The Workers' Weekly
Guardian
CPA
$2
#1684 May 13, 2015
COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA
www.cpa.org.au
ISSN 1325-295X

Medicare

Privatisation agenda continues

Anna Pha

Whenever the Abbott government talks about delivering a "fairer", "simpler" or "better" service, the alarm bells should be ringing. No more so than its latest moves to deliver a "healthier Medicare" and "better health outcomes" for patients as "efficiently as possible". Health Minister Sussan Ley has launched three reviews to deliver a blueprint to provide the basis for the replacement of Medicare by a privatised health system run along the lines of the failed American model. At the same time co-payments will resurface through the backdoor. BUPA and Medibank Private, the largest funds, are driving the government's agenda.

Leaner and meaner

The first Taskforce will review the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) which lists the services (GP, specialist, pathology, radiology, etc) eligible for Medicare rebates and a scheduled fee for each service. The rebate is a certain percentage of this fee.

The MBS lists more than 5,500 services, "not all of which reflect contemporary best clinical practice," Ley said. The MBS Taskforce "will come up with savings when items come off the MBS or are changed, but there are also new items to be added," she says. It sounds a bit like a balancing act with neutral funding outcomes.

No one can object to a review and the removal of outdated items, changes to rebates to meet current practices or the addition of new items. But this is not what the Abbott government really has in mind. The minister's claims about a "healthier Medicare" are political spin for a cost-cutting exercise.

The 2014-15 budget papers reveal government plans to reduce Medicare rebates by $3.5 billion over the three years 2015-16 to 2017-18 (following the review). (NB: The 2015-16 budget was not available at time of writing.)

At the same time the government is setting up a Primary Health Care Advisory Group to investigate "better care" for people with complex and chronic health conditions, such as mental health and diabetes, and the connections between primary health care and hospitals.

But with a government hell-bent on slashing social security and health spending by billions of dollars, the question is how they intend to fit this and other changes into its cost-cutting exercise.

Restructure of system

The third taskforce is to "develop clearer Medicare compliance rules and benchmarks". This is targeted at doctors who "do not do the right thing," Ley said.

There is some rorting of the system, especially by some highly paid specialists. But is this what the government intends to address? The Minister provides no details. Is the government thinking of a casemix model along the lines used for public hospital funding; a set amount per medical condition or service, not time-based?

Clearly, the Minister is thinking of a radical overhaul: "Medicare in its current form is sluggish, bloated and at high risk of long-term chronic problems and continuing to patch it up with bandaids won't fix it." Not a shred of evidence is provided to back up her claims.

Ley claims Medicare's structure no longer efficiently supports patients and practitioners to manage chronic conditions or complex interactions between primary and acute care, in particular the connection between primary health care and hospital care. So what sort of structures does the government have in mind?

The former Health Minister Peter Dutton was more open about the government's agenda: "I am encouraged to see that health insurers are looking at innovative options in the area of primary health care," he said. "They have been excluded from the primary care space for historical reasons, and if insurers are prepared to work collaboratively with doctors and patients, then we should welcome that development."

Abbott's National Commission of Audit, headed by big business representative Bruce Shepherd, did not mince words: "More deregulated and competitive markets, with appropriate safeguards, have the greatest potential to improve the sector's competitiveness and productivity," – spin for privatisation of Medicare with private, for-profit, health insurance funds managing it.

"Also, in a system like ours, the community must become more aware of the real costs of health care," – spin for co-payment or abolition and bulkbilling.

The aim is to prune Medicare back to the minimum of "basic" services, hand over its management to private health insurance funds to manage. Patients would be able to take out extra insurance to cover items not included and to cover the gap between the cost of the service and the privatised rebate.

Continued on page 2

May Day 2015 – marching through the streets in Adelaide. See page 4 for a report on Cuba's May Day.

5

Kojarena defence communication station

10

Culture & Life
Ernst Thälmann

12

ISIL is in Ukraine

2015-16 Budget coverage next issue

Guardian

Issue 1684 May 13, 2015

Budget 2015 – Undermining principles

Joe Hockey's second federal budget is set to be announced as this issue of the *Guardian* goes to press. Hints, pre-announced policies and leaks have led many to conclude that it will have a much "softer" approach; that the Abbott government has learnt its lesson that the community won't accept measures that assist the already wealthy and attack the less well-off. Many figure that the government has lost its commitment to budget surpluses and other articles of neo-liberal faith. It is true that many Coalition parliamentarians never believed their own "debt crisis" propaganda, but it would be a mistake to believe the federal government is scrapping its pro-corporate, anti-people agenda.

Abbott & Co have shifted focus. For some time now, they have been engaging the public – or, at least, columnists in the major dailies – in a "conversation" about the nature of pensions and other government payments. The age pension has had particular emphasis. Questions were raised about whether pensioners should be allowed to draw a pension while living in homes worth over $1 million, for example. The argument goes why shouldn't they be obliged to sell off the family home that has had its market value swollen through the growth of the big city housing bubble, down-size their accommodation and live off part of the proceeds?

The "discussion" has now moved to the broader topic of who should be entitled to a pension. The idea has been floated that retirees who most people would presumably consider wealthy are currently receiving the age pension. The fact that the amounts paid are not large and struggle to be called even a "part pension" is glossed over. Concepts of "wealth" in this era of monumentally expensive housing, residential aged care and other necessities are sidestepped, too.

Part of the federal government's previous approach to savaging the pension was to shift indexation of any increases from movements in average weekly wages to changes in the Consumer Price Index. Given the current circumstances, that step would have saved the Commonwealth $23 billion over the next decade – money the government could then splash on corporate tax cuts, rebates, tax-payer donated infrastructure, and so on. Even in these days of media and institutional neo-liberal consensus, it was just too blatant in its anti-people approach.

The tactic currently favoured is to undermine the principle of universal access in the minds of the Australian people. In the post-WW2 years, popular notions of social justice rested on this pillar. If you were a higher income earner, for example, and were not interested in private home ownership and wanted to rent public housing that was perfectly acceptable. You paid a higher rent and your choice not to join the private housing market was respected. Fast forward to the 21st century and access to public housing is restricted to those living near or below the poverty line. It is called "social" housing to make clear the link to "social security" or "welfare", as it is now being called in the best condescending tradition.

Medicare reflects the same core value of universal access as does public education. All such institutions are under attack from neo-liberals the world over. With regard to the age pension, Assistant Treasurer Josh Frydenberg spelt out the thinking in a recent television interview. He insisted that taxation shouldn't be considered a form of enforced saving for income in retirement. That's what superannuation is for. This is the attitude of the capitalist ruling class in countries like Australia at the current stage of global economic crisis. People must "self-provision" for needs such as health, education and retirement income.

The idea that we could all contribute to public funds for services and assistance as required must be flushed completely out of the thinking of first world populations, according to this perverse mentality. The role of governments is to rule in the interests of corporations that will grow fat on the needs of the people. The scant remnants of public services and benefits should be inadequate, punitive and restricted to the destitute. In the battle of ideas raging in the midst of very real struggle out there in Australian society, this is the anti-people ideology that must be defeated.

PRESS FUND

There's some good news this week. The University of Western Australia has pulled out of the Abbott government's scheme to provide $4 million for a campus "think tank" to be run by climate "contrarian" Bjorn Lomborg with the purpose of advising the government on climate change policy. One Liberal MP has accused UWA of curbing free speech, and the government is investigating whether the University can be sued for breach of contract. We intend to follow this fascinating little story. However, we need your assistance by way of contributions to the Press Fund, which helps us cover our operating costs, so please send us something for the next edition if you possibly can. Many thanks to this week's supporters, as follows:

R Gillespie $20, Mark Mannion $5, "Round Figure" $14.70, SOC Guardian tin $30.30, Brian Lowe $75, A Johnson $100, Garry Speirs $150

This week's total: $395 Progressive total $3,320

United against uni deregulation

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Australian Education Union (AEU) are challenging the Australian government to come clean on its position in the secret Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) negotiations, now at a crucial stage.

The NTEU is accusing the Abbott government of using the international TISA negotiations to covertly open up government subsidies to international profit-making higher education providers.

"Twice the Australian Senate has rejected legislation to deregulate university tuition fees, cut funding to public universities and extend CSPs (Commonwealth Supported Places) to private higher education providers. The government must give the Australian Parliament and public the assurance that it does not intend to let this slip through in the wording on public subsidies‟ in the TISA", said NTEU national president, Jeannie Rea.

"The NTEU supports a clearer definition of public services which retains the right of governments to provide and fund public services without being obliged to provide subsidies to private providers," explained Rea.

The AEU and NTEU are gravely concerned about reports that the Australian government, along with the governments of Colombia, New Zealand and Norway, is proposing the inclusion of education within the scope of the international Trade in Services Agreement.

The two unions, representing teachers, academics and other workers in schools, TAFE and universities, oppose trade agreements which liberalise and further commercialise and privatise education.

The purpose of the TISA negotiations, which are being conducted in secret by members of the World Trade Organisation, is to further liberalise trade in services across the world .The final details of any agreement struck will not be disclosed until 5 years after it is signed.

"Australians should be concerned about the threat posed to public education in these secret negotiations and alarmed by the lack of transparency," said AEU federal president, Correna Haythorpe.

"Education is a right, not a commodity, and accessible public education must continue to be provided by governments. Australia must not put its world-class public education system at risk simply for the convenience of global corporations.

"The liberalisation of education and facilitation of the private education market, as a consequence of including education in the TISA, would have negative consequences for public education. We have seen the huge damage done in the Vocation Education and Training (VET) sector by uncontrolled privatisation. We do not want this secret agreement to extend this damage," added Haythorpe.

The two unions argue that restricting the capacity of governments to regulate the provision of education in their national interests poses a direct threat to quality public education for all, potentially impacting on student learning conditions and the working conditions of teachers, academics and other education workers. It is also a direct challenge to democratic processes and the public governance of education, claim the two unions.

"Across the world we are seeing strong pressure to commercialise and corporatise education. In Australia we have seen the huge damage done by the privatisation of vocational training, but we are also heartened by the widespread public opposition to the federal government's current agenda of higher education deregulation and privatisation," stated Jeannie Rea.

"Putting our education systems up for negotiation in secret is not acceptable. We need stronger protections and investment in public education, not a watering down of regulation and accountability," emphasised Correna Haythorpe.

"Public education must remain at the heart of the Australian education system because it is the only way to ensure that quality education is available to all," concluded Haythorpe.

The AEU and NTEU are calling on the Australian government to join with countries such as Mexico, Switzerland, Korea, Taiwan and Japan, which have all opposed the inclusion of education in the TISA. ✪

Medicare

Privatisation agenda continues

Continued from page 1

Welcome to the American system! It is twice as expensive, poor quality and tens of millions of Americans receive no health care.

Co-payment

The $5 co-payment has been removed from the table. The government does not need it. A four-year freeze on Medicare benefits is set to all but kill off bulkbilling.

The freeze will slowly strangle bulkbilling as doctors' surgeries face rising costs with no increase in rebate to meet them. They will be forced to charge fees or go out of business. Some have already abandoned bulkbilling.

Commenting on the government's rebate freeze, the Doctors' Reform Society* (DRS) noted: "The commonest private charge to see a GP starts from $60 and goes upwards to the AMA recommended fee of $75, or more. Based on these figures alone, many Australians would face a co-payment of $25 if their GP stops bulk billing, or up to $40 or more to see a GP. And thus a lot more than the $5 co-payment proposal."

The National Health Performance Authority's report "Healthy Communities: Frequent GP attenders and their use of health services in 2012–13" (released on March 19), states: "More than one-third of Australians (35.3%) went to a GP six or more times in 2012–13, and those who went most often tended to be older and less wealthy, were more likely to have several long-term health conditions …"

This confirms that consistent with its other cuts, the Abbott government's plans for healthcare will hit the poorest and most in need the hardest.

The Audit Commission proposed phasing in the government's Medicare overhaul in several stages. Ley appears to be setting the stage for the first wave of changes. Reading between the lines of her references to "fairness", "sustainability" and the government's constant call for "price signals", there is another aspect to the overhaul.

That is means testing, something that the Audit Commission was very keen on.

A better Medicare

Medicare spending has not spun out of control. In fact it has been extremely stable as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product. Universal access to bulkbilling and high quality services provided by the public sector are central to Medicare.

There are a range of measures that could strengthen Medicare, provide universal access to bulkbilling and relieve the pressure on public hospitals.

These should be centred around primary and community care. GPs are the first port of call.

The first step would be to fund nurses to work with GPs who could help doctors with immunisations, baby health clinics, change dressings, give better support and care for the mentally ill – a range of things that do not require a GP. They could also assist doctors with house calls and visiting nursing homes.

Salaried doctors could be placed in nursing homes to take care of the elderly, sick residents which would substantially reduce the number going to hospital when treatment by a doctor was all they required.

The annual $6 billion plus of taxpayers' money that subsidises the private health insurance funds (the PHI 30%-40% rebate) should be redirected to public hospitals.

Special subsidies and incentives are required to ensure regional centres have the medical centres and hospitals they require.

Such measures would result in a much better health system and would save a lot of money by taking pressure off public hospitals. This is what true efficiency and better health care is all about – not the continuous cuts to Medicare by successive governments from both major parties.

Medicare belongs to the people. It is our health system.

The task forces are expected to report back by late 2015.

*The Doctors' Reform Society was formed in 1973 to support a proposal for a publicly-funded universal health insurance system. ✪

UN hears of threat to our communities

Rudi Maxwell

Kimberley Land Council chair Anthony Watson has spoken to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York about the threat to close remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia.

"We wanted to get international attention from the UN for what Australian governments are doing," he told the *Koori Mail*. There is an agenda here, when you look at the WA government and how they are handling Indigenous affairs. There are big concerns from all around the world. The UN were appalled by the Barnett government's approach.

"Australia is a wealthy country so wanting to close down remote Aboriginal communities doesn't make sense. At an international level our Prime Minister and (the WA) Premier are regarded as really nasty, backward people."

WA Premier Colin Barnett spent three days in the Pilbara last week, but had still not met with Aboriginal groups from the Kimberley, where most of the remote communities are situated.

"There are 274 remote communities in Western Australia. I think any fair-minded person would say that number is not viable into the future," Mr Barnett said. There's also issues in many of those communities about education, health, sometimes neglect, abuse of children, domestic violence, alcohol and drugs.

"Unacceptable"

"A lot of people over the years have said a lot of nice and comfortable things, but the situation is still unacceptable – not for the majority but for a number of Aboriginal communities. I am determined we will do everything we can to improve the viability of remote communities."

As protesters rallied around the world, Mr Barnett conceded that his previous language about remote communities had been "a bit loose" and that the process would take decades. He instead said "a significant number" would close.

"No person will be forced from their land," Mr Barnett told reporters. "But the state will not be able to provide services across that many communities.

"Some of the larger communities, I hope, over time will become gazetted towns ... some will continue as communities but probably with more people and, yes, there might be associated small outposts around them ... close enough so that children can go to school."

Daisy Ward and Lizzie Ellis called people together for a protest at Wingellina (Irrunytju), in eastern WA, near the border of South Australia and the Northern Territory.

"We believe this announcement by the WA government represents a continuation of colonisation that will see the confiscation of our traditional lands," they said.

"We have to keep our lands in our hands. This government has not consulted with us to discuss their concerns. They should talk with us about how we can help reduce the costs of running remote communities."

The Premier called on governments and Australia's Aboriginal leaders to take more responsibility. "Some people have been alarmed, and I concede I was a bit loose with my language," he said. The wider community wants to see some effort from Aboriginal people. This has to be a mutual process.

"I can understand there are people protesting, but I think they misunderstand what our government is doing. I've had a lot of support from Aboriginal people writing to me and saying 'You are right'."

Hundreds of protests were staged around the world in support of remote Aboriginal communities, which Mr Watson said was heartening. "We are happy that they are supporting us and it's painful that the premier is not engaging with us. His tactics towards leaving the Kimberley consultation until the last minute is appalling, it puts our community under duress," he said.

Jackie Oakley was among the speakers at the SOSBlakAustralia rally in Perth. (Photo: Tash Nannup)

"Shame"

"It's not helping us or investment in our future. For the government to turn around and blame us, when they have had control and misspent funds for decades, is a shame.

"They are still wanting to have control over spending and programs that have failed us all this time and we are standing up to say that we have solutions."

Mr Watson said living on country was fundamental.

"I had the privilege of doing that, it gave me recognition of who I am, the connection that my great, great ancestors have to this country," he said.

"It's important, it's where our heritage belongs, and types of food and lifestyle that have sustained our people for centuries, and it's the sense of belonging."

Koori Mail ✪

Concern at Alice threat

The Northern Territory government has threatened to take children away from their parents if anti-social behaviour in Alice Springs continues. During and after the recent Easter holidays there were several incidents in Alice Springs, including rocks thrown at police officers, Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

"I'm giving the parents of the children responsible for this spate of violence a very clear message. Get your kids off the streets. Get them back to communities and back into school," he said. "Otherwise, these children will be regarded as requiring protection and we will take immediate action. Parents should not doubt our resolve to do this."

NT Children and Families Minister John Elferink said the government was taking a "zero-tolerance approach".

"I have directed my department to take strong action and take children into care where the legal grounds are met," he said. "Normally the department would see this as a last resort and be willing to work with parents, but these are not normal circumstances.

"Our advice is that many of the children throwing rocks and committing anti-social acts are from communities. If parents don't want to see their children in care then they need to get off the grog and head back to their home community."

But legal and Aboriginal organisations have slammed the government's approach, saying that threatening to take children away is inflammatory, punitive and against its own guidelines.

Punitive

Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) chief executive Mark O'Reilly told the *Koori Mail* that child protection measures had not been designed as a punitive measure.

"Basically, the government is saying, if kids don't behave we'll put them into care, which completely ignores the legislation that talks about when care and protection orders can be made," he said.

"In this situation, the government seems to be circumventing that legal process and holding out threats for behaviours that nobody has any insight into yet.

"It does a lot to undermine the whole regime of care and protection."

Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT spokesperson Priscilla Collins said the current rate of removal of Aboriginal children from their families is higher than at any other time in the NT's history.

"Placing children into care is never a justified punishment," Ms Collins said. "The proposed response reveals a government that is too ready to place all blame on Aboriginal parents but take no responsibility for its own failures in Aboriginal policy."

Making Justice Work (MJW) coalition spokesperson Antoinette Carroll said the government had defunded a number of youth programs in Alice Springs, including vital after-hours initiatives, and slammed Mr Elferink for his approach.

"These comments are disturbing and disgraceful. They are clearly directed at Aboriginal people and are dangerously generalised, reinforcing negative and untrue stereotypes," she said.

Koori Mail

Pete's Corner

Sydney

CPA Port Jackson Branch
invites comrades and friends to join us for our

Port Jackson Discussion Hour

Tuesday May 19
Why you should be afraid of the TPP
Introduced by Comrade Steve

Tuesday June 2
Should Aborigines be included in the Constitution?
Introduced by Comrade Hannah

Tuesday June 16
The US military pivot revisited
Introduced by Comrade Hannah

All classes 5:30 pm
at 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills
Enquiries: Hannah 0418 668 098

Million Cubans march on May Day

Keith Headland

The 1st of May Brigade takes place between the April 26 and May 10 in what Cuban officials are calling an epoch of change with the release of the remaining three of the Cuban Five, and ongoing negotiations.

The highlight of the Brigade was attending the May Day march in the Plaza, and seeing one million Cubans taking part in solidarity with the revolution, and in support of Venezuela with President Nicholas Maduro in the Presidium with Raul Castro and other Cuban leaders.

Faced with hostility, threats from imperialism, attempts to isolate the country and destroy the Cuban revolution, the revolutionary government under Fidel Castro established ICAP (Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples) on December 30, 1960 to lead the struggle and coordinate international solidarity with the revolution. As part of this process CIJAM (International Camp Julio Antonio Mella) was opened on February 25, 1972 at Caimito, about 40 kilometres west of Havana, as a place to hold the solidarity brigades.

The camp hosts about 15 brigades a year, both international and by country or region including the Southern Cross Brigade from Australia and New Zealand.

The program includes some work at the camp and an agricultural cooperative, meetings with specialists on different aspects of Cuban life and reality, a visit to Santa Clara to the Che Guevara memorial and also to another province.

The May Day brigade this year went to the Bay Of Pigs (Playa Giron) for several days and visited various places of interest and had meetings with local people.

For the first time Cuba took part in the Summit of the Americas held in Panama.

In this new atmosphere on Friday April 10 a historic meeting took place between US Secretary of State John Kerry and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez.

Following this a meeting was held between Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro.

Cuba, as an outcome of the negotiations, has been taken off the list of countries that patronise terrorism, which it should never have been on.

While we are aware of the ongoing attitude and actions of US imperialism as regards national liberation and independence movements and conspiring against the Venezuelan revolution, it is notable that following the December 17 statements of Raul Castro and Barack Obama to begin negotiations to establish diplomatic relations, and the prisoner exchange of Alan Gross and another American agent in jail in Cuba for the remaining three of the Cuban Five, for the first time in many years the governments of Cuba and the USA are sitting at the negotiation table to try and establish normalisation of diplomatic relations, which would be of huge benefit to the Cuban people.

The annual International Meeting of Solidarity was held at the Palace of Congresses in Havana on the May 2, with the Five Cuban Heroes attending the event together with over 1,000 participants from over 70 countries, including government representatives from Cuba and other South American countries, trade unionists and solidarity activists. It also included the 1st of May Brigade with 230 people from 30 countries, and the Che Guevara Brigade from Canada with about 60 people.

May Day celebrations in Havana Square (Plaza de la Revolución), Cuba. (Photo: Keith Headland)

During a ceremony at the Conference a number of activists in the solidarity movement, including comrade Vinnie Molina, CPA President, were presented with the Friendship Award by the Five in appreciation for their work in support of Cuba.

Ana Teresita Gonzalez, Cuban Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, in her speech at the conference said that the announcements of December 17 are a very important victory for Cuba that nobody can minimise.

She also said that the threats against Venezuela by Obama were a huge mistake, as it mobilised all the countries of the region in support of their struggle.

We should never lose sight of the class and anti-imperialist nature of the struggle to defend Cuba, but the negotiations offer a unique opportunity, combined with international solidarity, to continue the struggle to lift the blockade and leave Guantanamo and return the occupied territory to the Cuban people.

Faced with internal pressures from US business and farmers to take advantage of the neighbouring market opportunity, combined with pressure from the international working class and solidarity movement the combination makes for formidable forces pushing for change.

As stated by a number of speakers, the result of 55 years of blockade to isolate Cuba has ended up with the US itself being isolated in the international community and in the UN. ✪

Only strong unions can end this exploitation

Robert Corr

A *Four Corners* investigation has uncovered gangs of black market workers run by unscrupulous labour hire contractors operating on farms and in factories around the country. These labour hire contractors prey upon highly vulnerable young foreigners, many with very limited English, who have come to Australia with dreams of working in a fair country.

They're subjected to brutal working hours, degrading living conditions and the massive underpayment of wages.

The program heard some Baiada workers are on the job for 18 hours per day, seven days a week and are exhausted. Two workers first employed by Baiada earned the $25 an hour award wage, but were then switched to a labour hire company operating within the factory which paid $18.

The program cited wages as low as $13 an hour at another plant. Staff working for a Baiada labour hire sub-contractor said two workers were abused.

This sounds very familiar. Here's David Whyte describing a National Union of Workers strike at Baida Poultry in 2011:

On a number of visits to the picket line, I listened to numerous horror stories of workers who worked in brutal conditions and risked their lives for as little as $8 an hour.

Their union, the National Union of Workers, estimated that at any one time, at least 10 per cent of staff were absent due to work-related injury. Workers said when their colleague was killed in the [Baiada] chicken packing machine, they had to remove his remains from the machine, hose it down and start up production again within two hours.

Those on the picket line spoke of constant bullying, assaults and sexual harassment by immediate superiors in the plant. Back then, New Ltd columnist Miranda Devine called unions "evil" for campaigning against this kind of exploitation:

"This is the ugly face of the increasingly militant union movement. Cashed-up unions are flexing their muscles, knowing they have a short window of opportunity to entrench power before the Labor government is thrown out.

"… The union's main complaint is that the company employs contract workers, which means more than half of the workforce does not belong to the union."

Indeed, the use of labour hire contractors as a shield was a big part of the dispute – as it was again in 2014, when similar allegations arose around Baiada:

"The reasons companies engage temporary international workers through indirect employment is that they can walk away from their legal responsibilities for paying workers compensation insurance, superannuation, public liability and minimum rates of pay," said the Australasian Meat Industry Employees union..

A 23-year-old woman from Hong Kong who worked at the Baiada chicken processing plant in Beresfield for more than six months said she was paid $11.50 an hour and shared a house with 30 people.

Staff at a labour hire company that short-changed chicken processing workers and forced them to live in overcrowded share accommodation are allegedly operating the same business under a different name after going into liquidation and escaping claims for more than $434,000 in back payments for work at the Baiada chicken processing plant near Newcastle.

The Baiada family have made their fortune in poultry farming, with Baiada Poultry turning over about $1.3 billion revenue in 2013. The firm employs about 2,200 people and is a major supplier to Coles, Woolworths and KFC.

Working Life ✪

The Kojarena Defence Communication Station, WA

Part of global network war preparations

30 kilometres due east en route to the farming community of Mullewa in Western Australia, lies the "defence communication" base at Kojarena.

Since the 1960's Australia's foreign and defence policies have been increasingly linked to US foreign and domestic policy.

Richard Titelius

In the shadow of the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing by Australian and New Zealand troops, many Australians may be left wondering how we are to avoid the devastation and tragedy of war – the senseless waste of life that encapsulated World War I wherever it was fought?

Successive Australian governments have believed that Australia's peace and security is wrapped up in close defence and security ties with the US. This helps to explain the large number of US bases which have been set up in Australia as well as the regular war exercises or games between the US and Australia, mostly in Australia's backyard. The most notorious spy base which our "Defence Partner" has helped to set up in Australia is at Pine Gap in the Northern Territory, still being used today.

In Western Australia, 30 kilometres due east en route to the farming community of Mullewa, lies the "defence communication" base at Kojarena.

The Australian people are told that Kojarena is not a US base but a joint Australia-US ground station "hosted" like other Australia-US "joint facilities" on the basis of our full knowledge and co-operation. However, like other so called "joint" facilities at Pine Gap and Harold E Holt at Exmouth, which we have with the US, are joint access in name only.

The facility relays information from multibillion dollar US Orion satellites and integrates us deeply in a global system which collects signals intelligence (SIGNIT) from space. The missions and capabilities of the base are highly classified – and yet it sits 30 kilometres east of the large coastal mid west port city of Geraldton. The facility is basically unmanned except for a few security staff while maintenance is done by call-out crews.

The facilities which gather this information are part of a system called ECHELON which is operated by the Canberra-based Defence Signals Directorate and also operates SIGNIT systems through ground stations such as the one at Kojarena. Though operated by Australia's Defence Department, information streaming through it is mostly sent direct to the US.

The Kojarena facility also supports the US Navy's Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), a narrow band satellite-based mobile phone network that is designed to support US and Australian military users, including deployed forces, and can play a major role in US drone strike assassinations. The site is operated under the secretive UKUSA Agreement.

The ground station at Kojarena can intercept communications from Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Pakistani regional satellites as well as international satellites throughout South East Asia, making it a strategic tool in the US government's recently declared military "pivot" to the Asia Pacific region.

Since the 1960's when Australia joined the United States in its imperialist war in Vietnam, Australia's foreign and defence policies have been increasingly linked to US foreign and domestic policy, with its military increasingly integrated into the US military.

The presence of these bases such as at Kojarena, which was opened in 1993, the recently reactivated Harold E Holt on North West Cape near Exmouth and Pine Gap in central Australia, tie us more to the defence and foreign policy objectives of the US.

Though we are told by the government that Kojarena is not a US base, but a joint Australia-US ground station "hosted" like other "joint" facilities on the basis of our full knowledge and concurrence, the reality is that even our own parliamentarians, including former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and former Greens Senator Jo Vallentine and current Greens Senator Scott Ludlam, find it difficult to gain access to or obtain even concrete answers on what goes on in these bases.

These bases tie us to the monitoring and surveillance of countries such as China, India, Japan and Russia with which we have important economic and financial ties. This monitoring is used for economic as well as military purposes. The bases have for instance been used to monitor trade negotiations and the communications of corporate manufacturing rivals.

The bases are also used for submarine and fighter jet communications as well as the monitoring of satellite communications in orbit around the earth and make Australia part of the US's military eyes and ears in its quest to pursue wars of conquest.

The bases are part of Australia's willingness for US-Australian military interoperability and as such Australia could become a target itself in future conflicts.

The world risks becoming a more unsafe and insecure place as these imperialist strategies are played out to manipulate and exploit the resources and people of the world and the preparations for war. The bases on Australian soil at Kojarena, Harold E Holt and Pine Gap are an integral part of this agenda.

The Communist Party of Australia deplores the continued erosion of our sovereignty and hijacking of our defence and foreign policy objectives through the presence of these foreign, principally US, bases on our soil.

The CPA, in the interests of Australia's and global peace and security interests calls for the bases to be closed. ✪

Around 9.5 million Australians paid tax in 2012-2013 according to tax statistics released last week. Two thirds of the tax was paid by Australians who earned $80,000 or more. More than one quarter was paid by those earning $180,000 or more. You'd expect the people who are the highest earners to pay accordingly as well. Not so. Fifty-five of Australia's highest earners paid no income tax at all, not even the Medicare levy. All these people earn at least $1 million but with the helpful (and very expensive) tax advisors they manage to write down their taxable incomes to below the tax-free threshold which is $18,200. Says a lot about their willingness to contribute to society. Not very far removed from another group of public leaners – multinational corporations which go into fits when they hear the word "tax". Guess who'd be called welfare cheats, free loaders, leaners etc by the government around budget time. Not their friends in high places, I don't think.

It's going to be stormy over Canberra. Public servants at the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) are planning to deny weather forecasts to Canberra airport at times when the politicians are coming to the capital and leaving it. MPs, their staff and lobbyists descend on Canberra airport on the Tuesday morning of each Parliamentary sitting week. They leave on Thursday to go back to where they come from. The BoM technicians are planning to withhold weather information from airlines and air traffic controllers to inconvenience politicians without putting safety or commerce at risk. They hope their action will sharpen the politicians' minds on the fact that the BoM's 1,700-strong workforce has had no pay rise since June 2013. Their enterprise agreement expired nine months ago and there is no fresh offer.

Queensland Education Minister Kate Jones has warned that the Abbott government would cut $30 billion from school funding nationally over four years. Public schools are already struggling to provide decent education on shrinking budgets. The situation is greatly aggravated by a threefold increase in the number of students with autism spectrum disorders. It is not clear why autism spectrum has become so widespread but it has. States demand more federal funding as they are carrying the burden of educating children with mental health issues and learning disorders. NSW has the largest public school system which deals with 14,000 students on the autism spectrum – a 160 percent increase since 2008. In WA public schools the number of autistic children is 4,000, a three-fold increase in 8 years. In Queensland the figure is 12,709 students. In South Australia 9 percent of public school students have a diagnosed disability. In Victoria it is one in six. Three-quarters of disabled students are educated in mainstream classrooms. The federal government allocated $5.2 billion to help schools cater for students with disability and learning disorders between 2014 and 2017. This is not enough. Early intervention is extremely important in helping children with disabilities to develop. Proper funding is the least the government can do.

Driving agriculture into the gro

Clare Westwood

In 1960, there were some three billion people on the planet. Around that time, the Green Revolution with its package of so-called "modern technologies" for agriculture was launched with the announced aim of feeding the poor, especially in the developing world. Yet in 2009, after almost a half-century of "modern" agriculture, the number of hungry shot over the one-billion mark for the first time with the worst food crisis of the decade. This made up one-sixth of the world's population.

Although the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says 805 million people suffer from hunger today, other sources cite much higher figures. If we include micronutrient deficiency, the number rises to over two billion.

In 2008, at the height of the food crisis, non-governmental organisation GRAIN issued a timely report titled "Making a Killing from Hunger" which identified who the real profiteers in the global food system were: "It seems that nearly every corporate player in the global food chain is making a killing from the food crisis."

According to the report, Canada's Potash Corp, the world's largest producer of potash, a key ingredient in chemical fertilisers, made over US$1 billion in profits, an increase of more than 70% from 2006. Cargill, the world's leading grain producer, recorded a whopping 86% increase in profits from agricultural commodity trading in the first quarter of 2008 compared to the same quarter the year before.

Meanwhile, UK supermarket giant Tesco reported an upturn in profits of 12.3% from 2007, a record rise. Monsanto, the largest seed company globally, gained a 44% increase in overall profits in 2007, followed by DuPont, the second-largest, with a 19% increase in profits from seed sales, and Syngenta, the third largest seed company and one of the top pesticide manufacturers, which saw a jump in profits of 28% in the first quarter of 2008.

In 2008, over 400 experts from around the globe submitted the findings of four years of research on the state of agriculture in the world. Entitled Agriculture at a Crossroads, the report of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) declared that "business as usual is not an option", referring to the current toxic corporate model of agriculture introduced by the Green Revolution and citing compelling evidence of its ill effects on human health and the environment.

Agribusiness displaces agriculture

Traditional agriculture consists of small biodiverse farms which provide families and communities with different varieties of their staple food (rice, corn, potatoes etc), vegetables, legumes, nuts, fish, crabs, birds, poultry, eggs, milk, meat, fruits, medicines, herbs, wild edibles, flowers, fodder, fuel, housing material and even material to make clothing (e.g. cotton). Organic materials were used to fertilise the soil and pests were managed by eco-friendly traditional methods. For generations, this was the face of agriculture, which was the bedrock of world food production by small farming communities especially in the Global South.

With the Industrial Revolution and the discovery of oil, the face of development and the world's political economy changed drastically. Neo-liberal globalisation widened the divide between the rich and technologically superior countries and the poor ones, against the backdrop of a sharply rising global population.

In the 1950s, the so-called Green Revolution in agriculture was launched, spearheaded primarily by the United States. It focused on the world's leading staple crops: wheat, corn and rice. In Asia, the US established the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines in 1960, funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. The publicly declared objectives were to eradicate hunger and poverty in rural Asia, which had a large population of small-scale rice farmers. The hidden motives, however, were to open up markets for the US agrochemical industry and to establish US control over Asia through its food production.

The Green Revolution came with a "package" of what were called "high-yielding varieties" (HYVs), mechanised irrigation, mechanisation, and synthetic fertilisers and pesticides manufactured by foreign agrochemical companies. Monocultures of these HYVs became the face of farming. Governments were urged to encourage their farmers to adopt high-input technologies with free or subsidised start-up supplies of HYVs and synthetic chemicals. This was the birth of industrial agriculture or rather "agribusiness", since the culture of small-scale farming was no longer the order of the day.

The HYVs were heavily dependent on chemical fertilisers and pesticides and irrigation to produce the desired yields. Funds became available to developing countries to build irrigation facilities and loans were offered to farmers who grew the recommended HYVs. Such subsidies continued for decades in many countries in Asia and still exist in some to this day. By the 1990s, an estimated 40 percent of farmers in the Global South, led by Asia, were using Green Revolution seeds.

A bitter harvest

The Green Revolution dealt the single most destructive blow to agriculture and is responsible for the widespread destruction of the traditional farming culture, community wisdom and richness of biodiversity of small rice farms which had sustained the people for centuries before the Green Revolution. It is aptly described as the "colonisation of indigenous agriculture".

Biodiversity gave way to monocropping. Thousands of traditional local crop varieties have been lost in the last five decades of the Green Revolution, sometimes up to 95% as in Andhra Pradesh, India, replaced by a small number of HYVs. From over 100,000 traditional rice varieties prior to the Green Revolution, 30 years later, only five HYVs accounted for 90% of rice fields in Malaysia and Pakistan, nearly 50% of the rice acreage in Thailand and Myanmar, and about 25% of rice farms in China and Indonesia.

One IRRI variety accounts for 84% of Cambodia's dry season crop. From 1970 to the 1990s, the land area in Asia under HYVs rose from 30% to 70%.

In effect, the Green Revolution reduced total farm productivity and biodiversity in the field and diminished nutrition on the table, leading to an increase in micronutrient deficiency which affects some two billion people worldwide. GRAIN described this as "a trade-off between quantity and quality in peoples' diets, especially amongst the poor".

Chemical pesticides and fertilisers, pushed farm costs of production up and reducing farmers' net incomes to t

While HYVs initially led to increased yields, the persistent use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers gradually caused land/soil degradation, which led to yields levelling off and then falling. Annual rice growth rates in Asia dropped from an average of 3.4% in 1977 to 1.5% in 1997, trailing off to an average of 0.8% by 2004.

The constant use of chemical pesticides increased pest resistance and the HYVs became susceptible to more pest outbreaks. In 1975, Indonesian rice farmers lost half a million acres of rice to the brown plant hopper, while the Philippines lost almost its whole rice harvest in 1973-74 to tungro, a virus carried by the rice hopper. Most HYVs in India have been reported to be vulnerable to major pest attacks resulting in crop losses of 30-100%, requiring new varieties to be introduced every three years. In 2007, IRRIs rice varieties in Punjab, India, were found to be susceptible to about 40 insect pests and 12 diseases.

The Green Revolution was both capital- and fossil-fuel-intensive. IRRIs HYVs required vast amounts of chemical pesticides and fertilisers, pushing farm costs of production up and reducing farmers' net incomes to the point of debt, bankruptcy and even suicide in some places like India. Fertiliser use in Asia increased almost threefold from 52 kg/ha in 1979 to 138 kg/ha in 1999.

Since the introduction of chemical pesticides, farming communities all over the world have suffered from acute and chronic pesticide poisoning. In 2004, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that one to five million people a year suffered from acute pesticide poisoning, resulting in 20,000 fatalities among agricultural workers. The World Bank cited 355,000 deaths annually due to unintentional poisoning, with about half occurring in agriculture, with 41 million people suffering from health effects. Hoffman et al., however, put the number of cases of pesticide poisoning at around 25 million a year.

IRRI itself used toxic pesticides such as endrin and paraquat (made by Syngenta), endosulfan (Bayer), glyphosate (Monsanto), benomyl (DuPont) and chlorpyrifos (Dow Chemical) in its experimental fields in Laguna, Philippines. A study in 2000 found that about 70% of former IRRI workers exposed to these pesticides were suffering from cancer, diabetes, lymphoma, Parkinson's disease or thyroid, liver and kidney diseases; many of them have since died.

In 2008, FAO itself admitted that the Green Revolution "has not necessarily translated into benefits for the lower strata of the rural poor in terms of greater food security or greater economic opportunity and well-being". IAASTD researchers reported in the same year that 1.9 billion hectares (involving 2.6 billion people) had been affected by land degradation, the abuse of fertilisers had led to the formation of large dead zones, the abuse of (chemical) pesticides had led to groundwater pollution and loss of biodiversity, and 70% of the world's fresh-

The 2008-09 food crisis was a structural collapse that had been waiting to happen. It showed the world just how perverse and fundamentally flawed the industrialised global food production and distribution system truly was and pinpointed the root cause: the corporatisation of the food chain.

ound

he point of debt, bankruptcy and even suicide.

water was withdrawn globally for irrigation, which in turn caused salinisation in some areas.

Their main conclusions were that the emphasis on increasing yields and productivity had had negative consequences on environmental sustainability, the paradigm of industrial energy-intensive and pesticide-dependent agriculture was an outdated concept, and small-scale farmers and agroecological methods provided the way forward.

A consolidated report by ETC Group in 2014 declared that the industrial food system provides only 30% of all food consumed but uses 70-80% of the world's arable land to grow 30-40% of crop-derived food; accounts for more than 80% of fossil fuel and 70% of water used in agriculture; is responsible for 44-57% of greenhouse gases emitted annually; deforests 13 million hectares; destroys 75 billion tonnes of topsoil every year; and dominates the US$7 trillion commercial grocery market, while leaving almost 3.4 billion either undernourished or overweight. In sharp contrast, the peasant food web supplies 70% of the world's food with only 30% of its agricultural resources, and using only 20% of the fossil fuel and 30% of the water in agriculture.

Conclusion

The 2008-09 food crisis was a structural collapse that had been waiting to happen. It showed the world just how perverse and fundamentally flawed the industrialised global food production and distribution system truly was and pinpointed the root cause: the corporatisation of the food chain. In 2013, Olivier De Schutter, the then UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, declared that the new global target set at the 1996 World Food Summit to halve the absolute number of hungry people by 2015 (rather than the percentage) was "today out of reach by far".

The industrialised global food and agriculture system set in place by the first Green Revolution, which was supposed to feed the world, has in effect undermined the very basis for realising this aim. In spite of this, corporations together with international institutions like IRRI are pushing ahead with the "Second Green Revolution", with genetically engineered seeds taking centre stage in what is simply a "more of the same" formula as the first fiasco. Thus, the hijack and ruin of our food chain continue.

For footnotes see *Resurgence* publication available online at www.twn.my

Third World Resurgence

Britain's elections and the Royal Baby Bounce

Felicity Arbuthnot

For great swathes of the UK, Prime Minister Cameron is seen as an arrogant, out of touch, over-privileged, aristocrat who hates the poor, disadvantaged, elderly, disabled, affordable social housing, those unable to find work in a shrinking job market and just about anyone not from his money-mired hunting and country mansion pals. In a family tree festooned with titles he is also a lineal descendent of King William IV.

His government's swinging welfare cuts have led to suicides and many other financially related deaths, such as diabetic ex-soldier, David Clapson, who died with just £3.44 in the bank, six tea bags, a tin of soup and tin of out of date sardines in his cupboard. His benefits had been stopped. He died from diabetic ketoacidosis caused by not taking his insulin. His sister felt he may have stopped injecting himself in despair over his lack of cash and work. (*Daily Mirror*, April 20, 2015.)

Labour Party Leader, Ed Miliband's popularity is faring little better, especially since Tony Blair pitched up, all teeth and permatan, to "support him 100%", also donating £100,000+ in £1,000+ bundles to one hundred Labour parliamentary candidates. Endorsement by Blair after Iraq is the kiss of electoral death.

Cameron and Miliband are running about neck and neck in the unpopularity stakes, with Cameron saying that should Miliband scrape in to form a "minority government" it would have no standing. Chutzpah of some dimension. Cameron, of course, leads a minority party, which is why he had to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

David Cameron also tied his own hands when it came to calling an election at a time when government popularity might have been marginally higher, since he changed the parliamentary cycle to a fixed five year term (he assumed office on May 11, 2010.)

However, will he benefit from an unexpected coincidence, the birth five days before the May 7, elections of a second child to the heir to the throne, Prince William and his wife?

In context, in 2013 David Cameron faced scathing criticism, including UK poverty and social exclusion rising by 1,689,000; those earning below the minimum living wage at 6,422,000; food banks reaching 707, with 500,000 relying on just one chain; child poverty rising by 13 percent and 800,000 more households living in fuel poverty, with a further woeful list: "Cost of Cameron's Hundred Worst Failures" of putting the social slash and burn of his government's policies to shame.

But then a baby was born, Prince George, Prince William's first child and third in line to the throne.

As Matthew D'Ancona wrote at the time:

"What Cameron will want – subtly but unmistakably – is to annex some of the mood of celebration and associate himself and his government with the outpouring of emotion. Royal fertility is one of the ancestral forces that binds a nation together and mediates its dreams. It is both magical and down-to-earth; swathed in majesty, yet grounded in flesh and blood. Every politician wants a piece of that." (*Evening Standard*, July 24, 2013.)

David Cameron, it seems was also early on to the possibilities of hitching his wagon to the feel good factor of the second birth at the time of the election and amongst the first to congratulate the royal couple last September when the pregnancy was announced.

On the announcement of her admission to hospital for the birth on May 2, he tweeted:

"My best wishes to the Duchess of Cambridge, who is having her second child today. The whole country will wish her well." The *Daily Mirror* recorded that Twitter users

Cameron is seen as an arrogant, out of touch, over-privileged, aristocrat.

speedily noted that, as one wrote, "nicely managed to avoid saying labour …"

Another cynic wrote:

"You've had that Tweet saved in your drafts folder for days, haven't you … ready to deploy at a second's notice."

Of the birth he tweeted congratulations and "delight" and fawned:

"One of the privileges of my job, is you get to see them up front and they are a wonderful couple and loving parents."

The Obamas in their message also congratulated "all the people of the United Kingdom" though quite what they had to do with the creation and arrival is hard to fathom.

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel congratulated David Cameron.

In a throwback to empire, the 8lb, mite was greeted with royal gun salutes in London's Hyde Park and at the Tower of London. There are royal baby stamp collections, royal baby coins struck by the Royal Mint.

Legoland in Windsor, near one of the Queens palaces announced:" … at the Legoland Windsor resort we have welcomed the new royal baby in miniature into our lego royal family in our world famous Miniland attraction." Bookmakers have paid out over a million pounds to those who guessed the baby's name correctly (Charlotte Elizabeth Diana) and Pizza Hut gave free "royal" pizzas to customers named Charlotte.

But whilst former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Obama Small Business Advisor, Karen Mills have enthusiastically supported David Cameron, will he, as he sweated around the country, jacketless, tieless, sleeves rolled up, trying to look how he thinks "ordinary" people look, manage: "to annex some of the mood of celebration and associate himself and his government with the outpouring of emotion"?

We will have to wait and see. His Senior Advisor is Jim Messina, former campaign manager of Barack Obama's 2012 re-election bid, known as "the fixer", a stated Cameron admirer, he has a reputation for pulling advantageous political stunts. However what works in the US often does not travel well across the Atlantic.

Cameron's chief election strategist is Australian Lynton Crosby, a political strategist dubbed "the master of the dark arts" and the "Australian Karl Rove." He ran the Conservative election failure in 2005. That he is a lobbyist for the tobacco industry introduces another contradiction for Cameron who has finally made some weak efforts to discourage smoking.

Further: "a cross-party committee of MPs accused the government of 'utterly unacceptable' behaviour over the preparation of a new bill on lobbyists, Labour warned of a 'lobbying scandal' in Downing Street after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne unveiled tax breaks for the fracking industry, championed by Crosby."

Crosby's company, Crosby Textor, "represents the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association. One of its members, Dart Energy, has a UK subsidiary, Dart Europe Limited, which has an interest in the Bowland Shale site in Lancashire and Yorkshire …" There is deep hostility to fracking in the UK.

In a further blow to Cameron-Crosby credibility the *Independent* obtained a document, produced in 2010 by Crosby's lobbying firm, which proposes targeting key UK government figures, including David Cameron, to enhance the "size, acceptability and profitability of the private healthcare market. If there is one service of which the British are militantly proud and protective, it is their National Health Service".

So Miliband has the Blair millstone round his neck, and Cameron who wanted to be "heir to Blair", and regards him as his "mentor" has the Messina-Crosby duo. Whatever they come up with it seems it will take more than a royal baby to persuade a cynical public to resoundingly embrace either of them.

Incidentally, inconsequential comment of the day: Cameron father's home was called Blairmore.

globalbriefs.ca

The limits of propaganda

Dmitry Orlov

As Paul Craig Roberts has recently reported, the US government is in the process of launching an all-out war on truth. Those who express views contrary to the party line out of Washington will be labelled a threat. Eventually they may find themselves carted to one of the concentration camps which Halliberton (Dick Cheney's old company) has constructed for US$385 million. But that may take a while. In the meantime, we can expect lots of other, less dramatic developments. Indeed, some of these are already happening. Here they are, listed in order of severity.

1. Self-censorship. Those who have previously tried to get the truth out no matter what become more reticent and prone to equivocation when reporting on "hot" issues.
2. Topic-avoidance. They start avoiding certain "hot" issues that they feel are most likely to get them into trouble.
3. Response to harassment. A few incidents of mild official harassment cause certain blogs to start watering down their content, or pulling down content in response to harassment.
4. Blacklisting. The officials start censoring content on a case-by-case basis, blocking or shutting down certain internet sites that they consider seditious.
5. Blocking communications. The officials start dealing with the "hard cases" of uncooperative individuals who remain, shutting down their communications by disabling their cell phones, shutting down internet access, and by imposing travel restrictions so that the "hard cases" are forced to remain in places where they can be watched.
6. Detention. Those found to be truly uncooperative, who try to circumvent the restrictions, are rounded up and shipped off to the above-mentioned camps.

This may seem like a dire prognosis, but actually I just want to present a relatively complete list of public measures for your consideration. Yes, there will be a few "hard cases" who will insist on getting right in the face of Washington officialdom in futile hopes of somehow affecting the political process or winning over a few of their compatriots.

But at some point such individuals become indistinguishable from people with mental problems. That is because if you live in the US, actually know how the political system there operates, and still think that the US is a democracy, then you DO have a problem. You can't have it both ways: either you buy into the official propaganda, or you don't.

But Washington's propaganda isn't working at all well in the rest of the world

Also, it bears pointing out that the vast majority of people in the US are quite happy listening to Washington's propaganda, be it from Fox or NPR, don't consider it propaganda, and have been conditioned to consider anyone who attempts to tell them the truth to be tin hat-wearing conspiracy theorist. And that means that tin hat-wearing conspiracy theorists have a role to play. So, why bother sending them to a concentration camp?

And so it seems likely that the truth-tellers will remain free-range for the time being, unless they really lose it and start tilting at windmills.

Unless, of course, full-on war hysteria breaks out. In that case, while the external goons are busy pretending to be "not winning, not losing" but somehow "keeping America safe" in yet another part of the world, the internal goons have to be kept busy. Rounding up undesirables.

That's the state of affairs in the United States and its subservient territories: Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand and a few others. But Washington's propaganda isn't working at all well in the rest of the world, be it Russia or China or Latin America. In all of these places, Washington's message control has more or less failed.

This is why the people in Washington are in a bit of a panic, and labelling internal dissidents as a "threat" is just them flailing in search of an answer. They can't stop lying, and they can't even pretend to rule the world if everyone knows that they are lying, so their only option is to try to squelch every voice except their own. They may succeed at this within the US (some would say they already have) but as far as the rest of the world – good luck!

Information Clearing House ✪

Opportunities to achieve gender equality

Buenos Aires, 6 May 2014 – UN Development Program (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark called 2015 a "new opportunity" to achieve gender equality as she kicked off a three-day global meeting to mark the 20th anniversary of the landmark conference on women that enshrined the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Opening the international conference addressing challenges facing women and girls titled "Women and Social Inclusion: From Beijing to Post-2015" with Minister of Social Development for Argentina Alicia Kirchner and the head of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Helen Clark stressed that, in addition to a specific gender equality goal in the new Post 2015 global development agenda, it is crucial to ensure all policies at the national and local levels are seen through a "gender lens" to help overcome historic inequalities between men and women.

"In pursuing economic growth which benefits all citizens, it is important to focus not only on ensuring that women can participate in the decisions which affect their lives, but also on overcoming the barriers, including institutionalised discriminatory practices and attitudes, which keep poor women poor," said Helen Clark, addressing over 200 global leaders, parliamentarians, policy makers, researchers, and women from civil society organisations and communities around the world.

"This includes addressing the scourge of violence against women, and also the disproportionate burden of unpaid work carried out by women and girls which deprives them of time to earn money, gain new skills, and take part in public life," she continued. "Such moves in support of gender equality and women's empowerment are at the heart of UNDP's efforts to eradicate poverty, improve the lives of women, and drive sustainable development."

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka issued a call to "tackle the root causes of women's poverty", including by ensuring decent work for women.

"For women's poverty to be history, women need to be in protected and decent jobs in overwhelming numbers," she said.

"There can be no gender equality without justice, inclusion, growth and social development," said Alicia Kirchner, Minister of Social Development for the government of Argentina.

Progress

During the last few decades, poverty rates have declined in every region of the world. Between 1990 and 2010, the proportion of people in developing regions living under the threshold of US$1.25 a day, the international benchmark for measuring extreme poverty, fell from 47 percent to 22 percent.

Progress for women is also visible: at least 50 percent of the world's women are now in paid wage and salary employment, an increase from 40 percent since the 1990s. Gender parity in primary school enrolment has been achieved in much of the world, and tertiary enrolments now favour women. In most regions, life expectancy for men and women has consistently risen, with women on average living longer than men.

Also, women's political participation has increased worldwide. In 1995, women comprised 11.3 percent of parliamentarians. Today, they make up 22.1 percent of parliamentarians, which is, however, still below the 30 percent target set by the UN.

Around that time, the event's host, Argentina, passed a gender quota law. Since then, 11 other Latin American countries have also introduced gender quotas, contributing to the Latin American and Caribbean region having the highest percentage of women parliamentarians (26.4 percent) and women ministers (22.4 per cent) in the world.

Closing the gender gap

Despite the progress, too many challenges remain, participants stressed. More than 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty, and women continue to be more likely than men to be among them, according to a recent UN report on the Millennium Development Goals progress. Despite the increased number of women in paid wage and salary employment, women remain disproportionately represented in vulnerable employment, and earn 10 to 30 percent less than men do for the same work. Moreover, across countries and regions, women are less likely than men to have access to decent work, assets, and formal credit, and do not have an equal voice in decision-making.

At the event's opening session, Helen Clark highlighted key steps to boost women's empowerment, such as supporting legal reforms to ensure women's equal access to land, credit and assets, guarantee equal pay for equal work, and strengthen labour protections; developing employment and entrepreneurship programs which target women; and establishing social protection measures which are of particular benefit to women, such as maternity benefits, unemployment and health insurance, and greater livelihood security.

The three-day event will also address how climate change and inequalities impact on women and how to protect women in countries in conflict or post-conflict. These are crucial topics in the new global development agenda. ✪

Anti-Tory protests met with police violence

Joana Ramiro

Police violence and mass arrests marked the first weekend of the new Tory government as thousands of young people took to the streets in a peaceful protest to voice their anger over further austerity measures.

The peaceful protest turned sour when, after three hours of causing havoc with central London's traffic, protesters and police clashed on Whitehall in scenes reminiscent of the 2010 student movement.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed that 15 people had been arrested, with several protesters reporting excessive use of violence by the police.

London School of Economics student Daphne Wikken said: "I have never experienced such extreme force of police violence. "My legs are bruised everywhere and I cut my arm.

"For me what is particularly scary is the fact that the government is already cracking down on dissent so badly just days after the general election."

A man was picked up by his throat by a police officer in riot gear, moments before police lines closed in on protesters, kettling a few hundred near No 10.

One of those jailed during the day's clashes told the *Morning Star* "arrests were made under arbitrary circumstances, after the demonstration had ended."

The student, who asked to remain anonymous after being released on bail, added he had been "brutally handcuffed" and searched, "having stopped to inquire on someone's else's arrest."

While the protest was called against the prospect of another five years of cuts to public services and the privatisation of the National Health Service, many of those present used the event to argue for a proportional electoral system. Asked why he decided to join the demonstration, Pascal Cameron said: "For me it was just the shock of it being a Tory majority when clearly there is no mandate for that when you look at the votes."

Speaking about the Conservatives coming to power on less than 40 per cent of the votes with a 66 per cent turnout, he said: "It really struck me this election that it's not actually democracy when it's a minority rule.

"It's the opposite of democracy."

Morning Star ✪

JCP gains in local elections

In the second-half round of nationwide local elections on April 26, only the Japanese Communist (JCP) and Liberal Democratic (LDP) parties increased the number of their seats from the last elections four years ago.

The JCP won a total of 1,092 seats, up 62 seats from the previous election. The percentage of JCP members in local assemblies went up to 8.78% from the previous 7.76%.

The LDP added 145 seats to its pre-election strength while the Komei Party's number fell by 14 and the Democratic Party of Japan by 129.

Following the election results, the JCP Standing Executive Committee issued a statement.

The following is an excerpt from the statement:

The JCP made a great advance in both the first half and second half of the nationwide local elections. The JCP Standing Executive Committee would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to all voters who voted for JCP candidates and to all the supporters, campaigners, and JCP members who worked hard to achieve the JCP advance.

During both election campaigns, the JCP focused on linking national government policies with local government policies. At a time when the use of the Abe administration's war legislation became a real possibility, and there was a rise in strong public concern and criticism, the JCP attracted broad public support and attention.

Following its major advance in the first half of the elections, as a goal for the second half, the JCP put particular importance on seeking the victory of all JCP candidates. It achieved this goal in municipal elections held in 14 prefectures. Efforts made by JCP candidates in their 20s and 30s in the election campaigns provided a breath of fresh air in party activities.

Despite the overall success, the JCP in some electoral districts failed to secure its pre-election strength and the number of its votes declined. A major cause of this problem is a lack of JCP strength which is often cited as a particular weakness in the party's election activities. This weakness was reflected in the results of the second-half round. Keeping this firmly in mind, let's renew our determination to build a stronger JCP.

With its continuing advance since the 2014 general election, the party has succeeded in establishing a new connection with the general public. Utilising its increased strength, the JCP will continue fighting against the Abe government's runaway policies and work hard to help develop public movements to protect peace, democracy, and people's livelihoods. ✪

Magnificent victory in Tripura

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) congratulates the people of Tripura for the magnificent victory that they bestowed on the Tripura Left Front in the elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

In a landslide victory, the Left Front has bagged all the 28 seats of the TTAADC defeating all its opponents resoundingly. Except for five seats, in all the other 23 seats, the Left Front got more than 50 percent of the votes polled.

The Polit Bureau appreciates the fact that the people of Tripura have thwarted all attempts at creating ethnic tensions. Elections to the TTAADC were held peacefully.

The Polit Bureau also congratulates the leaders, members, workers and sympathisers of the Party and the Left Front for the hard work they put in to make this victory so outstanding. ✪

Support *The Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Region Briefs

Disadvantaged people in Vietnam's Dong Nai province will receive 625 housing units (worth more than A$24 million) from the Provincial Department of Construction by the end of this year. The construction head, Nguyen Thanh Lan, said that 50 housing projects were half completed. Among them eight projects offering 4,000 students accommodation have already been finished. In the past two years the province built and upgraded 960 houses. The province's People's Committee Vice Chairman, Tran Van Vinh, called on the department to speed up the building process and distribute more land for public housing.

Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister, Pham Binh Minh, attended a ceremony hosted by the Russian embassy to mark the 70th anniversary of the Victory of the Great Patriotic War. The minister said the Soviet Union played a decisive role winning the war against fascism, and the global community should ensure similar wars do not happen again. He added that the victory encouraged Vietnam's independence movement and he also thanked the Soviet's assistance in the past. Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang, Chinese President Xi Jinping and other world leaders went to Moscow on Russian President Putin's invitation, attending another larger ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary.

The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) Chair, Shii Kazuo, criticised the recently renewed Japan-US Defence Cooperation Guidelines. He said that the guidelines strengthened the military alliance between Japan and the US, it encouraged Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to further turn Japan into a military nation, including the building of more military bases for the US in Okinawa and the possibility of enabling Japan to further support the US's global military actions. Shii argued those actions and policies were against Japan's national interest. Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) Foreign Ministry spokesman also condemned the guidelines, saying the guidelines fabricated the DPRK as a threat, but the real purpose was to turn Japan into a bridgehead for invasion. He added that the new guidelines would no doubt destabilise the region.

Three hundred thousand people in China's Tibet Autonomous Region were affected by the recent earthquake in Nepal. Chinese President, Xi Jinping, called for all-out efforts to be taken for working on disaster relief and rebuilding damaged houses and infrastructure. The earthquake (in Tibet) left 26 dead, 856 injured, 2,700 collapsed and 40,000 damaged buildings. The good news was 63,989 people were evacuated and accommodated with clean food and water, medical treatment, power supply and telecommunication services.

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

Indonesia's appalling past

Indonesia's cruel punishments in executing Australian and other drug smugglers have been utterly disgraceful. Indonesia has learnt nothing from its appalling and shameful past in East Timor and continues its awful atrocities in West Papua and now these vile executions.

Australia must respond hard, stand up for human rights and stop supporting this corrupt, oppressive and brutal army and government. Repressive regimes like Indonesia need to be treated like the international pariahs they are. Enough, Australia should give no more aid for the Indonesian army or government.

Indonesia's barbaric killings were for local political posturing. Common sense requests reasoned arguments and even pleading for lives failed. The only alternative is the type of direct action all corrupt and oppressive governments like Indonesia understand financial pressure.

Most of the big business enterprises in Indonesia (legal and illegal) are owned by the army or former army officers and their cronies. We should boycott Bali, Garuda and all other Indonesian business interests.

Steven Katsineris,
Vic

Live to 150 ... in a climate disaster?

The Liberal Party does not believe in climate change.

Yet, they believe human beings will live till they are 150 years old.

What next? A tax on the tooth fairy?

Wake up Australia!

Don Johnson
Riverina

Aid cuts will damage disaster responses

The looming cuts to aid in the federal budget pose a risk to the ability of aid agencies to prepare for and respond to disasters.

Oxfam is currently responding to the worst earthquake in Nepal for 80 years, the devastation caused in Vanuatu by Cyclone Pam, and is still helping communities rebuild their lives after Typhoon Haiyan in The Philippines.

Australian aid has helped Oxfam to become a proven humanitarian responder, enabling it to deliver quality humanitarian response around the world in emergencies such as Nepal.

Sustainable, predictable funding to NGOs makes us more capable of quick response, particularly if we have long-term development and disaster preparedness programs already in the country – we can then be much more efficient in delivering immediate assistance.

It will be difficult for aid agencies like ours to prepare communities for natural disasters and to respond to them when they happen if the $1 billion in aid cuts is not reversed.

In Vanuatu when Cyclone Pam hit, we were already on the ground working with communities and the government to prepare for and coordinate our immediate response.

Not only will we see cuts to long-term aid programs that provide safe water, get kids into school and provide the boost people need to turn their lives around, we will also be less ready to respond when disaster strikes.

Australians know the importance of responding to disasters and lending a helping hand; the public's response to the Nepal and Vanuatu disasters proves this. These cuts could diminish our ability to respond to future emergencies.

Australia is surrounded by poorer nations – 18 of our closest neighbours are developing countries. In an interconnected world, their prosperity and security is our prosperity and security. We must not abandon them.

We cannot run and hide from a world where humanitarian disasters and crises are growing. If the government does not reverse its aid cuts, that is exactly what it will be doing.

Dr Helen Szoke
Oxfam Australia

Culture & Life

by **Rob Gowland**

Ernst Thälmann, hero of the working class

American academics who have a left-wing perspective on their chosen subject do not have an easy road. Any attempt to present their students with a viewpoint that reflects a working-class interpretation of events or phenomena runs the very real risk of being held up by right-wingers (students' parents, other academics, local "opinion makers", church leaders) as "Communist propaganda", and we all know how despicable *that* is!

For many US academics, the prospect of being mired in battles with their university's administration until eventually being forced out is just too much to face. They take the easier option and keep their opinions private, not rocking the boat and feeding their family instead. It is sad, but understandable.

So when a Comrade sent us a copy of a book by an American academic on Ernst Thälmann, the German Communist leader murdered by the Nazis, I was naturally curious to see what approach it took. It didn't take long to find out.

The book is *Hitler's Rival* by Russel Lemmons, Professor of History at Jacksonville State University in Kentucky and published by the University Press of Kentucky. It is subtitled, *Ernst Thälmann in Myth and Memory*.

Thälmann was the respected and popular leader in the 1920s of the German Communist party (KPD), the largest outside the Soviet Union. It was in part because of the growing success and influence of the KPD that the German ruling class turned to the Nazis. They knew that whatever else he did, Hitler's rabble-rousers and uniformed thugs would save them from Bolshevism. He would also lead them to war, which they thought was no bad thing, promising huge profits, conquest, raw materials, and power. But especially profits.

The Nazis came to power on a program of lies, race hatred and a pseudo-leftwing pose – condemnation of the big banks, socialist phraseology, public concern for the workers (but private concern for corporate interests). And fomenting violence in the streets to unsettle the middle class and deter militant workers from opposing them.

As soon as the Nazis gained government, Thälmann was arrested, placed in solitary confinement and kept in prison for 11 years until in 1944, with the Red Army's victory inevitable, he was taken to Buchenwald concentration camp and secretly murdered.

The title of Lemmon's book – *Hitler's Rival* – is a clue to what he is about. Thälmann was not Hitler's rival, he was Hitler's most potent *enemy*. He opposed everything Hitler stood for and fought against the Nazis through the '20s and even after he was arrested and imprisoned. His condemnations of the Nazi regime and its attacks on German workers were smuggled out of his prison cell by courageous members of the Communist underground and published as illegal pamphlets or forwarded to the Comintern in Moscow for distribution worldwide.

But Lemmon has a purpose. He does nothing so crass as to directly attack Thälmann the anti-Nazi fighter (after all that is a matter of historical record). No, he sets out to undermine that historical record itself. His devious thesis is summed up on the back cover of his book: "In *Hitler's Rival*, Russel Lemmons examines how the Communist Party gradually transformed Thälmann into a fallen mythic hero, building his legacy into a cult that became one of their most important propaganda tools in central Europe.

"By analysing the party intelligentsia's methods, demonstrating how they used various media to manipulate public memory, and exploring the surprising ways in which they incorporated Christian themes into their messages, this unique volume separates the intriguing truth about Thälmann's life from the myth that was created around him."

Classic Cold War propaganda: Thälmann, the courageous and respected leader of the German working class and the dedicated anti-Nazi, is to be transformed into a construct of the Communist Party, nothing more than a propaganda weapon for the government of the GDR. To do this while pretending not to be attacking Thälmann's memory is despicable.

Ernst Thälmann was not Hitler's rival, he was Hitler's most potent *enemy*.

Imperialism, the most developed sector of capitalism, is waging an ideological war against the rest of the world, a war of ideas to cloak their preparations for waging a war of destruction and bloodshed. In this Cold War, lies and distortions are normal currency, as they are in capitalism's other regular dealings.

When counter-revolution swept Eastern Europe with the help of Gorbachev, West German politicians were allowed to persuade the people of the GDR that if they voted for union with West Germany they would not only keep all the benefits of socialism that they enjoyed but would add to them the supposed benefits of the EU, namely freedom to travel and plentiful consumer goods (of course their agriculture would be deliberately destroyed and unemployment would also appear for the first time).

The Wall came down and *revanchist* West German politicians, now in charge of the whole country, moved to eradicate all monuments to Communists and the anti-fascist struggle. They were able to demolish the largest statue of Lenin in East Germany before public opposition forced them to stop. But they are still trying. The large statue of Ernst Thälmann in Berlin, donated by Russia, is regularly disfigured with splashes of paint by neo-fascists emboldened by the refusal of the authorities to place a police guard on it.

Lemmons devotes a large slice of his book to the local government wrangles over whether to break up the statue, to grow ivy all over it or build a huge hedge around it or just to surround it with propaganda billboards giving the "facts" about Thälmann! So far it has been left alone, paint-spattered though it is.

Regardless of German *revanchists* seeking to destroy the evidence of East Germany's socialist era, or anti-Communist American academics re-writing history to suit their class interests, Thälmann's place in German and world history remains a matter of record and is secure for all time. He was and remains a hero of the working class. ✪

Rob Gowland
previews
ABC & SBS
Public Television

Sunday May 17
Satday May 23

If one was to believe the numerous TV drama series from the US set in hospitals, the US health system must be second to none: outstanding care, money (or the lack of it) is never a problem, and no one ever suffers from accidental (still less deliberate) neglect or indifference. But that's TV; the reality is different.

As shown in Michael Moore's punchy documentary feature ***Sicko*** **(ABC2 Sunday May 17 at 8.30pm)**, health care in the USA is phenomenally expensive, being run strictly for profit. Almost 50 million Americans cannot afford health insurance while the remainder, who are covered, are often victims of insurance company intransigence. ***Sicko*** points out that the US health care system is ranked only 37 out of 191 by the World Health Organisation with certain health measures, such as infant mortality and life expectancy, equal to much poorer countries.

Former employees of insurance companies describe cost-cutting initiatives that give bonuses to insurance company physicians and others who find reasons for the company to avoid meeting the cost of medically necessary treatments for policy holders, and thus increase company profitability.

A 1950s record distributed by the American Medical Association, narrated by Ronald Reagan, preposterously warns that universal health care could lead to lost freedoms and (gulp!) socialism. In response, Moore notes that socialised public services like police, fire service, the Postal Service, public education and community libraries have not led to anything dire.

In a taped conversation between John Ehrlichman and President Richard Nixon on February 17, 1971, Ehrlichman is heard telling Nixon that " ... the less care they [health insurance companies] give them, the more money they make", which Nixon considers "fine". Under Nixon, US health care became the domain of so-called health maintenance organisations (HMOs), essentially insurance companies.

Hillary Clinton is shown as initially a crusader for change, appointed to reform the health care system by her husband, newly elected President Bill Clinton. Republicans and right-wing media throughout the country characterised her plan as the harbinger of socialism. When it was defeated, she dropped the topic. Seven years later, her silence was rewarded, when she became a Senator for the State of New York, her victory partially funded by her former foes, the health care industry; she is second only to Rick Santorum as the Senate's highest recipient of health care industry campaign donations.

Moore tackles the bogey of "socialised medicine" head on, travelling to Canada, the UK and France to contrast the cost of health care for patients in those countries to the situation in the US. The contrast is stark indeed. Returning to the United States, Moore observes that the only place where the US government provides free health care is at the Guantánamo Bay detainment camp for "enemy combatants". So he packs the 9/11 rescue workers who were denied government funds to care for the physical and psychological maladies they subsequently developed, together with others needing medical attention, on three speedboats and sails from Miami to "Gitmo" to request access.

They are of course turned away from the base, and the group moves on to Havana, where they receive free medical treatment at the elite Hermanos Ameijeiras Hospital. Providing only their names and birth dates, the volunteers are hospitalised and receive medical attention. Before they leave, the 9/11 rescue workers are honoured by a local Havana fire station.

Sicko premiered on May 19, 2007, at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, receiving a 17-minute standing ovation. *Variety* described ***Sicko*** as "an affecting and entertaining dissection of the American health care industry".

Roger Friedman of Fox News called the film "brilliant and uplifting" and praised Moore for the way in which he lets "very articulate average Americans tell their personal horror stories at the hands of insurance companies" and "criticises both Democrats and Republicans for their inaction and in some cases their willingness to be bribed by pharmaceutical companies and insurance carriers."

British film magazine *Empire* praised Moore's filmmaking and personal artistic vision, exclaiming "***Sicko*** is the film that truly reveals Moore as an auteur."

David Denby of the *New Yorker* lined up with the health care industry, calling the film "feeble, even inane", but film critic Stephen Schaefer of the *Boston Globe* described ***Sicko*** as "a very strong and very honest film about a health system that's totally corrupt and that is without any care for its patients."

Sicko was commended in the Australian Film Critics Association 2007 Film Award for Best Documentary.

Sicko (ABC2 Sunday May 17 at 8.30pm)

Like all Moore's films, ***Sicko*** was viciously attacked by the right-wing (including their "ultra-left" hangers-on) in the US, who seemed to see his criticism of the lack of affordable health care in the country as unpatriotic and an insult to "the greatest country on Earth".

Wendell Potter, former Head of Corporate Communications at CIGNA, revealed that the health insurance industry umbrella agency America's Health Insurance Plans had developed a campaign to discredit Moore and the movie. Potter himself thought that Moore "hit the nail on the head with his movie. But the industry … was really concerned.

"The industry has always tried to make Americans think that government-run systems are the worst thing that could possibly happen to them, that even if you consider [a government-run system] you're heading down on the slippery slope towards socialism. … It could potentially reduce the profits of these big companies. So that is their biggest concern."

Potter disclosed that "we have more people who are uninsured in this country than the entire population of Canada. And that if you include the people who are underinsured, more people than in the United Kingdom. We have huge numbers of people who are also just a lay-off away from joining the ranks of the uninsured, or being purged by their insurance company, and winding up there."

Urban Institute economist Linda Blumberg stated that Moore "correctly provides evidence that the current system fails and a universal system is needed. … Americans as a whole have yet to buy the philosophy that health care is a right and not a privilege" and if Moore succeeded in popularising the idea, he "will have done the country a tremendous service." ✪

Sydney
Public Meeting

Cuba, the U.S. and the Future of the Revolution

with special guest speaker

Kenia Serrano

Member of Cuba's National Assembly and President of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples

7.30 pm Saturday, 6 June 2015
Teachers' Federation
23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills

Also on Saturday, 6 June 2015 at the Teachers Federation

11.30am **MEET THE NEW CUBAN AMBASSADOR**
Report from Cuban Ambassador to Australia, **José Manuel Galego**, and discussion

1.30pm ***PANEL*** **- YO SI PUEDO, Expanding Cuban program for Aboriginal adult literacy**
with José Manuel Galego [Cuban Ambassador], Jack Beetson [Literacy for Life]

3.30pm ***PANEL*** **- CUBA IN TODAY'S WORLD**
with Kenia Serrano, Tim Anderson, Marce Cameron, guest East Timorese doctor

In December last year, U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro simultaneously announced plans to "normalise" diplomatic and trade relations. This warming of relations occurs in the context of a half-century U.S. financial and trade embargo of Cuba, which is still in place.

"No one should dream that the new policy announced means acceptance of the existence of a socialist revolution 90 miles from Florida," Raúl Castro has said. Cuban representatives insist that Cuba's sovereignty, internal affairs and revolution are not negotiable. Meanwhile revolutionary Cuba has continued its outstanding internationalist traditions, sending almost 500 doctors and nurses out of more than 15,000 volunteers to go to West Africa to fight the deadly Ebola epidemic.

Come to a speech and discussion led by Kenia Serrano on the changes in Cuba, the shift in U.S. relations and the future prospects for Cuba's internationalist and socialist revolution.

Australia Cuba Friendship Society - Sydney
www.sydney-acfs.org

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

Editor: Tom Pearson

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

Printed by **Spotpress**
24-26 Lilian Fowler Pl Marrickville 2204

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

Sydney
POLITICS IN THE PUB

May 14
HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT IN SPEEDING UP ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE?
Blair Palese, CEO 350.org;
Christopher Wright, Professor, Sydney University;

May 21
COLONEL KEMP AND ISRAEL ARMY MORALITY: A RIGHT TO PROTEST: UNIVERSITY AS JUDGE AND JURY
David Brophy, Dr, University of Sydney;
Michael Bull, Journalist, *New Matilda*;

Every Thursday 6:30 pm *'til* 8:15 pm
Harold Park Hotel
Cnr Wigram Rd & Ross St Glebe

Charles Bradley 02 9692 0005
odl_bradley@pacific.net.au
www.politicsinthepub.org.au

ISIL is in Ukraine

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

Is the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) / Islamic State (IS) / Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah fe Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham (DAISH/DAESH) active in post-EuroMaidan Ukraine? The answer is not exact. In other words, the answer is both yes and no.

Then again, what is the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH? It is a loosely knit band of militias, just like its predecessor Al-Qaeda. Included in its network are groups from the Caucasus, which have been fighting in Syria and Iraq. Now they are in Ukraine and using it as a steppingstone into Europe.

The conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are all fronts in a multi-dimensional war being waged by the US and its allies. This multi-dimensional war aims to encircle Eurasia. China, Iran, and Russia are the main targets.

The US also has an order of operations with which to take out these countries. Iran is first, followed by Russia, with China as the last part of the Eurasian set comprised of this "Eurasian Triple Entente". It is no coincidence that the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are near the borders of Iran and Russia, because Tehran and Moscow are the nearer term targets of Washington.

In the same vein as the interlinked nature of the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, there is also a connection between the violent, racist, xenophobic, and sectarian forces that have been unleashed as "agents of chaos". It is no mere coincidence that Newsweek had a headline saying "Ukrainian Nationalist Volunteers Committing 'ISIS-Style' War Crimes" on September 10, 2014. Whether they know it or not, these deviant forces, whether they are the ultra-nationalist Pravy Sektor militias in Ukraine or the head-cutting gangs of Al-Nusra and the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH in Syria and Iraq, all serve one master. These agents of chaos are unleashing different waves of constructive chaos to prevent Eurasian integration and a world order that is free of US dictates.

The "constructive chaos" that is being unleashed in Eurasia will eventually wreak havoc in India. If New Delhi thinks that it will be left alone, it is foolishly mistaken. The same agents of chaos will plague it as well. It too is a target like China, Iran, and Russia.

Why is it okay for the US, EU, and NATO to support separatist movements and militias in other parts of the world, but criticised and forbidden for other countries to do the same?

In the US and the EU, the refuge that Denmark gave Isa Munayev is not questioned.

Strange alliances

It should not come as a surprise that the different agents of chaos are loosely aligned. They serve the same master and they have the same enemies, one of which is the Russian Federation.

It is in this context that Marcin Mamon has reported about the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH connection in Ukraine. He even explains that some of the fighters from the Caucasus feel that they have a debt to Ukrainians like Oleksandr Muzychko.

Mamon is a Polish documentary filmmaker who has produced a number of documentaries about Chechnya, such as *The Smell of Paradise* with Mariusz Pilis in 2005, for the British Broadcasting Corporation's *Storyville* program. He is also openly sympathetic to the cause of the Chechen separatists against Russia in the North Caucasus.

Mamon's travels to Afghanistan and his interaction with Chechen separatist fighters have resulted in the Polish filmmaker having contacts with the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH inside Syria and Turkey. This extraordinarily led him down a new path to Ukraine.

"I didn't even know, at that point, whom I was meeting. I knew only that Khalid, my contact in Turkey with the Islamic State [ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH], had told me his 'brothers' were in Ukraine, and I could trust them," he writes about his meeting in a "potholed street in Kiev, east of the Dnieper River, in an area known as the Left Bank". In an earlier article Mamon explains that these so-called "brothers are members of ISIS and other underground Islamic organisations" who "are on every continent, and in almost every country, and now they are in Ukraine, too". He also explains that "Khalid, who uses a pseudonym, leads the Islamic State's underground branch in Istanbul. He came from Syria to help control the flood of volunteers arriving in Turkey from all over the world, wanting to join the global jihad. Now, he wanted to put me in touch with Ruslan, a 'brother' fighting with Muslims in Ukraine".

Ukrainian ultra-nationalists like Muzychko also became so-called "brothers" and accepted into this network. Mamon explains that the Chechen fighters accepted him "even though he never converted to Islam" and that "Muzyczko, along with other Ukrainian volunteers, joined Chechen fighters and took part in the first Chechen war against Russia" where they "commanded a branch of Ukrainian volunteers, called 'Viking', which fought under famed Chechen militant leader Shamil Basayev."

Private battalions

What does it say when Chechen separatists and the transnational network of so-called "brothers" tied to the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH are being recruited or used to fill the ranks of private militias being used by Ukrainian oligarchs? This is a very important question. It also clearly demonstrates how these elements are agents of chaos.

Marcin Mamon travelled to Ukraine to meet the Chechen fighter Isa Munayev. Munayev's background is explained thus: "Even before he arrived in Ukraine, Munayev was well-known. He fought against Russian forces in both Chechen wars; in the second, he was the commander of the war in Grozny. After the Chechen capital was captured by Russian forces between 1999 and 2000, Munayev and his men took refuge in the mountains. He fought from there until 2005, when he was seriously injured and went to Europe for treatment. Munayev lived in Denmark until 2014. Then war broke out in Ukraine, and he decided it was time to fight the Russians again".

The above is an important passage, because it illustrates how the US and EU have supported militants fighting against Russia. In the US and the EU, the refuge that Denmark gave Isa Munayev is not questioned, whereas the allegations levelled against Moscow for supporting the soldiers of the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic are seen as criminal. Why the double standards? Why is it okay for the US, EU, and NATO to support separatist movements and militias in other parts of the world, but criticised and forbidden for other countries to do the same?

"An older man in a leather jacket introduced me to Munayev. 'Our good brother Khalid recommended this man', the man said. (Khalid is today one of the most important leaders of the Islamic State. Khalid and Munayev knew each other from years spent fighting together in Chechnya)", Marcin Mamon explains about the connections between the Chechen separatists and ISIS/ISIL/IS/Daish/Daesh.

Munayev has come to Ukraine to establish "one of what would become several dozen private battalions that sprang up to fight on the side of the Ukrainian government, operating separately from the military". His militia was named the Dzhokhar Dudayev battalion, which was named after the separatist president of Chechnya.

globalresearch.ca

Australian Marxist Review

Journal of the Communist Party of Australia

IDEAS
THEORY
POLICIES
EXPERIENCE
DISCUSSION

4 issues are $25
including postage within Australia

74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
Ph 02 9699 8844 shop@cpa.org.au
www.cpa.org.au/amr
Credit cards incl type, name, number & exp date.
All Cheques/Money Orders to "CPA".

Support *The Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Communist Party of Australia

www.cpa.org.au cpa@cpa.org.au

74 Buckingham St,
Surry Hills, 2010
P: 02 9699 8844
F: 02 9699 9833

General Secretary
Bob Briton gensec@cpa.org.au
Party President
Vinnie Molina president@cpa.org.au

Brisbane Branch
PO Box 33, Camp Hill, Qld 4152
P: 0449 202 189
cpabris@live.com.au

Sydney District Committee
Wayne Sonter
74 Buckingham St,
Surry Hills, NSW 2010
P: 02 9699 8844 F: 02 9699 9833

Tasmania Branch
Bob Briton
P: 0418 894 366 tas@cpa.org.au

Riverina Branch
Allan Hamilton
2/57 Cooper St,
Cootamundra, NSW 2590
riverina@cpa.org.au

WA Branch
Vinnie Molina
PO Box 98,
North Perth, WA 6906
P: 0419 812 872
perth@cpa.org.au

ACT
Ruben Duran
P: 0421 049 602
act@cpa.org.au

SA State Committee
Bob Briton,
PO Box 612,
Port Adelaide BC, SA 5015
P: 0418 894 366
sa@cpa.org.au
www.adelaidecommunists.org

Newcastle Branch
newcastle@cpa.org.au

Melbourne Branch
Andrew Irving
Box 3 Room 0 Trades Hall,
Lygon St, Carlton Sth Vic 3053
P: 03 9639 1550
F: 03 9639 4199
viccpa@netspace.net.au