Trade unions are approaching a crucial juncture in their history. When in the late 1990s the then Workplace Relations Minister Peter Reith stripped workers of many hard won conditions, it was the opening shot in the Government’s longer term plan to smash the union movement in this country. Reith, the man who brought hooded goons, guns and dogs onto Australia’s waterfront, is gone. But the Government’s objective remains.

It now intends to step up the pace. The employers and government are preparing for a massive offensive against workers and their unions.

With control of both Houses of Parliament from July 1 next year, the Howard Government will push through legislation to strip bare all enterprise bargaining agreements, leaving only minimal working conditions and wage rates.

Where awards were stripped back to 20 so-called “allowable matters” by Reith, trade unions were forced to turn to enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) to retrieve as many of the lost award provisions as possible.

The task was made more difficult by restrictions placed on unions, including a clamp down on the right to take industrial action. Trade union resources were pushed beyond their limits and many workplaces and force workers onto the employers’ side. The Electrolux case (see The Guardian 12-09-04) as an excuse to introduce legislation that will strip EBAs of the use of contractors and travelling time; restrictions on the use of contractors; training and study leave; protective clothing.

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The many award provisions that were removed included: flextime; shift breaks; maximum hours of work; restrictions on the use and hours of work of casuals; accident pay; amenities; promotion systems; incremental wage rises; equal employment opportunity; closed shops; stop work meetings; workplace harassment; shop steward rights; preference to unionists; use of contractors; travelling time; superannuation; training and study leave; protective clothing.

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The Guardian

Insidious propaganda

Rupert Murdoch denies that management interferes in editorial decision-making, and generally speaking that is probably true. The uniformly pro-war, fear-mongering line that pours out every evening, and forms the daily news-sheets through Fox News television, is not the result of day-to-day edicts handed down from his board of directors. Murdoch backs George W Bush, the theft of civil rights and the military aggression being carried out under the cover of the war on terrorism. Senior editors are given their marching orders, the wheels are put in motion and the general line followed: all employees must follow suit. The propaganda can be overt, or sly and underhand. The Weekend Australian Magazine of November 20 is a case in point.

On its cover, instead of a headline there is a long quote – “She looked pregnant, otherwise she was completely normal. She looked normal up to the moment when she exploded.” There is the photograph of a young woman in army fatigues holding a child on one arm and a gun on the other. That particular issue of the magazine carries a very disturbing and degrading denial of the ties to the denigration of women. The juxtaposition of photos, the order of appearance of its articles, the choice of subjects; all were loaded up for maximum emotional effect.

There was a reminding piece on the women protesters who were arrested at the US base at Pine Gap in 1983, written as though the threat of nuclear annihilation by a world superpower no longer exists, and as if US spy bases are essentially benign presences.

Next there was a profile of singer Tina Harrold – with glossy photo in designer fashions – who we are told critics are “comparing to Nina Simone and Aretha Franklin”. Further on there is a head and shoulders colour portrait across two pages of “Perth teenager Gemma Ward”, who we are informed is the “supermodel of the moment” but who has “her “wide eyes … set on bigger things”. There followed two pages with a photo history.

The next feature was a story about shark attacks with the up-case headline “BLOOD IN THE WATER”, leading into the cover story. Headlined “MOTHER, MURDERER, MARTYR”, it asked, “What led a young mother to choose a murderous fate as a suicide bomber?” The article runs across seven pages.

It asserts, “Every Palestinian wants to be a suicide bomber, in public at least. Western reporters’ notebooks are filled with page after page of declarations of an imminent self-sacrifice that rarely happens. Like any old coin the same tired slogans have passed from hand to hand despite the dawning recognition that the war of martyrs has failed...”

Further on the author contradicts himself, claiming “the cult of martyrdom has grown”. And in order to rob the story of its political content, the article insinuates, without any facts to back it up, that the young mother had become pregnant in an adulterous affair that was a “propelling factor” in her carrying out the bombing.

It says she had “never left the prison strip of Gaza”, which is “crammed with 1.3 million Palestinian refugees”, that she “lived in a world of suffocating closeness…”. The author’s description of Palestinian society, its historical and cultural make up, is placed in skewed context: “The tribe, not the individual is paramount. Western concepts of individualism – the ambitions and dreams, the private bedroom that Australian teenagers take for granted – are culturally alien.”

The Israeli occupation and its real “suffocating closeness”, is mentioned, but the impression conveyed is that this is simply a necessary measure in order to keep in check this “alien” culture.

In this context, we are expected to draw from all of this is that the answer to the question posed at the beginning, “What led a young mother to...?” must be, “Because she is not Western”, meaning “unsullied” as a sensibly “decivilised” society drove her to it. The real barbarians – Israel’s Sharon Government and its state-sponsored terror – are left completely out of the picture.

If only she had been like these blues singer, that supermodel, those spirited women at Pine Gap, who after all didn’t resort to such sort of thing. Such are the insidious peddlers of racial hatred and the promoters of war.

The Guardian

CPA contribution to Eureka 150th Celebrations

The Sydney District Committee (SDC) of the CPA mark to the 150th Anniversary of the Eureka Stockade by reprinting two publications already existing in the working class history of Australia. These publications will be launched at an event called “Still Fighting to Defend Democratic Rights” on Sunday December 5 at the Gaelic Club.

The first publication is called Eureka – A Portfolio of Prints; it was originally printed in 1954 to mark the 100th Anniversary of the stockade.

This portfolio includes 13 lino cuts of events leading up to and during the siege of the stockade. Some of the artists who produced this work are still alive and are very happy to see their work reprinted.

The artwork is backed up by a historical comment from the participants or contemporaries of the events. One very notable contemporary was Karl Marx who wrote about it, an excerpt of what he wrote is included. Stockade participants Monty Miller and Carboi Raffaello are liberally quoted.

The combination of stark lino cuts and the commentary of participants makes for a very significant publication. The SDC believes this publication would make a very valuable addition to any library, personal, local, union, university or any other.

The second publication, The Eureka Stockade, is a small 36-page booklet by RD Walshe. This booklet was also first produced in 1954 for the 100th Anniversary. It maps the political content of the struggle and its relevance for today’s Australia.

The launch of these books will feature as guest speaker Dr Drew Cottle, historian, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Western Sydney. Drew would be known to many readers for his excellent book, The Brisbane Line. To make it a really great afternoon, the launch will feature songs of workers’ struggle from around the world.

The DC urges all members, friends, unionists, in fact anyone with an interest in working class history to attend on December 5. See the ad on page 7 for details of function.

The Annual Glebe Street Fair

The Communist Party of Australia – Port Jackson Branch – was part of the annual Glebe Street Fair 2004 held on Sunday November 21. The basic selling item was the now “famous brand of revolutionary jams”.

Passers by were encouraged to visit the stall and look at the goods. We received many compliments to the effect that we were one of the few stalls still campaigning against the “victory” of Howard. We sold many copies of the Communist Manifesto and material on Che.

If you are interested in more information on the Port Jackson Branch or the Party in general, then please phone 02 9669 8844 and ask for Rob or Tom.

Second Hospital Appeal for Iraq

Late last year the Communist Party of Australia through The Guardian, appealed for funds to provide medical assistance for the people of Iraq. As a result of the generous contributions from readers and supporters more than $2,000 was raised. The suffering and needs of the Iraq people have not diminished over the last 12 months. The CPA is again appealing to readers, members, supporters and friends to help raise an even bigger amount this year – no less than $5000. Money collected will be conveyed to the Iraqi Communist Party to continue their medical services to the people of Iraq.

We urge you to give what you can – and a bit more! Many thanks to the following for their generous contributions:

H Heinemann $34, Cathy Picone $50, Michael Power $50.

Total $134.00

Hospital Appeal for Iraq

I ………………………………………..donate $………………. to the above appeal.

I agree/do not agree to having my contribution acknowledged in The Guardian.

Contributions by cheque, money order or credit card giving name on the card, expiry number and expiry date.

Credit card _ _ _ _  _ _ _ _  _ _ _ _ Expiry date _ _  _ _

Please send donations to: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
Hardie drags out asbestos compo agony

Bob Briton

Last week representatives of the NSW Attorney General’s Department and Cabinet sat in on discussions being held between the ACTU and James Hardie about the future of compensation to victims of the giant manufacturer’s asbestos products. Shortly afterwards, the Carr Government announced that a review would be conducted into the state’s current compensation scheme to see if legal costs could be kept down. The review is expected to be completed by early 2005.

ACTU Secretary Greg Combet had originally requested the review as a way around Hardie’s previous dogged insistence on a statutory scheme that would strip asbestos disease sufferers of their right to seek compensation under common law. Hardie welcomed the news of the review.

The six weeks of talks that followed on from the Jackson Inquiry had become deadlocked over the issue of legal costs. Representatives of the building products manufacturer alleged that lawyers’ fees in the current system could swallow up $400 million of the over $2 billion (20%) expected to be needed to compensate claimants. At different times they have maintained that legal costs would account for 27 per cent, 30 per cent or even 40 per cent of payouts within the existing system.

During the Jackson Inquiry, however, plaintiff lawyers Turner Freeman revealed that legal fees account for only 17 per cent of the costs met by Medical Research and Compensation Foundation (MCRF) — the body currently distributing compensation that had been set up from the Jackson Inquiry. MCRF estimates that it has sufficient funds to meet claims until April, its grim situation will probably lead management to appoint a liquidator in early December.

The ACTU hopes that the NSW Government’s review of the current court-based system will put the emphasis in discussions back on the question of the financing of Hardie’s liabilities by Hardie. In view of Hardie’s foot dragging, the strengthening of the community campaign against the company becomes a vital task.

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Still avoiding responsibility

Hardie has persisted with its heartless stance in the face of considerable pressure. The Jackson Inquiry found that the company had schemed to avoid its full responsibility to asbestos victims. The NSW Government has threatened to pass legislation to make the corporation — not just its spin-off foundation — directly liable for compensation if the current talks break down. There is a growing boycott movement against James Hardie products and unions and victims now have a permanent protest outside the company’s factory in Rosehill, NSW.

It appears, though, that the company has sympathy in high places. Last week SA Labor Senator Penny Wong called on Hardie’s director Donald McGregor to step aside as Telstra chairman in light of the ongoing asbestos scandal. Communications Minister Helen Coonan described the call as a “low act” and added, “Whilst we do support the claims of the victims … it is not just a simple matter of snapping your fingers — you have to be able to fund these claims.”

Hardie did manage to snap its fingers and produce $10 million for disgraced former executives Peter McDonald and Peter Shafron. The company would probably claim to have sniffed its fingers again recently with the announcement of an offer of $85 million to bail MCRF out of its current difficulties. At the moment the foundation has assets of $40 million as against $80 million in notified claims.

Talk of liquidator

MCRF managing director Dennis Cooper described the offer as “another example of spin over substance”. He was not interested in any funding proposal unless the foundation’s legal rights against the Hardie group and its directors were totally preserved. While MCRF estimates that it has sufficient funds to meet claims until April, its grim situation will probably lead management to appoint a liquidator in early December.

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The Sydney rail system, which performed brilliantly during the Sydney Olympics, has since been reduced to near chaos, principally because of the corporation’s inability to manage the Hardie group and its directors. The corporation failed to convince the Dust Diseases Tribunal.

Hardie is indeed steering developments to achieve by other means what it said it wanted at the beginning of the talks. Hardie is still insisting on a system involving mediation before the compensation matters go before the Dust Diseases Tribunal.

It now wants claimants to be penalised if they do not accept the company’s offer of damages and a subsequent court ruling awards lower damages. Hardie claims its costs would be “halved” under such a scheme. If the unions and the NSW Government does not retain its position, Hardie may get its statutory legislation to make the corporation directly liable for compensation.

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The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) NSW Branch has donated $20,000 to the Asbestos Disease Support and Information Service. They have become the first employer to commit funds from the State Government as the reason for placating construction workers. The payments to the workers will be the lowest paid disability workers in the state. By splitting compensation for future sufferers and their families. Unions representing workers at Brisbane City Council are uniting to protect wages and working conditions. The move comes after the Mayor of Brisbane announced an Operational Efficiency Review. The review identifies a number of areas for improvement. Among the possible changes is reorganising the council’s structure. The Queensland Council of Unions has produced a campaign newsletter which can be accessed at brisbanecommunity.com.

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The Spook
Written by Melissa Reeves
Directed by Neil Armfield

The play opens as Martin raves excitedly into a tape recorder about a party he had just attended, giving names and descriptions of guests, what they argued about, who drank too much and who’s bonking whom. He related Martin’s excitement for the job wanes as he not only begins to know and develop close friendships with his new comrades, but also finds – as a good working-class boy – that he often has sympathy for their causes.

It is a turbulent time in the Australian left – anti-communist hysteria has split the Labor Party. The Maoists have split from the Communist Party, a military coup in Greece unleashes a second wave of mass murder against Communists there. The war in Vietnam is escalating and just as democracy is becoming is becoming a distant memory a crisis in Czechoslovakia looms. Thus the stage is set for a quiet hum of agreement and nervous energy that is both enduring and gratifying.

Directed by his ASIO contact (Steve Le Marquand) that he is performing a great duty in the service of Australia. A 19-year-old Martin takes to the job with gusto.

Melissa Reeves’ thorough research of the subject matter is evident and is appreciated. Historical events are woven through the dialogue – often with great subtlety – and each piece of news influences Martin, his Party comrades and family members in daily activity. I approached this play with great caution, fearing it may descend into a cheap pot shot at the old commie lags. It was a time of national fear and xenophobia. It was a time of national fear and xenophobia. It was a time of national fear and xenophobia. It was a time of national fear and xenophobia.

Actor Russell Kiefel pulled no punches responding, “If you substitute an Iraqi Muslim for the Greek Communist you will immediately understand”. A quiet hum of agreement and dozens of nodding heads indicated that these school students had indeed understood.

The Spook is playing at the Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney, until December 22.

For tickets and session times go to www.belvoir.com.au

Privatising apprenticeships

The Federal government is prepared to pay ten times more per student to private training providers than it injects into the TAFE system. The move, which would put competency skills into the private sector and may be labelled a “thinly veiled attempt to privatise training”. Unions have revealed that the plan to establish the “Australian Technical Colleges” would involve school leavers and workers employed on AWAs (gov- ernment non-unison individuals’ training colleges) who were on the brink of the campuses.

The colleges would exist alongside the existing TAFE system and duplicate its underfunded resources, according to Phil Bradley from the NSW TAFE Teachers’ Federation.

“TAFE could provide this training if it was not starved of billions since the Howard Government came to power”, said Mr Bradley. “There has been a 25 percent cut per student in real terms over the last five years.”

Government figures show that over 50,000 people were turned away from TAFE last year because of funding shortages. This does not take into account others who did not even apply because of fee rises.

Mr Bradley also slammed a plan by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the National Farmers Federation to set up the “Institute of Trade Skills Excellence”.

The Institute is seen as a move by big business to provide accreditation, especially in the current body overseeing trade accreditation, the Australian National Training Authority, is being abolished from July 1, 2005.

Even small business and private providers are up in arms over the federal government move, with the Australian Council of Private Education and Training slamming the Institute proposal.

This will create a narrow compartmentalisation of needs of big business”, said Mr Bradley.

Unions are currently preparing a response to the Government’s Australian Technical Colleges proposal.

The privatisation of health services, spearheaded by the Howard Government’s destruction of Medicare, will be accompanied by the abandonment of ethics and standards in the pursuit of profits. So, we have drug companies paying doctors for information about the medicines they prescribe for their patients. GPs estimate that the sale of script information could see doctors collectively pocket $200 million a year.

The Australian Medical Association – which fundamentally supports privatisation – says a medicine should be chosen because it is the right one for the patient and “not because of perverse incentives”. Can’t have it both ways.

Meanwhile, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Chile, the latest scare tactic in the fear and loathing department is that terrorists might attack food supplies. Howard and his puppeteer George W Bush no doubt played a big hand in getting that into the summit’s final draft statement. And the masses of impoverished and unemployed will surely be comforted in the knowledge that a gathering of world leaders around crucial economic questions has included a commitment to crack down on shoulder-held anti-aircraft missiles.

Secrecy is a fundamental mode of operation for a government involved up to its armpits in collusion, nepotism and corruption. So it was that last week the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet announced that any disclosure by the media of leaked secret policy material will result in police raids on the particular media outlet. This followed a Federal Police raid on the National Indigenous Times newspaper two weeks ago after it published policy information about racist plans to take away welfare payments from Indigenous Australians. Peter Shergold, the Head of the Department, said he was protecting “the provision of frank and fearless advice”. Like the stuff about Iraq’s weapons, or the children onboard affair, perhaps?

CAPITALIST HOG(S) OF THE WEEK: are the Band-Aid pop stars. At Christmas time 20 years ago a bunch of overpaid rock singers, led by Bob Geldof, came together in what was called the Band-Aid concert and recorded the song, “Do They Know It’s Christmas?”. Then as now it was a political question: underdeveloped former colonial possessions are still dominated and exploited by the economically powerful West. Now, Sir Bob (knighthood for his efforts) and other like-minded pop stars are to again to record the Christmas ditty in the name of the world’s starving millions. It also apparently hasn’t occurred to these puffed up celebrities that asking the famine stricken if they know it is Christmas is somewhat askew considering the devastation was hitting nations that are overwhelmingly of the Islamic faith. British Chancellor Gordon Brown was quick to support this exercise that helps obscure the real reason behind the plight of the poor, announcing that government taxes on the new CD will be waived.
In Australia today, there is no more powerful symbol of resistance to tyranny than the Eureka flag. It stands as the powerful symbol of resistance to injustice.

The colonial authorities were on notice, resistance to injustice was increasing and would not be cowered by inflicting even greater tyranny.

The Eureka Stockade 150 years ago, the Southern Cross of Eureka has come to embody everything that is best in the Australian character; courage, conviction and a commitment to a Fair Go.

For miners-workers, we cherish the spirit of Eureka. For us, the Eureka miners’ rebellion is not a far off historical clash that occurred 150 years ago and is frozen in time; it is alive in our struggles today.

The burning rage against injustices that afflicted the Eureka miners 150 years ago, remains undiminished in our struggles today.

There is nothing we wear with greater pride than the symbol of Eureka. There is nothing we cherish more than the proud independent spirit of Eureka.

As we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade on December 3 1854, it is fitting to remember the events that led to this uprising and the benefits that flowed to all Australians as a result of it.

The Eureka Story

In 1851 gold was discovered in a number of places across central Victoria sparking a gold rush that attracted people from not only all over Australia but from all over the world. By 1854 there were almost 70,000 men, women and children living on the Victorian goldfields chasing fortune.

By then, the easy surface gold was exhausted and the miners burrowed into the hills and gullies. The workings became known as diggings and those that mined them were Australia’s first diggers.

The rush to the gold fields created a huge shortage of labour as workers left the factories, wharves and industries in search of their fortune. This greatly concerned the captains of industry who not only had to contend with a shortage in search for licences had to deal with increased demands from the workers who remained and who had real industrial muscle.

The value of every fine be given to the arresting copper.

Under the control of the Gold Commission on the mining fields, the authorities unleashed a wave of tyranny. Miners who had licences but did not have them on them as they worked their claim were arrest and fined.

 Arrested miners were taken to police camps and chained to logs or gum trees or flung into filthy prisons until they or their mates found the money to pay the fines. The coppers grew more greedy and ruthless and increased demands from the miners that was enforced by a large contingent of police and backed up by a military garrison.

Rising anger

Two events in October 1854 lit the fuse that exploded into the Eureka Rebellion. The wrongful arrest during a licence hunt of a crippled non-English speaking Armenian named James Scobie, Father Smyth. The crippled man was subsequently convicted of assaulting a police officer.

The second occurred when a miner, James Scobie, was killed by the owner of the Eureka Hotel, James Bentley, and three of his men. Bentley and his cronies were acquitted, an injustice that outraged the diggers.

The murdered digger Scobie’s claim was next to that of Peter Lalor, an Irishman who was greatly respected among the diggers.

Lalor, whose brother James Fintan was a leader of the Young Irelanders rebellion in Ireland, had spoken out against the injustices meted out to the diggers in the mining regions of Ballarat, which had a population of some 25,000, including immigrants from Ireland, New South Wales, Britain and China.

In contrast to the miners’ quarters, a new establishment was growing up around the Government Camp, from where the Resident Gold Commissioner, Robert Rede, exercised absolute authority which was enforced by a large contingent of police and backed up by a military garrison.

Pursuit of justice

On October 17, a crowd of 4000 gathered near the Eureka Hotel, which was surrounded by the hated police. Despite this the meeting was conducted peacefully and it passed two resolutions. The first said: “That this meeting pledges itself to use lawful means to have the Bentley case tried again”. The second resolution: “That this meeting offer a reward for the conviction of James Scobie’s murderers.”

As the meeting was breaking up the police rode into the crowd trying to herd them away. Inside the Eureka Hotel, the owner, Bentley, panicked and mounting a horse in sight of the angry miners rode full gallop towards the police camp.

The crowd had now swollen to around 10,000 and moved toward the Eureka Hotel to be confronted by Commissioner Rede. Despite Rede’s and the heavy police presence the Eureka Hotel was burned to the ground.

Seven men were arrested and charged.

In response, Governor Hotham decided to take a hard line and ordered 500 extra police and soldiers to Ballarat. Hotham demanded more of the detected licence hunts ordering the police to use whatever force they felt was necessary.

On October 22, a crowd estimated at 10,000 miners gathered at Bakery Hill directly across the flat from the Eureka Hotel to be confronted by Commissioner Rede. Despite Rede’s and the heavy police presence the Eureka Hotel was burned to the ground.

On November 1, the Ballarat Reform League was formed.

Meanwhile in Ballarat, four of the seven men arrested for burning down the Eureka Hotel were found innocent and the other three were sent to Melbourne, convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from three months to six months.

Throughout the next month the leadership of the Reform League sought meetings with Gold Commissioner Rede and Governor Hotham to discuss Bentley’s acquittal and the jailing of the three Eureka men as well as broader issues such as the abolition of the licence, democratic representation of the gold fields and the disbanning of the revived Gold Commissions.

As a public condemnation of the injustices grew, so too did Governor Hotham’s concern and he appointed one of the State’s most respected Magistrates, Mr Stuart, to review the Bentley acquittals. Stuart found that the Ballarat Magistrate Dewes—who acquitted Bentley and his cohorts—and some police were not only liars but were brutal and wick ed and that Bentley was undoubtedly guilty of Scobie’s murder.

Bentley and two of his henchmen were sentenced on 18 November to three years hard labour for the murder of James Scobie. But that was all that the miners were going to get from Hotham. Their three mates remained in jail and the Governor remained opposed to their demands for reform.

The colonial powers in Melbourne and on the Ballarat gold fields remained determined to impose their rule by force.

On November 28, military reinforcements from Melbourne to the gold fields were attacked by a group of miners at Eureka. Baggage carts were overturned and a number of men were injured in the clash.

Southern Cross flown

The following day, November 29, at a mass meeting of some 12,000 miners on Bakery Hill, the Southern Cross flag was flown for the first time.
The moderate leadership of the Ballarat Reform League was reported on their failure to make any significant progress in their talks with Governor Hotham.

The diggers had had enough.

Pushing his way through the crowd to the platform, a miner named Frederick Vern said he wanted to speak. He mocked that the diggers burn their licences and that no one take out a new one. Further, if any of the miners were arrested they rest pledged to free them.

Beneath the flag of the Southern Cross to the sound of their own guns firing, the miners burned their licences.

Commissioner Rede’s spies brought him the news and he responded by ordering a licence hunt the next day, November 30. They targeted the diggins closest to the police camp and eight miners were arrested.

Following the raid thousands of miners retreated to the head of Broken Hill where Peter Lalor, rifle in hand, stood on a tree stump.

Oath of allegiance

Lalor told all those who were there and who could not swear an oath of allegiance to the Southern Cross, to leave. Those who stayed formed into formations and with the Southern Cross hoisted on a flag-staff, Peter Lalor, now commander in chief, knelt beneath the flowing Southern Cross flag and led the diggers in their oath: “We swear by the Southern Cross to defend our rights and liberties”. Meanwhile, in the centre of the stockade a large bonfire was lit and a makeshift kitchen was established to feed the men.

At noon on Saturday December 2, no attack had come and most miners began to leave the stockade planning to come back on the Monday. By Saturday night only 150 miners remained at the stockade. Rede’s spies were reporting regularly. The police were thin that night and that they were poorly armed.

At 2am on Sunday December 3, the Government troops mustered quietly outside the police camp for their surprise assault on the 150 poorly armed miners in the Eureka Stockade.

The Government forces were made up of: 152 infantry soldiers; 30 cavalry; 74 mounted police; 24 foot police; and five inspectors.

At 3am when the attack began most of the Eureka miners were asleep.

The uneven fight lasted between 15 and 20 minutes.

At the end of the battle, among the 22 stockaders killed and the 12 wounded were Peter Lalor and 19 of his fellow fishermen. With the exception of one miner identified as being from New South Wales, all the others were immigrants.

News of the brutal murder of dozens of poorly armed Irish convict rebels. Their leaders were hanged in chains and most of the survivors sentenced to between 200 and 300 years. The Eureka diggers achieved little because the colony’s first convict coal mines.

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Within 17 years of the Eureka Stockade the following important laws were passed in Australia ahead of many reforms democratic rights for ordinary people throughout Australia.

• 1856 – Australia introduces Secret Voting at elections.

• 1857 – Australia introduces the right for every man to vote.

• 1858 – In Australia a man no longer had to own property to vote.

• 1858 – Australia introduces a short period of Parliament for every three years.

• 1859 – England introduced payment of Members of Parliament allowing workers and other in the community equal opportunities to stand. England follows suit in 1911.

The events of Eureka in 1854 were pivotal in Australia’s history for democratic rights and a Fair Go for all.

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Sydney
National Asbestos Awareness Day
Friday 26 November 10am - 3pm
Museum Institute, Darling Harbour
Call ADFA on 1800 006 196
People’s Weekly World

Philippines:
Police fire on striking workers

The strike has enjoyed massive support from various communities in Tarlac and other sectors nationwide. On November 15, some 12,000–15,000 people from 10 surrounding communities poured at the picket lines to show support to the workers. Together, they thwarted an earlier attempt of the police and military to dismantle the workers’ barricades.

At present, the remains of the slain victims lie at the gates of Hacienda Luisita. The victims’ family and the two labor unions vowed to parade the bodies of the 14 fatalities as a grim reminder of the brutal carnage. They also avowed to regroup and restore the picket lines, stressing that the bloodshed all the more fortified their resolve to continue with the fight. “It is better for us to die fighting than being hungry”, said the workers.

Even with the carnage, charges of assault, illegal assembly, inciting to sedition and malicious mischief are being readied against the strikers.

The KMU has called for an independent and speedy investigation of the bloodbath. Swift justice should be given to the massacre victims, to their families and to the farm workers.

Your support called for
Trade unions, other organisations and individuals are urged to send protest and condemnation letters calling for justice and indemnification for the victims of the massacre.

Letters may be sent by visiting: www.labourstart.org and then clicking onto the Philippines reference under the “Act Now!” column on the left.

AFL-CIO head focuses on unity

Roberto Wood

Just one week after the disappointing outcome of the November 2 election in which the American labour movement had committed unprecedented money, time and attention, leaders of the AFL-CIO gathered in Washington, DC, for a one-day meeting to draw lessons and to plan for the difficult battles ahead.

The council met November 10 with defeated Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, who came to thank its labour for its support. To huge applause, Kerry pledged to continue battling. He vowed to raise his profile on workers’ causes such as overtime pay, trade, health care reform, and raising the minimum wage.

While expressing disappointment that Kerry did not win, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney focused most of his attention on the political potential of the network that labour built. “Never before had the American labour movement had committed unprecedented money, time and attention, leaders of the AFL-CIO gathered in Washington, DC, for a one-day meeting to draw lessons and to plan for the difficult battles ahead.

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“Never have we been so unified, moving forward together. We built a lasting force to continue the fight against attacks on working families, the fight for economic justice.”

The meeting also set up a process and timeline to consider much-discussed changes to the federation’s structure at the next regular meeting of the 54-member executive council in Los Angeles in February. The council is not only faced with the inevitable dissay at the electoral defeat. There is long-simmering frustration at the fact that big membership losses, due to outsourcing and technology-driven productivity gains, especially in the manufacturing sectors, have not been matched by organising victories. Sweeney appeared to be going to great lengths to preserve unity of the 59-member federation in the face of these challenges.

Sweeney announced the formation of a “committee for change” composed of the federation’s 25-member executive committee, which he will chair. He said the committee will reach out to all unions, state federations, central labour councils and constituent organisations as well as to rank-and-file for proposals.

One of those pushing most aggressively for structural changes is Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union. Prior to the meeting, Stern issued a 10-point program for major change in the structure of all unions, including merging smaller unions into larger, more powerful ones.

Leo Gerard, president of the Steelworkers Union, put his focus into larger, more powerful ones.

The four labour leaders, due to deal with the mass deporting four senior international unionists from the international airport in Bogotá in early November.

Colombia departs unionists
Maria Eaaovist

Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, condemned the Colombian government for deporting four senior international trade unionists from the international airport in Bogotá in early November.

“In a country where union activists are being killed as they fight for their rights, it is intolerable that international unionists expressing solidarity and support should be victims of a political game of intimidation”, said White.

The four labour leaders, due to attend an international union meeting, were detained at the El Dorado airport by agents of Colombia’s security forces as they prepared to return to Britain with senior immigration officials that their names appeared on a “list of people that the government declared because they had attended an international union conference last September and described as ‘illegal’ by senior government officials.”

The four included Vicente Baert Mosquera, General Secretary of the world’s biggest union confederation, the International Federation of Independent Trade Unions (ICFTU). In Brussels, a delegation led by ICFTU Assistant General Secretary Jose Olivio de Oliveira told Colombia’s ambassador, Nicolas Echavarria, that the deportation would constitute a violation of the government’s anti-union policies.

Following strong international condemnation of Colombia’s Vice President Francisco Santos and Foreign Minister Carolina Barco’s decision to deport four senior international unionists, the ICFTU has announced the formation of a “committee for change” in the structure of all unions, state federations, central union federations in the face of these changes.

The government’s decision was reversed following a formal protest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented by representatives of the global union federations and Colombians.

People’s Weekly World

Sydney
National Asbestos Awareness Day
Friday 26 November 10am - 3pm
Museum Institute, Darling Harbour
02 9637 8759 or toll free: 1800 006 196
asbestos@optusnet.com.au
Proudly presented by the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia Inc.

ASBESTOS CAN KILL

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The Guardian
November 24, 2004

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Iraq Every day it gets worse
Susan Webb

In the wake of the US assault on Iraq, the International High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, called for investigation of possible violations of international laws on treatment of civilians and war prisoners in Iraq.

News reports and photos show women, old people and children among the bodies lying in the streets who have been killed by gunshots, cars, with explosives. A father of seven told Reuters his children were sick with diarrhea and hadn’t eaten for days.

Associated Press photographer Bilal Hussein, who lives in Fallujah, reported on the aftermath of the US assault, “Destruction was everywhere. I saw people lying dead in the streets, the wounded were bleeding and there was no one to come and help them.”

“Every day it gets worse”

When US soldiers started firing on houses in his neighbourhood, he panicked and headed to the river to swim across to safer ground. “But I changed my mind”, he later told reporters, “after seeing US helicopters firing on people who tried to cross the river.” A family of five was shot dead as they tried to cross, he said.

Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions spokesman, Abdulhussain said the IFTU opposes the use of military force against civilian areas like Fallujah, and called for “a far greater effort” to negotiate a peaceful end to this “lawlessness, violence and impunity against Iraqi civilians”. The US military officials say they are investigating.

Iraqi Mormons, a national coordinator of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, commented on the incredible pressure faced by soldiers who “are being put back in combat the day after they’re wounded, while generals are living in air-conditioned houses in the ‘Green Zone’.”. Romo said that pressure is taking a toll on troops.

In a letter to President Bush before the US assault on Fallujah, the co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, representatives Dennis Kucinich and Barbara Lee (both Democrats), said, “There is no question our troops have the ability to take the city, but at what cost and to what end? A year from now will Fallujah be just another graveyard in a country teeming with anti-American sentiment?”

They urged Bush to “rethink the overall strategy in Iraq” and move toward “Iraqi self-determination with the help and participation of the United Nations”. In a statement last month, Kucinich condemned the administration’s request for an additional $70 billion for the Iraq occupation, which will hit Congress when it reconvenes in January. “The continued US presence in Iraq is counterproductive”, Kucinich charged. “Every day that we are inside Iraq the situation gets progressively worse.” The additional $70 billion “to continue a failed policy” pushes the total taxpayer cost to $225 billion, the congressional spokesman said. That is $225 billion that has not gone to our economy, schools, or health care system.”

Kevin Martin, executive director of Peace Action, said he would like to see an alternative, “a real strategy of disengagement”. As a measure, he told the People’s Weekly World, “would include funds to bring our troops home safely, funds for Iraq’s reconstruction, ‘controlled by the Iraqi people, not by the US’ and ‘funds for here at home’ that could pay for veterans’ care and other health and social needs.”

Violence escalated this week in Mosul, Iraq’s third largest city with a population of 1.5 million, and other cities in the country’s north and centre.

A leading member of the Iraqi Communist Party, who was also a member of the interim National Assembly, was ambushed and killed along with two comrades near the northern city of Kirkuk, on November 13.

Wadah Hassan Abdul Amir, always among those who opposed the party in early youth, and served in the party’s underground partisan Movement in Kirkuk, was killed in a gun attack by an armed gang against the Saddam Hussein dictatorship, the ICP said in a statement. His leadership in these struggles “won him the admiration and affection of the people of his region. He became a model and a hero”, the statement published in Guardian, 17-11-04 p.12)

A senior official of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of the Kurdish region’s two main parties, claimed that the Ba’ath Party has reconstituted itself in Mosul and is coordinating attacks against Iraqi police, government, and the city’s Kurdish and Christian minorities.

“The Ba’ath Party is working to recreate an ethnic civil war”, the Kurdish official said. Also last week, news media reported that kidnapped aid worker Margaret Hassan had been killed, and that aецed Iraqi-occupied Arab and Turkish-bom Iraqi citizen, had lived in Iraq since 1991, and had opposed the US occupation.

People’s Weekly World

Canadian dock workers to be fingerprinted for “security”

Port workers in Canada could soon be fired if they refuse to participate in new security checks, to be implemented as part of the federal government’s proposed new transportation security measures.

Around 10,000 dockworkers in the ports of Vancouver, Montreal and St-Louis-Burke, for example, will have their fingerprints and photographs taken, if new security measures, now in the final stages of implementation, take effect.

The measures, which are being imposed by the Canadian Government without a hearing, require background checks.

These include Canadian police and security intelligence services check for known or past associations and criminal records.

In addition, financial checks would be carried out in order to determine if a worker was prone to being involved in money laundering. The Canadian Government has stated that information would be shared with other foreign intelligence agencies.

If a worker refuses to undergo security clearance, they would lose their job.

According to Vancouver-based International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) coordinate Peter Lahay, “The regulations, in place since July 1, 2004, and imposed by the Canadian Government without hearing or consultation, require an invasion in advance of the inspection.

“Meanwhile the government is doing nothing in the way of truly securing the nation’s ports. This starts with a dedicated police force, Canada disbanded theirs in 1997, Security is being papered over and workers are being turned into scapegoats.

Kees Marges, ITF Dockers Section Secretary commented: “This is a wake-up call for port workers’ unions across the world. They should be alert to the consequences of being left out of boarders of the misuse of the ISPS Code. So far only unions from the US, Canada and Britain have been involved with the implementation of government policies, have raise specific complaints over the issues.”

The IF’s safety and security campaign, launched in September, calls on union support workers from excessive security legislation, which is frequently being used to undermine workers’ rights.

International Transport Workers’ Federation

“Every day it gets worse”

HAITI: The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organisation of American States has released a report condemning atrocities committed in Haiti since September 30. The Commission expressed concern about reported arbitrary arrests and detentions in the last two months including the October 2 arrest of the president of the Haitian Senate and three other politicians associated with the government of deceased President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, as well as the arrest of Father Gerard Jean-Juste in his Port-au-Prince parish. The commission emphasised the serious nature of reported threats and violent acts against human rights activists, journalists and the media in Haiti, as well as actions of armed gangs that are reportedly preventing delivery of humanitarian aid to the country’s flood victims.

BRITAIN: Scientist Steven Hawkins and London Mayor Ken Livingstone joined a moving ceremony in Trafalgar Square on November 2 to remember the thousands of people killed in the US war on Iraq. The names of thousands of Iraqis who have died were read one by one, along with the names of the over 1500 US military dead, 69 British military personnel and many victims from other nations. Parents and relatives of dead British soldiers participated, along with trade union leaders, celebrities from sports, the arts and science, and many rank-and-file activists.

NIGERIA: A second general strike to protest against rising fuel prices began on November 16. The strike was called by the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC). Union leaders accused the giant oil transnational Shell of being the “enemy of the Nigerian people”, and called for action against the company, which accounts for about half of Nigeria’s oil exports. NLC head Adams Oshiomhole said this time the strike would be total and indefinite.

ATHENS: At its meeting in Athens on October 31-November 1, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) endorsed the decision of a previous joint meeting in Beijing to establish a standing International Trade Union Forum. The Beijing meeting had brought together the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the WFTU, the Organisation of African Trade Unions (CATU), the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) of countries of the former Soviet Union. The WFTU welcomed the Forum as “an open platform and as an important step to raise the level of international trade union action at the present time in the struggle for the economic and social demands of the working people all over the world”.

Global briefs
Here we go again!
I read your front-page article last week about the Howard Government’s racist new welfare laws in absolute horror. Here we go again! The whole work-for-the-dole thing was tried out on the Aboriginal community first and then pushed on the rest of us. Now the next step in this control freak agenda is being mapped out. “Smart cards” to enable Centrelink to quickly deduct some or all of a person’s pathetic “benefit” and even to set limits on the community.

All this intrusion is said to be designed to overcome “passive welfare.” I reckon the plan is to get a whole section of the population to become jobless, utterly passive source of very cheap labour so that the Government can skim even more on its responsibilities to the community.

I’m sure the advertising campaigns won’t portray it like that. I notice terms like “self-reliance” and “shared responsibility agreements” are already being bandied around. Who is getting paid to come up with these warped ideas?

The idea of trialling this stuff on Aboriginal communities is really scary and must have been designed to ensure that it takes hold with the least resistance possible. With isolated communities living on extremely limited incomes there’s the chance to impose “collective responsibility” on them. Non-compliance by an individual or a number of individuals can be punished by denying services or benefits to a whole group. Then there’s the opportunity to set the majority of the population against “offending” persons and get the oppressed to enforce their own oppression.

Howard makes me sick the way he pretends that sections of the Aboriginal community support this recycled paternalism. It’s obvious that he hasn’t got any such support – the comments from Noel Pearson line he uses to cover his racism is getting so old it’s got whiskers.

This latest attack on people already lacking in the basics necessary for a healthy and comfortable life must be stopped in the bud. Good on The National Indigenous Times for making it public and alerting us all to the reality of the changes that are being hatched behind closed doors in the Howard ministry.

Laurie Wright Lismore, NSW

We still say: Bring the troops home!
I must admit I haven’t been following the Howard Government’s election campaign closely. With all else that is happening in the world at the moment it falls a little out of my sphere of interest.

There was one small detail I picked up from scanning the press over recent weeks: the opposition candidate, Victor Yushchenko, has promised to withdraw Ukrainian troops from Iraq, if elected.

So, as the US finds itself ever further from its goal of complete domination of Iraq, it is also finding that it has fewer and fewer friends fighting alongside it. The Spanish people succeeded in having their troops withdrawn by a method at which the Australians and Americans have subsequently failed – at a general election. The otherwise popular Aznar Government was brought down at the ballot box by a single issue – Spain’s involvement in the “War on terror”.

The Philippine troops have long gone.
The Hungarians announced three weeks ago that all their troops would be withdrawn by the end of March.

The Polish Government has announced it will also begin troop withdrawals in January after the election, with the Prime Minister stating that the remainder of the troops “will not remain in Iraq an hour longer than necessary”.

So we must ask: what impact will those troop withdrawals have on Australia?

Firstly, while our demonstrations against the war have failed so far, we must not forget that public pressure is the most valuable tool we have.

Even the slavishly pro-US government of Gloria Arroyo in the Philippines was forced to cave in to public pressure and withdraw its troops.

Secondly, the occupation forces are struggling to just hold ground in Iraq. As the “Coalition of the willing” dwindles it will put pressure on those remaining to supplement their numbers.

Tony Blair announced last week that the UK would be increasing the size of its contingent; the United States will no doubt make a similar announcement soon.

Even if so far we have been unable to have Australian troops withdrawn from Iraq, we must prevent more troops from going over!

Friends, we must not let John Howard’s victory dampen our resolve on Iraq. We must find new energy and reinvigorate the campaign for peace.

These facts remain unchanged: the war was wrong, the occupation is, our leaders lied and the bodies are piling up.

BRING THE TROOPS HOME!
Andrew Jackson Sydney, NSW

Remembrance Day
Remembrance Day and John Howard says “we can never repay the debt we owe” to our soldiers who died in the war.
Well, World War I? No problem. Our leaders killed a million Australians in World War I.

World War II? More than half an million. Our leaders killed a million-plus Australians in World War II. We must not forget that public pressure is the most valuable tool we have.

“Shared responsibility agreements”
The similarity to the concept of “offending persons” (what else can it be?) and the “passive welfare” concept is striking. The aim is the same: to ensure that poor people do not dare to ask for their benefits to be increased.

While the Howard Government was brought down in 1993 by an election campaign that was based on the realism of the Australian scene – the unemployment and homelessness anticipated by the recession – the present Government has no such support. It is being hatched behind closed doors in the Howard ministry.

Denis Keavns Wentworth Falls, NSW
10
November 24 2004
The Guardian
11
the naked male stand-in in son’s schooling. This leaves him so lights as a taxi driver to pay for his (played by Hugo Spear), moon-
he will willingly sacrifice all his baby. For the sake of his career that his wife has just had their first colleague while pretending delight
To Earth
meek-looking Warren Clarke (better prospect of returning to crime and local loanshark, Geoff must face the (a scaffolder) gets into debt to a
become an honest baker. When his and lawyers has more than a touch complexity in its characterisations

Trixy and Captain Cuddlepus interviewed in the Aardman series Creature Comforts

intelligence expert says that French pilots even flew missions. Retired US Air-force Lieutenant Colonel Tom Francena says that the United States and its allies knew about the use of chemical weapons by Saddam’s army against Iraqis and Scots from when it began but chose not to act on the information. The film asserts that when Saddam used chemical weapons to murder more than 5000 Kurds in Halabja, Iraq, in 1988 the US initially claimed Iraq was responsible for the deaths and refused to meet Kurdish witnesses of the crime or meet with members of the Iraqi opposition. French and German lawyers allegedly supplied Iraq’s chemical weapons program. Significantly, the French Government did not directly condemn the war. The documentary looks at the relationship between the United States’ commercial and strategic relations with Iraq and the failure of President Bush (Snr) to act when told that Hussein’s troops were mobilising for the invasion of Kuwait. Finally, the program asserts that the US and its allies were complicit in the slaughter of 300,000 Shiites – killed by Hussein after they rose up against him in 1991, after his defeat in the first Gulf War. Most of us are familiar with the charges but it’s nice to see them on the screen.

A few years ago, Aardman Animation, the makers of Wallace & Gromit and Chicken Run, made a short film called Creature Comforts. It was an amusing piece in which recorded interviews with ordinary Britons were put into the mouths of surprisingly appropriate animated plasticine animals. So successful was the concept that Aardman went on to do a series of TV ads for British Gas using the idea. Now, at last, Nick Park at Aardman has apparently decided to revive and expand the concept. The result is a new series of ten-minute shorts, with the overall title, again, of Creature Comforts. The comments from what the credits call “the great British pub” are often bizarre, but even the most mundane provide the animators and director Golezsolwitz with splendid opportunities (a middle-aged woman’s response “I’m actually afraid of the sea” in a discussion on the pleasures of the seaside takes on a wealth of new meaning when put in the mouth of a walrus). Comments from patients in a doctor’s waiting room have an added resonance when used as dialogue for animals visiting the vet. As you can see, the series is comprised of variations on a single joke. Watch more than a few minutes at a single stretch and it quickly palls.

Aardman, sensibly, has accordingly made the series in ten-minute episodes so as not to outstay its welcome. Used as a filler once a week, in the manner of Black Cab, it would make an amusing and clever interlude. But that is not how the ABC is going to show it.

They are running it three episodes at a time (ABC 8.30pm Thursdays) – a nice, neat half-hour block, you see. That’s the way I watched the preview tapes and it’s the wrong way to screen this material.

Sun November 28 – Sat December 4
The Debt (ABC 8.30pm Sunday) is a stand-alone drama produced by The Working Title grand of London and the offices of the BBC Drama.
Saddam Hussein: The Trial (SBS 9.30pm Tuesday) looks at evidence it says will never be presented or discussed at Saddam’s trial – evidence of the complicity of the US (and to a lesser degree France and Germany) in his crimes. The program charges that the United States not only supported the Iran-Iraq War – which resulted in the deaths of over a million people – but gave Iraq a “green light” to proceed with it. A mock observational documentary, The Office depicted a ghastly working environment, underpaid dead-end jobs, irritating colleagues and a smug, sexist boss – that was instantly recognised as being so true to life. In fact, it was so comically h"er-
fying that it became a hit in Britain and winner of numerous awards.

It claims that France supplied fighter planes and an American plan the conflict. The French Government did not directly condemn the war. The documentary looks at the relationship between the United States’ commercial and strategic relations with Iraq and the failure of President Bush (Snr) to act when told that Hussein’s troops were mobilising for the invasion of Kuwait. Finally, the program asserts that the US and its allies were complicit in the slaughter of 300,000 Scots – killed by Hussein after they rose up against him in 1991, after his defeat in the first Gulf War. Most of us are familiar with the charges but it’s nice to see them on the screen.

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Combines South East & South West Annual Union

Family Picnic Day

CFMEU CEPU AMWU AWU Building Trades Federation

Portland
Monday 13 December 11.00am - 3.00pm Portland Soccer Ground End of Percy St Contact: Mark Solly CFMEU 0427 013 186; Travis Lawson CFMEU 0417 247 999; Margarete Broderick Portland (03) 5223 4772; Aaren Carigliano CFMEU 9211 5532; Chry Nashottt AWU 0429 988 014 Tickets are available from the Union Office, job delegate, organiser or on the day at the picnic. Supported by the Portland & SE Trades and Labour Council

Adelaide
Monday 6 December 10.00am - 3.00pm Bonnyton Park (opposite Coca Cola) Tickets are $11/9 and are available from the Union Office, job delegate, organiser or on the day at the picnic. CFMEU 8424 3040 Visit CFMEU AMWU at www.cfmeu-forestdivision.com.au

City of Sydney, Central Business District

MANUFACTURING FEAR
Forum 2 – FACING FEAR
Friday 26 November 9am – 5pm UTS Broadway (Room to be confirmed)
No entry charge, refreshments provided

This forum focuses on the people and communities, racialised as ‘Other’, who have their freedoms curtailed, and currently are insecure, fearful, feeling terrorised in their own homes and how people working with racialised communities themselves responded, finding innovative ways to tell their stories.
Organised by: NSW Civil Rights Network + Research Initiative on International Activism, UTS
www.civilrightsnetwork.org www.internationalactivism.uts.edu.au
manufacturingfear@yahoo.com James Goodman 02 9514 2714

Politics in the Pub
Every Friday night 6pm – 7.45pm
Gaelic Club, 54 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills

November 26
ACEH AND WEST PAPUA – STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM Dr Nurdin Rahman Human Rights Activist, English, Uni Acoch John Martinkas Journalist and film maker, author of works on East Timor, Iraq

Inq: Pat Torres 02 9358 4834 pat Torres@bigpond.com; Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891; PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039; Win Chidele Fax 02 9660 6564 www.politicainthepub.org

The Guardian
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010 Ph 02 9299 9944 Fax: 02 9299 9933 Email guardian@cpa.org.au
Editor: Anna Pha
Published by
Guardian Publications Australia Ltd
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Printed by Spot Press
105-107 Victoria Rd Marrickville 2204
Responsibility for electoral comment is taken by T Pearson, 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010

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CFMEU Mining & Energy produces its first two DVDs

The Union: Fighting For A Fair Go

The CFMEU Mining & Energy Union has produced its first ever set of DVDs, which were premiered at its National Convention earlier this month. The DVDs are now available to the public.

The first, The Union: Fighting For A Fair Go, celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade and traces the struggles and gains of Australian mining and energy workers in the first four years of the new Millennium. In particular, it examines the sharp conflicts between the Union and four giant multinationals – Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, Anglo American and Xstrata – the four biggest coal producers in the world today. It also focuses on the front line experience of rank and file workers and their families in a broad range of conflicts and the benefits that have flowed not only directly to them, but to their communities too.

The film also deals with the difficult challenges facing mining and energy workers today in coping with an aggressive anti-union climate with rogue contractors and employers who are hell bent on the destruction of collective bargaining.

The film features Union leaders and rank and file activists speaking about the following:

- Rio Tinto campaign;
- BHP campaign;
- Anglo campaign;
- Xstrata campaign;
- The Pilbara;
- Roche and rogue contractors campaign;
- Winning over non-union workers;
- A Union for our families too.

The Union: Fighting For A Fair Go is a film that documents the courage and determination of Australian workers and their families in facing down the aggression of ruthless employers and giant跨国 corporations.

It is a film that celebrates the fighting spirit of Australians for a Fair Go.

Directed by Paddy Gorman and Russ Hermann.

Produced by the CFMEU Mining and Energy by Spontaneous Productions

Running time – 54 Minutes

Cost: $20 (please add another $5 for post and packaging)

Send orders to CFMEU Mining and Energy, PO Box Q1641, Sydney NSW 1230

The Human Cost Of Mining

Whichever business looks at the mining industry it is always in terms of dollars and cents. Economic rationalists never consider the human cost of mining. This short film looks at the real cost of mining – the human cost – which has been borne by hundreds of thousands of Australian families who have lost loved ones or watched them suffer from crippling injuries or debilitating disease incurred in the mining industry. As mining companies look to increase their profits they still maintain a lethal disregard for the welfare and safety of their employees in Australia. This is reflected in a massive push for deregulation of safety provisions won over 200 years of bitter experience that deregulation of safety provisions won for the welfare and safety of their employees.

The Human Cost Of Mining reflects on some of the biggest disasters in Australia's history. It features the Union's successful campaign to ensure the first ever convictions of individuals in Australia's mining history (Gretley 2004). It also documents the Union's success in closing an unsafe mine (Grasstree) despite the opposition of the powerful Anglo American multinational with the collusion of the Queensland Mines Department.

This short film also exposes the ruthless exploitation of contractors; excessive working hours; the employers' abuse of safety committees to pursue an industrial agenda; and dangerous employer gimmicks such as "safety reward" schemes to bribe workers into not reporting accidents or watching them suffer from crippling injuries or debilitating disease incurred in the mining industry.

It documents the Union's success in winning a number of historic victories for the welfare and safety of Australian mining workers.

Cost: $15 (please add another $5 for post and packaging)

Send orders to CFMEU Mining and Energy, PO Box Q1641, Sydney NSW 1230

SPA Books – Summer Highlights

Motorcycle Diaries
Che Guevara

The young Che's lively and highly entertaining travel diary. This new, expanded edition includes previously unpublished photos taken by the 23-year-old on his journey across the continent. To be released as a film in Australia on December 16 – 20% off list price!!!

175 pages - $20.00 + $2.45 p&p

Che Guevara Reader

The most comprehensive selection of Che Guevara's writings in an expanded edition. The reader contains four sections: the Cuban Revolutionary War; his views on major international issues; a vision for the Latin American revolution and a selection of letters.

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Fidel Castro

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126 pages - $18.95 + $2.45 p&p

Slovo – unfinished autobiography
Joe Slovo

A revealing and highly entertaining autobiography of one of the key figures of South Africa’s African National Congress and Communist Party. Includes a foreword by Nelson Mandela.

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Albert Einstein

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You don’t have to be Einstein… to know he was a giant in the world of science and physics. This book takes a new, subjective look at Time magazine’s “Person of the Century”, who earned a record with the FBI as a socialist enemy of the state.

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Please enclose cheque or money order made payable to “SPA Books”. Or call 02 9699 8844 with your credit card details.

Saving the Bony Giants

Poems & illustrations by Tom Pearson

88 pages - $10

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