

the BEACON

Journal of the
Melbourne Unitarian
Peace Memorial
Church

August 2014
Price /\$2

SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

SILENCE IS ACQUIESCENCE

EDITORIAL

We Australians can't escape responsibility for what is done in our name both nationally and around the world. It is claimed that in a democracy, however weak, ultimate authority rests with us, the people. Certainly our votes empower the government, we finance it with our taxes and we endorse its policies with our inactivity. If we remain silent in the face of the government's criminal policies towards asylum seekers, in effect we support them.

Mere words cannot graphically describe our repugnance at what this obscene government is doing to asylum seekers in our name. Every action, every new policy emphasises our pariah status in the eyes of the world, and we as citizens are forced to accept this status because of the criminal acts of this government.

The latest obscenity, handing back 45 asylum seekers from Sri Lanka to the Sri Lankan navy, is tantamount to handing Jews to the Nazis in World War Two. There was no proper individual assessment of these people's claims for asylum seeker status despite Minister Morrison's claims to the contrary.

The United Nations Human Rights Office says: 'International law requires that every case be individually examined on its own merits along with procedural safeguards and due process guarantees. Any returns, even from the high seas or in the territorial seas of other States, must be carried out in accordance with international law, under which handing back victims to their persecutor and collective expulsions are strictly prohibited'.

Amnesty International says, 'The decision that the whole High Court will hear the challenge reflects the gravity of the Australian government's deeply concerning proposal to return asylum seekers to a country where their lives may be at serious risk.'

Australia has become an international disgrace, and in the eyes of the world, Minister Morrison, Prime Minister Abbott and Minister Julie Bishop, in particular, are responsible for this. In their efforts to 'stop the boats' they have lied to the people, concealed the truth from the people, perverted the course of justice, broken our commitments to United Nations International Treaties, and are responsible for the



horrific deaths and criminal incarceration of people whose only crime is to want a better life for their families.

Fundamentally, this editorial is not to illustrate the infamy of this government ... every thinking *Beacon* reader recognises this. This editorial is a call to action. Each and every one of us has to do more than silently abhor the race to the bottom that characterises this government. We cannot remain passive or inactive on this issue or we become partners in their crimes. We have to show that they do not speak for us and that there is a range of ways to do this: talking in our workplaces, with our neighbours and family, writing a letter or sending an email, using the media and social media, radio talkback, contacting Local Members, passing on *Beacon*, joining with others and attending rallies.

Historically, almost everyone in this country (apart from Aboriginal Australians) came to Australia either as political or economic asylum seekers, so we all have a personal responsibility as well as a moral one.

This church will do all it can to expose and oppose the government's corrupt, illegal asylum seeker policies that have earned us international condemnation, thus besmirching the reputation of every one of us as international citizens. ■

Rising Income and Wealth Inequality – ‘A Central Economic Truth of Our Time’

It is a rare moment when the financial press offers an unflattering picture of the way the global economic system works – or doesn't work.

But that's what *Financial Times* has done in the light of recent figures released by the US Federal Reserve Board.

Around the world, there is a growing gulf between the super-rich – the top 1% – and the rest. This, says the *Times*, is a 'central economic truth of our times'.

The US figures show that the nation as a whole is richer than ever before. Total US net worth has risen to a record US\$81.8 trillion, up US\$1.5 trillion in the first quarter of 2014, and up nearly US\$13 trillion compared to the previous peak, before the 2008 financial crash.

But that's where the good news ends.

The fact is that the majority of that increase in wealth flowed to the super-rich in the form of higher share prices and rising property values. Figures show, for instance, that the sale value of the top 1% of properties in the US rose

21 per cent in the first 4 months of this year, while the sale value of the remaining 99 per cent of homes has fallen 7.6 per cent.

These facts help explain why an increasing number of US families struggle to make ends meet even when the official statistics suggest that the US, taken as a whole, is getting richer.

In fact, while total household wealth has risen 43 per cent since the depths of the economic slump in 2008, there has been an actual decline in median household income, down 7.6 per cent, since the same time. That, in turn, reflects the decline in the real value of wages and the growth of low paid jobs over the same period.

In short, recent policies pursued in the US – and around the world – designed to prop up stock markets, banks and the global financial system, have largely benefited the already wealthy rather than stimulating overall growth.

As the American dream fades, these trends are a warning to Australian working people of what lies ahead under the Abbott government. ■

Source: CEPU June 2014

DID YOU KNOW...

Nobel prize-winning US economist Joseph Stiglitz is visiting Australia at the moment and has been critical of the priorities in the Abbott government's first Budget. Asked what Australia had done right that the US had not, he had a one-word answer: unions. You have been able to maintain stronger trade unions than the United States, he added. The absence of any protection for workers, any bargaining power, has had adverse effects in the United States. **That's worth remembering in a hostile current political environment.**

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Australian values include social justice

June 2014

By **AL WASAT BILAL CLELAND**

The response to the recent Abbott government Budget has been largely negative. It is said to be increasing social division and inequality. It has been condemned as 'un-Australian' as it attacks the very fundamental value of 'a fair go' for everyone in society. It certainly runs counter to the accepted policies of Australia just after the Federation of 1901, when the Australian nation was established.

A judgment that is still celebrated, the Sunshine Harvester Judgment of 1907 by Justice Higgins, decreed there should be a basic wage paid to the unskilled worker, which met 'the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilised community'. He also said that the pay of the employee should not be dependent on the profits of the employer.

The amount he set of seven shillings a day (modern currency 70 cents) was based upon his estimation of the needs of an average family.

'The usual rent paid by a labourer, as distinguished from an artisan, appears to be 7s; and, taking the rent at 7s; the necessary average weekly expenditure for a labourer's home of about 5 persons would seem to be about **one pound 12 shillings and 5 pence** (three dollars 25 cents in modern currency). The lists of expenditure submitted to me vary not only in amounts, but in bases of computation. But I have confined the figures to rent, groceries, bread, meat, milk, fuel, vegetables, and fruit; and the average of the list of nine housekeeping women is **one pound 12 shillings and 5 pence**. This expenditure does not cover light (some of the lists omitted light), clothes, boots, furniture, utensils (being casual, not weekly expenditure), rates, life insurance, savings, accident or benefit societies, loss of employment, union pay, books and newspapers, tram and train fares, sewing machine,

mangle, school requisites, amusements and holidays, intoxicating liquors, tobacco, sickness and death, domestic help, any expenditure for unusual contingencies, religion, or charity.'

The year after this judgment, in 1908, the prime minister Alfred Deakin proposed that the old-age pension of ten shillings per week be paid to persons over 65 years of age who had lived in Australia for 25 years (but not Aboriginal people), and who were of good moral character and did not own property worth over three hundred and ten pounds (\$620).

Yet again the racist basis of thinking can be seen. It is one of the worst marks against us as a nation, which we still need to overcome.

While the Sunshine Harvester Judgment and the old age pension marked Australia as an advanced nation at that time, with due respect to the rights of its citizens (Indigenous Australians were not considered citizens), the basic wage and security in old age became part of the fabric of society. Now we have a Treasurer who condemns such basic features of our civilised society as undue expectations of 'entitlement' that he announces, is now finished.

A recent pamphlet supporting the Bust the Budget rally recounted under the heading 'Islamic Justice Principles' the hadith collection of Tirmidhi which indicates what we are entitled to similar to what Justice Higgins judged in 1907 according to the standards of his time: 'The Son of Adam has no better right than he would have a house wherein he may live, a piece of clothing whereby he may hide his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water.' Tirmidhi also records the hadith 'He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young ones and respect our old ones'. ■

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A letter to the thing I wish I had written

A Letter to Australia's History, 20 years from now.



By **JULIAN BURNSIDE**

ONCE I WAS PROUD OF MY COUNTRY.

In 1948, Australia played a leading role in creating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We had a history of being a proud, decent, largely egalitarian country.

In 1998, something important and fundamental started to change. You need to see where this can lead.

Patrick was one of the two big stevedoring operations in Australia. It was caught out training an alternative, non-union workforce in Dubai and never offered a convincing explanation. Peter Reith tried to help them, but with friends like that ...

Then in April, on the Tuesday before Good Friday, a bunch of goons stormed the docks and kicked out all the workers who were members of the union. They had attack dogs to give them an advantage and large gents with balaclavas and no necks who put up chain-mesh fences to keep the unionists out.

At the same time as the docks were being stormed, Patrick took steps to sack the entire unionised workforce and put the company into administration.

It turned out that the company had moved all its assets sideways into a new company without telling anyone, and the government had secretly helped it implement the plan.

It was a shock to learn that a Liberal government would conspire to break its own laws in an attempt to break the union movement: it's not how patrician bluebloods are meant to behave. But the Coalition argued all the way to the High Court that it was OK. They lost.

Then things got worse.

Since the Russians had left Afghanistan, the Taliban had escalated their attacks on the Hazara minority. Millions of Hazara fled Afghanistan. A few thousand reached Australia.

In August 2001 the *Palapa* was carrying 438 Hazaras towards Australia.

It began to sink. Australia asked the Norwegian cargo ship *Tampa* to rescue them. But when it tried to put them ashore at Christmas Island, Australia sent the SAS to take command of the *Tampa* at gunpoint.

John Howard said the people rescued by *Tampa* would never set foot in Australia. He said any asylum seeker trying

to get protection in Australia would be sent to Nauru: a tiny Pacific Republic with a population of 10,000 people and an area of just 21 square kilometres.

Then September 11 happened. And the Coalition government headed into the 2001 election on the indecent idea that 'We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come'. Coalition propagandists called asylum seekers 'illegals' and 'queue jumpers' and said that asylum seekers had thrown their children into the sea.

It was untrue, and they knew it.

The Labor Party said nothing to contradict the lies. The Liberals, it seemed, had turned into a party that was prepared to lie to the electorate and gain popularity by mistreating the most helpless people in the world.

For the next few years the cruelty and dishonesty continued. Asylum seekers, innocent of any offence, were held in detention for years until they collapsed into hopelessness and despair.

A little boy, eight years old, held in detention in South Australia, slashed his arms with razor wire.

A young man who had been in detention for five years cut himself so often he had ten metres of scarring on his body, but the government insisted that the only treatment he needed was Panadol.

A little girl, ten years old, held in detention in Melbourne, hanged herself.

The Coalition government argued all the way to the High Court that a man who had not committed any offence and was not seen as a risk to anyone, who had been refused a visa but could not be removed from Australia because he was stateless, that this man could remain in detention for the rest of his life.

What was shocking was not only that the government won, but that a government was prepared to make the argument in the first place.

Then Kevin Rudd became leader of the Labor Party and won government in late 2007. He promised a better, more humane policy concerning refugees. And he delivered it.

But then Tony Abbott became leader of the party that still called itself Liberal.

He restarted the anti-refugee rhetoric. Rudd responded by attacking people smugglers. He seems to have forgotten that his moral hero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was a people smuggler.

For a couple more elections and a couple more fractured administrations things kept sliding to the right.

The Pacific Solution, begun by Howard's Coalition government, abolished by Rudd's Labor government, was restarted by Gillard's Labor government.

Then, in 2013, we had an awful election campaign in which Rudd and Abbott competed with each other in their promises to mistreat asylum seekers. 'Cruel but necessary', they said.

It's tempting to think that if Pauline Hanson had been asked to help Rudd, she might have been concerned that he was too far to the right for her taste.

In October 2013 the Pope gave a speech about the tragedy of asylum seekers drowning off Lampedusa. He spoke about the globalisation of indifference and said:

'How many of us, myself included, have lost our bearings; we are no longer attentive to the world in which we live; we don't care; we don't protect what God created for everyone, and we end up unable even to care for one another! And when humanity as a whole loses its bearings, it results in tragedies like the one we have witnessed.'

Jesuit-trained Tony Abbott and Pentecostal hypocrite Scott Morrison were unmoved.

The Coalition won the election. Australia lost.

Labor lost a lot of talent when half its front bench followed Gillard out the door.

The Coalition quickly showed their true colours when we learned that senior members of the new government had been rorting their parliamentary expenses. That was no surprise: but it was interesting to see that the new Attorney General was involved. Haughty, supercilious, self-righteous George Brandis had elbowed his way to the trough with the best of them.

After all, wasn't Brandis the one who had ferociously attacked Peter Slipper for visiting a winery and charging the taxi ride to the Commonwealth? Brandis went to a friend's wedding and billed the Commonwealth. When he was found out two years later, Brandis repaid the \$1600 and said he had done nothing wrong.

Peter Slipper is still facing criminal charges for much less.

And Tony Abbott has billed the Commonwealth for every fun run and lycra cycle-fest, not to mention his Tamworth photo opportunity which apparently cost us about ten grand. Over the last couple of years he has had his hand in our pockets for about \$3 million.

So here's the problem.

We have a corrupt, hard, right wing Coalition government, led by self-seeking hypocrites.

We have a weakened, right wing Labor opposition unable it seems to restore decency.

And we have a country, once great, now seen as selfish, greedy and cruel and we have no political leadership at all.

We are redefining the character of our country. Most of us have not noticed because, for most of us, life is good.

The sight of the major parties competing to promise greater cruelty to boat people is new in Australian politics. We have never been perfect, but this was an obscenity without precedent.

It is painful to recognise that we are now a country that would brutalise one group with the intention that other people in distress will choose not to ask us for help.

But some of us remember how things once were; some of us see how things could be.

We will grieve until we find our way.

Recent history of Australia: when you are being written, please remember these things. ■

A MOST DECEITFUL BUDGET – **AN EVEN MORE DECEITFUL GOVERNMENT**

A speech delivered by **LEN COOPER**, Secretary, Communications Workers Union, Victoria, to the North East Border Trades and Labour Council in Wodonga on 16 June 2014.



The Abbott/Hockey Federal Budget protects big business on the one hand and punishes the battlers on the other. Those being punished are families, senior citizens, public servants, the unemployed, young people – including university students, people with disabilities and low-income earners.

Let me quote Dr Cassandra Goldie, the CEO of the Australian Council of Social Services, 'The real pain of this budget will be felt by people on low incomes, young people, single parents, those with illness or disability and those struggling to keep a roof over their heads.'

Other losers are education and health spending, spending on the environment and global warming, and the ABC and SBS public broadcasters. Foreign aid has been cut and so-called 'defence' spending is being increased massively.

Prior to the election Abbott said, 'No cuts to education, health, pensions, the ABC or SBS.' He also said, 'Governments should not and must not say one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards.' The Abbott government was elected by deception with the support of the Murdoch media empire and its line-up of apologists such as Andrew Bolt and Alan Jones. This is a budget chock full of broken promises and deceit. What we know now is that the budget contains a potential welfare catastrophe. More than half-a-million young people could need emergency assistance – including food packages – as a direct result of Abbott government changes that welfare groups have warned will lead to 'catastrophe'.

In an admission that a mandatory six-month wait for unemployment benefits for those under 30 is likely to push hundreds of thousands of people into crisis,

government officials have told Senate hearings the government had allocated \$230 million over four years to provide emergency relief to those affected. The government itself expects 550,000 applications for assistance, which will be delivered by charities in the form of food vouchers, transport or medications, household goods, clothing or by helping to pay rent or utility bills, and homelessness. Brotherhood of St Laurence head Tony Nicholson described the policy as 'draconian'.

There is no government budget crisis. The claims of a crisis are a lie and a sham – a sham designed to panic the Australian people and the Federal Senate to accept a mean, nasty, unfair, anti-worker budget. Australia's debt levels are historically low by international and national standards. Australia is a low-debt country and there are only a handful of countries in the world with a lower debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio. Net government debt for 2013/14 is \$191.5 billion or 12.1% of GDP. Net government debt in so-called advanced economies in the world averages 74.79% according to the International Monetary Fund. Australia is not a high-taxing country in relative terms. Australia is the fourth-lowest taxed country in the OECD.

The argument that Australian governments are high-spending governments is not supported by evidence. Since the Hawke government days, government spending has tended to be around 25% of GDP. Australia's budget deficit is small by international standards. Australia has the sixth-lowest deficit and is much lower than those of the USA, Britain, Canada, and most of Europe. The budget deficit is 1.9% of GDP – very modest on a world scale.

The only budget crises that exists in Australia are the budgets of the working class who are trying to make ends meet. Abbott's budget will make their situation much worse. The budget and its creators are obsessed with cuts. Not cuts to big business and the wealthy, but cuts to people's needs. They are not only obsessed with cuts – they are obsessed with ensuring that the working class (that is, workers in employment and workers unable to work) must be forced to carry the pain and the burden.

The Abbott government and its masters are already losing the argument about a so-called budget crisis. Thus, they are adapting or trying to adapt the message to one of a future crisis if we don't do something ... a growing population, an ageing population, growing demands on government and so on. There is nothing new in governments having to deal with such things over time. However, this should be a debate over how best to provide for our citizens' health, education, housing, jobs and welfare. If governments require more income eventually to provide for the sort of society we all desire, then let us look at a range of options.

Why not look at the billions and billions in direct and indirect assistance to big business. This is corporate warfare. Why not look at the tens of billions being spent on fighter aircraft and other so-called defence expenditures to satisfy the military strategy of the United States. Why

not look at the proposed expenditure of billions to be paid to the big polluters in Australia. Why not look at increasing taxes on big business, not decreasing them like the Abbott government is doing. Why not look at the reform of the superannuation system, the negative gearing rules and the taxation system generally, to ensure that millionaires and the other fabulously wealthy are no longer being given handouts and welfare from the taxpayer. Why not look at the billions of dollars being denied to governments by the rich due to tax evasion and avoidance.

We can see, as a result of the massive cuts to the states in health and education spending, planned by the federal government, that the issue of increasing and expanding the GST (goods and services tax) is being put on the agenda. The GST is a most unfair and inequitable tax. Taxation on goods and services can obviously be more easily paid by the rich because the increases represent a much smaller proportion of their income and wealth than that of the poor. A progressive income tax system is the fairest and most equitable taxation system because it is supposed to require taxation to be based on income and therefore is

more closely linked to a person's capacity to pay. If there are to be increases in taxation they should be based on a progressive pay-as-you-earn tax and not on a goods and services tax. Any increases in tax should protect low-and middle-income earners at least.

In the end, a budget becomes a question of one's priorities. However, the attacks on the poor, the pensioners, the students, the sick, the working people by this or any other government are never acceptable and nor should they be. So, what is it all about in the final analysis? It's about ideology. It's about the extreme right wing leadership of the Liberal/National party government and its free market, fundamentalist ideology.

The fundamentalists believe in deregulation to suit big business (get rid of red tape, controls, etc.) but at the same time, they believe in the most oppressive and undemocratic regulation of the working people and their unions.

The fundamentalists continuously crow about freedom of the press and media and how this is fundamental to democracy, but they constantly screw down on the ABC and SBS and support the maintenance of private media monopolies. They fume against any price controls on business; however, they are forever wanting to control the price of labour power, the price paid to workers for their work. This is their ideology. They are capitalist fundamentalists. They blindly follow the nonsense and myths of so-called free market economics.

Take Christopher Pyne, the Education Minister. He keeps repeating the mantra that the deregulation of university fees and opening them to the market will lead to lower costs and better quality for students because of so-called competition in the marketplace. Look around us. We are supposed to have so-called competition amongst the big banks. We deregulated and privatised the power companies. Lower prices? Better quality?

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They fume against any price controls on business; however, they are forever wanting to control the price of labour power, the price paid to workers for their work. This is their ideology.

When you take something to market, you are by definition taking a chance; leaving the results to chance. You don't know what will happen at the market. What students and what parents want university outcomes to be left to chance – to the market?

To further demonstrate the Government's ideology, let us focus on comments from Treasurer Hockey at the Sydney Institute in early June. In order to try to justify his budget he said, 'We must reward the "lifters" and discourage the "leaners".' We might well ask who are the 'lifters' and who are the 'leaners'? Clearly, in Hockey's terms the lifters are the rich, the well off, the corporate sector. They must be rewarded by government. The leaners in Hockey's terms are the poor, the sick, the students, the unemployed, the disabled, etc. They must be 'discouraged'. That is, their government payments must be lowered or removed or they must pay more.

So, you could not get a more cynical, divisive, and contemptuous policy than that. In fact, the real situation in Australian society today is that there are 'parasites' and 'workers', not 'lifters' and 'leaners' as suggested by Hockey. The parasites are those who make a fortune from 'clipping coupons' on the stock exchange, or are the fabulously rich who avoid or evade paying taxes, or are the owners of corporations who get billions from government handouts, etc. These are the parasites that Hockey protects. These are in fact the real 'leaners'. Then there are the workers who create the wealth by their daily labour. These are the real 'lifters' who Hockey taxes, fines and attacks.

What road are the Abbott fundamentalists taking us down if we let them? As part of trying to answer that question, let us look at whom Abbott and others report to, listen to and are committed to. This will give us some idea of the direction they are taking.

In April 2013, not long before the 2013 federal election, an important dinner was held celebrating the 70th anniversary of an organisation called the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The IPA describes itself as the world's oldest right wing think tank. It represents big business, in effect, like a bosses' union. It has close links to the Business Council of Australia. The IPA advocates free market economics, privatisation, deregulation, limited government, and the rule of law (whatever that means) and a free market approach to environmental problems.

Amongst its donors have been ExxonMobil, Telstra, WMC Resources, BHP Billiton, Phillip Morris, Murray Irrigation Ltd, Clough Engineering, Caltex, Shell, Esso, electricity and mining companies, and British American Tobacco, among others. On its website, the IPA brags about its 'close relationship' with the American Enterprise Institute, a right wing US think tank.

The IPA has over 100 policy demands it has wanted and wants the Abbott government to implement. At the 70th anniversary dinner attended by Gina Rinehart, Rupert Murdoch, Cardinal Pell and others, Abbott said this: 'I want to assure you that the Coalition will indeed repeal

the carbon tax, abolish the department of climate change, abolish the Clean Energy Fund. We will repeal Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, at least in its current form. We will abolish new health and environmental bureaucracies. We will deliver \$1 billion in red-tape savings every year. We will develop northern Australia. We will repeal the mining tax. We will create a one-stop shop for environmental approvals. We will privatise Medibank Private. We will trim the public service and we will stop throwing good money after bad on the NBN.' These were promises to the IPA fundamentalists that he is keeping.

Since the election, the Abbott government has been urgently implementing a range of other items on the IPA's list of demands, which he did not mention at the dinner. For example, the list included stopping subsidies for the car industry (done), eliminating Family Tax Benefits (part-done), the cessation of funding for the ABC's Australia Network (done), abandonment of poker machine reforms (done), the introduction of fee competition for Australian universities (done), and negotiating so-called free trade deals with Japan, South Korea, China and India (more than half done).

There are others, too, where the government has made significant moves. It might not have abolished the Human Rights Commission, but it has cut \$1.65 million from its budget as a beginning. While honouring his promises to the right wing economic fundamentalists of the IPA, Abbott lied to and continues to lie to the Australian people. Let me quote him: 'We will be a no surprises, no excuses government, because you are sick of nasty surprises and lame excuses from people that you have trusted with your future.'

Remember? 'I want to make it absolutely crystal clear: overall health and education funding will be maintained.' Remember?

The significance of this is clear. Abbott, his government, the IPA, the big businesses that support them, the Murdoch media, and right wing commentators amongst others want to take Australia further down the United States of America road.

Let us look at the US road: a huge and growing gap between the handful of the fabulously rich and the rest, including the very poor; a two-tier health system with millions unable to afford treatment and care; and an education system, and particularly a university system based on student debt which becomes more and more difficult if not impossible to pay back, a system with less and less access for the poor and middle class.

A welfare system that locks out more and more people from access and leaves them without work, without support and without hope; a system that has a prison population higher than any other country on earth; a system where workers' wages, except for those at the top, are still pegged at about 1970 levels – where millions of workers have to rely on tips from customers to survive.

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Clearly, in Hockey's terms the lifters are the rich, the well off, the corporate sector. They must be rewarded by government. The leaners in Hockey's terms are the poor, the sick, the students, the unemployed, the disabled, etc. They must be 'discouraged'.

Some direct examples in the US: the combined salaries of 350,000 pre-school teachers in the USA are less than that of five hedge fund managers. The top 1%, the wealthy, made more from their investments in 2013 than the entire cost of social security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the safety net.

Look at the Abbott budget again. It starts us down the road of everyone having to pay extra for medical treatment and other medical services – the US road. It intensifies the barriers against the payment of unemployment benefits, including periods of no payment ... nothing to live on. More crime, more drugs and more suicide – the US road. It deregulates university fees and increases student debt – the US road.

Of course, the trouble is that it doesn't end with the budget. In fact, the budget is just the beginning. Abbott's agenda includes: cuts to extra rates currently paid to workers for working unsociable hours (called penalty rates); a drastic lowering of the minimum wage; lowering of overall wages relative to the cost of living; a gutting of the Fair Work Commission which is seen as the industrial

umpire where workers are supposed to turn to when treated unfairly at work; more legislation to weaken workers' unions and tie them up in red tape in the hope of making it easier for employers to attack workers' wages and conditions. More and more it's down the US road. This is a race to the bottom, clear and simple, and the budget is only just the beginning.

We must not let this happen. We must fight to protect our hard-won social and work conditions. Abbott and his cohorts must be stopped. In addition, we must make it clear to any alternative party that can become the government that we will not tolerate the US road from them either. We must see this as a long-term struggle and we need to establish organisations in order to facilitate that. We need to establish 'people's assemblies' in every electorate, every region, every district, to fight back. The people's assemblies can hold conferences, forums, protests, and can do lobbying. They could run good independents for parliamentary office, where appropriate. They could debate and decide on good public policy to serve the people and decide on what sort of society they want. This is the road ahead. ■

Global Research, 21 July 2014

By **DR PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS**

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/how-american-propaganda-works-guilt-by-insinuation/5392573>

Why hasn't Washington joined Russian President Putin in calling for an objective, non-politicised international investigation by experts of the case of the Malaysian jetliner?

The Russian government continues to release facts, including satellite photos showing the presence of Ukrainian Buk anti-aircraft missiles in locations from which the airliner could have been brought down by the missile system and documentation that a Ukrainian SU-25 fighter jet rapidly approached the Malaysian airliner prior to its downing.

The head of the Operations Directorate of Russian military headquarters said at a Moscow press conference today (July 21) that the presence of the Ukrainian military jet is confirmed by the Rostov monitoring centre.

The Russian Defence Ministry pointed out that at the moment of destruction of MH-17 an American satellite was flying over the area. The Russian government urges Washington to make available the photos and data captured by the satellite.

President Putin has repeatedly stressed that the investigation of MH-17 requires 'a fully representative group of experts to be working at the site under the guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).' Putin's call for an independent expert examination by ICAO does not sound like a person with anything to hide.

Turning to Washington Putin stated: 'In the meantime, no one [not even the "exceptional nation"] has the right to use this tragedy to achieve their narrowly selfish political goals.'

Putin reminded Washington: 'We repeatedly called upon all conflicting sides to stop the bloodshed immediately and to sit down at the negotiating table. I can say with confidence that if military operations were not resumed [by Kiev] on June 28 in eastern Ukraine, this tragedy wouldn't have happened.'

What is the American response? Lies and insinuations.

Yesterday (July 20) the US Secretary of State John Kerry confirmed that pro-Russian separatists were involved in the downing of the Malaysian airliner and said that it was 'pretty clear' that Russia was involved. Here are Kerry's words: 'It's pretty clear that this is a system that was transferred from Russia into the hands of separatists. We know with confidence, with confidence, that the Ukrainians did not have such a system anywhere near the vicinity at that point and time, so it obviously points a very clear finger at the separatists.'

Kerry's statement is just another of the endless lies told by US secretaries of state in the 21st century. Who can forget Colin Powell's package of lies delivered to the UN about Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction' or Kerry's lie repeated endlessly that Assad 'used chemical weapons against his own people' or the endless lies about 'Iranian nukes'?

Remember that Kerry on a number of occasions stated that the US had proof that Assad crossed the 'red line' by using chemical weapons. However, Kerry was never able to back up his statements with evidence. The US had no evidence to give the British prime minister whose effort to have Parliament approve Britain's participation with Washington in a military attack on Syria was voted down. Parliament told the prime minister, 'no evidence, no war.' Again here is Kerry declaring 'confidence' in statements that are directly contradicted by the Russian satellite photos and endless eyewitnesses on the ground.

Why doesn't Washington release its photos from its satellite?

The answer is for the same reason that Washington will not release all the videos it confiscated and that it claims prove that a hijacked 9/11 airliner hit the Pentagon. The videos do not support Washington's claim, and the US satellite photos do not support Kerry's claim.

The UN weapons inspectors on the ground in Iraq reported that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. However, the fact did not support Washington's propaganda and was ignored. Washington started a highly destructive war based on nothing but Washington's intentional lie.

The International Atomic Energy Commission's inspectors on the ground in Iran and all 16 US intelligence agencies reported that Iran had no nuclear weapons program.

However, the fact was inconsistent with Washington's agenda and was ignored by both the US government and the pressstitute media.

We are witnessing the same thing right now with the assertions in the absence of evidence that Russia is responsible for the downing of the Malaysian airliner.

Not every member of the US government is as reckless as Kerry and John McCain. In place of direct lies, many US officials use insinuations.

US Senator Diane Feinstein is the perfect example. Interviewed on the pressstitute TV station CNN, Feinstein said: 'The issue is where is Putin? I would say, "Putin, you have to man up. You should talk to the world. You should say, if this is a mistake, which I hope it was, say it".'

Putin has been talking to the world nonstop calling for an expert non-politicised investigation, and Feinstein is asking Putin why he is hiding behind silence. We know you did it, Feinstein insinuates, so just tell us whether you meant to or whether it was an accident.

The way the entire Western news cycle was orchestrated with blame instantly being placed on Russia long in advance of real information suggests that the downing of the airliner was a Washington operation. It is, of course, possible that the well-trained pressstitute media needed no orchestration from Washington in order to lay the blame on Russia. On the other hand, some of the news performances seem too scripted not to have been prepared in advance.

We also have the advanced preparation of the YouTube video that purports to show a Russian general and Ukrainian separatists discussing having mistakenly downed

a civilian airliner. As I pointed out earlier, this video is twice damned. It was ready in advance and by implicating the Russian military, it overlooked that the Russian military can tell the difference between a civilian airliner and a military airplane. The existence of the video itself implies that there was a plot to down the airliner and blame Russia.

I have seen reports that the Russian anti-aircraft missile system, as a safety device, is capable of contacting aircraft transponders in order to verify the type of aircraft. If the reports are correct and if the transponders from MH-17 are found, they might record the contact.

I have seen reports that Ukrainian air control changed the route of MH-17 and directed it to fly over the conflict area. The transponders should also indicate whether this is correct. If so, there clearly is at least circumstantial evidence that this was an intentional act on the part of Kiev, an act that would have required Washington's blessing.

There are other reports that there is a divergence between the Ukrainian military and the unofficial militias formed by the right-wing Ukrainian extremists who apparently were the first to attack the separatists. It is possible that Washington used the extremists to plot the airliner's destruction in order to blame Russia and use the accusations to pressure the EU to go along with Washington's unilateral sanctions against Russia.

We do know that Washington is desperate to break up the growing economic and political ties between Russia and Europe.

If it was a plot to down an airliner, any safety device on the missile system could have been turned off so as to give no warning or leave any telltale sign. That could be the reason a Ukrainian fighter was sent to inspect the airliner. Possibly the real target was Putin's airliner and incompetence in implementing the plot resulted in the destruction of a civilian airliner.

As there are a number of possible explanations, let's keep open minds and resist Washington's propaganda until facts and evidence are in. In the very least Washington is guilty of using the incident to blame Russia in advance of the evidence. All Washington has shown us so far is accusations and insinuations. If that is all Washington continues to show us, we will know where the blame resides.

In the meantime, remember the story of the boy who cried 'wolf!' He lied so many times that when the wolf did come, no one believed him. Will this be Washington's ultimate fate?

Instead of declaring war on Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, and Syria, why did Washington hide behind lies? If Washington wants war with Iran, Russia, and China, why not simply declare war? The reason that the US Constitution requires war to begin with a declaration of war by Congress is to prevent the executive branch from orchestrating wars in order to further hidden agendas. By abdicating its constitutional responsibility, the US Congress is complicit in the executive branch's war crimes. By approving Israel's premeditated murder of Palestinians, the US government is complicit in Israel's war crimes.

Ask yourself this question: Would the world be a safer place with less death, destruction and displaced peoples and more truth and justice if the United States and Israel did not exist? ■

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from our readers



Dear Beacon Board

Enclosed is my cheque for \$40, being for two years' subscription.

I apologise for late payment and thank you for continuing to send the *Beacon*. It is much needed to counter the appalling Abbott government and its controllers, the Murdoch press and the IPA.

Regards

D Johns, Vic

Dear Beacon Editor

The May issue of the *Beacon* was an absolute treasure, starting with the editorial about the 'Glorification of War' and followed by timely articles by Julian Burnside and Scott Ludlam and then the article 'Auditing the Auditors'. You do live by your motto 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Congratulations.

M Morrison, NSW

Dear Beacon Editor

Thank you for your publication. An absolute must.

R Van Derlei, Qld

Sir

Would you please send a complimentary copy of the *Beacon* to Paul Betzien. Congratulations and best wishes for your continuing endeavours.

P Pastourel, Qld

Dear Editor

Enclosed is a cheque to cover 2 years' subscription to the marvellous *Beacon* publication plus a donation towards the cost of the People's Commission of Audit.

Would you kindly send me a copy of the document for use as a reference source when I engage in conversation with my (few) conservative friends.

Yours faithfully

A Cerbasi, Vic

Dear Editor

We've done it again! Our *Beacon* subscription is well overdue and we thank you for continuing to keep us on your distribution list in spite of our tardiness. To make amends, Pam and I will again take out a two-year renewal and offer a donation. Our cheque for \$60 is enclosed.

We have now been *Beacon* readers since the mid-1980s and we have always enjoyed reading the hard-hitting social critiques that it provides.

Can I also thank you for sending us a copy of the FAQ of the Government Budget that was a distillation of the findings of the People's Commission of Audit commissioned by the Church and carried out by The Australia Institute. It is a concise yet revealing exposure of the ideologically created myths that the Abbott government relies on to justify its abhorrent, unfair financial policies. We have shown the document to many of our friends. We commend the Church for its determination to continue the fight against the Budget.

Yours truly

M Reid, ACT

Dear Donna

Please send me two copies of *Auditing the Auditors* – I missed out.

The *Beacon* is just that! Great articles. Enclosed my annual subscription.

D Porter

MUA Veteran, NSW



Our church is a public and usable asset with portable seating and excellent conference, meeting and function facilities. We welcome its use by those who support our motto 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Interested individuals or groups can contact the church office – we would be delighted to speak to you. A donation is payable.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Editorial

Rising income and wealth inequality – 'a central economic truth of our time'

Australian values include social justice

A letter to the thing I wish I had written

A most deceitful budget – an even more deceitful government

Global research, 21 July 2014

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Monthly journal of the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church
Est. 1852

Registered by Australia Post

Post Print Approved
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