2006 with the loss of 256 licensed aircraft engineer positions and several hundred additional support staff. When members of the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers' Association (ALAEA) visited two overseas facilities maintaining Qantas and Jetstar aircraft, they were appalled. In Manila they found two licensed engineers operating alongside 44 unlicensed engineers. In

Singapore, up to 60 licensed engineers were working at one time of which only five were licensed.

In Australia, the engineer ratio was 70 percent licensed to 30 percent unlicensed compared with five percent licensed in Manila and eight percent in Singapore.

The ALAEA concluded that both the Manila and Singapore sites were operating at unsafe levels of licensed engineers.

Qantas earned the well-deserved reputation of workplace bully. It tried to force the Howard government's individual employment contracts (AWAs) on maintenance engineers and long haul cabin crew. At one point it boasted having 300 strike-breakers on short-term contracts for deployment in the event of industrial action by flight attendants. At the same time it sought to slash wages during negotiations for a new enterprise agreement. The Rudd government, to its credit, blocked attempts by Qantas to import strike-breaker engineers on section 457 visas.

## "Slave labour"

Jetstar flies international and domestic routes with cabin crew employed by body hire company Tour East Thailand (TET). Their employment contracts provide a base wage of \$258 a month, an extra \$7 an hour when flying, no sick leave, half the annual leave of Australian crew and effectively set no limit on hours of duty.

Failure to report for work could entail the repayment of four months' wages and the sack.

One Jetstar crew member told *Lateline*, "It was horrible. I felt like a slave."

The Sydney-Bali and return trip is about 17 hours – a fatiguing trip, sometimes extended to 20 hours or more by flight delays. Under international regulations pilots are given a break and stay overnight for obvious safety reasons. Not the cabin crew.

On April 22, five Thai-based crew pulled out of a flight, citing fatigue after a series of domestic and international flights. They received a blunt letter from their employer, warning: "Whilst illness, etc., is accepted by your employer, poor time management is not ... TET requires from

you an understanding that you will not repeat these behaviours in the workplace."

Jetstar in a statement provided to *Lateline*, referred to its high standards of "fatigue management", and said it does not require employees who are fatigued to operate a flight. (emphasis added)

Jetstar tried to distance itself from TET, saying it was "a local company with expertise in employment in the local market." It tried to play down TET's relationship to Qantas: "Qantas has a minority share." Yet, Qantas gives on its website as its contact and address in Bangkok: "Tour East (Thailand), 21st Floor, Charn Issara Tower 1..."

*Lateline*, asked: "Why does the Thai-based contract for cabin crew say in clause 9.2 that The Planned Limit and Operational Extensions may be extended by the Employer. Doesn't this, in effect, place no limit on the hours crew can work?"

Jetstar responded: "No, this is not correct. Jetstar has clearly established duty limitations that are consistently applied regardless of where our cabin crew are based." That might be true, but what are these limitations if 20-hour shifts fall within them?

Jetstar also says it has written to TET informing them that the communication it sent to the five crew was "not supported by our airline."

## Second class treatment

As Senator Nick Xenophon asked on *Lateline*: "How will a crew be able to cope with an emergency if they've been required to work in excess of 20 hours in just one shift? It's something that doesn't apply to Australian cabin crew for good reason and it shouldn't apply to foreign-based cabin crew who are doing work here in Australia."

Senator Xenophon indicated that he will seek to introduce a private member's bill that would force Australian airlines to provide the same flight and duty conditions for foreign crews as are currently given to Australian crews. The bill would also apply to international airlines in which an Australian airline owns more than a 20 percent stake.

*Lateline* also reported that it had obtained over 60 incident reports

from at least 37 crew members who had filed complaints this year to Jetstar management about fatigue and exhaustion after flying the Sydney-to-Perth-to-Darwin routes.

If the bill is passed it will thwart any plans Qantas has to use low cost offshore based airlines to avoid its obligations under Australian enterprise agreements and industrial relations law and taxation. These include taxation, superannuation contributions, sick leave, maximum shift lengths, wage rates and other conditions and benefits that Australian workers and their trade unions have won.

## Offensive against workers

Meanwhile Qantas continues its offensive against unions and its workforce in Australia. Long-haul Qantas pilots have begun industrial action to protect the conditions of pilots. The action so far is low key, with unauthorised in-flight announcements informing passengers about the Australian and International Pilots' Association's campaign.

Baggage handlers, catering, freight and other Transport Workers' Union members have voted for

protected action during enterprise negotiations. Their demands include enhanced safety, job security and a safety net for employees and out-sourced staff.

Warehouse staff, members of the National Union of Workers, decided last week to walk off the job for a day over job security and wages. They are also fighting for casual staff to receive the same rights as provided to permanent employees, including superannuation, workplace entitlements and paid training.

Qantas, including its subsidiary Jetstar, is a lesson in privatisation. The Australian government has lost control of its national carrier and lost a significant source of regular income. Safety has been put at risk (fatigue of crew and offshore maintenance), the health of its employees jeopardised, working conditions and wages reduced and quality of services reduced. A large percentage of its workforce is now deunionised with little protection. Thousands of jobs have been lost in Australia. All in the name of private profit.

The *Lateline* program illustrates the importance of the public media, how the ABC, not beholden to corporate sponsors, can expose the super-exploitation of workers and other unsavoury practices of capitalism. ☘

# Hiroshima Day Ban all nuclear weapons

Continued from page 1

## Nuclear danger

The Fukushima nuclear meltdown illustrates the dangers of uncontrollable spread of radioactive material. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) describes the serious nature and dire consequences of the Fukushima disaster as "unprecedented in Japan's history." In a policy statement calling for an immediate break with nuclear energy and a full-scale shift to renewable energy, issued in June, the JCP says:

"Once a serious accident occurs at a nuclear power plant and radioactive material is released into the environment, there is no technological means to contain it. The damage spreads geographically without limit and the consequences are likely to persist for generations.... In this regard, nuclear accidents are in a category without parallel."

The JCP raised the question of why the "technology in nuclear power generation should be allowed to exist in society in spite of its extraordinary hazards to humanity inherent in the event of accidents ..."

"All types of nuclear reactors now in operation or under development produce massive amounts of nuclear fission waste. A one-million-kilowatt reactor accumulates, after one year of operation, as much radioactive materials as one thousand Hiroshima-type atomic bombs would produce at the time of detonation. However, humankind does not possess the technology to keep this radioactive material safely isolated. This fact was painfully

proven by the 1979 Three Mile Island, the 1986 Chernobyl, and the 2011 Fukushima accidents.

"The inherent danger of nuclear power plants lies in the fact that they produce and then store massive amounts of deadly nuclear waste with no way to safely isolate it."

These accidents and the inherent dangers pointed to by the JCP highlight the importance of abolishing nuclear weapons and replacing nuclear energy with environmentally sustainable, renewable energy sources.

## Join the actions

There will be actions around Australia commemorating Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see details page 4). They are an opportunity to make demands to:

- Abolish all nuclear weapons
- End the US-Australia military alliance
- Close US bases in Australia
- Halt the export of uranium, limit use of uranium to medical purposes
- Immediately cut Australia's military spending by 10 percent
- Use the money saved to fund public hospitals, education, housing and transport and for research and development of job-creating renewable energy.

Australia could and should make an important contribution to peace and the future of the planet and its people by adopting an independent foreign policy and showing respect for the sovereign rights of nations to independence, equality and self-determination. ☘



Photo: Denis Doherty

A very rowdy but good natured demonstration against Max Brenner was held in Melbourne on Friday 29th July. The demonstrators moved off to blockade two Max Brenner outlets in the city. With about 400 demonstrators and 150 police in narrow alley ways of the Melbourne CBD businesses in that vicinity were very quickly shut down. Max Brenner has a very prominent pro Israeli military position.

# Yindjibarndi Aboriginal people WA FMG mining magnate

**In the beautiful rugged Pilbara region of north Western Australia a struggle is being played out between a timeless culture and a culture and ideology which is threatening the vitality of humanity itself.**

On one side are the proud Yindjibarndi people, who wish to preserve their culture, customs, language, way of life and country which embodies their spirit. On the other side is Australia's second richest person, Andrew Forrest (another Western Australian mining magnate, Gina Rinehart being the richest) with a net worth of \$6.9 billion who is chairman of the corporation he founded, Fortescue Metals Group (and currently appealing a ruling by the Federal Court that bars him from running FMG), which mines and exports iron ore.

The other intriguing story to be told here is that of Native Title and whether it is really working the way it was originally intended or has it become a one-way street for the benefit of mining companies. When Native Title was introduced in the mid 1990s it was thought that the process would give Aboriginal people an opportunity to be at the negotiating table on decisions about the future of their culture and country. The truth is now that this occurs only as an appearance while the reality is that once an Aboriginal community commits to the Native Title process they are locked into a process which guarantees that mining will take place on their land whether they want the mining or not.

In WA the mining interests are also assisted in an almost blanket (corporate) media message that mining is good for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. This is nowhere more evident than in the sole WA daily newspaper, *The West Australian* which fawns over local magnates Andrew Forrest and Gina Rinehart in weekly articles and opinion pieces, celebrating the wealth and prosperity they allegedly bring to the state, championing their causes, and glossing over their weaknesses and the detriment they cause to some communities and the environment.

In recent years the Yindjibarndi people through the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation (YAC) commenced negotiations on a Native Title Claim with FMG which came to a head at an extraordinary meeting on March 16, 2011, in Roebourne. The meeting was called by a splinter group of Yindjibarndi people supported by Andrew Forrest. Andrew Forrest was at the meeting, as were a lawyer hired by him, Ronald Bower, his own anthropologist and other henchmen.

Andrew Forrest had also bussed in Aboriginal people from Carnarvon and elsewhere for the meeting to be stacked by people who would vote to accept the proposal that FMG were going to put to them.

The meeting did not go Andrew Forrest's way when those Yindjibarndi people lead by YAC CEO, Michael Woodley walked out in disgust. While Andrew Forrest sought to

continue the meeting regardless, he was not able to legitimise his claim on Yindjibarndi land. Forrest's unconscionable actions were captured on video and downloaded onto the web where it went viral.

On July 18, the ABC's *Four Corners* program ran a story on the struggle between the Yindjibarndi people and Andrew Forrest's FMG which has received much media attention in the eastern states while *The West* ran an article on the program without actually referring to it as the ABC's *Four Corners* program!

The following is an interview conducted by *The Guardian's* reporter **Richard Titelius** with Michael Woodley.

**Richard Titelius:** Kerry O'Brien on *Four Corners* said that, "over the next 40 years FMG is hoping to scrape some 2.4 billion tonnes of iron ore off this land. The infrastructure and people that come with it will inevitably reduce much of this country to an industrial landscape."

Can you comment further and would you like to see less iron ore scraped from your people's country?

**Michael Woodley:** If we had a genuine choice of being able to say, "No mining", then they (the Aboriginal people) would say no. The Yindjibarndi people do not want to see their country become an industrial site for the benefit of shareholders and investors. We do not want Yindjibarndi land to become a haven for the mining investors to become rich at the expense of Aboriginal people who will become poorer materially, physically and spiritually.

**Titelius:** What about water resources? Would such activity have an effect on the hydrology of the area i.e. the area around the proposed Solomon Hub project?

**Woodley:** There are currently water shortages being experienced in the Pilbara and projects like the Solomon Hub envisage taking 60 million tonnes a year over 40 years. Water is an integral part of mining and as mining activity increases the need for water will increase. Where will the water come from to meet this increased demand? The townships of Dampier and Karratha rely on water from bores at Millstream and sometimes these bores have been run down to critical levels.

The mining activity itself will cause some parts of the water courses to be touched and compromised, while some parts will not be touched on the surface but will not have water flow to them as a consequence of activity upstream or elsewhere.

**Titelius:** Are there sacred sites and law sites that would be disturbed by the proposed mining activity at what FMG calls the Solomon Hub?

**Woodley:** Yes, the Yindjibarndi people through the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation – an organisation set up to protect our Native Title rights and promote our culture, has been trying to educate the [Native Title] Tribunal, but have not been able to move them one iota. This is partly because the Native

Title Tribunal administers the Native Title Act which is a federal Act to promote the inevitable development of a mining or other projects. The recognition and classification of sacred sites and other places or objects which are of significance to Aboriginal people is controlled by the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990* which is a state act.

**Titelius:** In the *Four Corners* program you said that the only way for Aboriginal people to get out of poverty and to fix up some of their social problems is to insist that these companies pay a fair deal. How would they pay this money and what should the companies such as FMG do?

**Woodley:** It is very important from the outset to state that Aboriginal people are capable of managing their own affairs. We have to free ourselves from the lows that industry and governments have sunk us to.

Aboriginal people face challenges in health, housing, education and the motivation which is often not there ... as we are constantly being told what we are and what to do and being kept out of our country while we live in Roebourne.

We need to get back to the simple and fundamental things in life that has kept us Yindjibarndi people going for over 40,000 years.

**Titelius:** I agree and no white civilisations have endured continuously for 40,000 years in the same way. The non-Indigenous have certainly something to learn from Aboriginal people [about how to cultivate and protect a society].

What would happen to present and future Native Title claims if no one is teaching law, language, and customs to new generations of Yindjibarndi people?

**Woodley:** The Native Title legislation [and process] is designed to remove connection from Indigenous peoples to their country for the benefits of colonial/imperialist and capitalist class. Native Title gives the appearance that there is consultation with one or more claimant groups but what happens if, due to the complexity of the claim and disagreements over what is being asked from the mining company, that the mining company can advise the Native Title Tribunal that they have been bargaining in good faith and that 6-12 months has elapsed and can they now make a decision on their claim. This will usually be as much of the mineral rights that they have been able to peg out on the Aboriginal land. In the case of FMG, it is more than 50 percent of our land.

**Titelius:** Can Aboriginal people who have full employment and are embedded in mainstream society have the time and the will to continue Yindjibarndi law, language and customs?

**Woodley:** No they don't have the time – and that has been the challenge for Aboriginal people of being torn between two worlds. Kinship is very important in Aboriginal society and a big part of the glue that holds it together. They [Yindjibarndi people] want to be with their people and their country more than their jobs. What defines white man is often his job, his car, house, travel and status whereas it is kin and country which define Aboriginal people.

I have known people who would chuck in their jobs rather than their identity.

**Titelius:** What will happen to Aboriginal law when every Aboriginal person has a full time job? Readers may remember the Australian Employment Covenant (AEC) which was launched in 2008 with the backing of the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. It involved such luminaries of capital and their apologists as Rupert Murdoch, Andrew Forrest, James Packer, Noel Pearson and the heads of almost 200 other corporations including Woolworths and KFC. And although ambitious in its scope (to find 50,000 jobs for Aboriginal people within two years), its agenda was far less noble. But after three years it has filled just 4,300 jobs.

**Woodley:** If there were full employment of Aboriginal people in mainstream society we could kiss our world goodbye ... and especially any rights and interests under Native Title.

Aboriginal people will be too busy being caught up in the same things that white people do. No wonder Andrew Forrest "can tell you



Photo of Vermeer T1 255 Surface miners at FMG's Christmas Creek. This is the fate which awaits Yindjibarndi land if Andrew Forrest's magnetite ore per hour. FMG has recently taken delivery of the miners as, "disruptive technology".

straight employing Aboriginal people is great for business." It creates more consumers and therefore more is produced.

More and more people need to wake up to the impact which this materialist, production/consumption world view has on Indigenous societies and the non-Aboriginal world. We need to make a good, clean, green and sustainable world.

White people are starting to learn this too, hopefully not before it is too late.

**Titelius:** In the 1920s and 1930s Western Australia had a Chief Protector of Aborigines, AO Neville (Mister Neville to the Aboriginal people) who adopted a paternalistic approach to the care of Aboriginal people believing that it was in their best interests for them to forget their culture and that it would be best to try and breed them out as they couldn't look after themselves.

Is Andrew Forrest's approach to the Yindjibarndi people a similar type of paternalism, hoping to give them all jobs while trying to have the Aboriginal people turn away from their culture and the country which embodies their meaning and spirit?

**Woodley:** Andrew Forrest is replacing government welfare with mining welfare, which in effect creates native welfare all over again. This is because Aboriginal people will still not have the sovereignty over their land and the autonomy over their communities and destinies.

**Titelius:** Have you been following what has been happening at James Price Point in the Kimberley with the proposed Woodside Gas Processing Plant?

Do you see any parallels or lessons of the struggle north of Broome between competing groups of Aboriginal people and your own struggle with FMG in the Pilbara?

**Woodley:** What I can see from the struggle at James Price Point where the Kimberly Land Council has been acting on behalf of the traditional owners the Goolarabooloo Jabirr-Jabirr people in a native Title application, disagreement



Yindjibarndi Elder with grandson Michael Woodley at the Millstream oasis on the Fortescue River in the heart of their sacred land. Ned Cheedy was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2011 NAIDOC Awards

# take on



Christmas Creek mine near the Chichester Ranges in the Pilbara. Andrew Forrest is successful with the Solomon Hub project. Each T1255 surface miner can rip up over 800 tonnes of rock. The latest Vermeer T1655 Surface Miner. It has twice the size and power of the T1255. It is described by its

has occurred where all the voices were not being properly heard.

People's eagerness to get into these projects means that some people are overlooked.

These are sensitive negotiations and if all relevant sides have not been heard as in this case then one side which has been ready to agree with Woodside Petroleum and the Liberal government of Colin Barnett, then the land is surrendered pursuant to the wishes of this group, while others are left frustrated and empty handed-or "empty countryed".

In our case with the Yindjibarndi people, Allery Sandy has been too quick to push a point of view which could see all Yindjibarndi people lose something in exchange for a fleeting glance at wealth for a few people.

The lesson is that, when Aboriginal people are strong, unified and speak with one voice that we will show to mining companies and government what our beliefs in our country are and the preservation and strengthening of our culture and way of life.

**Titelius:** The federal government is trying to tackle the effects of climate change by introducing a carbon tax and reducing greenhouse gas emissions-initially by five percent. Do you believe that preserving the integrity of Aboriginal land, creating sustainable industries and jobs (tourism, some mining, agriculture and renewable energy) would be a way for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to achieve a win-win situation?

**Woodley:** Aboriginal people are the masters of land management as we have been able to demonstrate that for thousands of years. A diversity of land use and ensuring that a variety of land uses do not compromise each other is critical for sustainable and effective land management i.e. people, animals and plants existing in harmony.

Aboriginal people should be a part of this process as we are the custodians of the land and as the land is our temple we want to care for it so that we fulfil the wishes of our elders past

and present who sought the integrity of country above all else.

By stopping or putting significant restrictions on the amount of Yindjibarndi land which can be mined by FMG, this will also limit the amount of CO2 which will be released into the atmosphere through the mining of the magnetite iron ore, its shipping and processing.

Unfortunately, while it would be an achievement to stop Andrew Forrest and FMG from mining their tenements, other bastards would step in and do the same thing unless the government acted to make parkland of these areas rich in conservation and spiritual values.

**Titelius:** This is the challenge to save Aboriginal country, customs and heritage and ultimately humanity by preserving this country and creating a good, sustainable and peaceful future for all.

The alternative is the surface or strip mining for the magnetite ore that has already started at other FMG mine sites at the Cloudbreak and Christmas Creek 200 kilometres to the east of the proposed Solomon Hub project which is on the southern end of Yindjibarndi land.

At these sites 120 tonne and now 180 tonne Vermeer T1655 rip through the land at about 750,000 tonnes per month, reducing the land to pits and graded strips on which little will be able to grow or live for decades. In the case of the Solomon Hub, the proximity of the Fortescue River and its tributaries it could cause massive sediment build up - especially of the Millstream oasis which is the most sacred of Yindjibarndi cultural sites.

Recently the Barnett Liberal state government created a further reason for it to approve magnetite and uranium ore mining - a five percent royalty tax on their shipment.

However, while the corporate profits and government revenues are being increased they are being done through irreparable damage to Yindjibarndi country, the water and other ecosystems of the area and humanity and this planet as a whole. ✪

Film review - Paul Krehbiel

## Locked Out

**Locked Out is a fast-paced story of a workers' victory in the face of what looked like insurmountable odds. It's exactly the message that should be seen in union halls across the country and abroad - especially since employers are using lockouts more and more, from US Steel at the Hamilton Works in Canada to the corn-processing lockout of the Bakery and Millers union at Roquette in Iowa.**

Strategists at the highly profitable Rio Tinto mining company, one of the world's largest with US\$150 billion in assets and 77,000 workers worldwide, thought it would be easy to impose the company's will on 570 borax miners in the tiny, isolated desert town of Boron, California. They were wrong.

In this incredible David vs Goliath story from last year, David won (though he took a few licks himself). The epic battle was captured by independent filmmaker Joan Sekler in a stunning film, *Locked Out*.

The story begins in the Autumn of 2009 when the miners' union contract was about to expire. Rio Tinto's take-it-or-leave-it offer put management in complete control of everything: drastically cutting workers' pay, benefits and pensions, changing wages as they saw fit, using temporary workers as they saw fit, contracting out work as they saw fit, changing workers' hours and days off as they saw fit, taking away all veterans' benefits, and much more.

Management gave the workers a January 31 deadline to accept the proposal. Rio Tinto is the major employer in the area, and the well-being and survival of the town depends on those who work at the mine.

Sekler's camera was at the miners' emergency meeting January 30. The room was packed and the atmosphere tense. Local President David Leibengood called the company's proposal "an illegal contract".

Member Larry Roberts summed up the choices: "The company is counting on your fear and insecurity. But that's what you'll have

every day with this contract." The miners voted overwhelmingly to reject. The next day, Rio Tinto locked them out.

When hundreds of miners and their families went to the front gate of the mine every day to picket and protest, chanting, "We want to work," Sekler was there. She filmed the buses with darkened windows, filled with scabs, and the security guards and police who ushered them in and videotaped picketers constantly.

Miners and their spouses started doing research on Rio Tinto. They learned the company had mines on six continents and that it mined gold, diamonds, coal, copper, iron ore, and uranium. They also learned that Rio Tinto had a bad reputation nearly everywhere.

Sekler highlights the company's sordid history in *Locked Out*, beginning with its use of slave labour in Spain during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. She shows the role of Rio Tinto in arming a military force in Papua New Guinea that killed upwards of 15,000 people who protested a mining operation there because it destroyed their land and stole the land's mineral wealth.

Much of what the Boron miners did is common in well-planned strikes or lockouts, but it's not usually captured on film. Miners, their spouses, and their children volunteered for committees for picketing, outreach, media, food distribution, and emergency financial issues.

They went to small businesses in the area to put up window signs that read:

"We support the families at Borax/Rio Tinto. An injury to one is an injury to all. ILWU."

Sekler shows all these committees in action.

We also see the tremendous support from other unions. The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor collected food and loaded tractor-trailers that Teamster members drove to Boron. Support rallies were held in Boron, Los Angeles, London, and Australia. The media committee set up a website ([boraxminers.com](http://boraxminers.com)) and a newsletter, *The Sagebrush Telegram*. ✪



# Libya war lies worse than Iraq

Thomas C Mountain

**Asmara, Eritrea: The lies used to justify the NATO war against Libya have surpassed those created to justify the invasion of Iraq. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch both had honest observers on the ground for months following the rebellion in eastern Libya and both have repudiated every major charge used to justify the NATO war on Libya.**

According to the Amnesty observer, who is fluent in Arabic, there is not one confirmed instance of rape by the pro-Gaddafi fighters, not even a doctor who knew of one. All the Viagra mass rape stories were fabrications.

Amnesty could not verify a single "African mercenary" fighting for Gaddafi story, and the highly charged international satellite television accounts of African mercenaries raping women that were used to panic much of the eastern Libyan population into fleeing their homes were fabrications.

There were no confirmed accounts of helicopter gunships attacking civilians and no jet fighters bombing people which completely invalidates any justification for the No-Fly Zone in the Security Council resolution used as an excuse for NATO to launch its attacks on Libya.

After three months on the ground in rebel controlled territory, the Amnesty investigator could only confirm 110 deaths in Benghazi which included Gaddafi supporters.

Only 110 dead in Benghazi? Wait a minute, we were told thousands had died there, ten thousand even. No, 110 lost their lives including pro-government people.

No rapes, no African mercenaries, no helicopter gunships or bombers, and only 110 ten deaths prior to the launch of the NATO bombing campaign, every reason was based on a lie.

Today according to the Libyan Red Crescent Society, over 1,100 civilians have been killed by NATO bombs including over 400 women



and children. Over 6,000 Libyan civilians have been injured or wounded by the bombing, many very seriously.

Compared to the war on Iraq, these numbers are tiny, but the reasons for the Libyan war have no merit in any form.

The majority of the Libyan people are rallying behind the Libyan government and the leader, Muammar Gaddafi, with over one million people demonstrating in support on July 1 in the capital Tripoli. Thousands of Libyan youth are on the front lines fighting the rebels and despite thousands of NATO air strikes authentic journalists on the ground in western Libya report their morale remains high.

In Egypt the popular explosion that resulted in the Army seizing power from Mubarak began in the very poorest neighbourhoods in Cairo and other Egyptian cities where the price of basic food items like bread, sugar and cooking oil had skyrocketed and led to widespread hunger.

In many parts of Egypt's poor neighbourhoods gasoline/benzene is easier to find than clean drinking water. Medical care and education is only for those with the money to pay for it. Life for the people of Tunisia is not that much better.

In contrast, the Libyan people have the longest life expectancy in the Arab world. The Libyan people have the best, free public health system in the Arab world. The Libyan people have the best, free public education system in the Arab world. Most Libyan families own their own home and most Libyan families own their own automobile. Libya is so much better off than its neighbours, every year tens of thousands of Egyptians and Tunisians migrated to Libya to earn money to feed their families, doing the dirty work the Libyan people refused to do.

So why did NATO launch this war against Libya?

First of all Gaddafi was on the verge of creating a new banking system in Africa that was going to

put the IMF, World Bank and assorted other western bankers out of business in Africa. No more predatory western loans used to cripple African economies. Instead a US\$42 billion African Investment Bank would be supplying major loans at little or even zero interest rates.

Libya has funded major infrastructure projects across Africa that have begun to link up African economies and break the perpetual dependency on the western countries for imports. Here in Eritrea the new road connecting Eritrea and Sudan is just one small example.

What seem to have finally tipped the balance in favour of direct western military intervention was the reported demand by Gaddafi that the US oil companies who have long been major players in the Libyan petroleum industry were going to have to compensate Libya to the tune of tens of billions of dollars for the damage done to the Libyan economy by the US-instigated "Lockerbie Bombing" sanctions imposed by the UN Security

Council throughout the 1990's into early 2000's.

This is based on the unearthing of evidence that the CIA paid millions of dollars to witnesses in the Lockerbie Bombing trial to change their stories to implicate Libya which was used as the basis for the very damaging UN sanctions against Libya. The US government lied and damaged Libya so the US oil companies were going to have to pay up to cover the cost of their government's actions. Not hard to see why Gaddafi had to go, is it?

Add the fact that Gaddafi had signalled clearly that he saw both Libya's and Africa's future economic development linked more to China and Russia rather than the west and it was just a matter of time before the CIA's contingency plan to overthrow the Libyan government was put on the front burner.

NATO's war against Libya has much more in common with NATO's Kosovo war against Serbia. The Libyan War lies are worse than Iraq. *Information Clearing House* ☛

## US House of Representatives votes to defund Organisation of American States

Emile Schepers

**In another fit of the kind of lunacy that is turning the Republican majority in the House of Representatives into a source of universal wonder and fear, the House Committee on Foreign Relations voted 22 to 20, in a party-line vote, last week to cancel the payment of this year's US\$48.5 million dues to the Organisation of American States.**

The attack on the OAS was instigated by Republican members of Congress, led by Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the current Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Florida Republican representative David Rivera even characterised the OAS as an "enemy" of the United States. The Republican politicians portrayed the OAS as an organisation controlled by left-wing states such as Cuba and Venezuela. They also denounced the OAS for opposing the June 2009 military coup d'état against

leftist President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras.

A number of right-wing "heroes" on Capitol Hill, including Ros-Lehtinen, were heavily involved in organising support in the United States for the coup led by businessman Roberto Micheletti, and have strong ties to ultra-rightist and anti-democratic circles in a number of Latin American countries, including people involved in various coup plots.

So what is the real situation? The Organisation of American States was founded in 1948 at the instigation of the United States, with the openly stated goal of stopping the "spread of communism" in Latin America. It started with a bang: Just as then US Secretary of State George Marshall was in Bogota, Colombia, for the founding session, the assassination of a populist candidate for Colombia's presidency, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, set off a wild riot (the famous "Bogotazo") and initiated decades of violence in Colombia's

countryside and cities, a situation that still goes on today.

In its 63 years of existence, the OAS has, for the most part, turned a blind eye to brutal abuses of power and violations of human and democratic rights all over the hemisphere. However, it has been consistent, until very recently, in one thing: The exclusion of Cuba (in 2009, over strenuous US objections, the OAS retired its general objection to Cuban membership; however, a formula has not yet been found to integrate Cuba into the organisation).

For the most part, the OAS has been seen by the Cubans and left-leaning Latin Americans as simply an instrument of imperialism; of guaranteeing US domination of the politics of the western hemisphere.

However, in recent years, the coming to power of left and left-centre governments in many countries of the region has meant that the United States has not been getting its way every time. For example, the OAS had voted to cut

economic support for Honduras after the 2009 coup, but the US State Department did not entirely go along with this, and furthermore started a separate process, outside of the structure of the OAS, to "mediate" the Honduras dispute, using then Costa Rican President Oscar Arias as a go-between. This was seen by many in Latin America as a mechanism for taking pressure off the Honduran coup government.

For this reason and others, 32 Latin American and Caribbean countries have been getting together in recent years to start a new organization whose purpose is to fend off U.S. efforts to control the region. The organization, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) explicitly excludes the United States and Canada from membership, based on bad memories of the OAS.

This is co-chaired by left-wing President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and conservative President Sebastian Piñera of

Chile. Besides left and left-centre governments such as those of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Uruguay and Venezuela, right-wing governments such as those of Presidents Felipe Calderon of Mexico, Piñera of Chile, Santos of Colombia and others are participating.

The initiation of CELAC was announced on February 23, 2010. On July 5 of this year, CELAC was supposed to be officially launched in a meeting and ceremony in Caracas, Venezuela. However, the illness of President Chávez led to a suspension of the event, as he has gone to Cuba for follow up treatment for cancer. A new date for the event is being decided. (Vice President Elias Jaua will stand in for Chávez while he is away).

Democrats in Congress reacted angrily to the Republicans manoeuvre to defund the OAS as a new form of isolation. They pointed to the help the OAS provided for this year's cycle of elections in Haiti. *People's World* ☛

# Norway terror exposes Europe's far right

Emile Schepers

Norway, population 5 million, was rocked on July 22 by two of the most heinous terrorist acts in recent history. First, a massive bomb, evidently made from fertiliser and chemicals (remember Timothy McVeigh), rocked downtown Oslo, the capital, wrecking government buildings and killing eight people. Two hours later, a man dressed as a policeman appeared at a youth camp organised by the Labor Party, part of Norway's ruling coalition, on the island of Utøya, and opened fire, killing at least 68 young people.

The perpetrator of both incidents was Anders Behring Breivik, born in 1979, who was known for extremist anti-Muslim, anti-Marxist and anti-immigrant views, but who did not have a known prior history of violence. This was in spite of initial speculation that Islamic extremists could have been to blame, perhaps exacting revenge for Norway's participation in the Afghanistan War as part of NATO. Breivik is now under arrest, and is by no means denying his actions, which he sees as "necessary." The immediate questions that remain are:

Was there, or is there, a wider conspiracy? (Breivik talks about two other "cells," but police doubt it). And: Is Breivik mentally ill, as his lawyer claims? The more important question, about the political roots and ramifications of Breivik's terroristic act, must be raised.

A short while before his rampage, Breivik distributed a 1,516 page screed, titled "2083: A European Declaration of Independence". The number evokes the year 1683, when Christian troops headed by King Jan Sobieski of Poland repelled the last attempt of the Ottoman Turkish Empire to capture Vienna. The memorandum, published under the pseudonym of Andrew Berwick (perhaps a reference to James Fitzjames, First Duke of Berwick, an illegitimate son of King James II of England and VII of Scotland, and another general who fought against the Turks), is a



denunciation of a supposed imminent Muslim takeover of Europe, including Norway, in which the Christian peoples will be forced to submit to Sharia law and the status of "dhimmitude," the inferior, but tolerated, status of Christian communities within the old Ottoman Empire.

Breivik blames multicultural policies and "Marxists," as well as feminism and women in general for this coming catastrophe. The suggestion is that the targets were selected because of Breivik's idea that the current left-centre coalition government of the Labor Party (of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg), the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party has opened Norway's gates to massive Muslim and other foreign immigration.

Breivik's manifesto is full of iconic European historical references. He claims to be part of a movement to restore the Knights Templar. This order of knights was established during the Crusades, in 1120 AD, with the purpose of providing protection for Christian Pilgrims to Jerusalem. The Templars were ferocious anti-Muslim warriors, but also shrewd bankers and financial managers, and eventually became wealthy and powerful in Western Europe. They were violently suppressed in 1312,

by King Philip IV of France, who owed them money and did not feel like repaying it.

In current European and US culture, there is interest in a supposed survival of the Knights Templar, which shows itself in fictional works like Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. This resonates with mystical chords in the minds of some romantic fantasists.

Breivik also toys with Masonic imagery, but there are no indications of an actual connection with Freemasons. Some sources refer to Breivik as a Christian "fundamentalist" but this appears to be a misapplication of the term; "white Christian bigot" would seem to be closer to the mark.

And in that, Breivik is not alone. Unlike many violent European ultra-rightists, Breivik is not an anti-Semite and in fact admires Israel as a staunch ally against the Muslim "invasion". He also sees anti-Muslim Hindu nationalists, and, for good measure, Vlad Dracula, "the Impaler" of Medieval Romania who was the inspirer of Bram Stoker's *Count Dracula*, as heroic anti-Muslim fighters.

Norway is part of NATO but not of the European Union; nevertheless

it has been receiving a fair number of new immigrants lately. About 12.2 percent of the population is foreign born, a figure slightly less than that of the United States (12.8 percent). The largest numbers of foreign-born people in Norway are from Poland (about 60,000), followed by Sweden (34,000), Pakistan (32,000) and Iraq (28,000).

Most new immigrants are settled in Oslo and other major cities. Breivik is not alone in weaving conspiracy theories on the theme: Paranoid accusations against Muslim immigrants coming to impose Sharia law, denunciations of multiculturalism and rants about Marxism are common not only in Norway, but all over Europe and the United States. Many people on the US right have been snookered into the idea that the city of Dearborn, Michigan, is under Sharia law, a complete falsehood.

The combination of new immigration with the economic and financial crisis that started with the US mortgage meltdown of 2008 has led to new anti-immigrant aggression all over Europe. The worst of these come out of fringe right-wing groups, but major conservative leaders in politics and the media have been harping on the theme, probably as a

way of deflecting public anger from their own failed policies.

These include British Prime Minister David Cameron, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and French President Nicolas Sarkozy. In the United States, anti-immigrant and especially anti-Muslim hysteria is stock in trade for the Republican right, including the tea party, and such media personalities as Glenn Beck.

In Europe, all major political groupings from communists to monarchists denounced the massacre, but some people broke ranks and seemed to condemn the victims and praise or sympathise with Breivik. In the United States, Glenn Beck caused outrage by comparing the Norwegian Labor Party's youth camp with the Hitler Youth.

Whether Breivik is technically "insane," as his attorney claims, or not will be decided by the courts as advised by medical experts. The longest prison term in Norway, which has no death penalty, is 21 years. But in the court of world public opinion, the ideologues and agitators who have been playing with fire by whipping up anti-foreign and anti-Muslim sentiments are now in the dock.

*People's World* ☛

## Who owns America? Hint: it's not China

Thomas Mucha

Truth is elusive. But it's a good thing we have maths.

The people at Business Insider know this, and put those two principles to work today in this excellent and highly informative little slideshow, made even more timely by the ongoing talks in Washington, DC aimed at staving off a US debt default.

Here's the big idea:

Many people – politicians and pundits alike – prattle on that China and, to a lesser extent Japan, own most of America's \$14.3 trillion in government debt.

But there's one little problem with that conventional wisdom: it's just not true. While the Chinese, Japanese and plenty of other foreigners own substantial amounts,

it's really Americans who hold most of America's debt.

Here's a quick and fascinating breakdown by total amount held and percentage of total US debt, according to Business Insider:

- Hong Kong: \$121.9 billion (0.9 percent)
- Caribbean banking centres: \$148.3 (1 percent)
- Taiwan: \$153.4 billion (1.1 percent)
- Brazil: \$211.4 billion (1.5 percent)
- Oil exporting countries: \$229.8 billion (1.6 percent)
- Mutual funds: \$300.5 billion (2 percent)
- Commercial banks: \$301.8 billion (2.1 percent)
- State, local and federal retirement funds: \$320.9 billion (2.2 percent)

- Money market mutual funds: \$337.7 billion (2.4 percent)
- United Kingdom: \$346.5 billion (2.4 percent)
- Private pension funds: \$504.7 billion (3.5 percent)
- State and local governments: \$506.1 billion (3.5 percent)
- Japan: \$912.4 billion (6.4 percent)
- US households: \$959.4 billion (6.6 percent)
- China: \$1.16 trillion (8 percent)
- The U.S. Treasury: \$1.63 trillion (11.3 percent)
- Social Security trust fund: \$2.67 trillion (19 percent)
- So America owes foreigners about \$4.5 trillion in debt. But America owes America \$9.8 trillion.

*Global Post* ☛

## ITF protest over job cuts at Japan airline

The International Transport Federation (ITF) is calling for intervention by the Japanese government to reinstate workers at Japan Airlines (JAL) who have been dismissed.

ITF civil aviation secretary Gabriel Mocho, ITF inland transport section secretary Mac Urata, and Rhys McCarthy from the UK ITF-affiliated union Unite visited the Japanese embassy in London to hand over a resolution. It was passed by ITF affiliates attending a meeting from June 21-22 in Madrid and demands that the Japanese government intervene urgently to withdraw the dismissals and secure negotiations "on an agreed basis" to complete the workforce reduction. The unionists also want to see the company abide by national and international law.

A series of voluntary schemes have already fully achieved the

company's workforce reduction target; nevertheless the company decided unilaterally that compulsory dismissals were necessary to secure a further 81 flight crew and 84 cabin crew job reductions by December 31 this year. Members of the ITF-affiliated unions Japan Airlines Cabin Crew Union and Koku Rengo as well as workers represented by the Japan Airlines Flight Crew Union are set to be affected by the job cuts.

Gabriel Mocho commented: "Despite having met the set personnel reduction targets JAL has gone on to impose swingeing compulsory redundancies – ignoring efforts by unions to discuss ways to reduce labour costs. The ITF and its member unions are supporting our colleagues in Japan who are taking the company to court and to the International Labour Organisation over this matter." ☛

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



email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

## Call to extend the BDS

There is a BDS (Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Campaign) against the Zionist state of Israel, and I personally support it. Why not also a BDS campaign against the US empire that is currently bombing Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Libya, and has been involved in overthrowing almost every Latin American government and is currently blockading Cuba?

The day when the US military is at last a Defence Force – and not the Empire Attacking and Invading Force – I will end my personal BDS against it. Until then, I have decided not to purchase anything from the US, or any US owned corporation.

Luke Weyland  
Sydney

## Carbon sinks cannot go on forever

Carbon sinks are a time-limited benefit for humanity. In 2009 8.4 billion tonnes of carbon was emitted by humans into the atmosphere. That's about 30.8 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. One tonne of carbon is equivalent to 3.67 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Twenty six percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were absorbed by the world's oceans making them progressively more acidic. Forty seven percent accumulated in the atmosphere and 27 percent are absorbed into the world's forests and agricultural lands.

Forests and oceans as carbon sinks cannot go on forever. Forests, will not keep on removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere forever. They are a time-limited benefit to humanity as carbon stores in removing carbon from the ongoing fossil fuel emissions. More regrowth of tropical forests will add a little time.

There is no such thing as a sustainable city; no city on this earth has mitigated to any balance with the environment.

The future will be both challenging and divisive, and bring to light the questions we have only begun to consider.

Gerry Georgatos  
WA

## On the carbon tax

I was disappointed to read *The Guardian's* position on the carbon tax last week. The Editorial correctly defended the Greens against a recent campaign to slur their "humanity", but also ran with the front page headline: "Carbon Tax Won't Work" (July 13).

The carbon tax is by no means perfect, but the Greens among others have realised that purist grandstanding has achieved nothing over the past several years, and that compromise is necessary to set wheels in motion and to at least get serious political debate in the arena.

The essential class basis of the current debate is that state intervention is immediately necessary to save the planet, and that this intervention is necessary on a global scale. We cannot allow capitalist anarchy to ruin the Earth's climate.

To dismiss the Labor government's proposal is a cop out on this debate. We need to stand together, unify the working class and turn the present, badly handled, anti-progressive situation around.

To align ourselves with Tony Abbott's "Big Bad Tax" line wins us no credit, does not even begin to stop global warming, and helps re-elect the ruling class toadies. We must fight the class issue in alliance with progressives everywhere.

Bob Treasure  
NSW

## Guatemalan Tour 2011



## Tour Dates

URNG Representative Ovidio Orellana

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Perth	16-19 August
Adelaide	19-23 August
Melbourne	24-29 August

URNG/Maiz is facing its greatest challenge in the upcoming general elections since the end of 36 years of civil war. Forming a broad front (Frente Amplio) of Left forces Guatemala follows the path of other successful movements in Latin America for a Peoples Unity Government.

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Live Music by Ovidio & Friends in all local functions

## Culture & Life

by

Rob Gowland

## Coal seam gas – a hot potato?

A major contributing factor in the NSW Labor Party's debacle at the last state election was the servile way Labor in NSW kow-towed to the interests of the coal industry. That mine owners' profits took precedence over the concerns of the people was evident to everyone, and – added to the corruption and the pandering to property developers – brought about the rout of Labor at the polls.

Nevertheless, to the dismay of Tony Abbott and others of that ilk, the scientific links between the mining and burning of fossil fuels on the one hand and pollution of our air and water with accompanying global warming on the other are now generally accepted even within the Liberal Party.

For some of the more reactionary elements of capitalism all that matters is that there is still big money to be made out of coal, especially if public money can be used for infrastructure costs, such as rail and port facilities. Faced with dancing visions of BIG dollar signs, they find it all too easy to

set aside any lingering concerns over nebulous concepts like the environment, or even "your children's future".

Being capitalists, and wedded to the capitalist way of thinking, they are confident that there is no problem that cannot be resolved – through an advertising campaign.

Coincidentally, the various arms of the mining industry are running advertising campaigns on television at present according to which this country should get down on its knees and kiss the feet of the mine owners: apparently they are responsible for everything good in Australia, from the Flying Doctor Service to the provision of water in outback communities.

Actually, people not being as gullible as PR companies seem to think, some of these ad campaigns have aroused anger rather than support. Like those ads in which a middle-aged grazier extols the virtues of coal seam gas (CSG) extraction – as he gazes contentedly over his land and stock: – "I have no qualms with Santos – they have five wells on my property".

As *The Land* newspaper reported "speculation was rife" that the grazier in the ad was a fictional character played by an actor, but he turned out to be real. Col Maunder, a cattleman from Queensland, who obviously had no qualms about taking Santos' money in return for appearing in their ad, seems to have bought the mining industry's argument lock stock and barrel.

"We would not have the standard of living we have without exporting these resources," he told *The Land*. An argument all the other farmers battling to keep CSG companies off their land do not accept.

Anyone who has had experience of the coal seam gas extraction business (or seen the film *Gaslands*) will know why farmers and environmentalists are united in opposing growth of this destructive "industry".

Mr Maunder's property is currently only being used by Santos for



exploratory drilling. He better pray Santos does not find any viable CSG reserves under his land, for if they do the five wells he has now will quickly mushroom, as the nature of CSG extractions is to drill numerous wells close together – very close together.

For example, Santos plans only 50 exploration core holes and pilot wells in the Pilliga region over the next four years, but in case they get lucky and find viable CSG reserves, their license approval allows them to put in 500 gas wells in the next 15 to 20 years.

Col Maunder's "gimme the money" attitude is in marked contrast to other more far-seeing landowners, such as Anthony Thompson, 7th generation head of Widden Stud in the Upper Hunter, an enterprise founded by his family in the 1850s.

Quoting *The Land* once again,

"Mr Thompson believes he is ultimately custodian of Widden and responsible for preserving its heritage and carefully managed environment, bounded by the Wollemi National Park.

"We're very concerned about anything that might impact on water or the environmental conditions in which we raise our horses", he said.

"Fracturing the stone sediment, the rock that holds the water table, and possibly having gas coming into our water, would have a very dramatic impact.

"It is impossible to imagine how we could have coal seam gas infrastructure here co-existing with what we have."

Santos is in the process of finalising its purchase of Eastern Star Gas, which will give Santos the largest gas reserves in NSW.

When environmentalists revealed just how toxic is the waste water from CSG drilling, the CSG companies suddenly became green, promoting CSG as "green energy", supposedly much more environmentally friendly than coal mining.

There is little benefit to the people of NSW from any of these mining schemes: they will make a small group of companies rich while leaving the land (and water ways) poisoned and despoiled for years to come.

All over the state people are banding together to fight the threat of these "developers", whether opposing the spread of coal mines in the upper Hunter, or fighting CSG drilling in the North West, or in Camden and Campbelltown.

Everywhere the fight is the same: profits for the few versus the health and happiness of the many. ☘



Sun Aug 7 –  
Sat Aug 13

Singing has always been a mixture of group and individual performances. Those with fine voices led the way, but even at public performances everyone else was encouraged to join in.

In England's music halls and workmen's clubs, in America's vaudeville houses, at performances of Gilbert & Sullivan, at patriotic or revolutionary gatherings, people joined in song.

It was always a feature of working class life, and hence a prominent feature of the folk song revival of the 1960s. But popular music today is big business. Recorded music and performances by individual artists is the dominant form of music favoured by the moguls of the industry.

The people still seek to join in – witness the popularity of garage bands and karaoke. But mass choral singing largely has fallen into disuse. The recent spate of films and TV programs about the benefits of choral singing point to a popular reaction against this trend.

The pleasure and sense of community to be derived from joining in a collective effort to produce vocal music has been the theme of a wide

range of documentaries and even fiction films of late.

The very latest is *Seriously Singing* (ABC1 Tuesday August 9 at 10.05pm), concerning a 91-year old singing teacher and a choir of raw kids from Lake Boga Primary School in the Victorian Mallee.

Sixty years ago, the same teacher – Jessie Carmichael – led a group of children from this school to win acclaim in the Commonwealth Jubilee Choral Festival. *Seriously Singing* reunites some of those choristers – now in their 60s and 70s – to look at the significance of the event and to make some very valid points about the importance of music (particularly singing) in education and in our lives.

The program has caustic things to say about the present fashionable emphasis in education on numeracy and literacy, including this memorable quote from Dr Neil McLachlan, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne: "Music is to mental health what sport is to physical health."

The current craze for supernatural-themed stories and films has spawned another TV series, *Valemont* (ABC2 Tuesdays from August 9 at 10.20pm). The story of a teenage girl's search at a posh US university for the murderer of her brother, the series is chockfull of extraneous and largely meaningless shock effects (she cannot look in a mirror without a pair of bloody hands suddenly flashing out to try to seize her).

Instead of having hysterics, she takes these bizarre occurrences almost in her stride, which seriously undermines the terror-laden atmosphere the series clearly strives for.

The series is also beset by a fatally under-funded budget: the university has lots of buildings but there



*Seriously Singing* (ABC1 Tuesday August 9 at 10.05pm).

are very few students (presumably they could borrow the location but had to pay the extras, so they don't have many).

And why are the students in American college "fraternity houses" (at least in the movies and on TV) such vicious, amoral oiks?

**The Invention of Dr NakaMats** (ABC2 Wednesday August 10 at 9.20pm) presents the reviewer with a problem. The title suggests that the maker of the program, Danish visual artist Kaspar Astrup Schröder, is aware that the biggest invention of Dr NakaMats (real name Yoshiro Nakamatsu) is himself.

Nakamatsu is an inventor claiming to hold the world record for number of inventions with over 3,200 patents. A quick check of Wikipedia shows that Nakamatsu's claim is

absurdly false: he has only 14 US patents, and a total of only 395 worldwide patents or patent applications.

His actual patented inventions include:

A toilet seat lifter.

A condom with an embedded magnet, supposedly "improving sensitivity" as "electricity is generated in the blood vessels in the female organs by Fleming's left-hand rule".

A CD for supposedly "enhancing brightness or sexual function".

A cigarette like device for supposedly "activating the brain".

A peephole in a sheet of material, described as a "oneway visible shielding object".

A "Wig for self defence" – a strip and a weight are attached to a wig. The wearer swings the wig to hit an attacker.

This does not stop him from making a string of outlandish claims on his website which are all repeated in this film (claims such as that he was "Selected by the US Science Academic Society as one of five world number one great scientists in history who are Archimedes, Michael Faraday, Marie Curie, Nikola Tesla and Yoshiro NakaMats." As Wikipedia points out, this is clearly false, as the US Science Academic Society does not exist.

The point is, Schröder's film

presents Nakamatsu's claims without any comment, which is at best misleading, at worst aiding and abetting a fantasist.

It is clear from Schröder's film that Nakamatsu has an ego of gigantic proportions, so it is not surprising that he harbours political ambitions too. As Wikipedia puts it, "He is known for frequently entering and losing elections in Tokyo. Now he has a special seat on the Happiness Realisation Party."

I have no problem with the ABC paying money to acquire this portrait of an eccentric egoist who suffers from delusions about his own importance. But I do have reservations about the manner of its presentation, which makes it impossible for the viewer without access to independent sources of information to know whether Nakamatsu is a charlatan or not.

For instance, the publicity sheets issued by the ABC for this program repeat Nakamatsu's claims to being the world's most prolific inventor as though that was fact when it is not and then go on: "NakaMats is a unique pioneer and force of nature, a fact Schröder's film captures with great joy."

I think they've missed the point. ☹

## Harvest Time

and other poems



by Vic Williams

## Harvest Time - and other poems

by Vic Williams

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in the pub

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# South African Communist Party marks 90th Anniversary

The following is a statement by the South African Communist Party (SACP) about the 90th anniversary of the founding of the party on July 31, 1921. Major celebrations were scheduled to take place over the weekend including a rally at the Sugar Ray Xulu Stadium in Clermont, eThekweni, KwaZulu Natal Province.

**The 90th anniversary is a moment to celebrate the enormous role that the SACP has played in the national liberation of our country, and also its contribution towards the reconstruction of our country since the democratic breakthrough of 1994.**

Ours is a party that is committed to the destruction of the capitalist system in our country and the building of a more humane alternative, a socialist South Africa. In achieving this objective we are guided by our medium term vision, that of seeking to build working class influence in all key sites of power, both inside and outside the state.

We are also celebrating the many contributions the SACP has made in the struggle for liberation in our country. Our Party was the first non-racial political party and also through this helped pioneer non-racialism in the politics of our country and in society in general.

It was the Communist Party that not only theoretically pioneered this but was in the forefront of organising African workers and white workers hand in hand in pursuit of the common enemy, capitalism. It is this which was later to influence what Comrade Joe Slovo was to coin as an understanding of the "national character of the class question and the class character of the national question". We celebrate a party of national liberation. It was the SACP that led in this country the call for black majority rule, with its call from way back in 1929.

We celebrate a party that has been a dependable ally of the progressive forces and the Mass Democratic Movement led by the ANC in the struggle against apartheid. We celebrate a leading role of communists in the operations of the people's army, uMkhonto we Sizwe. The SACP has also contributed immensely towards the building of the African National Congress as the leading formation of the national liberation movement, much as it has also, over the years, learnt a lot from the ANC.

We honour heroes and heroines of our revolution included amongst others Johannes Nkosi, Basil February, Ruth First, the heroic leadership and activism of communists in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaign, the leadership role of women like Dora Tamana in the Federation of South African Women and the ANC Women's League and the ANC, and the brilliant organisational

skills of trade unionists like Elizabeth Mafikeng, John Beaver Marks and many unsung heroes and heroines of our revolution.

The SACP can also rightly claim that no other political organisation has played and contributed to the building of the progressive trade unions like it has done. The SACP also pioneered progressive media in our country that has promoted the interests of the workers and the poor, a far cry from the role that is being played by mainstream media, whose obsession today is unbridled support for capitalism and an opposition to all that the ANC-led alliance and its government is trying to build.

It is for all the above reasons and history that since 1999 we have taken forward the decision of building a vanguard party with a mass character and immersed our organisation in taking up campaigns that touch at the heart of the daily struggles of the South African people through our Red October Campaign. Since 1999 the SACP has led the following campaigns:

- For land and agrarian reform
- A campaign for the protection of vulnerable workers
- A campaign for food security for the poor, lower food prices and redistribution of land for food production
- A campaign to transform the financial sector to serve the majority of our people including a credit amnesty and campaigning against reckless credit lending – it is this campaign by the way which partly insulated our finance institutions during the capitalist crisis of 2008
- A campaign for safe, affordable and accessible public transport system
- A campaign for Quality Healthcare For All which called for amongst others the introduction of the National Health Insurance
- A campaign for the financing of development
- A campaign against corruption
- A campaign to build street committees and people's power for a revolutionary state
- A campaign to deepen and strengthen participatory democracy

These are the campaigns that have left an indelible mark in the minds and heart of ordinary South Africans about the relevance of the



SACP in radically transforming their lives. It is because of these campaigns, amongst others, that today we can talk about a Communist Party whose paid up membership is just over 130,000. We are in fact the largest political formation after the ANC.

The Communist Party today is faced with the challenge of attaining the required balance of its tasks and role in governance and continuing its leadership role in mass struggle as an independent organisation.

As we celebrate our 90th anniversary the SACP further commits itself, in the struggle for the total liberation of our country, to fight all forms of corruption, both inside and outside the ranks of our Alliance and the state. We will do this without fear or favour and irrespective of who is involved or implicated.

The SACP will also intensify its ideological offensive against both liberalism and neo-liberalism, as well as attempts to try and destroy the image of our movement by these liberals.

Today there is a huge offensive by liberals and conservatives, who have consistently lost elections since 1994, to try and abuse our institutions of democracy to try and project our movement and organisations as inherently corrupt. With the support of mainstream, bourgeois media, these liberal forces, are trying to rule from the grave – losing elections but attempting to co-opt our institutions of democracy to pursue an anti-ANC and anti-government agenda.

We further commit ourselves to consistently fight against all forms of populist demagoguery and factionalism, whose aim is to try and steal our organisations in order to further narrow accumulation agendas.

In doing all this we will continue to mobilise the mass of the workers and the poor of our country, and seek to meaningfully participate in government as part of our overall objectives to build a better South Africa for millions of South Africans. ✪

## Curious about Cuba?

Are you interested in:

- agricultural sustainability?
- food security?
- global social justice?
- universal health care?
- education?
- socialism in practice?

**Be more than a tourist!**  
**Join the Southern Cross Brigade to Cuba!**

The brigade runs 28 December 2011 - 20 January 2012 and costs \$1000\*.

Find out more and register your interest now!  
**www.cubabrigade.org.au**

\*\$100 late fee applies for bookings received after 31 July 2010. Cost includes all accommodation, meals and excursions while in Cuba. Cost does not include international airfares & taxes or compulsory travel & health insurance.

## MIRAL

IS THIS THE FACE OF A TERRORIST?

**Perth Film screening**  
**Miral – Is this the face of a terrorist?**

Sunday August 7  
Doors open: 3pm  
Screening: 3:30pm  
Film and Television Institute (FTI), 92 Adelaide St, Fremantle

Jewish director Julian Schnabel, of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* has not found a distributor in Australia, so this is one that Friends of Palestine (WA) is bringing to you. Starring Freida Pinto of *Slumdog Millionaire*, and Willem Dafoe.

**\$10 concession/ \$15 regular/ \$20 solidarity**

Perth **If you are concerned about a sustainable future you must see Power of Community**

The Australia Cuba Friendship Society WA Presents a unique opportunity to see the film, learn about the Southern Cross Work Study Brigades to Cuba and talk to people who've been there and witnessed this unique experiment in Urban Agriculture and Sustainable living.

**City West Lotteries House**  
2 Delhi St WEST PERTH, WA, 6005

**Sunday 21 Aug, 2 to 5 pm**

Contacts: acfswa@gmail.com  
Phone: 0419 812 872 or 9247 2731

**FREE ENTRY**



Communist Party of Australia

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Email: [cpa@cpa.org.au](mailto:cpa@cpa.org.au)

The Guardian

Website: [www.cpa.org.au/guardian](http://www.cpa.org.au/guardian)  
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