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Sand in the wheels

Weekly newsletter - n°153 - Wednesday 20 November 2002.

THE WTO IS IN TOWN (SYDNEY)

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On Saturday, October 26th the United States witnessed its largest peace demonstrations since the Vietnam war: more than 150,000 people assembled in Washington, DC, 45,000 in San Francisco and ten of thousands more in other American cities. This is more than remarkable for a whole series of reasons.

3- When Big Biz Has Taken Over Everything (By Jerre Skog)

After all, corporate America knows what's good for us all and deserves to be trusted, having shown its adherence to law, ethics and morals in years gone by. Corporate America has integrity and honesty that can only be matched by the politicians it has bought! The notion, that many of its foremost exponents are greedy, selfish and utterly amoral, can be based on nothing but ugly rumours! What can be better than giving corporations full freedom?

4- WTO in Sidney – Australian Protests (by James Arvanitakis)

This coming week, the World Trade Organisation (or WTO as it is affectionately known) will hold an 'informal' mini-ministerial meeting in Sydney consisting of 25 member nations. This meeting will be greeted by a large number of "anti-globalisation" protesters.

5- Fishing in Troubled Waters (by Lalitha Sridhar)

In parallel to the UN conference on climate change in New Delhi (October 25th, 2002), the India Climate Justice Forum (ICJF) will hold a conference - consisting of workshops, panels and a rally-- from October 26-28 at the Constitution Club in New Delhi. This Summit is designed to highlight the serious deficiencies in the UN conference and provide a platform for climate change impacted communities from around the world. In this article a fishing community in South India speaks out on the deleterious effect of development on their life and work.

Before the Deluge

By Dave Renton

I watched the young woman, and next to her, the journalist. "Don't you see this as a defeat?", he asked.

"I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean."

"You've organised this great conference, but in America, the security council has voted to support the US, without a single abstention. The war's coming".

It's true, she said. But if we're going to stop war, there's only one way to do it, by mass protests, in the streets, and that's what we're doing. Another participant at the European Social Forum, from Britain's Stop the War coalition, had his own answer. What the UN vote tells us, he said, is that the most important divides in society are between classes, not nations.

On one point, though, the pressman was right - the conference had been special. Organised in conscious imitation of the World Social Forum meetings held each year in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the European Social Forum in Florence brought together some sixty thousand activists from all over Europe. The



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weekend anti-war demo pulled anything up to one million people. Without anyone consciously planning it, the left has learned to re-invent the nineteenth-century tactics of classical social democracy. We meet in huge international conferences to plan the future. The only difference now is that no decisions are recorded. Not yet, anyway.

Are we watching the left finally rebuild itself? A friend asked me this, as we crossed the city. It was easy to think so, especially on Saturday's huge protest. José Bové was there, sharing his tractor with one of the leading stewards from threatened FIAT. There were contingents from ATTAC in France and North Africa, a dozen Italian unions, throngs in a dozen colours, delegates from the thirty-plus countries that had attended the conference.

As we marched through residential areas, signing a pidgin mix of Italian, French, German, English and Dutch, people gathered at the balconies to wave us forward. One woman even threw small white flowers at the feet of the marchers from her window. Perhaps we reminded her of a previous liberation.

A similar mood of hope excited those within the conference. The leaders of such mass organisations as the union network COBAS and Communist Refoundation must have passed a signal to their militants. Discuss by all means, don't even be afraid to criticise, but no sectarianism. For the most part, the advice worked. Yet the tentative alliance of international anti-capitalism was diminished by certain absentees. There were fewer NGOs than I expected. Anarchists were represented around the cultural events, but not so much in the conference halls.

While some parts of the left are finally growing in confidence, other movements are also stirring. Berlusconi told shop-keepers to close rather than see their businesses looted. One local paper, Firenze Nazionale, warned a similar constituency of "L'Invasione Blac Bloc". By Saturday, the British delegation was discussing the high BNP vote in Downham. Turkish delegates had their own election to report, an Islamist landslide, and three ultra-nationalist parties in the top six.

In Florence, tension was close. Passing time in a cafe, I watched two groups of Italians square up. "Troublemakers!", one group shouted - "fascists!" the others roared back. The Mayor welcomed the Social Forum to his city, offering all delegates a fifteen percent discount in the local museums and galleries. Such was his power. The entrance to the

Duomo was flanked, though, by armed police, sent by the minister of the interior. The Corriere della Sera showed snipers guarding the doors of the Uffizi. And of course, Bush had his mandate, as the journalist told us.

How to stop the US war on Iraq? Some sections of the Italian left propose sending human rights observers, following tactics used in Palestine. One organising meeting was used to plan a European-wide protest demo. The British thought this should happen in February, while others wanted it earlier. My feeling is that most anti-capitalists underestimate - as ever - the casual brutality of which our rulers are capable. The left must be optimistic and idealistic, Florence was about us showing our best face. But while we meet, others plan. I am fearful.

This article was first published in The Voice of the Turtle <http://voiceoftheturtle.org>

Regime Change Begins at Home – Make it Happen.

by Felix Kolb

On Saturday, October 26th the United States witnessed its largest peace demonstrations since the Vietnam war: more than 150,000 people assembled in Washington, DC, 45,000 in San Francisco and ten of thousands more in other American cities. This is more than remarkable for a whole series of reasons. Firstly, this time the protests were early. In the case of the last Gulf War, the peace movement only gained momentum after warplanes started dropping bombs on Baghdad. These protests took place before the US government had succeeded in gaining the UN Security Council's blank cheque for its aggression. Secondly, the peace movement has overcome a media boycott. To date, no serious public debate about the pros & cons of attacking Iraq has emerged. Corporate media is grossly underreporting the voices critical of Bush's war cry, even though these voices include, not just the 'usual suspects', but also former US generals and the CIA. Thirdly, even though more than a year has passed since 9/11, speaking out against the war or the President is still considered unpatriotic or even anti-American by a significant part of American society. In Europe it is relatively risk free to be against the war in public, but in the US open dissent requires considerable courage. In light of this, the big turnouts of October should be read as signs of hope that the American left has finally overcome the paralysis by which it was captured after 9/11. I



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know, you might object that the mid-term elections have already destroyed this hope. Frustrated myself, I am convinced that this conclusion is wrong. Moreover, it is also very dangerous, because it can easily develop into a self-fulfilling prophecy. I will return to the midterm elections later on in the article.

After George W. Bush was elected President by the Supreme Court after the 2000 election debacle in Florida, Europeans – like myself – started to look at the US with ever faster growing suspicion and alienation. The major reason for this concern is the extreme American unilateralist turn. The rejection of the Kyoto protocol, the withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the rejection of the International Criminal Court (ICC), just to name a few examples, upset European politicians and people alike. In May 2002 the German weekly 'Der Spiegel' published revealing poll data about German feelings towards the US: 76% of all Germans compared to 68% in 1993 believe that the US is interfering too much in other countries' national affairs; 50% compared to 37% in 1993 do not believe that the US is a guarantor for peace and security in world politics; and finally, 65% compared to 58% in 1993 believe that US intervention in conflict areas is only a means of furthering its own interest [1]. This data easily explains Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's willingness to reject and oppose US plans for the Iraq war so openly and so bravely. And it is not without irony, that Bush and his White House Hawks are directly responsible for the victory of his red-green coalition government. As much as I agree with the strong European sentiment against the "21st-century American imperialism" (Senator Edward M. Kennedy) it is unfair to parts of the American people. Europeans tend to overlook that the US are not only inhabited by people wedded to guns, violence, the death penalty and over-eating, people who are happy to swallow whatever they are told by George W. Bush, Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld at the cosy daily chats that pass for press conferences, as the Guardian rightly observed [2]. The recent peace demonstrations were also very powerful proof of the existence of the other side of America. The signs carried by the protesters demonstrated the variety of reasons for which Americans oppose the war: 'WAR WON'T MAKE US SAFER', 'NO BLOOD FOR OIL', 'U.S. EMPIRE: NOT MY AMERICAN DREAM', 'START SEEING IRAQI CHILDREN', 'PEACE IS PATRIOTIC', 'WAR BREEDS TERROR' and 'REGIME CHANGE BEGINS AT HOME – VOTE'. This last one – my favourite – made me think a lot about regime changes – the one America needs as well as the ones Europe needs.

To begin with, the elections were by no means a Republican sweep. In the 1994 midterm elections we saw one; back then the Republicans gained 52 House, eight Senate seats and 10 governors. This year the Republicans "only" took over five House and two Senate seats, and the democrats were even able to win three governor races. I immediately admit that this doesn't change the grave consequence. The Republicans now, for the first time since President Eisenhower, control the Congress and the White House at the same time. The possibility that Bush will now enforce his national agenda as well is horrifying. This agenda includes among other things radical tax cuts for the richest and the big corporations, a freezing of all efforts to end corporate fraud, moves to privatise the social security system, and a roll-back of environmental protection. In addition Bush is prepared to staff the federal courts with ultra-conservative judges. In case of the Supreme Court this might possibly mean the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* and thus the very right of every woman to decide when to have a child. If Democratic senators would decide to use the filibuster strategically, they could prevent the worst legislation and could reject the most conservative nominations for the federal courts. During periods of Democratic control of the Senate, Republicans have used this right of unlimited debate successfully. Regarding the prospects of the pre-emptive war against Iraq, the election results have the most immediate and fatal consequences. Bush, with the support of some Democratic leaders, has succeeded in reframing the election outcome as a referendum on the war on terrorism [3]. Bush now claims to have a new mandate for the war against Iraq. I do not intend to deny that many American people supported Bush on the basis of fighting terrorism, but with respect to Iraq, this support hinges on a series of outright lies. Due to these lies, many Americans believe that Iraq is already threatening the US mainland with missiles, is armed with weapons of mass destruction, will have a nuclear bomb very soon, and most importantly, that Saddam Hussein has close links with Al Qaeda – 71% of all Americans even think he was personally involved in the 9/11 attacks [4]. It doesn't help that the consensus among western secret services is that there is no evidence for a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. But it hasn't stopped the Bush administration from pretending the opposite. At a forum at the University of Utah, Karl Rove, the Bush administration's chief political strategist, was asked whether the administration was concerned about the possibility that 200,000 innocent Iraqis might die in an American-led invasion. Mr. Rove



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responded, "I'm more concerned about the 3,000 who died on 9/11." [5] The New York Times, which reported this story, did not comment on this devilish connection. And as Eric Alterman from The Nation argues in his article "Bush Lies, Media Swallows", this is by no means an exception, but nowadays a usual pattern [4]. American democracy is in real danger when the (corporate) media so completely fails to distinguish between truth and lies. Remember George Orwell's dictum from 1984: "Whoever controls the past controls the future. Whoever controls the present controls the past." Right now this present is controlled by the Bush administration, "an extremely elitist clique trying to maintain a populist façade" [6]. Our first priority must be to break its hegemony in constructing a totally distorted image of world affairs, but which most people believe is reality.

A Democratic victory at the midterm polls could have been a start; instead we were faced with a devastating loss – not in numbers but in consequences. It is still too early to explain the elections outcomes with great confidence. However, it is possible to distinguish between at least two popular narratives. The first narrative was most powerfully expressed in John B. Judis' article "No Fault" [7]. Decisive for the outcome of this close race was that the Republicans did much better at turning out voters in Republican-leaning areas and in the mostly white suburbs where Independents and swing voters are -strong. The reason, he argues, is that Bush is still very popular among Independents, whereas his popularity has decreased among self-declared Democrats. In other words the Republicans succeeded in turning the normally localized midterms into a national election, focused on Bush and his war against terrorism. This view is supported by Bush's intensive campaigning and by the fact that in many states successful Republicans challenged their democratic opponents by painting them weak on defense – what I consider as the Newspeak term for aggression. Therefore, Judis concludes, Democrats would not have done better – maybe even worse – if they had taken a clear stand against the war. The paradigmatic article for the opposing narrative is Stephen Zunes' article "How the Democrats Blew It" [8]. Democrats totally failed in aggressively challenging the incumbent President in opposing the war and rejecting the tax cuts. Instead they decided to work on a consensus building approach with the Bush administration. Thus Democrats were not able to articulate a distinct vision from the Republicans on everything from the war to national security to the economy, and so were left to fight localized battles against the nationalized GOP agenda mentioned

above. As a consequence rank-and-file Democrats and other progressives voted for the Green Party or stayed at home. And more importantly they did not put in the volunteer time or campaign contributions they would have otherwise. Paul Krugman in a New York Times Op-Ed piece offers a very similar analysis and I totally agree with his straight-forward conclusion: "If the Democratic Party takes a clear stand for the middle class and against the plutocracy, it may still lose. But if it doesn't stand for anything, it – and the country – will surely lose." [9] However, one should not reject Judis' point of view rashly and entirely. As I have already argued there are many Americans who support President Bush's war plans although on the basis of false information. It is therefore up to the peace movement to convince Independents and swing voters that voting for the Republicans and Bush's Iraq war is wrong and won't make the US safer – if anything there are good reasons to assume that the opposite will be true. And there is a second related caveat. Whereas it is quite plausible that Democrats would make a difference in national politics the same is not so clear regarding international affairs. After all, it was the Clinton administration, which used the UN weapon inspectors as spies in order to obtain intelligence information which had nothing to do with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, but everything to do with identifying and locating Iraqi targets for future U.S. attacks. After the weapon inspectors were withdrawn from Iraq, Clinton ordered operation "Desert Fox" – a four day bombing of Iraq [10]. Many of the courageous Democrats who voted against the Congress war resolution, did it with reference to the administration's go-it-alone approach and not for more general concerns. On the other hand a US assurance to accept the UN's last word in matters of war and peace would have made it much more difficult for the Bush administration to get its UN war resolution. However, in my eyes the major challenge for the peace movement is to marginalize hawkish positions in American society so that Democrats are not tempted anymore to serve this ideology. A liberal and offensive Democratic leadership is necessary to achieve this change in public opinion, but it is by no means sufficient. Only a strong, broad and non-ideological movement can do this job.

The peace movement should fasten to the already existing sentiments in the American public: an overwhelming majority of all Americans is against a unilateral war against Iraq. That is why the Bush administration needed the UN resolution so badly, which it finally got on November 8th, only three days after the midterm elections, through an



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unanimous vote. And despite the fact that it announced again and again that it will attack Iraq without UN support if necessary, it had been bribing and threatening the UN and the member states of security council for months to get this resolution. Although there are also reasons to be upset about the resolution, we should consider its need as a major weakness of the Hawks and thus as an early success of the movement. Why was the support for the resolution finally so overwhelming, although many states had opposed it for months? The naive interpretation conceives the resolution text as a real compromise, in which France, Russia and China succeed in preventing "Automaticity" – another extraordinary example of Newspeak. The term "Automaticity" refers to a very vague type of resolution wording, which makes it very easy for powers – namely the US – to attack, to bomb or to invade countries with the alleged legitimacy of the UN. Preventing "Automaticity" through explicitly placing the power to decide what counts as a material breach of the resolution in the hands of the Security Council would indeed have restrained the US war makers effectively. However, the resolution leaves these essential questions open and thus the way clear for war, as the Guardian put it. Mr Ritter, a former chief UN weapon inspector, claimed that the US will try to trigger a war with Iraq by interfering in inspections. "The US will be doing whatever it can to provoke confrontation. There is a big group of people in the US that want war," he said [11]. Although not intended by most of the Security council members, in practice it will be up to the US to decide whether Iraq is in "material breach" of its obligations. It probably won't help that the Security Council has to be consulted, because in the US interpretation of the resolution that does not mean it cannot already start a war. In order to prevent a war the peace movement must now try to convince the American public that the resolution does not mean what the Bush administration is claiming. However, that should be even more difficult than convincing the American public that the war is simply too risky and won't help fight terrorism. This underlines that it was a strategical mistake to oppose the war plans only in terms of a unilateral attack. But if it has not been the changed content of the resolution what else could explain the overwhelming support? In order to answer this question we have to untangle the UN Security Council, with its 15 members. Aside from the five permanent members – the USA, Russia, China, France and Great Britain – each with powers of veto, there is also Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Ireland, Guinea, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway and Syria. Some countries most likely Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Guinea, Mauritius and Mexico

voted for the resolution simply because they could not afford to vote with no [12]. When in 1990 South Yemen, alongside Cuba, voted against the US sponsored resolution, the US diplomat told the Yemeni' "That will be the most expensive No vote you ever cast." And Washington cut off its entire \$70 million US aid package [13]. Although such considerations also might have played a role for France, China and Russia the story gets more complex. All of them were bargaining with the US over the resolution for a long time. After Bush's success in the midterms they finally acknowledged that they were not in the position to stop the US from going to war anymore. For China and Russia not to cause the US trouble means in return not being troubled by the US. The Bush administration has backed off on human rights complaints, the war in Chechnya, the status of Tibet and supporting Taiwan [14]. For France and as well for Russia it is also about their oil interests – French and Russian companies have contracts with Iraq. It took them some time to become reassured that the new pro-American regime in Iraq will respect this contract. After all Iraq has the second biggest oil reservoirs in the world – not even including the oil-fields experts suspect exist but which have not formerly discovered.

Now it is time to return to Europe, because it needs to consider its own complicity in this coming war. If the war is really about accessing cheap oil and controlling it -- and there is good reason to believe this is the case -- then Europeans alike will also benefit from this war [15]. I know that hurts; but just because the US is most addicted to cheap oil, European states and their peoples are themselves not innocent of the addiction. In a sense the US is going to make war for a (perverse) public good. And it is in the nature of public goods that it is difficult to reject them. What does that mean for social movements? The environmental movement has to acknowledge that we have already entered the age of resource wars. It has every reason to press even harder for the solar age and it has to become part of the peace movement. Remember that one of the major organizations even has (Green)'peace' in its name. No idea how to make that link? Just, consider the script for the following commercial inspired by the Slim-Fast one: Instead of "I lost 50 pounds in two weeks," the ad cuts to different people in their sport utility vehicles: "I gassed 40,000 Kurds," "I helped hijack an airplane," "I helped blow up a nightclub," and then in unison: "We did it all by driving to work in our SUVs." [16] The global justice movement also has a role to play. It should not only support peace actions by means of resources and activists, but it should make clear its argument that



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economic injustices caused by neo-liberal globalisation are supportive of war and terrorism. Recently, it even has become possible to make one straight forward link between war and free trade. The US Trade Representative, Bob Zoellick, who was attending a meeting in Mexico this October, made the connection explicit between Australia's support for war on Iraq and the Administrations support for a US-Australia Free Trade Area (FTA), stating: "Australia has fought with the United States in every war in the 20th century. They've been strong supporters of ours, and to me that matters." [17] And indeed Zoellick recently succeed in squashing the US farm lobby opposition to the FTA. These of course are all long-term strategies, but we desperately need them, because we have indeed good reasons to worry a lot that the Iraq war could be followed by another war in the Middle-East. Remember, Iran is also a dot on the "axe of evil". It is much stronger in military and economic terms than Iraq and has big oil reservoirs as well. But, what are the facts that could support such reasoning. First, there is evidence of military build-up in Afghanistan that only makes sense as means for an attack on Iran [18]. Second, in an interview with The Times during his recent visit to Great Britain, Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon insisted that Tehran should be put under pressure "the day after" action against Baghdad ends because of its role as a "centre of world terror" [19]. It is not a terrible amount of evidence, but enough to be worried at least as long as the Bush administration is able to control public opinion.

To sum up, we are in real trouble right now. There seems to be neither a country nor the UN left, which could stop the US attacking Iraq. Thus, it is completely up to the peace movement. And although our chances to stop the war against Iraq are not very high – we must do everything possible to try to stop it. Not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because our strength in the next month will determine whether the US government can afford another war. The challenges the peace movements in the US and Europe are facing are quite different. In the US the peace movement must first and foremost convince the American public that a war against Iraq (and maybe in the near future Iran) is wrong and won't help to protect them from further terrorist attacks. That means, as I have already argued, first, to marginalizing hawkish ideology and second, break the President's hegemony in constructing a totally distorted image of world affairs. Demonstrations, teach-ins, door-to-door canvacing etc. – the means are all well known. In Europe the situation is different, because the majority of the population is

already convinced that a war against the Iraq would be a terrible mistake. While some European governments like the British and the Italian are openly supporting the US policy, other governments are paying lip services to the peace movement, but doing nothing substantial to stop the US war machine. In this situation it needs more than further demonstrations and public awareness raising. Indian novelist Arundhati Roy urged anti-war campaigners to use civil disobedience to oppose military action against Iraq. Picking up on this idea, in Germany a new campaign by the peace movement will organize peaceful blockades at the major US airbases there. By means of civil disobedience the organizers hope to obstruct the American war machine and its supply weaponry and personnel. In the coming weeks and months we will face many frightening moments. In such moments it has sometimes helped me to recall what Bert Brecht wrote a long time ago: "Who fights can lose. Who doesn't fight has already lost."

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When Big Biz Has Taken Over Everything

by Jerre Skog. Swedish writer, musician and alternative observer living in Germany since 1999

The Brave New Nightmare of GATS

At the Police station--Officer, I have been robbed! A fellow with a gun took my wallet and clock just five minutes ago!--Of course Sir, we'll take action immediately. Can I have your credit card?--Hell, that was in my wallet! You got to get the guy first.--In that case you'll have to make a cash deposit. That's 200 dollars please?-- Hey, I was robbed of all valuables! I don't have ANY money!--Sorry mister! In that case I wish you a good day. Thanks for seeing "Corleone Law & Order Corp" and remember to invest in our stock!

In the Library--Sorry Sir, "Educational Services" don't have "War and Peace" OR "Shakespeare's collected works" OR "Animal's Farm" nowadays! They just don't have profit potential any more and the turnover was shit. And since you've got very little credit left on your library credit card, I recommend "The wit and wisdom of George W. Bush" or "How to win friends by bombing people" by Donald Rumsfeld. Since we charge by the number of pages they are both extremely cheap! And the Holy Bible is on special discount. Only 10c! Don't forget to return them on time! Or else. . . .

Commercial for "Tax r Us"--Ask not what you can do for your country! Ask what you can pay to your country! Remember, missiles are the basis of democracy and they don't come cheap!

Crossing the river--Hey man, you're not allowed to cross here. You gotta take the new luxury bridge 13 miles upstream that cost \$2 for pedestrians. How do you expect WorldCom's "Bridge over Troubled Waters Inc" to make any profit if you guys use the old cheap bridges? Besides this one is already sold to be transported to Yokohama!--But I don't need an expensive luxury bridge, and I'll walk real slow, like.-- Tough luck, Buddy! Now beat it!

At "Monsanto Ultra-Fast Food Shacks"- -A glass of water and a burger? Coming up Sir. Do you want the normal tap water with standard filth for 1 buck, or Monsanto's slightly modified high-tech neutron-added super-octane water for 3 bucks? It goes perfectly with our burgers made out of genetically modified caterpillars.

Finding two fat bearded men in black leather jackets at the door--Morning Maam. It's been reported you still haven't paid those \$29,36 that you owe the IRS. We in "Death Angels' Collectors" wonder if you can pay now or we gotta break your legs? And don't forget the added collection fee of \$250! Nice little kid you got there. . . Would be a pity if something happened to her, right?

The president on TV--I'm proud to announce that we will save 32 billion by outsourcing civil defence to Ukrainian National Guard. This allows us to spend 17 more million on national defence and make tax cuts for the highest earners by at least 19 billion. Now, some say this will cost more than we save but remember we do it for America and democracy. God bless you all!

At a "New Anderson Consulting & Governing Corp" board meeting--I'm pleased to be able to announce that our bids to take over governing in Zambia, Dubai, Venezuela and San Marino for the next two year period have been a total success. As a result we will be able to cook the books on a scale that is unprecedented in corporate history. Anyone here speak Zambian, by the way?

In a US federal court--Your honor, we in the jury have found the defendant, Arthur S. Greenpeace, guilty of having driven a vehicle averaging more than 15 miles per gallon.-- And so say you all?--So say we all.--Very well. Arthur S. Greenpeace, in the name of "Exxon Mobile's Court Services" i hereby sentence you to to be taken from this place to "Gambini Correction Facilities" in the cellars of 1035 Main Street where they will lean heavily on you to teach you proper patriotic behaviour. Hey! He's trying to escape! Grab the enviro bastard!

An ad by the highway--Let us send you to places of our imagination!--"Enron Travels Inc." dreams up happiness for you!

Conversation in a lobby--Whattya mean, we're all sold out to big biz? You some kind of a nut or what? It doesn't cost me more than 5 bucks in damages to "Sex Corp" for infringing on their patent rights when me and my old lady have a nice good session. I can



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even do it by instalments! Oh, sorry! I didn't see you're a nun.

Home is where the profit is--Ma, there comes Coca Cola out of the cold water faucet!--Shut up and drink, Bertie! We gotta consume 5 gallons of the stuff every week to be allowed to buy water! And they have the contract for two more years!

At the Hospital--So you don't have health insurance, you don't have plastic cards, you don't have any money and you don't have a steady address? And you expect us here at Compassionate Health to remove the knife in your back and stop the bleeding? Get real mister! Be happy we don't charge you for messing up the carpet!

News comment on TV--And the bid for Attorney General for the next 4 years was won by 5 year old Cathy "the Great" Bush, the latest addition to "Bush Imperial Inc.", the successful regime-conglomerate. A speaker for miss Bush outlines her policy as one of fighting terrorism and throwing tantrums when denied candy.

Letter to John Doe--Dear Sir, This is to inform you that your DNA code is now patented by "Human Labs Co" as J.D.#672391/974QD. In the future please desist and abstain from creating more offspring using sperm containing our patented code in the process unless paying us a stud-fee of \$1850 per offspring. Yours sincerely, Kenneth Lay, President.

Downtown in Pittsburg--We got a report that you didn't pay you air fee since you moved in last month!--Sorry, the air is so polluted here that I thought it was free breathing in the area.--Don't try to muddle the issue Mac! How do you expect the shareholders of "Coalburners Air Supply" to live if you don't pay your fees! But it's a free country, you can stop breathing!

Outburst in the subway, to the tune of aggressive PA commercials-- WHAAAAAHHH!!! I don't care what WTO, IMF and the world Bank says, I get crazy! This life in the Imperial States has turned into a nightmare!--Hey watch your words, Buster, I work for the CIA!--Hey, you're not supposed to spy in the homeland!--We're the "Controlling Individuals Agency" nowadays so you better bite your tongue and behave. Or drop dead!

And in the end. . .--"Rent-a-coffin Inc." announces Q2 earnings up 37 % after introducing the recycling scheme for the dear deceased whereby they are put

to good use after being processed into dog food. Brand name: Uncle & Auntie's pet biscuits.

After all, corporate America knows what's good for us all and deserves to be trusted, having shown it's adherence to law, ethics and morals in years gone by. Corporate America has integrity and honesty that can only be matched by the politicians it has bought! The notion, that many of its foremost exponents are greedy, selfish and utterly amoral, can be based on nothing but ugly rumours! What can be better than giving corporations full freedom?

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*GATS means "General Agreement on Trade in Services" and is presently peddled to governments around the world by WTO, IMF and the World Bank, in order to force privatization in all areas earlier financed by tax money.

WTO in Sidney – Australian Protests

By James Arvanitakis. Australian PhD student attempting to write a thesis titled "Redesigning the Global Economy". He is also Board member of the NGO AID/WATCH, and helps coordinate the Research Initiative on International Activism.

This coming week, the World Trade Organisation (or WTO as it is affectionately known) will hold an 'informal' mini-ministerial meeting in Sydney consisting of 25 member nations. This meeting will be greeted by a large number of "anti-globalisation" protesters. These protests will go ahead despite the tragic events in Bali and the ominous prospect of war against Iraq. Indeed, the recent events which have highlighted the fact that Australians are not immune from tragedy, has strengthened the resolve of the protesters.

As they have done before, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Treasurer Peter Costello and the conservative elements of the media, will dismiss the protesters as luddites, misguided, naive and misunderstanding how the global financial system works. In fact, the president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, greeted by protesters while in Australia just over a year ago, stated that he had once protested against foreign direct investment, but had "grown up".

As a former economist, banker and someone with experience in the financial markets, I have now become one of these so-called anti-globalisation protesters. Yes, from a Mercedes and home ownership, to a full-time student, part-time human



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rights advocate committed anti-globalisation protester and renter (I mean who can afford home ownership in Sydney these days?). Where once my major concern was my stock portfolio and my greatest delight was correctly forecasting the direction of interest rates, I now spend my (mostly unpaid) time working in solidarity with human rights activists and environmentalists both in Australia and overseas.

My response to Howard, Costello (and the conservative elements of the media) is that it is time to read past chapter 1 in your first year economic textbooks. According to chapter 1, we are all rational economic beings. We make rational decisions that maximise our utility (or enjoyment), by purchasing the goods that we want at the price we are willing to pay. This is the magic point that economists refer to as "equilibrium". In chapter 1, we live in the world of "perfect competition", where the world is made up of many small firms each chasing consumers to maximise their profits. In this world, the invisible hand of the market guides competition to ensure all needs are met.

This is also the world where "comparative advantage" dictates what each nation should produce (with guns or butter being an old favourite to highlight the point). The "trickle down effect" will ensure that those who become the wealthiest spend enough money so that their wealth eventually "trickles down" to the poorest. (Or as once a friend of mine explained, you feed the poorest by hoping the wealthiest leave some crumbs behind.)

In chapter 2, however, we learn about market failure and imperfect competition. We learn that the real world is not rational and we make decisions based on fear, greed and spontaneity. People are not always rational. And this is part of the enjoyment of life. How can buying flowers for your partner be considered rational? Or is losing sleep the night before your team plays in the grand final rational? There is nothing rational about having a favourite shirt either. As people, we often make decisions that economists would not consider rational.

But what does losing sleep over a league team have to do with anti-globalisation protesters, my decision to leave the world of banking and the decision of thousands to protest? A great deal actually.

One day, after a very successful year in the financial institution I worked for, I took some time to travel through South America. While travelling, I was continually overcome with the staggering

contradictions of that beautiful continent. The wealth of few, sat on the poverty of many. Nations that had followed the advice of economists had specialised in producing raw materials from mines that had not been much improved from when they were first opened in the 17th century. Here, conditions are so bad that many mine workers die of respiratory problems well before they are 30. It is here that trade unions are all but illegal.

In these nations, the trickle down effect translates to tourists 'tipping' 12 year-old boys to run to the bottom of the hill, light dynamite and then run out of harms way, before the explosion.

So, while sitting on the side of a mountain in South America with my new backpack, expensive walking shoes and \$200 sunglasses, I watched these events unfold. At this point I had an epiphany. I realised that for every currency and interest rate speculator, there are millions who are fighting to survive the day. That when I cheered because interest rates would rise (and a bonus was forthcoming), there was someone in my city that would no longer make their mortgage repayments. I realised that the real cost of my car is the life lost in these mines because of inadequate safety procedures. It also became obvious to me that the world's poorest nations only have two things to trade - their environment and their cheap labour (slightly more depressing than guns and butter).

It is here that I also realised, that a life lost - be it in a terrorist bombing or a bomb going astray in a 'legal war' - is still a life lost.

The protesters against the WTO, like those at S11 in Melbourne two years ago and the many others around the world, are made up of people from all walks of life. They are people who believe that the world's poorest nations should not be making loan repayments greater than the amount that they spend on health or education. Jubilee estimates that such policies result in 20,000 preventable deaths a day. The protesters are not anti-trade, but believe that traded goods should meet minimum environmental and human rights standards (like no forced child labour and boycotting nations that promote apartheid). They also believe that markets are there to serve rather than rule humanity.

This is not radical stuff. But rather, concepts that try and place economics within the community, rather than being its defining characteristic.

It is beyond me that any rational person could believe in the "invisible hand" of the market. I



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stopped believing in that hand while sitting on that mountain. In response to Mr Wolfensohn, I believe growing up means understanding there are more important things than just money. And in response to Howard, Costello (and of course the conservative elements of the media), please read chapter 2.

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Fishing in Troubled Waters

By Lalitha Sridhar

They call it a second summer in a city that knows little else. As temperatures soar and October burns in Chennai, in the Southern fringes of the Uroor Olcott kuppam (fishing village) in Tamil Nadu, South India, the sea looks deceptively unchanged in its expanse.

The centuries-old fishworking community knows otherwise. Catch is dwindling and even fisherfolk like Kathir, 32, who possess motorized boats, would rather not indulge in fuel and futility. Instead, like so many of his kin, he prefers to take up a job as a watchman for Rs 1,500 a month (about US\$30). Witnesses to the 'development' which has altered the very face of their neighborhood with its apartment complexes and luxury cars, men like Shekhar, 40, are visibly bitter, "The government spent hundreds of thousands on the beautification of the beach. It is only for people who come in cars for morning walks. We have no roads or electricity. I hate my life. It is not like my grandfather's time. Nothing is the same anymore -- even the fish are gone."

Driven by desperation to find elusive catch, they brave November winds in their traditional kattumarams (catamarans). India's most skilled artisanal fishermen are from Kanyakumari district, famous for their felicity with the hook-and-line, longlines and deep-sea fishing for sharks. Untouched by the mechanics of hydrocarbon-driven industrialization, artisanal fisherfolk across coastal communities take the full blast of the impact of climate change.

The UN WRI's (World Resources Index) 1998 figures peg the Indian Ocean sector as the most densely populated coastal region in the world, with 135 persons per square kilometer. Large populations along these coastlines depend on fishing for their livelihood and nutrition. In Southern India's Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, 200,000 people -- a third of the population -- earn their living directly from the sea.

According to R.Ramesh, R.Purvaja and S.Ramachandran, scientists at the Institute for Ocean Management, Anna University, Chennai, greenhouse gas emissions are depleting the ozone layer to the extent that we have 7 percent more UV radiation now than we did less than 10 years ago. A study by Dr. Herman Cesar, Institute of Environmental Studies, Free University, The Netherlands, revealed that between February to June in 1998, surface water temperatures in the Indian Ocean was reportedly 4 to 6 degrees centigrade above normal for an extended period of time. Fish catches worldwide plummeted in 1998 due to the El Nino Southern Oscillation which, exacerbated by global warming, lasted for over 18 months. Fishmeal production fell by 10 million tons -- about 10 percent of the global fish catch -- and entire species such as horse mackerel, mackerel and hake were acutely scarce.

In 1998, El Nino caused massive coral bleaching, even in hitherto untouched atolls of the central Indian Ocean. Besides worsening the effects of over-fishing, increasing the levels of toxicity in fish species and seriously undermining natural coral reef barriers to seasonal cyclones, bleaching directly impacts 90 percent of the traditional artisanal fishing communities which rely on harvesting near shore reef-related fisheries and seaweed resources.

According to Dr. Cesar, fish productivity may further drop as the reef structure disintegrates, resulting in reduced catches, less protein in the diet, particularly for coastal communities, lower health status and possible starvation, particularly among the poorer segments of the community. While more research is required to better assess the damage to the communities and economies around the Indian Ocean, there is no doubt that fisherfolk could experience a major loss of income and reduced ability to purchase other food.

That rapid climate change is impacting food security has been apparent for several years. An India country study by the Tata Energy Research Institute and the Ministry of Environment and Forests published in 1995 projected that a 1 metre sea level rise could put as many as 7.1 million people -- including all coastal fishing communities whose livelihood is directly linked to the ocean -- at risk of displacement. Yet, climate change is not a priority area of research in this country, even though several global studies name India among the nations that are particularly vulnerable. There are only eight scientists from India on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)



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which advises the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as opposed to 227 from the United States.

Meanwhile, fisherman Anbazhagan, 65, of the Uroorkuppam, finds five generations of a family occupation suddenly unsustainable. The reasons he ascribes are valid but one-dimensional, "It is because of all the deep water mechanized boat trawling. Politicians come and promise everything but they never return -- they don't like the stench of fish." Anbazhagan and his community are paying for the privileges they will never see. And as always, women are the hardest hit. Tamil Nadu, the only state in India which has given significant importance to women's work in fisheries, started the first Fisherwomen Extension Service back in 1979 and within a decade, a chain of 36 women's cooperatives were operational with around 4,500 fisherwomen members.

Women, who are involved in drying, curing, vending and auctioning fish are often the most invisible amongst the marginalized. As Aleyamma Vijayan, Nalini Nayak and Mercy Alexander under the ambit of the National Fishworkers Forum point out, "As fisheries resources are increasingly threatened, the task of women gets more and more difficult. This not only relates to problems of access to fish, but also access to credit, marketing and basic livelihood infrastructure at the village level. Dr. Cesar's study estimates a loss of US\$260 million at net present values to largely artisanal fisheries, over a period of 20 years, based on the admittedly optimistic assumption that the damage to the reefs is not too bad and the recovery will be relatively rapid.

An example of the damage caused, as well as potential research-enabled corrective measures, is the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve (GMMBR). A study by the Dr.M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation reveals that the Biosphere is home to more than 42 of the 365 species of phytoplankton catalogued from India. As a sanctuary for rich marine diversity it includes 20 islands extending from Mandapam to Tuticorin over a 140-kilometer stretch of coastline. Commercial exploitation of coral reefs and large-scale removal of mangrove vegetation is leading to dwindling fish harvests from the Gulf of Mannar. This region historically maintained production that was significantly higher than the national average.

Yet, 70 percent of the working population involved in direct fishing and 21 percent in fishing related activities live in huts along the sandy beaches with literacy rates of 31 percent much lower than the

Tamil Nadu state average of 64 percent. Despite depending on a particularly fertile marine region, home to some of the richest mangroves of the Indian subcontinent, 40 percent of the fisherfolk are in debt. Whether the damage caused by large-scale exploitation can be controlled through ecologically sound intervention, as is being attempted here by the Foundation, only time will tell. Mangroves are critical bio-systems which grow in inter-tidal regions and act as a primary nursery area for a number of commercially important shrimp, snappers, crab, penaeid prawns, sea perch, catfish and clams. They are also the breeding ground for other species like angiospermic flora, flagellates, phytoplankton, seaweeds, seagrasses, sponges, corals and benthic algae which sustain the oceanic food chain.

Studies indicate that global warming and rising sea levels have significantly shrunk mangrove areas, as has already happened to devastating effect in the low island countries of the Western Pacific. The UNESCO, UNEP and other UN agencies are now establishing a series of marine reserves to study the impact of global climate change on mangroves. It remains to be seen whether the fishing communities in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere hurling towards its own destruction, will be able to live and tell us their story.

Much-needed interventions have to be holistic. Says Dr. Nagendran of the Centre for Environmental Studies, Anna University, "Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) offers a means of balancing the competing demands of different users of the same resources. It is essential to overcome the sectoral and intergovernmental fragmentation that characterizes today's coastal management. Planning in coastal areas has to take account of the specific features of small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including the risk of over-exploitation by 'last resort' fishers -- poor people with no other source of livelihood."

Activist T.S.S. Mani, who has been working with the fisherfolk of the Nochchikuppam commune concurs, "Climate change has a direct and terrible effect on the livelihood of coastal fishworkers. They rate amongst the poorest of the poor but their concerns are completely marginalized. Even research organizations treat them as incidental to their ecological focus. Although they may not understand global warming and greenhouse emissions, their traditional knowledge of the oceans, fine-tuned over centuries, should be providing key insights. But artisanal fishworkers have become victims of development instead of being participants to the process."



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" These days, it is differences in national regulations, far more than tariffs, that put sand in the wheels of trade between rich countries." (From: The... " These days, it is differences in national regulations, far more than tariffs, that put sand in the wheels of trade between rich countries." (From: The Economist, May 24th, 1997). What does "put sand in the wheels" mean? Copyright. Senior Member. to which corruption can grease or sand the wheels in the presence of a low. quality of governance is discussed below. 2.1. The "grease the wheels" hypothesis. The ill functioning of the bureaucracy is considered as the most prominent. inefficiency that corruption could grease. precisely the meaning of the "sand the wheels hypothesis". At an aggregate level, the impact of corruption on the quality of civil. servants is questionable. One of the most lengthiest documentaries of any medium (48 hours in the 1969 version, 52 hours for the 1978 and 1981 versions) Fact|date=January 2008, The History of " | | Wikipedia. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1986 anime) " Infobox animanga/Header name = The Wonderful Wizard of Oz caption = ja name = あああ"æ³•ă½ă., ja name trans = Oz no MahÅtsukai genre = Fantasy, KodomoInfobox animanga/Anime title = director = Naisho Tonogawa studio = Panmedia network = flagicon|Japan TV" | | Wikipedia. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1986 TV series) " For other adaptations of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, see The Wizard of O... " * /The car wheels slipped on the ice, so Tom put sand under them, which did the" | | Dictionary of American idioms. 16+.