



# Holden sacks 500, pockets subsidies

Bob Briton

Giant US auto maker General Motors has admitted it has received \$2.2 billion in taxpayer subsidies over the past 12 years to keep producing Holden cars in Australia. The timing of the revelation was unfortunate. The company had just announced a further 500 jobs would be axed from its operations – 400 from the plant at Elizabeth in Adelaide and another 100 at the design and engineering facility at Fishermen's Bend in Melbourne. The South Australian Premier and other government spokespersons expressed anger and frustration at the move but nobody is threatening any real action. Adelaide workers are reminded of the long and costly farewell of Mitsubishi from the Australian manufacturing scene five years ago. Ford does not sound confident about its future and Toyota has also held the hand out for assistance.

Federal and state governments are coy about the exact nature of the deal they struck with GM to stay in the country but they insisted it was a good one at the time. In return for the latest \$275 million cash injection, Holden was to release the new VF Commodore model and invest \$1 billion in their next generation car due in 2017. A "guarantee" manufacturing would stay until at least 2022 was talked about. The VF was released but now the company is umming and ahing about its prospects. "I cannot predict the future," GMH managing director Mike Devereaux said recently. "I can't control what central banks do ... I cannot control the values of other currencies that we compete with and I cannot predict what that will do to our business."

It's true that Mr Devereaux can't control the exchange rate of the Australian dollar, whose stellar rise of late has been blamed for the relative lack of competitiveness of Australian manufacturing. The Commonwealth renounced control of the currency decades ago. But together huge transnationals have engineered the global economy so that if governments in countries like Australia don't subsidise their profits to levels agreeable to them, they simply move to low wage centres, claiming international market forces left them no option. Governments might express their more or less genuine "anger" at the actions of companies but there is little they can do under conditions of capitalism. In any case, most of the occupants of Australian parliaments accept the profit first "logic" of the capitalist system.



Holden, Australia's first car maker – a 1954 FJ ute.

## Coalition sounds tough

The Coalition is trying to sound tough. Industry Minister Greg Combet's opposition counterpart, Sophie Mirabella, says she would trim \$500 million from the \$1.5 billion to be spent under the New Car Plan from 2015. Somehow she would get more binding commitments from companies receiving public funding. She would refer support to the industry to the Productivity Commission. Free marketeer Tony Abbott says locally based manufacturers should lift their export performance in spite of the cripplingly high value of the Australian dollar. Hardly a confidence-inspiring "alternative" approach.

Unions are prepared to fight to ensure redundancies will be voluntary. The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union wants the Coalition to step back from its threat to cut industry subsidies. The union's national president Andrew Dettmer has contrasted

the actions of the Australian government to that of Japan in the face of a downturn in manufacturing. Japan has devalued the yen and car sales have jumped accordingly. "The Japanese government is completely unapologetic about its policy settings," he said.

## Sooner or later – nationalisation

Restoring controls over the Australian currency would be a positive step in the rolling back of decades of neo-liberal policy but, along with other similar tweaking measures, it won't fix the underlying problem of private ownership of what is a strategic sector of the economy. Taken together, vehicle building and its allied industries still employ around 250,000 people in Australia.

Its presence is vital to the maintenance of a manufacturing base in the country, a feature that used to be acknowledged as necessary for

the guaranteeing of living standards and even the sovereignty of the country. Its direction and priorities should not be determined in boardrooms in the US, Japan or elsewhere.

Sooner or later truly big decisions will have to be made about the nature of the resource, finance and manufacturing sectors. Public ownership under democratic control and a planned approach are the only way to fix the situation whereby transnationals pocket subsidies to maintain operations and jobs only to abandon local workers to their fate and head offshore in pursuit of higher profits.

Australia may not need so many of its manufacturing eggs in the vehicle industry basket. The production of public transport and other sustainable infrastructure might be a more viable option but the question will never be put if control of these vital community assets remains in corporate hands.

It will be an almighty battle but the fight back has to start somewhere. ✖

3



NSW gov't plans further attacks on civil liberties

5



Intrigue, contrivance and the undermining of a government

10



Culture & Life  
Exit Margaret Thatcher – and good riddance

12



Ken Loach:  
*The Spirit of '45*

## Guardian

Issue 1589

April 17, 2013

NBN –  
near enough not good enough

If the Coalition wins the election on September 14, it has promised to scuttle the National Broadband Network and replace it with a second rate alternative. A plan to allow access to very high speed Internet to 93 percent of the Australian population and acceptable speeds to even very remote areas would be axed. Another very expensive system would be foisted on the community with the prospect that it would have to be upgraded in the not-too-distant future, again at great expense. An opportunity to create modern, nation-building infrastructure would have been lost.

Why would forces like the Liberal and National parties be prepared to take such a destructive decision, so contrary to the longer term interests of the community, including commercial interests? The farce that passes for political debate in Australia is to blame. In their race to represent dominant interests in Australian society, Labor and the Coalition have come closer and closer to one another politically in recent decades. Just about every adult in the country is aware of this fact so, to attract increasingly jaded voters, the big two parties strive harder and harder to establish a "point of difference".

For a long time, the Coalition has played the "better economic managers" card. In the old days, the Libs claimed they were more adept at controlling inflation, then interest rates. Now the boast is that it is the party of "fiscal responsibility" and balanced budgets. In line with this image, it has shown itself ready to shoot down or trim any proposition for reform for the benefit of the people of the country, while looking after monopoly interests and the wealthy at every turn.

Labor has posed as the party of the "big picture", the grand reforms to move the country towards greater social justice and more modern social norms. Since the demise of the Whitlam Government, which actually did institute several reforms of that nature such as Medibank and free tertiary education, Labor has continued to sponsor grand sounding projects. Unfortunately, these have mostly proven to be duds that have done nothing to disrupt the overarching neo-liberal agenda. The carbon-tax and the mining tax are prime examples of this approach.

Into this pro-monopoly *status quo* came the proposition to build a national broadband network using state of the art fibre optic technology. It involves the construction of an impressive piece of infrastructure, not simply some creative accounting to give the appearance of doing something.

It's true that the NBN will be a platform for profit-making by retailers for its services and it's true that the Commonwealth has committed to bow out of its ownership role in future. It is, nevertheless, a project that offers to further break down the tyranny of distance that has always beset the country and opens up the possibility for a range new services and even industries. Notably, it bucks the trend in Australia by ensuring that regional areas would receive the benefits before major urban centres.

The shadow communications minister, Malcolm Turnbull, knows all this and appears at his most unconvincing while trying to argue that similar possibilities could be provided using, in large part, the existing, limited, high-maintenance copper network. It's simply not true but the opportunity to present the Coalition as the frugal alternative to the spendthrift Gillard government was not going to be passed up. Coalition strategists appear to be pitching to generations that spend less time on the Internet and may even consider it a fad.

The corporate media are assisting the Coalition's election campaign solidly on this and many other issues. The smaller than anticipated number of subscribers to the NBN at the moment is being focussed on. So are delays involving contractors unable to deliver on time. Teething problems are being highlighted to promote the impression that the system could be a massive white elephant. The latest accusation about the NBN is that the \$43 billion price tag for the project could blow out to \$90 billion!

It is a great shame the NBN could fall victim of the no-holds-barred contest of the two big parties of capital. The NBN shouldn't be shelved and the labour movement should fight for all aspects of its operation to be put into and kept in public hands. In this day and age, affordable access to quality Internet services is essential. The Coalition's "near enough is good enough" approach must be fought.

## PRESS FUND

Woodside Petroleum is dropping plans to construct a huge gas processing facility next to the beach at James Point in Western Australia's Kimberley region. That's really good news, because it's a place of great natural significance, where fossilised dinosaur footprints are visible in the rock formations. But the battle fought against the proposal by the Indigenous owners, environmentalists and local residents isn't necessarily over, because the company is considering building a smaller plant at the site. We intend to watch their actions closely, to check their next move – but we need your help, because we depend on the Press Fund to cover production costs, so please send us a contribution for the next issue. Many thanks to the following for their generous support this week, as follows:

MH \$500, David Klemm \$20, Mark Mannion \$5, "Round Figure" \$10, Eddie Seymour \$50

This week's total: \$585 Progressive total: \$1,655

Supreme Court  
of India on the  
Novartis Patent case

Martin Khor\*

The ruling by the Supreme Court of India dismissing the petition from Novartis AG is a historic decision with positive global implications. Novartis had challenged the interpretation given by the Indian Patent Office to Section 3 (d) of the Patents Act that seeks to prevent the grant of patents on non-inventive new forms of known medicines.

The Novartis AG application had claimed a patent for a new salt form (*imatinib mesylate*), a medicine for the treatment of chronic myeloid leukaemia. Novartis sells this medicine in several countries under the brand name Gleevec (Gleevec). The Indian patent office had rejected the patent application on the ground that the claimed new form was anticipated in a US patent of 1996 for the compound *imatinib* and that the new form did not enhance the therapeutic efficacy of the drug. The decision was upheld by the Indian Patents Appellate Board (IPAB).

The legal challenge from Novartis had alarmed patients groups, governments of developing countries and some international organisations. This was in view of the possible negative implications for access to affordable medicines for patients in those countries if the petition of Novartis were to be allowed by the Supreme Court.

Most developing countries strongly rely on Indian generic pharmaceutical companies for the supply of affordable medicines.

Any weakening of section 3 (d) would have enabled multinational pharmaceutical companies to extend their patent monopolies based on frivolous incremental improvements which – as in the case of *imatinib* – could delay the generic supply of essential medicines for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

In this context, the decision by the Indian Supreme Court is very significant. In interpreting section 3 (d), the judgment took into account the legislative history of Section 3 (d). The Supreme Court observed that this section was introduced in the Patents Act by the 2005 Amendment to ensure that while India allowed product patents on medicines in accordance with its TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) obligations, it did not compromise public health through "evergreening" of pharmaceutical patents.

The Court, hence, took into account the concerns about the impact of TRIPS on public health and on the development of an indigenous pharmaceutical industry. Moreover, it considered the implications of the Novartis case for the availability of essential medicines at affordable prices globally. The Supreme Court decision fully reproduced two letters

from Dr Jim Yong Kim, the former Director of the Department of HIV/AIDS at WHO and from UNAIDS to the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare expressing the concerns relating to the continuous availability of affordable drugs supplied by Indian firms in other developing countries.

Thus, the decision by the Supreme Court of India has significant positive global implications. It has effectively protected the leading role of India in supplying affordable medicines to other developing countries. The reaffirmation of the primacy of health and access to medicines as a right of citizens is particularly important for the international community when these rights are under significant threat under bilateral trade and investment agreements.

This decision is a triumph for all developing countries which will be able to continue importing affordable essential generic medicines from India. Developing countries can benefit further by emulating the Indian approach towards balancing patents and public health by discouraging evergreening. Finally, this decision also shows the importance of public health sensitivity in the judiciary in determining disputes on pharmaceutical patents.

\*Martin Khor is Executive Director, South Centre

Melbourne

Pauline Mitchell  
Memorial  
Ceremony

Join us in celebrating  
the life of Pauline Mitchell  
Foundation member SPA,  
now the CPA  
Long time organiser  
and former secretary  
of CICD

Saturday 27 April 2pm  
Unitarian Church  
110 Grey St,  
East Melbourne

All welcome

See *Gardian* #1587, 27-03-2013  
for obituary

Melbourne

March on  
MAY DAY

Sunday

May 5

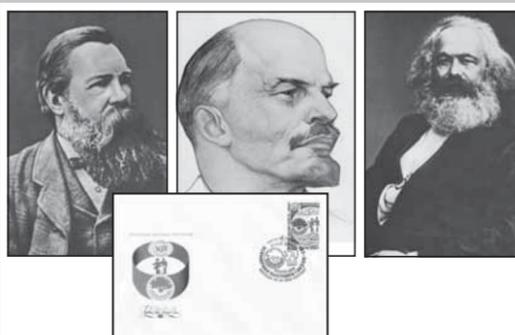


Assemble 1:00pm

Victoria Trades Hall

Corner of Victoria &amp; Russell Streets

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE FOR SOCIALISM



Send a really special message of hope and optimism to a comrade, workmate or loved one ... for a better life in a better, truly humane world, in a socialist world.

Each Postcard comes with an exquisite full colour first day envelope from the USSR commemorating Expo 1988 in Brisbane.

Phone: 02 9699 8844 Email: shop@cpa.org.au  
postal: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills NSW 2010  
All prices include postage & packaging (p&p) within au  
Make all cheques and postal orders out to "CPA".  
For credit cards provide name, type, number, and expiry.  
Minimum credit card payment is \$20

1x \$2, 2x \$4, 3x \$5, 6x \$9, 10x \$12

# NSW gov't plans further attacks on civil liberties

Peter Mac

**The NSW O'Farrell government is considering removing the right to silence for people accused of crimes, so that failure to answer questions could be used in a court of law as evidence of guilt. Defence counsel would have to disclose their arguments well in advance of the court hearing, whereas the prosecution would not.**

The right to silence is one of the longest held legal conventions in Australia and Britain, and enables accused persons to protect themselves from self-incrimination under heavy-handed police interrogation. Abolishing this right would put at risk the presumption of innocence, especially in NSW, which has no Bill of Rights to guarantee a fair trial and proper legal assistance. It would constitute one of the most serious breaches of civil rights in Australian history.

Moreover, the government wants to introduce "future crime" legislation under which any prisoner deemed not to be rehabilitated at the end of their sentence could be indefinitely imprisoned, even until they died. This would also be a gross violation of civil rights.

The government is also considering extending the notoriously ineffective and intrusive sniffer dog drug searches at railway stations, and incarcerating intoxicated persons in "sobering up centres" – in effect imprisoning them without trial.

## A crescendo of attacks

In 2011 the state opposition led by Barry O'Farrell promised to end the main political parties' competition for tougher compulsory jail sentences (the "law and order auction"), reduce the complexity of bail laws, lower the rate of incarceration of vulnerable groups, including children and people with mental disabilities, and reduce the rate of recidivism.

However, in government the O'Farrell regime ignored most of its pledges, and dumped most of the recommendations of an expert report on bail reform, except for those dealing with the detention of children. Moreover, it passed new laws which effectively removed long-established civil liberties, despite vigorous objections from legal organisations, civil rights groups and Greens MPs,

## Rolling back your rights

It's worth reviewing civil rights that have been attacked by the government so far.

The right to remain in a public place has been eroded by one of the government's "move on directions" legislation. As Greens MP David Shoebridge pointed out: "These laws ... enable police to decide, based on their evidence alone, that a person is intoxicated, and then force them from a public place. While there is an argument to allow police to break up rowdy intoxicated groups, there is no justification to allow police to target individuals. This legislation will allow police to harass and intimidate people at their discrimination."

The legislation has implications for young people, the homeless, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, but also for demonstrators opposing government initiatives.

The discriminatory impact of this legislation has been compounded by the reintroduction of "drunk and disorderly" laws dropped in the 1970s. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommended that "governments should legislate to abolish the offence of public drunkenness". Being drunk in a public place might be a public inconvenience or embarrassment, but it's not a crime.

The right to appropriate apprehension and sentencing has been effectively removed. A judge hearing a case of someone accused of murdering a police officer must now make a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. The law makes no distinction between, say, a ruthless carefully-planned assassination and the impetuous act of a teenager, and will certainly result in unjust sentences. The law has been vigorously opposed by the Law Society and the Bar Association.

Anyone apprehended while breaching recently-introduced anti-graffiti laws, even just for carrying a spray can, must be brought before a court. The police have no power to caution or impose an on-the-spot fine, and the result is sure to increase the number of juvenile convictions.

The right of legitimately-based organisations to non-criminal status has been to all intents effectively ended by the "anti-bikie" laws, under which an organisation can



be "declared", in effect rendered illegal if a significant minority of its members associate for the purpose of criminal activity. Members of a declared organisation can be subjected to control orders, and sentenced to jail if they breach them.

It doesn't matter if most members of the organisation aren't involved in the criminal activity or are unaware of it. The Law Society and Bar Association vigorously oppose this law which they say violates civil rights. Its existence threatens the activity or even existence of protest organisations and political groups such as the Communist Party of Australia, which faced banning as an illegal organisation in the early 1950s.

The right to meet other members of the public has now virtually disappeared, because of the "Consorting and Organised Crime" legislation, which permits the arrest of anyone who meets on more than one occasion with a person convicted of an indictable offence. Ostensibly aimed at preventing people from assisting criminal activity, in effect it criminalises anyone associating with that person – even members of his or her own family. The law is supposedly aimed at anyone dealing with organisations accused of criminal activity (such as bikie groups), but it may be applied even in cases where

the person involved has no idea that those with whom he or she is dealing are involved in criminal activity.

The first person convicted under this law was a young man in a country town simply going to the shops with a friend who was a member of a declared organisation. Universal application of the law would place huge sections of the population at risk of prosecution, and its imposition at the discretion of the police is wide open to corruption.

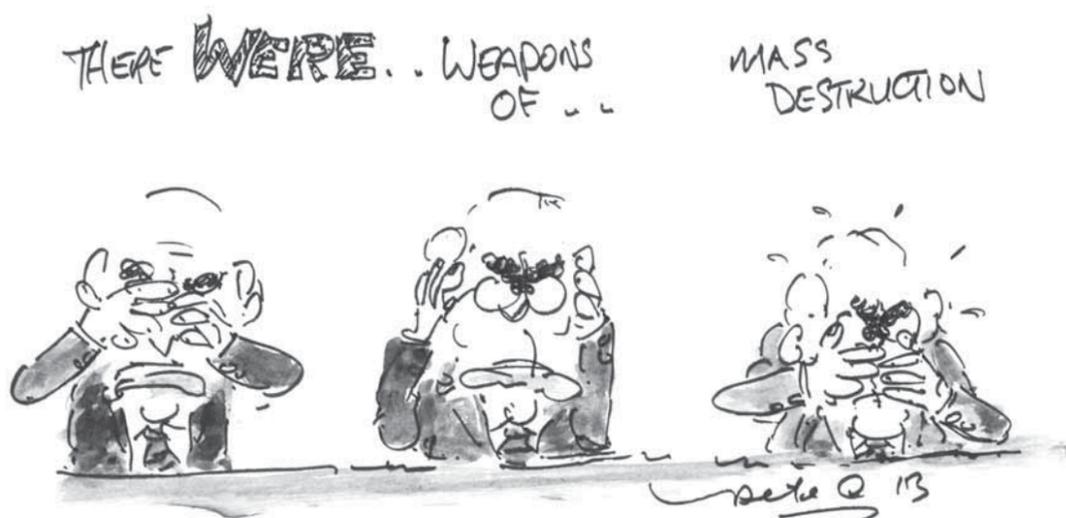
The cherished, long-established right of spousal privilege was removed under legislation introduced in 2012, under which it became an offence for someone to refuse to give evidence that might lead to a conviction of their wife, husband or common law partner. This law applies even in cases where someone

has been threatened with violence by their spouse or partner if they disclose such information.

The right of official visitor access removes the right of anyone being held under the state's notorious anti-terror laws to visits by independent people authorised to inspect prisons. As David Shoebridge observed: "This basically means that people who can be held indefinitely in NSW prisons under these anti-terror laws without charge will have no recourse to an independent external person to whom they would be able to make any complaints about the conditions of their incarceration."

According to David Shoebridge the law and order auction has become a civil rights give-away. That must end at the next elections, if not before. ✪

Pete's Corner



# MAYDAY

PERTH

**SUNDAY**  
**5 MAY 2013**  
 Fremantle Esplanade  
 12pm until  
 4.30pm

**12pm MARCH**      **10m FESTIVAL**

**FREE Festival Fun**  
 live bands, BBQ,  
 entertainment, food,  
 rides, activities

**SECURE JOBS      BETTER FUTURE**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **UNIONSWA**  
[www.unionswa.com.au/mayday](http://www.unionswa.com.au/mayday)

# Original place names embraced in Tassie

Jillian Mundy

**A new official dual naming policy to call Tasmanian places by both their original Aboriginal name and introduced English names appears to have been embraced, but the actions of one developer have annoyed local Aboriginal people**

Under the policy, introduced names will be phased out in favour of palawa kani (Aboriginal language) names as and when they are absorbed into the wider consciousness – much the way that “Ayers Rock” has largely reverted to “Uluru”.

Within days of the announcement at Hobart’s most prominent geographical feature, Mt Wellington (kunanyi) several weeks ago, non-Aboriginal developer Adrian Bold – who is pushing for a cable car on the 1,271-metre high mountain – registered the domain name kunanyi.org and several variations and linked them to his proposal’s website.

There’s been vocal opposition, official and community, for and against Mr Bold’s cable car proposal, including from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC).

The developer hoped his actions would secure a meeting with the TAC, saying he would gift the domain names to the TAC if they wished in “due course”.

Mr Bold told the *Koori Mail* it would be “preferable” to get the Aboriginal community on side, especially to get his proposed interpretation centre up and running.

“We’re trying to change to the Wellington Park Trust Management Plan, that prohibits transport infrastructure,” he said, referring to the other structures on the mountain as “rubbish”.

The plan is currently under review.

While Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Cassy O’Connor has labelled the domain registering disrespectful, TAC CEO Heather Sculthorpe called it a fantastic bonus.

“It’s fantastic publicity for us,” Ms Sculthorpe said.

“Him ripping us off, to get on page one (of the local newspaper), when the actual launch of the policy only made it to page three, it’s a fantastic bonus, spreading the word that kunanyi will be the new name of Mt Wellington,” Ms Sculthorpe said.



Mt Wellington (kunanyi).

“We think it is an attention grabbing exercise.”

Ms Sculthorpe said people had been saying they could challenge his domain registrations but she dismissed those suggestions as a waste of effort.

“He’s also just trying to get attention to himself by causing an argument with us,” she said of Mr Bold.

“After he done that, he sent us an email and rang.

“There’s no point, we are opposed to the cable car, it’s not his mountain and any interpretation of the mountain will be done by the

Aboriginal community not by a cable car proponent.

“We’ve already got palawa kani written on the mountain on interpretation panels. He doesn’t own the mountain, there’s nothing he can do for us by way of interpretation or giving us a domain name we don’t want. It’s quite funny.”

Palawa kani, the language revival program for Tasmanian Aboriginal languages, began in the early 1990s.

Aborigines who survived the attempted genocide, were sent to concentration camps, taught white man’s ways and English. Ms Sculthorpe said it was at these camps in the 1850s that the languages from different groups that were bought together started to evolve into a composite language, like in other places in Australia.

It has been a “sleeping language” in many respects until recently.

For the past two decades, it has been meticulously researched, taught in the Aboriginal community, songs written and welcomes to country spoken proudly in palawa kani, many words are used by Aboriginal people in every day conversation.

Where possible, words are from the North East language group, where most of Tasmania’s Aborigines descend, where this is not always possible words from other language groups in Tasmania are used.

Research has been extensive with Aboriginal people studying linguistics to obtain the correct pronunciations of word lists recorded by people from England, Germany, Holland, Scotland and France, using their many dialects.

Other words never left the vocabulary of Tasmanian Aboriginal families.

*Koori Mail* ☘

## Volgren victory travelling north

**Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union (AMWU) members at coach maker Volgren have secured a solid enterprise agreement result with an 11 percent pay rise and conditions superior to the non-union changes the company had wanted to impose nationally.**

The AMWU agreement outcome at Dandenong near Melbourne saw bus production workers win a boosted tool allowance and far easier union access to their site, in a deal which delegates believe should be a template for upcoming talks at Volgren’s Brisbane factory.

About 115 members voted to endorse the agreement after a campaign lasting nine months, which included strike action that disrupted Volgren’s production timeline on nine days this year.

That forced the company to abandon its goal of

having employees fund increases to employer superannuation contributions from their pay rise and dropping an attempt to get AMWU members to pay for their own tools – worth about \$2,500 over the life of the agreement.

Instead, the tool allowance will increase at the same rate as wages.

An earlier workplace vote which Volgren organised to try to implement a copy of the non-union agreement it has at its Perth factory resulted in a humiliating rejection, with the national CEO Peter Dale then taking over negotiations from the Victorian production manager, who left the company.

“It became far easier to deal with the company following that development and negotiations began to move quickly,” said AMWU Vehicle Division national assistant secretary Warren Butler.

“This agreement is a tribute to

the solidarity and determination of our members, who’ll now have backpay going back to July 2012.”

Mr Dale agreed that another fundamental change opposed by the AMWU, a classification structure which would have allowed non-trade certified workers on down-graded wages to take over the tasks of tradesmen, would be set aside pending any agreement with an elected shopfloor committee.

Union delegate Mark Fidanza said Volgren had admitted it wanted to impose tough key performance indicators (KPI) but these were now realistic and the existing roles of skilled trades workers – 80 percent of the workforce – had been secured.

“A key problem with the KPIs and so many other areas is that management had the wording ‘you will’ in their version, which we do not accept,” he said.

The wage rises of 4 percent in the first year then 3.5 percent per year for the next two years leaves members 1.5 percent better off than the non-union deal.

The agreement also provides more time for AMWU delegates to deal with union matters and removes the 24-hour notification the AMWU had to previously give for an organiser’s visit.

It permits meetings to take place in the lunch room – bringing forward the implementation of the new right announced under federal government reforms by six months.

“This opens the door for the next site negotiations in Brisbane and the company has indicated this time they will not involve the Australian Industry Group, which just got in the way,” Mr Fidanza said. ☘

## MUA calls on Woodside to reject “dud” offshore processing option

**Woodside Petroleum’s exploration into an offshore floating liquefied natural gas facility for their Browse project is a dud option that should be rejected as soon as possible, according to the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).**

It follows Woodside’s announcement to the ASX that the James Point Price option was not commercially viable but that it would continue to explore options with its joint venture partners, including another onshore site or the possibility of processing the LNG offshore.

“Aside from the thousands of jobs that Australians would miss out on, the offshore option would also create the potential for environmental armageddon in the event of a leak or explosion,” MUA deputy national secretary Mick Doleman said.

“This new technology that Shell is trying to foist on the joint venture is untried and untested and could be catastrophic if something goes, such as a cyclone or a tsunami, particularly as it wouldn’t be crewed by professional seafarers with high-level safety qualifications.

“It’s not just workers that

have a problem with offshoring – both the Coalition and Labor Parties in WA oppose the idea on the legitimate grounds that it would be a bad move economically for the state.”

MUA WA branch secretary Chris Cain said the MUA is concerned that Woodside’s announcement was designed as a political measure to pressure politicians into backing the company’s plans.

“We genuinely hope that Woodside is not trying to use blackmail to pressure politicians to abandon their opposition to offshore LNG processing,” Mr Cain said.

“Any move to offshore the processing will be bitterly fought by unions, politicians and the community.

“It is the community that will suffer most from this proposal, as they will miss out on the benefits of royalties that are invested in essential infrastructure, as well as possibly seeing their gas prices affected.

“Locating a facility 200 kilometres offshore would cut out local workers, cut out local content, and cut out local laws. We’re not having a bar of it,” Mr Cain said. ☘

Sydney

### Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) Rally

#### Time to say Fair Deal or No Deal in TPPA

The TPPA is a free trade agreement being negotiated between Australia, the US, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam. US global corporations are driving the agenda to expand their rights at the expense of peoples’ rights.

May 11 is International Fair Trade Day

*Join the protest in Sydney*

**Saturday 11 May 12 noon**

US Consulate, Martin Place (Corner Castleraeagh St)

# Intrigue, contrivance and the undermining of a government

Part 1

Anna Pha

Copies of cables from the US embassy in Australia released by WikiLeaks in 2011 gave some insight into the slavishness of the "special relationship" Australian governments have had with successive US administrations. (See *Guardian* #1517, 07-09-2011) A further release of cables by WikiLeaks last week has shed more light on informants within the ALP during the Whitlam era who kept US diplomats abreast of developments within Labor ranks and the trade union movement. They raise serious questions about where the loyalty of some of Australia's leading politicians really lies and the role played by the US in Australian politics.

The cables are part of a massive collection of 1.7 million documents which were transferred to the US National Archives in 2006. Some are still heavily censored, but none-the-less WikiLeaks has extracted much of interest. Reading them, it is not surprising that Foreign Minister Bob Carr reneged on his commitment to raise the question of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange with Swedish Foreign Minister during his recent visit to Australia.

If Assange leaves the Ecuador's London Embassy he will be immediately arrested, deported to Sweden which refuses to provide guarantees that he will not be sent to the US to face execution or a life sentence for his role in the release of earlier diplomatic cables.

During the Whitlam government the then ACTU president Bob Hawke was one of the US Embassy's most valued Labor contacts according to Philip Dorling writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (09-04-2013).

Another valued informant was Kerry Packer's prize industrial relations reporter for *The Bulletin*, Bob Carr, now Foreign Minister in the Gillard Labor government. Other Labor figures include MP Race Matthews, Ken Stone (secretary Victorian Trades Hall Council) and Jim Coleman (secretary WA Trades and Labor Council).

There were officials from government departments. These included Richard Woolcott, secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Douglas McKay, secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade (Cable dated 24-01-1975). Liberals such as Jim Killen and Mal Brough also rate a mention.

The Whitlam Labor government was elected in 1972 on a popular and progressive platform for social reform and progressive changes to foreign policy. Hundreds of thousands of people had joined the anti-Vietnam War movement, the women's movement was gaining strength and trade unions were taking militant action in defence of wages that were being eroded by inflation.

The government attempted to implement its platform which recognised the importance of land rights, of women's equality, promoted multiculturalism, the arts, Indigenous rights and saw introduced a range of important reforms to public health services, education, housing, and social security. University fees were abolished, Medibank (now Medicare) was introduced, means testing of pensions abolished for over 75s, unemployment and sickness benefits were raised to the same level as other benefits, just to name a few reforms in a massive program.

On the economic front, it was a mixed bag of reforms with tariff reductions in the manufacturing sector taking a heavy toll on jobs although supported by retraining and other programs.

## Raid on ASIO

One of the boldest and most risky acts of the government was Attorney General Lionel Murphy's unannounced raid on the Melbourne offices of Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in February 1973. The untouchable ASIO came under his ministerial responsibility. Murphy believed that ASIO was withholding or even contemplating destroying information on a security threat against Yugoslav PM Džemal Bijedić who was due to visit Australia.

The Ustashi, a Croat fascist organisation that collaborated with the Nazis, had secret military training facilities in Australia. Several leading Liberal MPs were known to have an association with them. Australian Ustashi members were involved in terrorist bombings and ASIO was withholding information from the government.

The cables discuss the raid and report on subsequent action by NSW and Commonwealth police on April 2, where police raided 68 Croatian homes, made arrests and seized explosives and a pistol.

Murphy was to pay a high price for his actions.

## Foreign investment

The Minister for Minerals and Energy in the Whitlam Government, Rex Connor, and Whitlam were concerned at the high level of foreign ownership of Australia's mining sector. They were determined to prevent that level rising and to have the benefits of mining returned to the Australian people. They had a policy restricting foreign ownership of new mines to 50 percent, in practice allowing up to 75 percent. They attempted a far more serious move than Rudd or Gillard's tax on mining profits.

The Petroleum and Mineral Resources Authority Bill provided for the establishment of statutory government-owned corporations which could take an equity stake in mining corporations, thus ensuring 50 percent Australian ownership where this could not be obtained by other means by foreign investors.

The government also gained powers to control exports so as to prevent large surpluses on Japanese markets which were driving down prices. Needless to say these measures were strongly opposed by the mining sector, the Opposition, Treasury officials and Murdoch media who did their best to subvert them.

## Foreign policy

Whitlam was no quisling. He took a number of measures to assert Australia's independence and sovereignty. These ranged from adopting "Advance Australia Fair" as Australia's national anthem (instead of "God Save the Queen") and replacing British honours by a system of Australian honours (Order of Australia, etc) through to taking a stand against US imperialism, as in Vietnam.

One of its first actions was to withdraw Australia's forces from Vietnam and begin negotiations for the recognition of the People's Republic of China, while breaking them off with Taiwan.

The government used the powers of the Minister for Defence to grant exemptions from military conscription (and hence being sent to fight the US's war in Vietnam) to exempt

Whitlam was a strong advocate of peace and disarmament.



everyone. Draft resisters were released from jail. Australia voted at the UN in favour of sanctions against apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

In the international arena, Whitlam recognised the importance of Asia with particular emphasis on China and Indonesia. His emphasis on Indonesia and fear of communism (FRETILIN) on Australia's doorstep was behind his betrayal of the East Timorese when Indonesia decided to invade with the departure of the Portuguese.

Whitlam's support for the ANZUS Treaty did not translate into blind compliance to every demand of the US administration. In May 1975, the Socialist Party of Australia (now the Communist Party of Australia) wrote to Whitlam asking a series of questions on foreign policy. In his detailed response, Whitlam indicated, "The Australian Government takes the attitude that there should not be foreign military bases, stations installations in Australia. We honour agreements covering existing stations. We do not favour the extension or prolongation of any of those existing ones." (See *Guardian* #1550, 11-05-2011)

Whitlam was a strong advocate of peace and disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, and supported the concept of nuclear-free zones including one in the South Pacific.

## Socialist countries

On the question of the socialist countries, "The government believes in the universality of international relationships, regardless of ideological differences, and has actively pursued this course by, for example, establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, the German Democratic Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam," Whitlam said in his letter.

One cable from the US Embassy states that Whitlam's views on Vietnam were being reported at some length because, "they underline magnitude of problem we face in making any impact on GOA [government of Australia - Ed] on Viet-Nam as long as Whitlam and Labor are in office." A telling statement indeed! (Cable dated 10-02-1975)

The government also expressed its interest in attending meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement group of countries, an indication of its seriousness about being independent.

The cables quote Whitlam when asked in an interview with *Newsweek*, what he expects to get from a relationship with China: "The last 23 years we ... took an unrealistic and objectionable attitude. It is quite absurd for

any country, particularly in the Pacific region, to deny itself the opportunity of the officially (sic) communication with a quarter of the human race." (Cable dated 09-03-1973)

When asked what will happen in Indo China following the Vietnam War, Whitlam responds: "I am not going to make a prediction about that at this time. I will predict that Australia would never again be inveigled into intruding there. Once bitten, forever shy."

In other words, under a Whitlam government, Australia would not be drawn into another US imperialist war in our region.

In the same interview Whitlam was asked if relations with the US seemed to be cooling. Whitlam responds: "Now that the cease-fire has been achieved in Vietnam, the cause of friction should evaporate. Our predecessors were prepared to tolerate America's actions in Vietnam. We were not."

In response to another question, he again spoke out stridently and with insight: "Countries that have tried to preserve political dominance as a means of preserving economic predominance have beggared themselves in the process. Britain has beggared itself; America has weakened itself."

The cables also report on Whitlam's concept for a regional organisation or discussion group that would include the People's Republic of China, but not include the US, Russia or Taiwan (Cable dated 19-03-1973).

Whitlam, according to the cable, describes his proposal as an initiative to help free the region from "great power rivalries that have bedevilled its [the region's] progress for decades." The regional forum would be designed to "insulate the region against ideological interference from the great powers." It failed to gain support.

The cable concludes with the assessment of an informant from the Department of Foreign Affairs (its deputy secretary) giving Whitlam's position - "that Australia is beginning to feel itself alone in the world and wishes to show some initiative in forming new friendships based on mutual interests with other countries in the region."

The concept of relations based on friendship and mutual interests and Whitlam's assessment of countries that attempt to use political domination to maintain economic predominance must sound like heresy to the US administration and imperialism in general.

He was to pay a huge price for such heresy.

Next week: Economic crisis ☸

**MAY DAY SYDNEY PARADE**

**A PROUD PAST, A FIGHTING FUTURE**

WORKERS RIGHTS    WORK LIFE BALANCE    SOLIDARITY    WOMEN'S RIGHTS NOW

**Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Assembling: 11:30am    Assembly Point: Macquarie Street outside Parliament House, Sydney  
 Marching: 12:00pm

Facebook: May Day Sydney 2013    Twitter: @SydneyMayDay

# Acknowledge and recover the past

## The Spanish Republic Movement

Interview by Maria Hilario\* with the Asociacion Republicana, Irunesa Nicolas Guerendian. Present at the meeting: Secretary Juncal; President Tino; and Member Jon.

**MH: When and why did this organisation come about?**

**Juncal:** In 2005 the conferences and public meetings were organised with the theme of the Spanish Republic and we discovered then that Irun\*\* was in favour of the Republic. We saw the need and we started to organise and create this organisation. We took the name of "Nicolas Guerendian" because he was a Judge from Irun. He took part in the defence of the city during the Civil War. He was made prisoner and sent to Santona Santander and later the falangists brought him back and they walked him around the city before they killed him; he was buried for a long time in one of those unknown or unidentified places and he is one of them, one of the many thousands who still lay buried somewhere on the side of a road somewhere, unidentified.

**MH: Are people in general well informed about what went on during the franquist dictatorship?**

**Tino:** For us it is one of the most important reasons for the association that people don't forget about the past and that they know what happened. Spain is the second country in the world with more people "disappeared" and not being accounted for and no one seems to care about it. We sent our magistrates to Argentina to look for their disappeared but with the Spanish unidentified they don't want to know about it, they stopped all the work. It is terrible that Spain is inundated with graves along the sides of many roads and when someone has to unveil or dig up a grave the first thing they do is send the military police – Guardia Civil – and they close the investigation. It is tragic that in 2012 that this continues to happen.

**Jon:** People, especially young people, have very little knowledge about the Spanish Civil War and the years of dictatorship. They don't even know who Franco was. At the educational level there is a policy that they want to hide the history of Spain. In schools and Institutes you never reach the end of the themes and the history of contemporary Spain is never touched; young people turning 18 years of age don't know contemporary Spanish history.

**Juncal:** If today we look at the ones that became rich during the Franco dictatorship years it was because they stole from the republicans' inheritance. Now business people, judges, big companies are rich because of what they stole; if there was justice today and we could bring those criminals and thieves to the Courts like in Germany or other countries; half of the country could be charged and this would sanitise or clean up the problem. But no, nothing like this has happened here. The police are the same torturing people but with a face changed, the church is the same, the army too.

**MH: How important is the struggle to denounce past injustices and bring the culprits to justice?**

**Juncal:** Argentina have begun now to do a revision of what happened during our Civil War and this is very important as it is one of the main priorities of the movements for the republic to bring justice to the victims of the Franco dictatorship, if justice and reparation would happen; the right-wing movement in Spain would be jailed.

**Tino:** With our small resources from this

city of Irun we are undertaking a study with the help of a historian from the university and she is looking at the archives and she is shocked about what she is discovering in relation to thefts and misappropriation of inheritances from republican citizens after the Civil War. Looking at a lot of rich people in this area, looking at their parents and grandparents, this historian can see that they robbed many states, land holdings, properties and of course we are going to publish all these findings.

**MH: Is this to do with truth, justice, and reparation for the 150,000 deaths, people who were killed by the franquistas and whose graves have not been found? What needs to be done to accelerate a more just revision of the past?**

**Juncal:** The republic movement is spread across all the regional areas in Spain and it does what it can in these areas, with the help of forensic experts. Today we have only found about 10 percent. We know there is much more out there and there will be a lot we won't be able to find as it is under concrete or under roads. What could we do? I would love to put aside from their power and decision making all the judges and magistrates that are supporters of the Franco dictatorship, that are part of the Spanish legal system today.

**Jon:** I would like to change the laws and the judges' attitudes and make them more accountable so they should get involved with the victims of the dictatorship. Today this doesn't happen.

**Juncal:** It is because the new law to help the recovery and repair of the past does not enforce much because the judges and magistrates don't want to get involved when there is an investigation today. The judges wash their hands if they find a grave with bones. They ask the magistrate to proceed with an investigation but they don't do anything! They don't want to get involved!

**MH: Do you think this is because the judges generally have always been in favour of the dictatorship?**

**Tino:** It is a political hereditary; the ones in government now are descendents of the ones that were in power during the dictatorship. They perpetuate it, so it is very difficult. We have seen judges that are acting against what would be the right thing to do and this is because they are still "fascist", like their parents and their thoughts and actions continue.

**Juncal:** And the ones that are not fascist, because the law is not strong enough they don't want complications. When the transition came in the late '70s they created the Law of Silence and they told us it was because they did not want the army to take power. But when you change from a dictatorship to a democracy there has to be a clean up period and you have to be able to investigate the crimes they committed but not here. Nothing happened – the same people are still in power, the same families. Of course everyone said there was a transition but it was mainly a change of coats.

**MH: So do you think the revision of the past is a long way off seeing how bad things are at this moment?**

**Jon:** Now with the crisis what we need is a second transition where the truth, memory from the past, justice and reparation are implemented. We need to bring to justice and to charge to all those involved in crimes and to repair injustices and to acknowledge the victims. But for all this we need a different political system in Spain.

**Juncal:** And in Spain there are victims and victims. If a victim is because of ETA\*\*\*

straight away they get help but the victims from the Franco dictatorship, these ones are ignored because they are from the Civil War. The right-wing victims have more rights than if the victim is on the left side of politics. Where is the justice?

**MH: Is the media telling what is happening?**

**Tino:** In this country, the telecommunication services are owned by magnates.

**Jon:** There are not independent newspapers in Spain. Medium size printing hardly exists to reach a large number of people. All the newspapers belong to big investment groups.

**Juncal:** A few years back when the right-wing was in power like now every one thought that *el Pais* was a newspaper from the left side of politics but the director of the newspaper was Martin Villa and he was one of the torturers and had been interior minister during the Franco dictatorship. He was an assassin and he is still involved politically.

**Jon:** If we could write a biography of all the politicians we have now a lot of them were political appointees during the dictatorship years.

**MH: Would there be a day not too far away for a referendum on a republic and what needs to be done to win the referendum?**

**Jon:** We don't know if it is in the distant future or closer to now but we hope that day will come and we will try to unite all the republic movements of the left.

**Juncal:** I think it is difficult to say that there will be a referendum. They will have one only if they are interested in one but it won't be a popular republic from the left like the one we want. The ones in power now could say the monarchy is not working but we need to keep the capitalist system in power and that we are going to do a referendum for the republic to win but they would keep their power.

**Tino:** For our cause the biggest boost that we have at this moment is the Spanish royal family with the son in law's corruption, their love affairs, people are seeing what they are.

**Juncal:** We republicans from the left, we have values and we defend the public system against what they are doing, privatising everything. This is what the capitalism wants

**Tino:** I think they have prepared this crisis and it is at a time when the left forces are disunited.

**Juncal:** They won't give us a popular republic like we want, a federation republic. Probably it will be something like the one they have in USA and that one, we don't want.

**Tino:** Like France.

**Juncal:** The French one is not a working class republic one. But the right wing in France is not like here, which is rancid.

**MH: Why is that?**

**Tino:** In Spain nothing has changed in situ. If you live well, no one is going to touch you, you are not going to change, you continue to accumulate and steal, no one is going to touch you, you are not going to change.

**Jon:** I think that in Europe the fascist right-wing lost the war but in Spain it won the war so in Germany and France they lost power. In France there is a right-wing party with Sarkosi and the extreme right-wing Le Pen that is strong but is not like Spain. Here, the right is united there is only one right-wing party the PP and in France there are two.

**MH: Is this the right moment, given the economic crisis, for change? Would people be motivated to take a stand and get involved?**

**Juncal:** The problem is that people are not motivated for that change



People, especially young people, have very little knowledge of the dictatorship. They don't even know who Franco was.

**Jon:** The crisis brought people back to the streets and they are demonstrating. It all depends on the capacity of the left.

### Who are we?

We are a group of citizens from Irun that are proud to be for a republic and we meet regularly to defend and propagate the ideas and values of a republic.

We are an open association and welcome anyone that would like to promote and work for the republic values. We are a pluralist association welcoming all ways of thinking along the republic view of thinking. You do not have to pledge to any political party.

### What is our goal?

We are not guided by resentment but we are against the cover. We think it is time to acknowledge and recover the past.

Today the historical values of a republic are fully integrated: we defend human rights, we defend the public system like education and health, social justice, an independent judicial system, independence of the state from the church, public education without the separate from the church, the legal rights of the nations to their own destinies, and a strong commitment to resolve issues within nations with out going to war.

**The crisis brought people back to the streets and they are demonstrating. It all depends on the capacity of the left.**

# Asian Pivot and Obama's Korean Peninsula strategy

Murray Hunter

**North Korea is being depicted as an irrational provocateur and aggressor in the escalation of threats and military manoeuvres over the Korean Peninsula, and of course the regime's rhetoric is being used as proof of the intention to wage war. However the events occurring now can also be seen as a continuation of the Obama Administration's "Asian Pivot" strategy, which started with the US President's visit to Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia in November last year, where he tried unsuccessfully to establish a greater US military presence around the South China Sea over the issue of disputed territories.**

Since North Korea's firing of a three stage rocket back in December last year, and the underground nuclear test in February, threats, rhetoric, and military provocations have been rapidly escalating. Early in March, the UN approved fresh sanctions on Pyongyang, where North Korea retaliated through stating that it has the right to stage a pre-emptive strike on the US, as reported by the "western press".

However, North Korea is not the only country with its rhetoric; the newly elected President of South Korea Park Geun-hye stated that it will strike hard and directly against the North's top leadership if provoked.

Then only a couple of days after that, US marines commenced military exercises with Japanese Self Defence forces in Hokkaido. Pyongyang very quickly deployed long range artillery and multiple rocket launchers from bases just across from Baengnyeondo Island, where many clashes have previously occurred, and told South Koreans in the area to evacuate. President Park loosened the rules of engagement in the West Sea.

Very soon after, during the next couple of days the annual US-South Korean Foal Eagle joint military exercises which included 10,000 South Korean and over 3,000 US troops commenced on the Peninsula. The Western media portrayed North Korean condemnations of these military exercises as something unexpected, but in fact North Korea had opposed such exercises as being unnecessarily provocative each year. Only a few days later US Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel announced an increase in missile deployment in Alaska to counter any missile threat from North Korea.

Then escalation drastically increased with navel drills in seas around the peninsula, B-52s flying over South Korea practicing bombing runs, and then on March 28 a precision bombing run over the Peninsula of two B-2 bombers, the most advanced nuclear carrying stealth aircraft in the US arsenal. This was reinforced by Secretary Hagel's

statement that North Korean provocations should be taken very seriously.

In retaliation, North Korea cut military hotlines with the South, and soon after said it was entering a "state of war" with the South by cancelling the armistice agreement, where incidentally North Korea has been long willing to sign a full peace agreement, but to date the US has refused. However one must be careful with what the North actually means in their statements, as real meanings can be "lost in reckless translation".

Both sides are also claiming that they are the victims of cyber attacks, adding to the high tensions that now exist.

From the North Korean perspective, these escalations are coming from a country that carpet bombed the North almost out of existence during the 1950 Korean War. More than five million lives were lost during that conflict: the 1950 war started under the pretext of military exercises, just like those that recently occurred. It is reasonable to believe that in the North where the threat of military incursion by the US and South Korea has been a real possibility, current military movements are perceived as a real threat to the security of the country. If one was sitting in Pyongyang, one could very easily take the current provocations as being preparations for an attack. Both history and Korean military scenarios support this perception from the North's point of view.

The current "game" scenario playing out on the peninsula through these escalating actions is increasing the risks on both sides. There also looks like no immediate forum of moderation acceptable to both sides is available to hold any talks to decrease the tension. Both the Russians and Chinese are urging restraint to both sides. This time round a number of political commentators are taking the US to task for unnecessarily provoking North Korea.

Any further contemplated escalation could miscalculate the response by the other side and lead to open military conflict, be it minor and localised, or wider over the whole boarder region.

If one looks at the events going on within the Korean Peninsula within a regional perspective, the real concern of the US might be China. The Korean escalation is a good excuse to build up the US military presence in East Asia, at a time when some governments like Japan are even questioning the need to have US troops on their soil.

This escalation will encourage the South to further militarise themselves and don't be surprised if Japan is asked to play a much greater military role in the region, with pressure put on the government to amend the constitution that prevents Japan from taking offensive military action. The Korean

escalation will enable more US military assets to be placed closer to China, and create a good excuse for the Obama Administration to cancel cutbacks in military spending in order to take on the "new enemy" of the United States.

This can be seen as a replay of the old strategy of building up a caricature of evil, someone the US loves to hate. With Muammar Gaddafi, Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein all gone, someone is desperately needed with all the abilities required to "wage war on the United States". With the US moving their homeland policy towards domestic terrorism, a new international threat is needed. And Kim Jong-un fits the profile perfectly. Don't worry that the North doesn't have the capacity to make a first strike on US soil. Just like before in Iraq, the details can be glossed over. The "evil empire" brand was created by Reagan, carried on by Bush is now ready to be utilised by this administration.

One of the ironical things about the Obama Asian Pivot strategy is that it is utilising the same old tools of past administrations. Obama who portrayed himself as the great peace maker and communicator during the 2008 election campaign has turned out to be a chameleon. All promises and restraint and even dialogue with US "enemies" have been long forgotten. Obama had espoused himself as the great liberal, but the actions haven't matched the words, and in foreign policy he has done nothing more than continue on with the Bush-Cheney doctrine of aggressive military action.

If one can see what the administration has to gain through this escalation, it is difficult to find reason for any back-down. This game is important to the broad foreign policy objectives of the administration, particularly when the President failed to secure any greater US presence within the ASEAN region during his visit to the region last November.

President Obama would certainly have many supporters today in the US military-industrial complex. This US strategy will actually be counter-productive in bringing any chance of peace to the Korean Peninsula. The US provocation may strengthen resolve of North Korea's few allies to affirm support, and even win sympathy from others.

The events of the last few weeks on the Korean Peninsula may be very telling of the style and objectives of this second Obama Administration. The present "game in play" by the US is indeed full of risk and uncertainty. North Korea is running out of new ways to make retaliatory threats to warn the US of the consequences of playing this risky game. How many objectives in the Asia-Pacific region will Obama achieve through this "sabre rattling".

Pravda.ru ✖



about the Spanish Civil War and the years of

## Why are we called "Nicolas Guerendiain"

We decided to take on the name of our organisation Nicolas Guerendiain because we want to rescue from the past and bring to light a father and a son that are part of the history of this city, Irun. We want to reclaim their dignity.

[www.asociacionrepublicanairunesa.org](http://www.asociacionrepublicanairunesa.org)

140431@asociacionrepublicanairunesa.org

\* Maria is a CPA member. She travelled through Spain for three months last year.

\*\* Irun (old Basque for "fortified town") is a town of the Bidasoa-Txingudi region in the province of Gipuzkoa in the Basque Autonomous Community, Spain. Nowadays it is widely accepted by the historic researcher community that Irun is the ancient Basque Roman town of Oiasso on account of the vestiges (port, factory, etc) disclosed in the historic nucleus of Irun, while the name itself may have applied to the whole surrounding area.

\*\*\* Basque nationalist and separatist organisation founded in 1959. The main organisation of the Basque National Liberation Movement. ✖



A South Korean tank moves over a temporary bridge during military drill in Hwacheon near the border with North Korea on April 1, 2013.

# Stumble stones for German hearts and minds

Victor Grossman

**BERLIN:** The late, late snow has finally disappeared from Berlin's streets. Visible once again, here and there, are the "stumble stones" – "stolpersteine" in German – with their brief, tragic messages.

Many Berlin tourists will enjoy the night life. They may also look upwards – at the giant TV tower, the Brandenburg Gate, at ancient and less ancient churches. There is a wide assortment of memorial monuments, some impressive, some uninspiring.

But those who look downward, to the pavement where they walk, may glimpse a very different kind of memorial – the stumble stones.

They are small concrete blocks in the ground, 10 by 10 centimetres square, topped at sidewalk level by a brass plaque of the same size. Most are placed at entranceways to houses where people once lived – people seized by the Nazis and sent to die in a multitude of death sites in all the conquered territories.

Some were suicides. The message on the little plaque contains a name, a year of birth, the date of deportation and, if known, the place and date of death. There is room for little else. But the scant facts can tell a tragic story.

Sometimes there is only one plaque. Often, most movingly, there are two, three, four or five, placed neatly next to one another. As in Oranienburger Strasse, for example, near the impressively rebuilt, golden-domed synagogue; a group of five small squares, all for a family named Kozower, each with a name and year of birth: Philip, 1894; Gisela, 1901; Eva Rita, 1932; Alice, 1934; Uri Aron, 1942. And under each birth year: "Deportiert Theresienstadt 1943" and "In Auschwitz ermordet" (In Auschwitz he or she died).

These small memorials are placed wherever local people – those now living in the house, perhaps church groups, anti-fascist organisations, very often schools – decide to hunt up the facts and collect 120 Euros to pay for each plaque.

Then they can turn to Gunter Demnig, now 66, who had the idea for the stumble stones, and who makes every block, each and every letter by hand, and who mixes the concrete, attaches the brass plaque and secures it between the small paving stones so frequent in German streets. He has recently begun to train two apprentices to assist him.

Demnig, born in Berlin, became an artist and industrial designer in West Germany and began work at restoring monuments. Like so many students in those years he was a political person; he spent some hours in jail for hanging out an American flag with skulls instead of stars as a protest against the killing in Vietnam.

In 1990 in Cologne he painted a long white line of letters through the town, forming the words, over and over: "May 1940 – 1,000 Roma and Sinti." Fifty years earlier this group, the "Gypsies," defended by almost no one, had been forced along this line to the railway station as a test for far larger deportations soon to follow.

Then, in Cologne in 1995 and a year later in West Berlin, he started his project of making one stone for each individual, retrieving them from the anonymity of large memorials visited, all too often, solely on special occasions.

At first he placed the stones without official permission, but Germany made it legal in 2000 and he was soon called upon by people in one town and city after another. He has personally placed almost 38,000 such stones in over 650 German towns and cities, nearly 5,000 in Berlin alone. He has also been invited to place stones in over a hundred places in the countries surrounding Germany, as far as Norway and Ukraine.

Gunter Demnig, in his denim work clothes and broad-brimmed hat, carefully anchors each stone solidly in the ground. There is always a ceremony, in all weather, usually with music and poetry, almost always with flowers, and often organised by the school classes which did the necessary research – in local archives or as far as Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Sometimes – rarely – a grateful grandchild or other surviving relative can be present.

Despite the name, no one stumbles over these stones; they are no higher than sidewalk level. Asked about this, Demnig likes to quote a schoolboy who once participated: "No, no, nobody stumbles and falls, you stumble with your mind and with your heart."

Demnig feels that even the bending needed to read the messages on the stones is, in a way, a symbolic bow of quiet respect to those whose names he wishes to rescue from forgetfulness.

Above most names are the words: "Here lived..." and the site is the last



voluntary home of the person named – or where the house was once located. But Demnig also varies the pattern: "Here worked ..." or "Here studied" or "Here taught" – several are near the Humboldt University building on Berlin's central Unter den Linden Boulevard.

Most stones recall Jewish victims. But some years ago this was broadened to include, along with Roma or Sinti, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses or handicapped victims, also those who fought and died as active anti-fascists.

The names, the locations of the stones, and more biographical notes wherever possible are now available on the Internet. So it is possible to know more about some names on the stones, now scattered so widely around the country.

For example, we can learn just a little more about two young men from Hoechst on the Main River. Friedrich Schuhmann, machinist and hobby mandolin player, was a Communist. The plaque says: Born 1906, fled 1933 to the Saarland, (*not yet German-ruled at the time*), 1936 Spanish Civil War, Thälmann Battalion; Died July 6 1937, Brunete. We can read that he joined the fight in Spain even before the International Brigades

were formed, and that he was one of 14 men who died in that first day's battle for Brunete. Surviving relatives learned the facts only through this research.

The other from Hoechst, Fritz Hartmann, born a year earlier, was a Social Democrat.

After two arrests by the Nazis for his resistance he fled in 1933, also to French-occupied Saarland. When it voted to join Hitler-Germany he fled to France, continued fighting, but was caught in 1940 and sent to Mauthausen Concentration Camp. On April 13, 1945, only weeks before war's end, he was murdered. The other stones in Hoechst, over 50 of them, are for Jewish victims.

Not everyone supports Demnig's project. In Cologne a court decided to tax the stones with a severe 19 percent value added tax, since the lower seven percent rate is permitted only for "creative works". The many thousands of stones being placed in Germany, the court ruled, amounted not to "creative work" but to "mass production".

But Demnig was able to prove that every letter on every plaque was carved by hand and so was able to win the case.

In Munich, a serious objection

came from the head of the Jewish Congregation, who found it "insufferable" that the names of Jews killed by the Nazis should be on plaques over which people walked back and forth every day.

Her objections, though not shared by all Congregation leaders, were backed up by the mayor, and the stones in Munich, still prohibited on public sidewalks, are restricted only to private property. A large number are in storage.

But Demnig and many, many others, while they may understand these objections, are convinced that this way of personalising the fates of individuals who once lived at these places, with birthdates and death dates and places, helps to preserve their memories, while making clear that those who lived here must have known very well what was happening to their next-door neighbours. They see this as an urgent reminder for the present, a stimulus to thinking and often necessary re-thinking.

And indeed, it is not only snow or foot steps which render them temporarily less legible. Last year, in Greifswald, an area hard hit by neo-Nazis, eleven stones were torn out and stolen.

A few weeks ago in Berlin newly-placed stones were smeared with tar during the night. Those which disappear are soon replaced and, as Demnig says, "With a little benzine and a spatula the tar is gone." Red lacquer was once used. "I got rid of it with a solvent. Some colour remained in the letters, making them easier to read."

One night last September in Wismar nine stones were covered over with a steel plate marked with the birth and death dates, even the rank and decorations of German Wehrmacht soldiers, some from the most murderous SS divisions.

The struggle with the forces of darkness is by no means a settled affair. Perhaps these little stones, combined with the efforts and research of pupils in the schools and people in those houses, will affect this ongoing struggle. As the pupil said, the stumble stones are something for hearts and minds.

People's World ☘



## May Day Adelaide

**On Sunday, May 5, come to the  
PORT ADELAIDE WORKERS  
MEMORIAL**

**10 a.m.—Memorial Ceremony at the Workers Memorial, Black Diamond Corner, Port Adelaide. Then afterwards at the Council Rooms for morning tea.**

**12 noon—Barbecue and Refreshments at the Semaphore Workers Club, 93 Esplanade, Semaphore. All welcome**

Authorised by D. Roberts President S.A. May Day Collective



**2013 MAY DAY MARCH  
Saturday, May 4, 2013, 10.30 a.m.**

*Assemble Hindmarsh Square*

*and march to Torrens Parade Ground via North Terrace*

# Hunger strike at Gitmo: "We are dying a slow death here"

Pardiss Kebriyai

**I have just returned from Guantánamo, where my clients and a majority of the other 166 men there have been on hunger strike for over two months. Most of them have been cleared for release or will never be charged. But the Obama administration has refused to send them home.**

I met with men who are weak and have lost between 30 and 40 pounds. They told me of other men who are skeletal and barely moving, who have coughed up blood, passed out, and one who tried to hang himself.

One of the men I met with, Sabry Mohammed, a Yemeni who remains detained years after he was approved for release by the Obama administration, said, "We are dying a slow death here." Yet the authorities say they will not let men die – they will force-feed them when their body weight drops

dangerously low, strapping them into chairs and forcing a tube up their noses that pumps formula into their stomachs. The military reports that so far, 11 men are being "saved" this way. Yet as one of the men put it, the irony is that "the government will keep us alive by force-feeding us but they will let us die by detaining us forever."

Today, 166 men remain at Guantánamo, more than 11 years after they arrived in hoods and shackles. Most are being held without charge and will never be charged. The Obama administration has approved more than half of the men – 86 – for transfer, but hasn't mustered the political will to overcome congressional hurdles, despite saying it can and will. As their indefinite detention stretches into a second decade, men are aging, declining and dying.

Last September, Adnan Latif, a husband and a father, a man twice

cleared for transfer under the Bush and Obama administrations, was the ninth prisoner to die. The current crisis at the base had specific triggers, but there has been an emergency at Guantánamo for years.

The strike was sparked in early February, when prison authorities ordered searches of the men's Koran. One man told me, "I won't even touch the Koran without washing my hands, how could I use it to hide something dirty?" The men viewed the searches as desecration, which should hardly have been news to those in charge.

A former Muslim chaplain at Guantánamo once described the handling of the holy books as "the most contentious issue" at the prison. Given the sensitivity of the practice and the history of religious abuse at Guantánamo – acts like throwing Korans on the ground and shaving detainees' beards as punishment – the authorities should have known better.

Indeed, former commanders did know better. In a 2009 review of conditions at Guantánamo, ordered by the Obama administration, a commander at the base recognised that standard operating procedures "do not permit searching of the Koran."

The rule reflected an "elevated respect" for detainees' religious concerns – a lesson learned from the early years. It is unclear why that changed. Another of my clients said, "They are taking the camp back to 2006."

So far, prison authorities have defended their actions and downplayed the scale of the strike. Inside



Detainee IDs displayed at a protest outside the Supreme Court, February 2013. (Photo: K Vlahos)

the prison, my clients have described various tactics used to make life even more difficult and break the strike. Some have been life-threatening, like delaying the delivery of filtered drinking water, forcing detainees to drink from the tap of sink faucets attached to toilets in their cells. Before, there used to be signs above the sinks saying it was not safe to drink the water. One man said he would rather go without water than drink from the sink.

As the strike enters its third month and the crisis deepens, the authorities must reach for a resolution before someone dies. My clients are asking for assurances that their Korans will not be searched, or to hand them in altogether rather than see them desecrated.

But the solution to the broader calamity is closing Guantánamo, beginning with the release of men like

Sabry. He told me he does not want to die, he wants to return to his family, but he and others are continuing the strike because they have been pushed too far and this is the only means they have to protest peacefully. The only thing they can control is their own bodies. It is an act of strength even as they are growing weaker. They are desperately wanting to believe there is still a life for them beyond the prison walls.

At the end of our meeting last week, Sabry showed me a painting he made recently, of the prison surrounded by mountains. But outside the high, tight-mesh fence that encloses Camp 6, where Sabry is held, there is ocean. "I don't know what is outside. It is just what I imagine." After more than 11 years, it is long past time for the United States to send Sabry home. *Information Clearing House* ☘

## Over 100,000 patients benefitted from Cuba's Heberprot-P

**More than 100,000 patients in the world, including Cubans, have benefitted from the use of Heberprot-P, a medicament developed by the island's biotechnology industry for diabetic foot ulcers, with notable results.**

Doctor of Sciences Manuel Raices, a specialist with Havana's Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, an institution that along with the Angiology Institute developed this world leading

product, said that the medicine has prevented amputation in most cases, which improves the quality of life.

He announced that they plan to have another 60,000 patients to benefit from Heberprot-P, with a priority for Cubans.

Heberprot-P continues to be the only product of its kind in the world and constitutes another achievement of Cuban biotechnology at the service of mankind. *Cubanews* ☘

## Ecological cement, a friendly product developed by Cuba

**HAVANA: In cooperation with Swiss scientists, the Cuban Centre for Research and Development of Structures and Materials is producing ecological cement with prospects to increase its output next year.**

Cuba's *Juventud Rebelde* newspaper quoted the Centre's director Jose Fernando Martirena as saying that the new product is environment friendly and lowers the cost of cement production.

According to Martirena Cuba will produce 240 tons of ecological cement this month, a product whose content of clinker has been replaced with less environment harmful components, such as china clay but with no negative consequences for its resistance.

The new technology is expected to be transferred to cement producers in India, Brazil and China. *Cuban News Agency* ☘

## 100,000 say: free Shaker Aamer now

Paddy McGuffin

**Campaigners petitioning for the immediate release of the last Briton in Guantánamo have secured 100,000 signatures necessary to trigger a potential parliamentary debate.**

Shaker Aamer, a British resident who has languished in the US prison for 11 years without charge and trial, is currently on hunger strike in protest against his treatment amid growing fears over his wellbeing. Campaigners say the petition would add to pressure on the British government to live up to its commitment to secure his freedom.

A spokesman for the Save Shaker Aamer Campaign said: "This public outcry must not be ignored. The government must act now to get Shaker home to his family and friends in Britain."

"While a full debate in Parliament should now take place with all members of parliament present Prime Minister David Cameron's government must take

resolute and determined action, including, as Irene Nembhard of Birnberg Peirce and Partners has said, making an interstate complaint to the UN Committee Against Torture that the US's detention of Shaker for more than 11 years amounts to torture."

Stop the War convener Lindsey German, who is backing the campaign, described Mr Aamer's continued detention as "a stain on the democratic and judicial process."

And former Guantánamo detainee Omar Deghayes said: "Having experienced the bitterness of detention in Guantánamo for five years myself, what Aamer and the other detainees are going through is indescribable."

Reprieve director Clive Stafford Smith, who represents Mr Aamer, said he had spoken to his client and that the situation was grave.

He said Mr Aamer had told him: "They are killing us, so it is hard to keep calm. In reality I am dying inside."

Mr Stafford Smith said: "The ongoing detention without charge

or trial of these men is an affront to justice. Shaker has a wife and four British kids – one of whom he's never met – in London.

"The UK seems to just accept routine assurances from the US that all is well, when in fact all is rotten in Guantánamo Bay. Why does the UK take the position that there is nothing more that can be done when a close ally is committing the ongoing torture of Shaker Aamer?"

Reprieve is one of 25 international non-governmental organisations which signed an open letter to President Obama urging him to fulfil his 2009 promise to close Guantánamo Bay.

The letter, signed by organisations including Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Centre for Constitutional Rights, warns that "irreversible cognitive impairment and physiological damage may begin to occur by the fortieth day of a hunger strike, after which the possibility of death becomes an imminent risk."

*Morning Star* ☘

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



email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

## Bob Katter's footballer tax breaks are misguided

**MP Bob Katter has really lost touch with reality this time if he thinks giving footballer players a tax break is high on the agenda of the Australian public. His focus needs to turn to those in our community who are in need rather than those who are put on a pedestal.**

Muscular Dystrophy Australia has lobbied the government for tax breaks for families of disabled children to help with the cost of modifying their family car to enable them to transport their loved one in an

electric wheelchair, but it has fallen on deaf ears.

Katter's controversial plan to give footballer players a "fairer tax rate" has outraged many in the disabled community who have had their needs put on the shelf only to have a trivial and self-serving policy such as this gain attention.

Sure footballers entertain us, but it is a lost cause trying to tug at our heart strings saying they only average a six year career on a measly \$250,000 a year as that averages out to be about \$100,000 a year over 15 years.

At least these individuals have their health and are making a fortune benefiting from it. Even if they are let go in their late twenties, the majority are fit and able to find another job. Unfortunately this is not the case for those living with Muscular Dystrophy, a majority of whom require round-the-clock care.

How about Mr Katter focuses his attention on the people who actually need tax breaks. Families of those affected by Muscular Dystrophy are under huge financial strain and are in desperate need of more assistance.

Unfortunately these children with

Muscular Dystrophy haven't been able to become sporting superstars, because apparently that's what's needed to get the attention of this misguided politician.

**Boris M Struk  
Muscular Dystrophy Australia**

## WikiLeaks and East Timor

**Paul Toohy has done a great service in printing the article, Fraser backed Jakarta (The Advertiser 10.4.2013).**

Thanks to the release of cables by WikiLeaks, many Australians now know that former Foreign Affairs Minister, Andrew Peacock, tried to dissuade Malcolm Fraser from publicly acknowledging Australia's acceptance of Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor. Andrew Peacock was given the task to announce Australia's *de jure* recognition of Indonesia's takeover in 1979.

Disgracefully, this made Australia the only country apart from Indonesia to officially support the occupation.

The leaked cables also showed

that Malcolm Fraser promised the former Indonesian dictator Suharto that he would block radio communication between FRETILIN, the East Timorese resistance, and supporters in Australia. He was true to his word and had the Commonwealth Police confiscate several radios.

This was very callous because the radio contacts were the only rapid way of getting news from East Timor to the outside world as the Indonesian military closed off contact with the outside world as it embarked on its policy of genocide there.

I know something of this history as I purchased two of the radios on behalf of the East Timor solidarity movement in Australia.

Another revelation has come from the WikiLeaks release and that is the strong support of the US for Indonesia and its actions in the region and how it was using its close relationship with Australia to influence Australian policy.

After all, it was the US Central Intelligence Agency that in 1965 assisted the Indonesian military to overthrow former Indonesian President Sukarno and install the

Suharto dictatorship. This move led to several bloodbaths in Indonesia and other countries in the region.

It is important for Australians to know what their leaders were doing to assist the Indonesian dictatorship and US policy during the years of its illegal occupation of East Timor. This is surely a very shameful part of our history given the huge loss of life and human rights abuses occurring on our doorstep.

And we must not forget that Australia is still aiding the Indonesian military even as it continues its bloody control of West Papua.

Let us hope that we can get a release of all official documents relating to this period. It is important for us to learn how our leaders got us involved in such shameful actions and obtain pointers about how to avoid such behaviour in the future.

I would suggest that calling for a truly independent, non-aligned Australia which is dedicated to a respect for the human rights and the independence of all would be a positive first step.

**Andrew (Andy) Alcock  
SA**

# Culture & Life

by Rob Gowland

## Exit Margaret Thatcher - and good riddance

**It is not considered seemly in our culture to speak ill of the dead. Like hitting a man when he's down, it is frowned on in polite circles. The dead, we are told in explanation, cannot defend themselves. But if the dear departed's actions in life were so sordid that their recital after death can cause embarrassment to their heirs, then the family should surely have spoken up and disassociated themselves from these actions well before the deceased shuffled off this mortal coil.**

If they kept mum then, they have only themselves to blame now. In the case of the late Margaret Thatcher, her friends and relatives in fact not only did not keep mum, but instead expressed their support and admiration for her actions loudly and widely.

So they can have no legitimate complaint against the reception accorded the news of her passing. Were they surprised by the spontaneous celebrations in the streets at the news of the death of one of the world's most prominent supporters of *apartheid*? Thatcher never tried to hide the fact that she sincerely believed that the ruling class had not only the right but almost an obligation to crush all political opposition no matter what the cost.

The oppression of the black majority in South Africa by a tiny white minority was fine by her. She was white, and as the daughter of a grocer, a man who made what money he had by "buying cheap and selling dear", she had no sympathy for the poor and downtrodden.

She had the shopkeeper's hatred towards trade unions and anyone else that sought to put up wages or stop employers from lengthening hours of work.

The woman who put British soldiers into police uniforms so that they could attack striking coal-miners without causing a furore in the media saw nothing wrong with literally smashing your political opponents.

Thatcher was the bosom chum of Augusto Pinochet, the blood-covered dictator of Chile, murderer of not only democratically-elected President Salvador Allende but also of Chilean democracy itself along with thousands of the country's best sons and daughters who perished in the torture chambers of Pinochet's US-trained butchers, or were thrown from helicopters several thousand feet above the ground. When the body of the Minister for Education in Allende's government was washed ashore, every bone in her body was broken. Margaret Thatcher never condemned this or any similar act.

But when a progressive Spanish judge issued a warrant for Pinochet's arrest for crimes against humanity committed against the people of Chile, Maggie Thatcher very publicly rallied to his side, to show her support for a man who embodied everything the ruling class stands for, certainly everything Margaret Thatcher stood for.

She embodied the values of the class she aspired to and - eventually did - join: the exploiting, capitalist class. She exemplified that class's contempt for working people, its

contempt for the rule of law and its contempt for human life.

When the Argentine government rashly attempted to reclaim the Malvinas, which Britain had seized from them years before in order to enforce British domination of the South Atlantic, a British nuclear submarine torpedoed and sank the ageing and unsuspecting Argentine light cruiser *General Belgrano* with the loss of 323 lives.

The sinking of the *Belgrano* was highly controversial in both Britain and Argentina at the time and remains controversial to this day. The Thatcher government was accused of committing a war crime, which obviously annoyed Thatcher. She testily cut off reporters trying to question her about it outside Number Ten and told them instead to "rejoice in this victory!"

Her other mate - and strong supporter - Rupert Murdoch did just that, or at least his papers did. One of his British tabloids featured a front page comprising a large photo of the *Belgrano* and the headline GOTCHA! Tasteful, wouldn't you say?

However, from the moment the news broke that Thatcher was dead, Western news media were hard put to find "opinion makers" willing to praise her (their lingering feeling that they should be "fair" meant that comments like "what she did to this town was irreparable" got though along with the bilge from right-wing politicians). Students staged celebratory rallies and demos in the streets or passed resolutions condemning her and her policies.

In Sydney, the "front page" placards promoting Murdoch's *Daily Telegraph* were promptly improved by the spontaneous addition of anti-Thatcher graffiti. And former Prime Minister and fellow reactionary John Howard, doing his bit for right-wing politics with a glowing tribute to Thatcher, was interrupted by a reporter observing that "she was a supporter of *apartheid*" to which Howard masterfully replied "Well, nobody's perfect, we all make mistakes". The implication seems to be that if we sweep the "mistakes" under the carpet no harm is done.

The capitalist establishment in Britain especially and to a lesser extent elsewhere is busy trying to sanctify Thatcher, to rewrite history through their control of the mass media. But they are having a hard time of it. Too many people lived through the Thatcher years, and the scars are still visible everywhere.

The sorry state of British industry today, and of British social institutions and services, is an eloquent and constant reminder of the damage, destruction and social disarray that Margaret Thatcher's term in office brought about in Britain.

The British ruling class is giving Thatcher a state funeral complete with Royal participation. She served their interests well, so it's the least they can do, I suppose. And they probably hope that the pomp of such a funeral might serve to divert attention away from contemplating the misery of the Thatcher years and the enduring wretchedness for the British people that is her legacy. ✪





Sunday April 21 –  
Saturday April 27

**Miranda: Je Regret Nothing**  
(ABC1 Sunday 21 April  
at 9.30pm).

I quote from the publicity sheet for this week's episode of *Miranda*: "It doesn't matter what Miranda attempts in life, whether it is dating or simply dealing with her overbearing mother, she always seems to fall flat, quite literally."

That is not a good basis for comedy. You need a mixture of light and shade. To fail *all* the time is simply depressing. In this week's episode, Miranda is caring for her sick mother (played by Patricia Hodge). Hodge's character is such a pain that one soon feels that the only sensible thing to do is move the lounge, complete with mother and her bell, out to the footpath with a sign "Free to any one who will take it away."

Rob Brydon is back in the series of the comedy panel show *Would I Lie To You?* (ABC1 Wednesdays at 9.30pm). David Mitchell and Lee Mack return as the team captains. The aim of the game is to fool the opposition into mistaking fact for fiction and fiction for fact. With the right opportunities it can be very funny.

One irritating feature, however, is the way – when a player acknowledges that in fact he did *not* accidentally

kill his grandmother with a rock tied up in a sock, host Rob Brydon feels obliged to make it clear: "Yes, [insert name of contestant] did *not* kill his grandmother with a rock tied up in a sock." Just in case we did not understand, apparently.

**A**NZAC Day Programming – The ABC is going all out again this year with its coverage of Anzac Day, doing its bit to turn Gallipoli from a terrible waste of young men's lives into a momentous military event of world importance, an event that "made Australia a nation" and showed the world that Australians could die for "God, King and Country" just like all those other young conscripts duped by jingoism and racial hatred.

Australia had no quarrel with the Ottoman Empire, but Britain did. British capital coveted the colonial possessions of the Turks. Even in 1915 oil was becoming important, as was access to the other resource-rich areas of the world, for raw materials and trade.

Britain's First Sea Lord, Winston Churchill, was anxious to see the British Navy force in the Dardanelles, to cut off Turkey from its possessions closer to the Suez Canal, and to place Britain in a commanding position with regard to the coal and iron of the Donbas if Russia wilted in the face of the attack of the Kaiser's army. The result was the horribly bungled, very costly and ultimately abortive invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula by Australian, British and New Zealand troops on April 25, 1915.

Like so many of the big "pushes" of WW1, it cost a lot of lives for little reward, while being marked by chaos, confusion and bungling. Too many senior officers in the British army held their positions by virtue of heredity, family connections and money. Siegfried Sassoon exemplified the type in his famous poem of the period, *The General*:

"Good morning – good morning!" the General said when we



*Miranda: Je Regret Nothing* (ABC1 Sunday 21 April at 9.30pm).

met him last week on the way to the line.

Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead, and we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.

"He's a cheery old card", grunted Harry to Jack, as they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.

But he did for them both with his plan of attack.

All those who died in WW1 were victims of imperialist greed, an all-consuming greed for land, resources and power. It destroyed the lives of a generation and blighted the lives of the survivors. It was not a war fought to free a small country from invaders, or to overthrow a dictator or to defend freedom, although that is what the young Australian volunteers were told it was about. It was in fact a trade war, pure and simple. A war to rearrange the colonial possessions of the Great Powers.

Once upon a time, Australian commemoration of Anzac Day

concentrated on remembering the dead, but today Australia's bourgeois government and media enthusiastically celebrate the day like it was a triumphant sporting event!

Increasingly, the people who go to the dawn services – especially those who make the "pilgrimage" to Gallipoli for the service there – seem to be there for the spectacle and not as any sort of anti-war gesture. They should read the poetry of the time, much of it written by men who fought on Gallipoli, or in Flanders, or on the Somme. They did not write poems celebrating the horror of trench warfare. By celebrating the war as a great big adventure so we can all share in vicariously, we dishonor the memory of the men whose young lives were cut short by it.

**Desert War** (ABC1 Thursdays at 8.30pm from April 25) tries to elevate the campaign in the Western Desert to a "turning point in WW2". It wasn't. Without in any way wishing to belittle the defenders of

Tobruk, the war in North Africa was almost literally a sideshow to the main event, which was happening in Russia.

Consider the numbers involved: Hitler had 25 divisions in North Africa. He had *ten times* that number in Russia. Most of his tanks and most of his aircraft were in Russia. If these forces had not been caught up in the massive struggle in Russia, the outcome in North Africa would have been very different.

The one really interesting feature of *Desert War* is the revelation about the way British battle plans were shared with a US liaison officer who transmitted them to Washington, unaware that Axis code-breakers were also reading them. They were all forwarded to Rommel, who was able as a result to deliver a series of "brilliant" attacks that sent Monty's forces reeling.

The post-war fostering of a cult around Rommel, exemplified in Hollywood films like *The Desert Fox* seems to have been underserved. ☹



Sydney

**NO HUNTING** in National Parks Rally  
"It's a family affair"

Families and friends of the campaign against hunting in national parks are invited to a peaceful rally these school holidays.

**When:** 12:30 – 1:30pm,  
Thursday 18th April 2013

**Where:** Outside NSW Parliament House  
Macquarie Street, SYDNEY

**Bring:** Let's make this a colourful event! Please bring a sign or banner: "Don't put my kids at risk!" Children, please come dressed as your favourite native animal!

**Speakers:** Bob Debus, former ALP Environment Minister and Attorney General. Also a speaker for the Greens and representatives from the Public Service Association, WIRES, National Parks Association, and more.

[www.nohunting.com.au](http://www.nohunting.com.au)

[www.CPA.org.au](http://www.CPA.org.au)

Over 14 years of articles from *The Guardian*

Sydney

**POLITICS**  
*in the pub*

April 19

**COMBATING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES & WORKPLACES**

Vaughan Bowie, Adjunct Fellow, UWS;  
Ken Marslaw, "Enough is Enough" Organisation;

April 26

**US-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS – IMPERIALISM IN EAST ASIA**

Erik Paul, Dr, Research Fellow & VP CPACS;  
Ken McNab, Dr, Pres, Centre Peace & Conflict Studies, Sydney Uni;

May 3

**PRIVATISATION OF GOVERNMENT ASSETS – IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO FLOG?**

Joe Nagy, Finance & Economic Coach;  
Phillip Toner, Senior Research Fellow, Sydney University;

May 10

**VENEZUELA – A NEW DEMOCRACY OR A COMMAND CAPITALIST STATE?**

Federico Fuentes, author Latin American Turbulent Transitions;  
Rodrigo Acuna, PhD candidate, Latin American Affairs;

Every Friday 6pm 'til 7.45

**Gaelic Club**

64 Devonshire Street Surry Hills

Charles Bradley 02 9692 0005  
odl\_bradley@pacific.net.au

[www.politicsinthepub.org.au](http://www.politicsinthepub.org.au)

Subscription to **The Guardian**

12 months: \$100 (\$80 conc / \$150 solidarity)  6 months: \$55 (\$40 conc / \$80 solidarity)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay by  Cheque  Money order (Payable to "Guardian Publications")

Phone in details on 02 9699 8844

Or send to: Guardian Subscriptions

74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

or by credit card:  Mastercard  Visa \*\$20 minimum on cards

Card# \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Guardian**

Editorial Office  
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010  
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833  
Email: [guardian@cpa.org.au](mailto:guardian@cpa.org.au)

Editor: Tom Pearson

Published by  
Guardian Publications Australia Ltd  
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010

Printed by Spotpress  
24-26 Lillian Fowler Place Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment  
is taken by T Pearson,  
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010

**Enmore Newsagent**

195 Enmore Rd (near Edgeware Rd)  
Enmore, NSW

This Sydney newsagent  
regularly stocks *The Guardian*

# Ken Loach: Bring back *The Spirit of '45*

The outspoken film director renowned for his social-realist directing style, his socialist beliefs, and for turning down an OBE, talks to **Amy Hall** about why now is the time to reignite the spirit of 1945.

## What's your earliest memory?

Catching my fingers in a collapsing deck-chair. I still carry the scar!

## What are you politically passionate about?

Where to begin? The cruelties, inequalities and oppression brought about by capitalism and its offspring, imperialism. The corollary in the development of a leadership for the working class that can bring about revolutionary change. That in turn means developing class consciousness and fighting the propaganda that suggests "we're all in it together".

## Are you hopeful in the people's capacity to make history?

Yes, the collective strength of working people is irresistible. But I am fearful of the consequences of failure.

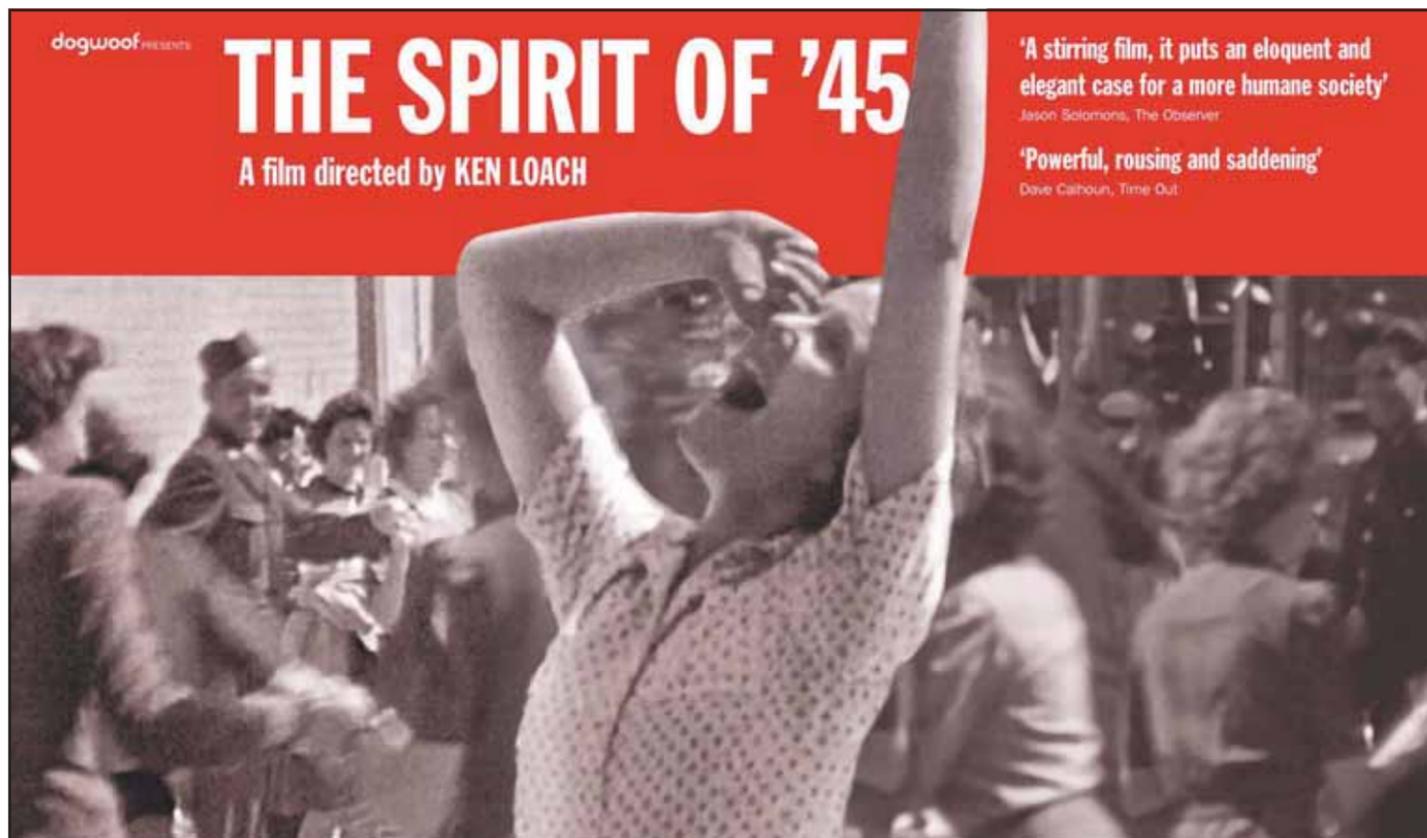
## Who or what inspires you?

People who fight back. Rank and file trade unionists like the miners and dockers in our country, or the Industrial Workers of the World in the US. The people of Nicaragua, Chile, Cuba and, earlier, Spain, who fought to establish a socialist society against the intervention of the capitalist governments of the US, Britain and others. The Partisans who fought fascism; Palestinians; the people of Western Sahara and all those who resist the vicious oppression of those who take their land and liberty.

## Your latest film, *Spirit of '45*, is about the building of the Welfare State and the unity of socialism in post-World War Two Britain. What inspired you to make this documentary now?

The period has largely been written out of history because it doesn't suit any of the main parties. But as the economic system collapses around us I think it's important to remember these few years when the beginnings of an alternative were starting to emerge.

And in order to tell the memories of people who were active at the time we can't leave it too long. As the system fails, we need to think creatively about new ways of organising ourselves,



because the mass unemployment and cuts and everything else that people are suffering cannot go on indefinitely.

## Do you think the same kind of unity and spirit is possible now?

It's certainly possible, but it would need a major change of consciousness. I think we could do that if we had the leadership and a project which everyone could see was in their interests. We need a strong Left within the unions, a strong Left winning positions in the leadership and cutting the ties with [Britain's opposition party] New Labour.

The worrying thing is that the 1930s were a very quiet decade politically, with very little industrial conflict, and yet with mass unemployment and deprivation. And in order to generate that spirit we had to fight fascism.

The danger is that fascism comes again and we find ourselves in another battle – that would be tragic.

## If you could show *Spirit of '45* to anyone who would it be?

I hope the young ones will see it. We showed some young people the [Labour Party] Manifesto of 1945 and they were saying "wow, if only we had that now – that's what we want". They were particularly struck by the care to build theatres and concert halls and libraries when now they're shutting all those things down. They just liked the broad humanity of it, the sense of a decent society.

## Some of your previous documentaries were banned. Have you had any problems with this film?

Not really, because it's made as a cinema

film; the ones which were banned were made as television programs. It's not that people won't get stuff banned now, but production is so micro-managed that you won't even get as far as shooting it. Back in the 1980s we could at least get it shot; then, when people found it was saying something they didn't like, they banned it. Now people can't get the commissions unless it is seen as acceptable to the establishment.

## What's your biggest fear?

That we do not overthrow the power of the big corporations before the planet is irretrievably damaged.

## Where do you feel most at home?

The West Midlands, walking around my home city of Bath, and on the football terraces. *New Internationalist* ✪

## Philippines: right to family planning compromised

The Reproductive Health Law would widen access to family planning for people living in poverty, writes Iris C Gonzales.

**The law took 13 years to pass and only three months for the Supreme Court to put on hold. Welcome to the Philippines, where Congress approved a landmark Reproductive Health Law in December 2012, despite staunch opposition from the Catholic Church. The Act guarantees universal access to contraception, sexual education, and maternal care.**

But the victory felt by women's

rights and reproductive health advocates has only been temporary: the Supreme Court has issued a temporary restraining order on the measure, acting on a petition filed by Catholic lawyers who considered the law "anti-life".

The Reproductive Health Law is considered landmark legislation because it would provide state subsidy for the acquisition of contraceptives to people living in poverty. In Philippine slums, where about four million people out of the country's 94 million population live, the fertility rate is high. The total fertility rate for women in the poorest quintile was 5.2 percent, compared with 1.9 percent in the richest

quintile, according to government statistics.

Human Rights Watch, a New York-based watchdog said delaying the implementation of the law puts women's lives at risk: "The reproductive health law was passed by Congress to address the many grave health risks faced by Filipino women," explained director, Brad Adams.

"By delaying implementation of the law for at least four months – a long time for an interim order – the Supreme Court is putting an untold number of women and girls at unnecessary risk. While we respect the judicial process in the Philippines, Filipino women and

families have waited and suffered long enough."

The chief public health officer of Quezon City, in the eastern part of the Philippines agreed that that delaying the measure puts women's lives at risk. She said that on the ground, the situation of women is lamentable.

"The Catholic Church has not opened its eyes. For us in the medical profession, what we are seeing in the field is that the situation is affecting the welfare of the poor people," said Dr. Antonieta Inumerable.

Dr Inumerable said that women have the right to make a choice in planning their families for the sake

of their health and that of their children.

Even the World Health Organisation expressed its support to the Philippine government's position on the Reproductive Health Law. It even offered to help by defending the measure before the Supreme Court.

The fate of this landmark legislation is still in the hands of the Supreme Court. A new hearing has been scheduled for June 18.

In the meantime, in Manila's slum areas, women go on with their daily lives. They struggle to survive, raise their families and give birth to more babies.

*New Internationalist* ✪



Communist Party of Australia

Website: [www.cpa.org.au](http://www.cpa.org.au)  
Email: [cpa@cpa.org.au](mailto:cpa@cpa.org.au)

Guardian

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

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

**Newcastle Branch:**  
PO Box 367  
Hamilton NSW 2303  
Ph: 02 4023 8540 / 0401 824 386  
[newcastle@cpa.org.au](mailto:newcastle@cpa.org.au)  
**Riverina Branch:**  
Allan Hamilton  
2/57 Cooper St  
Cootamundra 2590

**Melbourne Branch:**  
Andrew Irving [viccpa@netspace.net.au](mailto:viccpa@netspace.net.au)  
Box 3 Room 0 Trades Hall  
Lygon St Carlton Sth 3053  
Ph: 03 9639 1550 Fax: 03 9639 4199  
**West Australian Branch:**  
Vinnie Molina [perth@cpa.org.au](mailto:perth@cpa.org.au)  
PO Box 98 North Perth WA 6906  
Ph: 0419 812 872

**Brisbane Branch:**  
PO Box 33, Camp Hill, Qld 4152  
Ph: 0449 202 189  
[cpabris@live.com.au](mailto:cpabris@live.com.au)  
**South Australian State Committee:**  
Bob Briton, PO Box 612, Port Adelaide BC,  
SA 5015 Ph: 0418 894 366  
[www.adelaidecommunists.org](http://www.adelaidecommunists.org)  
Email: [sa@cpa.org.au](mailto:sa@cpa.org.au)