

The Big Picture

Issue 56

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"News to use & amuse"



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Editorial

If we were to imagine that there were 3 major groupings in the community, those who wish to retain control our resources; those interested in changing the status quo; and those who don't care one way or the other; we'd find that the voice of the first group was over represented in the media, while the voice of those who want change was staggeringly muted.

Given the 70 person Tas Government Media Unit, the control over the news exercised by forestry interests, the political party system that is so easily compromised by the donation and 'hire a politician as consultant' system, the public is doing it tough to try to hold and maintain any kind of open communication.

Even innocent debates on public sites like [TasTimes](#) are disrupted by GMU and others, often under the shield of anonymity.

The 'change the status quo' group has no protection either, they have no police, no courts of appeal, no mechanisms or structures such as exist for the power elites. They rely entirely on trust and openness.

Unfortunately this exposes those people to the full panoply of acts of subversion and perfidy.

An ABC investigation has revealed that a covert alliance of timber industry interests, unions and at least one Federal Labor MP, swayed key government forest policy in a campaign involving the infiltration of environment groups and ALP branches.

We reveal the A-Team, the heart of an elaborate covert campaign to spy on and sabotage environmental groups, infiltrate political parties and damage corporate competitors.

Using workers posing as greenies, the A-Team infiltrated all the major green groups, including...the Wilderness Society [ABC](#)

There's no 'intelligence' agency to help, no police are going to investigate, indeed the only reason that anything happened in the above case was that the ABC smelled a good story. After the story broke there was no follow up, no checking and the organisations involved had no formal processes to protect themselves from further incursions by powerful interests like forestry.

Those interests want even more control over our resources and are lining up to get it. Financial giants are also seeking to profit from climate change...

The CPRS is structured so that most of the revenue it raises will be recycled back to Australia's largest polluters rather than used to finance the massive increase in investment in renewable energy needed if Australia is to cut its emissions and maintain its living standards. Worse, even as the cap on emissions is lowered, the big polluters will be able to meet their lower targets by buying dodgy emission permits offsets from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia so that, according to Treasury forecasts, actual emissions by Australia's biggest polluters will be above 1990 levels until after 2035.

The CPRS, like similar schemes in Europe, is designed to slow down the structural change necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change. Simultaneously, it will create a new field of innovation for the financial industry, which led to the global economic crisis. [Age](#)

The amounts 'on the table' run into multiple billions, the power available to those who control our resources was previously unimaginable.

Would those people have the money, time and interest to try to control the agenda of influential opposition groups?

The Tasmanian timber industry already has a 20 yr wood supply agreement from Tasmania's various forests, which values the timber at \$15 tonne delivered to the chipper. By contrast, firewood sells for around \$100 per tonne!

Put another way, the forestry industry now virtually controls Tasmania's forests via their proxy Forestry Tasmania.

But the forestry industry is clearly not satisfied with just logging native forests, perhaps because they are getting harder to reach as they disappear into the chippers or perhaps because they just want more power and resources.

They want **both**...as Paul Lennon said...**we can have it all!**

They can keep our forests AND get political support for more subsidies and legal rights to expand their plantation estate.

In order to advance their case they have created the concept of 'jobs rich plantations' that somehow might keep them out of our forests even though the costs of growing plantation trees are 3x the price they'll pay for trees from public forests. According to forestry, plantation trees are going to make our climate safe.

Questioning such propositions is a role that alternative thinkers need to engage in frequently and deeply.

For a change, let's look at what's happening in Afghanistan, the powerful US is...

being "out-governed" by an enemy so ruthless it's bringing services to a desperate people ignored by the legitimate government that we installed.

The lessons and parallels are remarkable so that story 'Winners lose' appears below.

Also below is a copy of the revealing letter from TWS (see [Tas Times](#) for the developing story).

This week Brenda Rosser is back with a smokin' double barrelled blast that should make us think.

Perhaps we really should thank anyone that does that.

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That was the week that was

Governance & spin

Rudd largesse leaves signs for all to see [SMH](#)

Forestry/Food/Agriculture

Pulp mill case setback [Mercury](#)

New plantation claim for pulp mill [Mercury](#)

Climate/water/energy/environment

Sci/Fi Geo-engineering could be planet's last resort [Australian](#)

Armed forces concerned about climate change [TheAge](#)

Polluters win [TheAge](#)

Health/education revolution/communication/defence

Not enough Gps cause of hospital crowding [Mercury](#)

Medicare is failing and needs revamp: Govt report [TheAge](#)

The new people power: Gottliebse [BusinessSpectator](#)

Hospital makes you sicker [Telegraph](#)

End net censorship farce [SMH](#)

Nowhere for disabled adults except hospitals [TheAge](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech

Sorry to 'forgotten State care Australians' [SMH](#)

NT parking inspectors give dog ticket [HeraldSun](#)

Govt kicks 14 y.o. girl out after father's death [SMH](#)

Executed millionaire had tape of NSW political graft [Telegraph](#)

Immigration policy silence a real worry [TheAge](#)

Big 4 banks control our mortgages [TheAge](#)

World

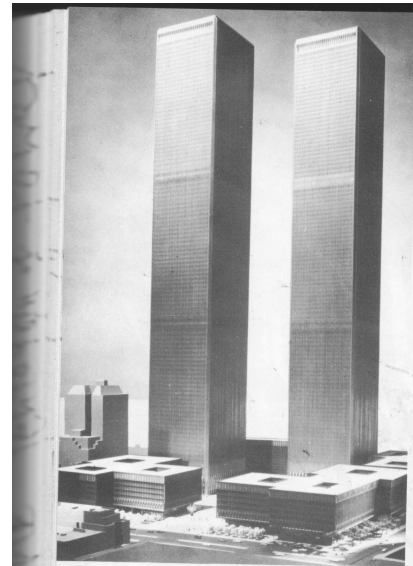
UK prisoners better fed than hospital patients [SMH](#)

US 'Arc of instability' just keeps getting bigger [AsiaTimes](#)

US general calls for urgent Afghan rethink [TheAge](#)

Only Another Dinosaur

Brenda Rosser. 4th September 2009



20: Homage to Giantism
Tinguely's sculptural happening 'Ho

In 1970, Lewis Mumford wrote an interesting paragraph - under the image of New York's World Trade Centre, as above. In his book 'They Myth of the Machine - The Pentagon of Power' the following text appears:

"The Port of New York Authority's World Trade Center, 110 stories high, is a characteristic example of the purposeless giantism and technological exhibitionism that are now eviscerating the living tissue of every great city. The Port authority, a quasi-governmental corporation, was in origin a happy political invention, first installed in London; but unfortunately its social functions have been subordinated to pecuniary motivations: and its executives have conceived it their duty to funnel more motor traffic into the city, through new bridges and tunnels, than its streets and its parking spaces can handle - while contributing to the lapse of a more adequate system of public transportation that included railroad, subway, and ferry. This policy has resulted in mounting traffic congestion, economic waste, and human deterioration - though with a constant rise in land values and speculative profits. These baneful results were anticipated and graphically depicted by Clarence S Stein, then Chairman of the New York State Housing and Regional Planning Commission, in his article on 'Dinosaur Cities' in the 'Survey Graphic', May 1925. Stein there described the breakdown - already quite visible - resulting from housing congestion, water shortage, sewerage pollution, street clogging, traffic jams, and municipal bankruptcy. But Dinosaurs were handicapped by insufficient brains, and the World Trade Centre is only another Dinosaur."

I deeply suspect, as Lewis Mumford does, that disastrous designs and decisions at the highest levels of world society will perpetuate to (likely imminent and global) catastrophe.

"The suppression of personality is already so complete in an automated economy that the reputed heads of our great organizations are as incapable of changing its goals as the lowliest filing clerk. It is the system itself that, once set up, gives orders."

Stagflation kills Capitalism

Brenda Rosser. 5th September 2009

Every now and again I look at the pieces of the economic history I've compiled and find myself mulling over a picture that emerges that appears to describe the imminent collapse of capitalism itself. However, the evidence points to stagflation rather than 'the market' as the chief culprit in bringing a quick end to our industrial and consumer way of life. The market hasn't failed because it simply hasn't been employed by what John Perkins (former 'economic hit man') calls the global 'corporatocracy'.

The other interesting observation is that the capitalist system appears to have been almost continuously propped up since the late 1960s by ever-increasing loads of sovereign, corporate and personal debt. Despite insolvency.

1972 – 1981 – The **price of oil increased nine-fold**. This fueled stagflation. Important changes occurred within the World Bank as a result of the energy crisis. It moved from supporting protection for infant industries and state planning and lending for state-owned enterprises to a commitment to trade liberalization and abandoned its support for public enterprises.

1987 – "A confidential World Bank report found **little or no evidence that the Bank's lending has caused significant movement toward greater reliance on markets**." [1]

"The [World] bank is notorious for giving bad advice.... Bank aid has helped many countries build unneeded steel factories, underused airports, and roads that crumble as soon as they are completed. The World Bank is currently **run like a Soviet factory**, concerned only with meeting its quantitative production goals.... Bank officers have pressured Third World governments to borrow more than they wished to borrow, a practice having dire results for the country... A Congressional Research Service study concluded in 1980, "**The Bank is seen as presiding over the buildup of debts which will ultimately be defaulted**." [2]Despite the fact that **56 Third World countries have now fallen behind in their debt repayments**, the bank continues to push for ever greater lending--both by itself and by commercial banks--to Third World governments.... In 1968, Robert McNamara became bank president and dedicated the bank to achieving ever higher loan levels. Between 1968 and 1981, when McNamara resigned, the bank's lending levels increased twelvefold, from \$883 million to over \$12 billion, and they have continued soaring since then." [3]

[1] Elliot Berg and Alan Batchelder, "Structural Adjustment Lending: A Critical View," CPD discussion paper no. 1985-21, World Bank (January 1985), p. 22. As quoted in: The World Bank Vs. the World Poor by James Bovard. September 28, 1987 <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa092.html>

[2] Cited in A. Hughes, "Is the World Bank Biting Off More Than It Can Chew?" Forbes, May 26, 1980, p. 123. As quoted in: The World Bank Vs. the World Poor by James Bovard. September 28, 1987. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa092.html>

[3] The World Bank Vs. the World Poor by James Bovard. September 28, 1987. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa092>

The letter

Dear fellow Tasmanian

I am writing to you as a Tasmanian who cares about what the future holds for our children. Your kids deserve to grow up safe and healthy, with good secure jobs. Tasmania can provide this and more, so long as you take action today.

You and all other Tasmanians depend on a clean, natural environment – for the jobs-rich tourism industry, agriculture, fishing industry and diverse forest-based industries.

With real leadership these industries could grow and develop more jobs and more wealth.

Gunns' proposed pulp mill does not mean more jobs. An economic study has found that more jobs would be lost in the tourism, agricultural and fishing industries than would be created in the pulp mill.

Jobs for the future

We could secure a safe climate and dramatically increase jobs in managing our forests as permanent carbon stores, expanding our tourism and renewable energy industries, and by supporting forestry workers working in a plantation-based wood-and-paper-product industry.

No more money for the pulp mill

The Tamar Valley pulp mill is not the right development for Tasmania. Its negative impacts, particularly on people in the Tamar Valley and surrounding areas, will far outweigh any positive impacts.

So far the Gunns board has refused to look at sustainable alternatives to the Tamar Valley pulp mill, but has instead taken taxpayers' money to push a project most Tasmanians don't support.

Hard-earned taxpayer dollars should be spent on much needed improvements to health care and education instead of funding Gunns' pulp mill.

Take action for your children

Act now, contact your elected representatives and ask them to:

- Support a jobs-rich, 100% plantation-based forestry industry and the protection of Tasmania's native forests
- Increase investment in industries which are providing sustainable jobs, such as tourism and renewable energy
- Ensure that none of your tax dollars go into supporting the Tamar Valley pulp mill

Yours faithfully

Paul Oosting

Paul Oosting
Pulp Mill Campaigner
The Wilderness Society

The letter has colour printing on the reverse side exhorting the read to 'Take action for your kids' followed by the slogan 'Get a guarantee for Tasmania's future'.

The letter is undated but was reportedly released by TWS very recently and comes with the postcard as below.



To Will Hodgman MHA
Channel Court Shopping Centre
Kingston Tas 7050

Produced by the Wilderness Society Tasmania
Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper
by Newprint, Huntingfield TAS



Dear Mr Hodgman,
The Tamar Valley is a vibrant region, with diverse industries and a healthy environment. With the right decisions, it could provide a positive future for me and my family.
The Rudd Government and the Federal Opposition have united to expand the renewable energy industry. We need this same spirit of cooperation in Tasmania to heal the conflict over Gunns' Tamar Valley pulp mill.
You can show leadership and guarantee a secure future for our kids and grandkids.
73% of Tasmanians want to see an end to state government support for the pulp mill (GWS poll, Nov 08). The Labor party is being divisive by doing deals to benefit their mates at the expense of Tasmania's future. We need you to guarantee not to help Gunns build their Tamar Valley pulp mill, but instead to implement a positive vision for our state that protects our native forests and provides long-term sustainable jobs.
We would support Gunns building a 100% plantation-based pulp mill if it was totally chlorine-free, situated where it won't affect people's health, and did not lead to job losses in fishing, farming and tourism.
With your leadership we can have it all. Please implement policies that protect our native forests, create long-term sustainable jobs, and help build a positive future for our kids and grandkids.
Yours sincerely,

Signed:	
Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Email:	

Winners lose

War commands debate on its own terms

By **ROBERT C. KOEHLER** [ICH](#)

September 3, 2009 "[Tribune Media Services](#)" -- The situation in Afghanistan is serious. We're getting "out-governed" by an enemy so ruthless it's bringing services to a desperate people ignored by the legitimate government we installed.

But our eight-year quagmire . . . excuse me, war . . . can still be won, says Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. and NATO commander in that country, who recently completed a review of the situation: "Success," he commented, "is achievable and demands a revised implementation strategy, commitment and resolve, and increased unity of effort."

Before I salute crisply and shout "yes, sir!" I'd like to quote from an essay by Robert E. Draper called "Keys to Real Success — Going Beyond 'Winning' and 'Losing' in Business With a Positive Attitude." I'm stuck, see, on the concept of "winning" this war, because human intelligence has mostly moved beyond this concept in every area of life except international relations, which remains a multi-trillion-dollar global bastion of Bronze Age thinking.

"It is important," writes Draper, "to first realize that success, as most businesspeople know it, is always trailed by the shadow of the fear of failure and, therefore, is not real success at all. That's because real success cannot be found in a 'winning' that includes a potential for loss. . . .

"To succeed at work requires adopting the mindset . . . of good card players," he goes on. "Like them, you play not for occasional fits of excitement, but to survive. This requires that you give long-range thinking priority in your mind, and that you never perceive a current gain that will be trailed by a long-term loss to be acceptable or even attractive."

OK, let's jump now to a refugee camp in Kabul, where journalist Norman Solomon introduces us to a 7-year-old girl named Guljumma Khan, who lost her arm in a U.S. bombing raid, and whose father has gotten nowhere trying to get redress or the least support from the United States, the United Nations or the Afghan government to obtain medical assistance for her or take care of his family.

Furthermore, Solomon writes, "Basics like food arrive at the camp only sporadically." The girl's father "pointed to a plastic bag containing a few pounds of rice. It was his responsibility to divide the rice for the 100 families" in the refugee camp.

"Is the U.S. government willing to really help Guljumma, who now lives each day and night in the squalor of a refugee camp?" asks Solomon. "Is the government willing to spend the equivalent of the cost of a single warhead to assist her?"

Morally speaking, what to do is remarkably obvious, graspable by virtually every human being on the planet, even, I believe, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates. When pressed by reporters following news of the McChrystal report's completion, Gates said, according to Reuters, that "any recommendation for more forces would have to address his concerns that the foreign military presence in Afghanistan could become too large and be seen by Afghans as a hostile occupying force."

There are 103,000 U.S./NATO troops in Afghanistan now; the country has been bombed (15,000 tons and counting) and occupied for eight years, with maybe 8,000 civilians killed in the process (God knows how many wedding parties bombed and

strafed), many more injured and displaced — and the U.S. secretary of defense feels we're pushing the limits of Afghan tolerance. Up the troop ante and they'll think we're a hostile presence.

Well, Team Bush never equivocated in its Bronze Age ferocity. Maybe, I initially thought, Gates' flicker of intelligent uncertainty — his feint in the direction of sanity — can be counted as progress, not by the desperate and starving Afghans, perhaps, but by the Obama voting base. So far, this is the extent of the "change" and "hope" we've gotten from his administration in the ongoing, disastrous wars of choice he inherited.

Because the Taliban, with a counter-agenda to advance, is incorporating a hearts-and-minds approach into its strategy for victory, the U.S. and NATO are grasping that they have to do likewise. So, on second thought, it's probably not moral progress at all, just further evidence that anonymous geo corporate interests control international relations.

When our leaders, even those who promise peace, sit in the driver's seat of war, they surrender their ordinary humanity — their consciences — and assume the mindset and agenda of those anonymous interests. In Afghanistan, this agenda includes regional dominance, the flow of oil (the pipeline) and, as with every war, the stoking of the military economy. This is what "winning" in Afghanistan really means — armless 7-year-olds be damned — and McChrystal is right. It's still possible. Even probable.

War commands debate on its own terms. Read or listen to the mainstream coverage: It conveys the details of war in a context devoid of moral intelligence. Yet for ordinary humanity, wars can never be "won." They can only be ended and, ultimately, transcended.

Robert Koehler is an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist and nationally syndicated writer. You can respond to this column at koehlercw@gmail.com.