



PRIVATISATION BY STEALTH

Why This Discredited Practice Is Still On the Political Agenda

Sunday, March 16th 2008

11.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

TRADE UNION CENTRE

199 Armagh Street, Christchurch

Bill Rosenberg, of CAFCA, on the international pressures driving privatisation.

Laila Harre, former Cabinet Minister, on the internal and external pressures on Government to privatise.

Sue Newberry, Associate Professor of Accounting, Sydney University, on the structures in place which enable some privatisation initiatives to proceed without the public being aware.

I want to register for the Privatisation By Stealth Conference

\$25 waged or

\$15 unwaged. Registration includes lunch.

Name -----

Address -----

Phone/mobile/fax/e-mail -----

Send registration slip and payment to:
CAFCA, Box 2258, Christchurch.

Privatisation – that discredited relic from the 1980s and 90s’ – has come creeping back out from under its stone. In 2007, National floated a policy of partial privatisation of selected State-Owned Enterprises. Public reaction was swift but with National odds on favourite to become Government in 2008, we need to sit up and take this seriously. As for Labour, in its three terms in power it has reclaimed a little of the swathes of the public estate privatised by its predecessors: namely, Air New Zealand, the national rail track network and Kiwibank. These were all popular policies and show that it can be done successfully. But much more needs to be done. Right now, Labour is giving privatisation a major boost by proposals for Public Private Partnerships in sectors such as road construction and housing, and for toll roads.

And we all know who will benefit from any further privatisation – the usual suspects who did so well out of it in the past. Namely, transnational corporations and NZ Big Business. Fundamentally, the drive behind it is ideological and its proponents well recognise how unpopular it is: “Privatisation is like dismantling a bomb – it must be done very carefully, for wrong decisions can have nasty consequences. There are obstacles to be overcome, arguments to be rebutted, proponents to be mobilised, and opponents to be thwarted” (Emanuel Savas, an adviser to Reagan and Thatcher, quoted in his 2000 book “Privatisation and public-private partnerships”).

This conference precedes the 2007 [Roger Award event](#) to be held that same night. Both Laila Harre and Sue Newberry will also be speaking at that. They are two separate events but we invite people to come to both.

There will be discussion and questions after each speaker, plus workshops. All speakers will take part in a wrap up plenary session at the conclusion of the conference.