

Senators,

As an Australian who still believes in a fair go and participatory democracy, I do not think that a Free trade Agreement with the USA will be for the greatest good of the greatest number of Australians.

As a trade unionist who still strongly believes in collective bargaining, I have not been at all impressed by how job security has gone out the window with globalisation of our manufacturing industries and erosion of our jobs and skills.

I've watched as my son's chances of building our country's sustainability with home-grown trade skills and training has been dumped in favour of importing cheap goods from grossly underpaid and non-unionised labour in countries run by undemocratic and repressive regimes.

I've watched as younger generations of Australians become human resources instead of human beings and are commodified to fit the virtual reality of futures exchanges and electronic stock markets and electoral machines.

I am a highly qualified and constantly upgraded cog in the wheel myself and go from casual work to casual work - with no holidays, no rest time, no sick leave to reinvigorate my aging and tired body. This grieves me. This degrades me. This dehumanises me.

But most of all, all the talk of 'globalising domestic markets', all the waste of good people, all the fear and loathing brought on by the USA's poor global policing to protect that nation's so-called 'security interests' - all of this over-capitalising of dwindling, non-renewable resources denies the majority of people in the world basic rights of survival.

I've watched as white leaders of affluent countries swagger through lesser 'developed' countries and talk (never act) against poverty, racism and totalitarianism.

I've watched as The Willing 'liberate' poorer nations of their assets.

I've watched as our leaders travel to boost the morale of 'the troops' but never stoop to listen to the families of those liberated of their lives by the not-so-invisible fist of capitalism.

As a mother, I grieve constantly for the beseiged citizens of those nations
'liberated' by American, British and Australian neo-colonialism. I fear for
their future. I watch as the 'liberated' nation of Afghanistan
regresses
further into anarchy and poverty - and Australia's leaders push for a
Free
Trade Agreement with the USA.

As an academic, I grieve constantly for my beseiged students. I watch
as
they drift in and out of unemployment and underemployment and try to
make
ends meet on the dole or student handouts. I fear for their future. I
watch
as they drift in and out of unsuitable, high-rent accommodation and
feel
guilty that I was able to benefit from quality public education,
suitable
cheap public housing and plenty of unionised secure employment in my
younger days. I feel guilty that I benefited from a cheap government
loan
that enabled me to buy my property.

As an Australian, I grieve for the international environment that
suffers
from privatisation of the world's commons. I watch as the USA takes its
computer graphics, its virtual reality into the once rich bushlands,
rainforests and oceans and owns, over-harvests, overkills and
mismanages
once abundant natural ecosystems that should belong to no-one - or
everyone.

The terror that the USA is bringing to the world as 'freedom' is
destroying
other nations' heritage, culture, language - and humanity.

As Friere said in his 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', when we make other
people less than human, we become less than human ourselves.

My hope is that women of the world will break their silence, stand
together
and say 'Enough!'

Enough of this 'free' trade that brings war and suffering! Bring back
Australian pride! Build our national interest on sustainable
enterprise,
public interest and international good will - not global capital
interests
that dehumanise.

Diana Rickard