

27 October 2002

The terrorists seem to be winning.

George W Bush said last year that terrorists were attacking the West because they hated freedom and democracy. He was echoed in this on numerous occasions by our own John Boy along with a plethora of others eager to join in the cacophony aimed to drown out any voice of opposition or reason.

In order to defend the freedoms that we hold dear and the terrorists hate so much, John Boy dove on the first opportunity to lock them away in the dark vault of his soul.

Away with our boundless plains to share as asylum seekers are locked up behind cages in the new internment camps. Away with freedom of religious expression as any organisation with the word *Islam* in its name is terrorised under a cloud of fear. Away with the right to form unions to protect ourselves and co-workers as the Royal Commission threatens to jail people for not handing over the names of their friends. Away with irresponsible loopholes for terrorists to hide behind like the right to remain silent and the maxim that a person is innocent until proven guilty as the new terror laws receive a post Bali welcome.

What is happening here is that the terrorists have won. People are terrified. People are living in a climate of fear and suspicion that has not been seen in Australia in my 40 year memory at any rate.

And the fear has not been brought upon us by swarthy faced Arabs in scarves but by our own elected leaders in casual suits.

In a singular masterstroke of freedom saving, John Boy decides to turn his back on the rule of law and side with countries like Iraq and China in refusing to sign the UN Convention on Torture, so that Australia can be free to torture whoever it likes without the bothersome world community sticking its beak in. John then goes on to oppose the International Criminal Court for the same reason before, without any hint of irony, he proposes the idea that any foreign national who commits a crime against Australians should be extradited to Australia to stand trial.

In the latest fear-mongering, following the shooting of two people at Monash Uni, John Howard is planning new gun laws to take away even more rights.

No, this is not a pro gun rant - I dislike guns as much as any of you and probably more than most of you. But look at what happened with the last lot of new gun laws: handguns suddenly became easier to come by. Ten years ago I would not have been able to buy a black market gun; today I know exactly where to get one....and in ten years, with a total prohibition and wide ranging laws aimed at cutting supply lines, production and use of guns, they might end up just as hard to get as heroin. and no doubt the same people will be profiting - the terrorists.

Funny thing about guns and heroin, look at Afghanistan today. A new UN report shows that 3400 tonnes of opium will be produced there this year. That's 20% more than before the evil Taliban banned its production in 2001 and almost 20 times as much as after they did - which seems to have offended people so much.

I guess that's what's meant by freeing Afghanistan, allowing Afghani men to shave and women to bear their heads whilst working in opium fields controlled by Australia's friends in Kabul because there's no other work and what the hell - they've already killed 6 000 of us - don't make any more waves, lets just bleed poppies and suck our fingers so it hurts less.

I bet the Iraqis are wishing that they thought of that. They need something to dull the pain of losing more than 5 000 children a month in the largest epidemic of cancer and birth deformities ever: While Australia coordinates the economic blockade which stops basic medicines and medical equipment from entering their country.

If this is the authorised Australian Government version of 'freedom' I for one want no bar of it: and for the record I want no bar of the alternative government's identical version of freedom either.

Because freedom will never come through the barrel of a gun or through the fascistic clamp down of dissent.

Many Australians have joined with millions of others around the world in saying an emphatic NO to war. Earlier this month in Melbourne more than 40 000 people marched against a renewed attack on Iraq.

But while we are under the cloud of terrorism, being anti-war is not enough. We need to be anti-terrorist.

We need to be pro peace, which is more than the absence of war.

It is refusing to be cowed by corrupt and immoral governments and their laws. It is taking the initiative and building communities. It is joining and becoming active in our peace, green, union, church or whatever organisation and laughing at their ridiculous new laws.

It is going to meetings - boring as they are - where you'll meet fellow travellers and organise dissent to the terror.

It is taking to the streets, not only in marches and rallies following set authorised routes through towns, but spontaneously, with a couple of friends, with your family, on your own. Even if it's just down to the neighbor's house who you've lived next door to for years but never had a real conversation with. Or to your local Mosque to say 'Hi - I'm not afraid of you'. Or to an internment camp.

It is dancing and singing with children and teaching them that the future is not lost and hopeless and that there is a spirit here which strives for joy and which will outlive the

perverted little men in their frightened little lives cryogenically sealing themselves off from any possible assault by 'the other'.

The time has come for all of us to not only oppose war but to create peace.

Jacob

WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER

NO WAR ON IRAQ
No Australian involvement

**Rally for
peace**

**1pm Sunday 1 Dec.
State Library**

March to Treasury Gardens for
speakers, music and food

National weekend of action
against the war

Victorian Peace Network 9659 2582 www.vicpeace.org