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SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

FASCISM IN THE GUISE OF POPULISM



EDITORIAL

Well, the world has now been 'trumped', and we are all facing the prospect of the largest imperialist nation in the world being led by a man whom Michael Moore referred to as 'a con man and representative of the billionaire class who sold the lie that he will bring back the American Dream'. The nation that led the world into the worst and most destructive economic and military crisis since the Second World War has now elected Donald Trump to lead the 'free world'.

What has been the response from our leaders to this election where only half the US nation bothered to vote? Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said 'Australia is a strong, reliable ally of US', and that the United States had been the 'guarantor of peace and security and stability in our region'. Turnbull said 'It is a great and momentous choice' ... 'the ties that bind Australia and the US are profound and based on our enduring national interest.' (Whose national interest one may ask?) The Leader of the Opposition, whilst not being particularly diplomatic, was more accurate when he described Trump as 'barking mad', and if Trump's comments during the US elections are accurate, then Mr Shorten is not far wrong.

In the light of our church philosophy of 'seek the truth and serve humanity', let us examine the Trump victory and its impact on the world at large. The truth as we see it is that the election of this multimillionaire, uncouth, racist, sexist, bigot as the media reports, is not a new phenomenon for the United States. After all, we have already had President Reagan (a not very astute third-rate film star); George Bush

(a Texas farmer who was a semi-illiterate, belligerent bully); and Bill Clinton (more intelligent, but with loose morals and deep contacts with the military establishment). While each of these, from both Democrat and Republican parties, led 'the free world', the same politics of neoliberalism continued unabated. Indeed, even under 'charming' and 'charismatic' Barak Obama, aggressive wars and drone attacks continued against innocent people and the economic impoverishment of both the American people and people around the world continues unabated.

All of these US leaders, under the guise of 'spreading freedom and democracy', instead practised imperialism. 'Imperialism occurs when a strong nation takes over a weaker nation or region and dominates its economic, political, and cultural life.' Imperialism means spearheading wars around the world, denying freedom and democracy to the people. Imperialism means the imposition of neoliberal policies of privatisation, massive poverty and suffering of the mass of the people both internally and in other sovereign nations to serve the small percentage of the powerful. Already Trump has appointed dangerous racists as advisers. Beacon recognises that behind all of these elected leaders stand the forces of finance capital, a cabal of multinationals and banks whose only interest is maximising their profit and power. The American people are beginning to rise against this cabal and their lackeys in government. They are realising that the poverty, unemployment and lack of democratic rights they are experiencing are a direct result of the policies of imperialism. We need to learn from their experiences.

INSIDE THE INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT: WAR, PROPAGANDA, CLINTON & TRUMP

BY **JOHN PILGER**



The American journalist, Edward Bernays, is often described as the man who invented modern propaganda.

The nephew of Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of psychoanalysis, it was Bernays who coined the term 'public relations' as a euphemism for spin and its deceptions.

In 1929 he persuaded feminists to promote cigarettes for women by smoking in the New York Easter Parade – behaviour then considered outlandish. One feminist, Ruth Booth, declared, 'Women! Light another torch of freedom! Fight another sex taboo!'

Bernays' influence extended far beyond advertising. His greatest success was his role in convincing the American public to join the slaughter of the First World War. The secret, he said, was 'engineering the consent' of people in order to 'control and regiment [them] according to our will without their knowing about it'.

He described this as 'the true ruling power in our society' and called it an 'invisible government'.

Today, the invisible government has never been more powerful and less understood. In my career as a journalist and filmmaker, I have never known propaganda to insinuate our lives as it does now and to go unchallenged.

Imagine two cities. Both are under siege by the forces of the government of that country. Both cities are occupied by fanatics, who commit terrible atrocities, such as beheading people. But there is a vital difference. In one siege, the government soldiers are described as liberators by Western reporters embedded with them, who enthusiastically report their battles and airstrikes. There are front-page pictures of these heroic soldiers giving a V-sign for victory. There is scant mention of civilian casualties.

In the second city – in another country nearby – almost exactly the same is happening. Government forces are laying siege to a city controlled by the same breed of fanatics.

The difference is that these fanatics are supported, supplied and armed by 'us' – by the United States and Britain. They even have a media centre that is funded by Britain and America.

Another difference is that the government soldiers laying siege to this city are the bad guys, condemned for assaulting and bombing the city – which is exactly what the good soldiers do in the first city.

Confusing? Not really. Such is the basic double standard that is the essence of propaganda. I am referring, of course, to the current siege of the city of Mosul by the government forces of Iraq, who are backed by the United States and Britain and to the siege of Aleppo by the government forces of Syria, backed by Russia. One is good; the other is bad.

What is seldom reported is that both cities would not be occupied by fanatics and ravaged by war if Britain and the United States had not invaded Iraq in 2003. That criminal enterprise was launched on lies strikingly similar to the propaganda that now distorts our understanding of the civil war in Syria.

Without this drumbeat of propaganda dressed up as news, the monstrous ISIS and Al-Qaida and al-Nusra and the rest of the jihadist gang might not exist, and the people of Syria might not be fighting for their lives today.

Some may remember in 2003 a succession of BBC reporters turning to the camera and telling us that Blair was 'vindicated' for what turned out to be the crime of the century. The US television networks produced the same validation for George W Bush. Fox News brought on Henry Kissinger to effuse over Colin Powell's fabrications.

The same year, soon after the invasion, I filmed an interview in Washington with Charles Lewis, the renowned American investigative journalist. I asked him, 'What would have happened if the freest media in the world had seriously challenged what turned out to be crude propaganda?'

He replied that if journalists had done their job, 'there is a very, very good chance we would not have gone to war in Iraq'.

It was a shocking statement, and one supported by other famous journalists to whom I put the same question – Dan Rather of CBS, David Rose of the *Observer* and journalists and producers in the BBC, who wished to remain anonymous.

In other words, had journalists done their job, had they challenged and investigated the propaganda instead of amplifying it, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children would be alive today, and there would be no ISIS and no siege of Aleppo or Mosul.

There would have been no atrocity on the London Underground on 7 July 2005. There would have been no flight of millions of refugees; there would be no miserable camps.

When the terrorist atrocity happened in Paris last November, President Françoise Hollande immediately sent planes to bomb Syria – and more terrorism followed, predictably, the product of Hollande's bombast about France being 'at war' and 'showing no mercy'. That state violence and jihadist violence feed off each other is the truth that no national leader has the courage to speak.

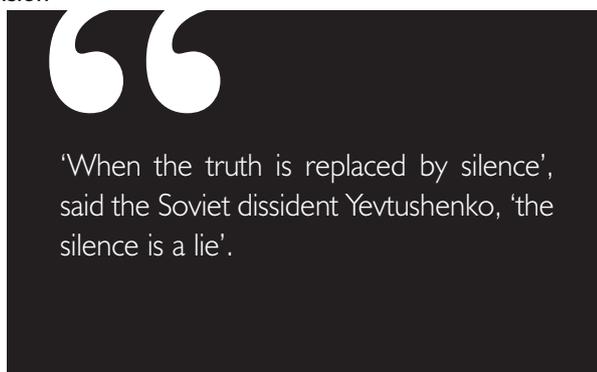
'When the truth is replaced by silence', said the Soviet dissident Yevtushenko, 'the silence is a lie'.

The attack on Iraq, the attack on Libya, the attack on Syria happened because the leader in each of these countries was not a puppet of the West. The human rights record of a Saddam or a Gaddafi was irrelevant. They did not obey orders and surrender control of their country.

The same fate awaited Slobodan Milosevic once he had refused to sign an 'agreement' that demanded the occupation of Serbia and its conversion to a market economy. His people were bombed, and he was prosecuted in The Hague. Independence of this kind is intolerable.

As WikiLeaks has revealed, it was only when the Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad in 2009 rejected an oil pipeline running through his country from Qatar to Europe that he was attacked.

From that moment, the CIA planned to destroy the government of Syria with jihadist fanatics – the same fanatics currently holding the people of Mosul and eastern Aleppo hostage.



Why is this not news? The former British Foreign Office official Carne Ross, who was responsible for operating sanctions against Iraq, told me: 'We would feed journalists factoids of sanitised intelligence, or we would freeze them out. That is how it worked.'

The West's medieval client, Saudi Arabia – to which the US and Britain sell billions of dollars' worth of arms – is at present destroying Yemen, a country so poor that in the best of times, half the children are malnourished.

Look on YouTube and you will see the kind of massive bombs – 'our' bombs – that the Saudis use against dirt-poor villages, and against weddings, and funerals.

The explosions look like small atomic bombs. The bomb aimers in Saudi Arabia work side by side with British officers. This fact is not on the evening news.

Propaganda is most effective when our consent is engineered by those with a fine education – Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Columbia – and with careers on the BBC, the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*.

These organisations are known as the liberal media. They present themselves as enlightened, progressive tribunes of the moral zeitgeist. They are anti-racist, pro-feminist and pro-LGBT.

And they love war.

While they speak up for feminism, they support rapacious wars that deny the rights of countless women, including the right to life.

In 2011, Libya, then a modern state, was destroyed on the pretext that Muammar Gaddafi was about to commit genocide on his own people. That was the incessant news; and there was no evidence. It was a lie.

In fact, Britain, Europe and the United States wanted what they like to call 'regime change' in Libya, the biggest oil producer in Africa. Gaddafi's influence in the continent and, above all, his independence were intolerable.

So he was murdered with a knife in his rear by fanatics, backed by America, Britain and France. Hillary Clinton cheered his gruesome death for the camera, declaring, 'We came, we saw, he died!'

The destruction of Libya was a media triumph. As the war drums were beaten, Jonathan Freedland wrote in the *Guardian*: 'Though the risks are very real, the case for intervention remains strong'.

Intervention – what a polite, benign, *Guardian* word, whose real meaning, for Libya, was death and destruction.

According to its own records, Nato launched 9,700 'strike sorties' against Libya, of which more than a third were aimed at civilian targets. They included missiles with uranium warheads.

Look at the photographs of the rubble of Misurata and Sirte, and the mass graves identified by the Red Cross. The UNICEF report on the children killed says, 'most [of them] under the age of ten'.

As a direct consequence, Sirte became the capital of ISIS.

Ukraine is another media triumph. Respectable liberal newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Guardian*, and mainstream broadcasters such as the BBC, NBC, CBS, CNN have played a critical role in conditioning their viewers to accept a new and dangerous cold war.

All have misrepresented events in Ukraine as a malign act by Russia when, in fact, the coup in Ukraine in 2014 was the work of the United States, aided by Germany and Nato.

This inversion of reality is so pervasive that Washington's military intimidation of Russia is not news; it is suppressed behind a smear and scare campaign of the kind I grew up with during the first cold war. Once again, the Ruskiies are coming to get us, led by another Stalin, whom *The Economist* depicts as the devil.

The suppression of the truth about Ukraine is one of the most complete news blackouts I can remember. The fascists who engineered the coup in Kiev are the same breed that backed the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. Of all the scares about the rise of fascist anti-Semitism in Europe, no leader ever mentions the fascists in Ukraine – except Vladimir Putin, but he does not count.

Many in the Western media have worked hard to present the ethnic Russian-speaking population of Ukraine as outsiders in their own country, as agents of Moscow, almost never as Ukrainians seeking a federation within Ukraine and as Ukrainian citizens resisting a foreign-orchestrated coup against their elected government.

There is almost the *joie d'esprit* of a class reunion of warmongers.

The drumbeaters of the *Washington Post* inciting war with Russia are the very same editorial writers who published the lie that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

To most of us, the American presidential campaign is a media freak show, in which Donald Trump is the arch villain.

But Trump is loathed by those with power in the United States for reasons that have little to do with his obnoxious behaviour and opinions. To the invisible government in Washington, the unpredictable Trump is an obstacle to

America's design for the 21st century.

This is to maintain the dominance of the United States and to subjugate Russia, and, if possible, China.

To the militarists in Washington, the real problem with Trump is that, in his lucid moments, he seems not to want a war with Russia; he wants to talk with the Russian president, not fight

him; he says he wants to talk with the president of China.

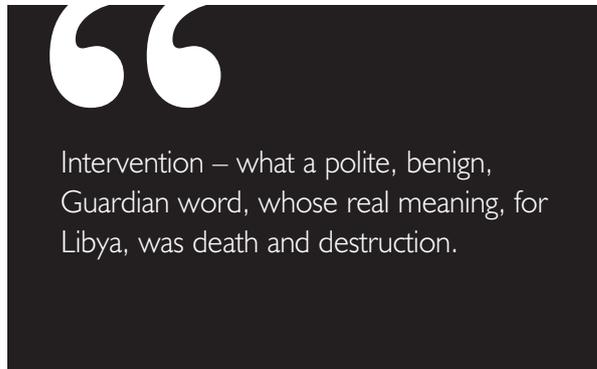
In the first debate with Hillary Clinton, Trump promised not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into a conflict. He said, 'I would certainly not do first strike. Once the nuclear alternative happens, it's over.' That was not news.

Did he really mean it? Who knows? He often contradicts himself. But what is clear is that Trump is considered a serious threat to the status quo maintained by the vast national security machine that runs the United States, regardless of who is in the White House.

The CIA wants him beaten. The Pentagon wants him beaten. The media wants him beaten. Even his own party wants him beaten. He is a threat to the rulers of the world – unlike Clinton who has left no doubt she is prepared to go to war with nuclear-armed Russia and China.

Clinton has the form, as she often boasts. Indeed, her record is proven. As a senator, she backed the bloodbath in Iraq. When she ran against Obama in 2008, she threatened to 'totally obliterate' Iran. As Secretary of State, she colluded in the destruction of governments in Libya and Honduras and set in train the baiting of China.

She has now pledged to support a No Fly Zone in Syria – a direct provocation for war with Russia. Clinton may well become the most dangerous president of the United States in my lifetime – a distinction for which the competition is fierce.



Without a shred of evidence, she has accused Russia of supporting Trump and hacking her emails. Released by WikiLeaks, these emails tell us that what Clinton says in private, in speeches to the rich and powerful, is the opposite of what she says in public.

That is why silencing and threatening Julian Assange is so important. As the editor of WikiLeaks, Assange knows the truth. And let me assure those who are concerned, he is well, and WikiLeaks is operating on all cylinders.

Today, the greatest build up of American-led forces since World War Two is underway – in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, on the border with Russia, and in Asia and the Pacific, where China is the target.

Keep that in mind when the presidential election circus reaches its finale on November 8. If the winner is Clinton, a Greek chorus of witless commentators will celebrate her coronation as a great step forward for women. None will mention Clinton’s victims: the women of Syria, the women of Iraq, the women of Libya. None will mention

the civil defence drills being conducted in Russia. None will recall Edward Bernays’ ‘torches of freedom’.

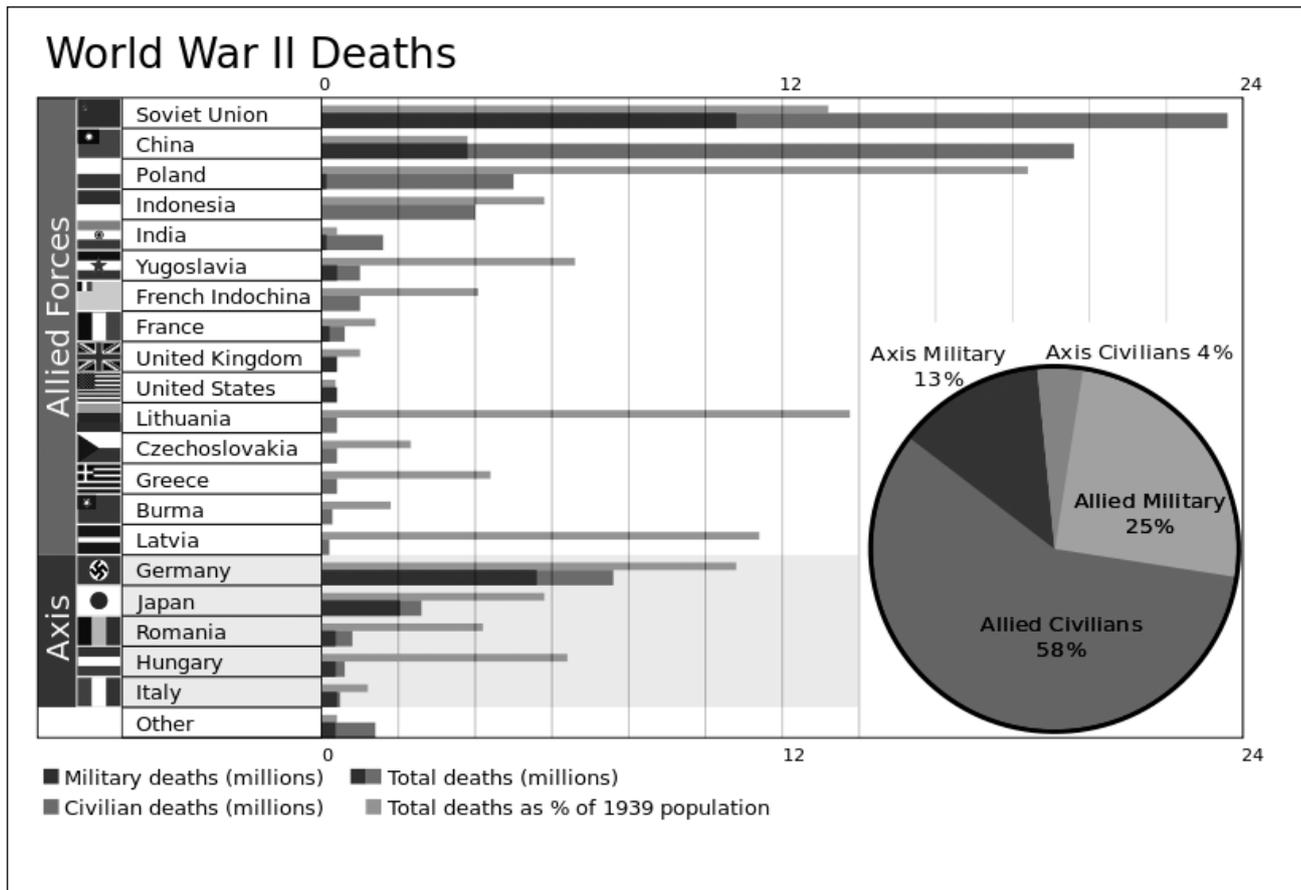
George Bush’s press spokesman once called the media ‘complicit enablers’.

Coming from a senior official in an administration whose lies, enabled by the media, caused such suffering, that description is a warning from history.

In 1946 the Nuremberg Tribunal prosecutor said of the German media: ‘Before every major aggression, they initiated a press campaign calculated to weaken their victims and to prepare the German people psychologically for the attack. In the propaganda system, it was the daily press and the radio that were the most important weapons.’ †

This is adapted from an address to the Sheffield Festival of Words, Sheffield, England.

DID YOU KNOW.....



TUNE INTO THE UNITARIAN HALF HOUR
 EVERY SATURDAY AT 10.30 AM 3CR • 855 AM • COMMUNITY RADIO

THE ELECTION OF **HILLARY CLINTON** PROMISES A MORE DANGEROUS WORLD

JOSEPH CAMILLERI Emeritus Professor of International Relations, La Trobe University



In a long and often exasperating presidential campaign, Americans and the world have been subjected to Donald Trump's odious and often incoherent rhetoric, and from both sides much vitriol and endless accusations of deceit, crookedness and sexual misconduct.

In this largely policy-free contest, Hillary Clinton's approach to the immense challenges facing the United States has escaped serious scrutiny. Yet, how America views its place in a rapidly transforming world has far-reaching implications not only for security at home and abroad, but for the economy, financial markets, the environment and much else.

How is it, then, that a former secretary of state, who loudly proclaims her intimate knowledge of world affairs, has given so little attention to the grave dangers looming on the horizon? Part of the explanation is that Clinton's campaign has judged the electorate as unwilling or unable to tune in to a serious discussion of international risks and opportunities.

Two other factors are worth noting. The positions Clinton has usually espoused, whether on Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya, have generally gravitated towards the use of military force. Nothing in her presidential campaign suggests a change of mind. But at the risk of alienating an increasingly war weary public, her minders have judged discretion to be the better part of valour.

Clinton has an acknowledged grasp of detail on many international issues. But neither her public utterances nor her stewardship of US diplomacy offer a compelling picture of a world in profound transition, or of the challenges this poses for both domestic and foreign policy.

Tension with Russia and other challenges

The first and most obvious challenge is the steady deterioration in Russo-American relations, which are now at their lowest ebb since the mid-1980s.

Perhaps the key factor has been NATO's expansion right up to Russia's doorstep, absorbing much of Eastern

Europe and even the three Baltic states (formerly part of the Soviet Union). Another factor is US deployment of a ballistic missile defence system in Romania, soon to be followed by a similar deployment in Poland. Russia has denounced these policies as a threat to its security and part of a new American containment strategy.

Putin's response has been to restore Russia's influence. This has meant strengthening its position in eastern Ukraine, annexing Crimea, taking issue with western military intervention in Libya, offering the Assad regime in Syria strong military support, and pursuing a far more assertive role at the UN Security Council and in several regional conflicts.

Both Russia and the United States now regularly cite the unfriendly actions of the other side as justification for ambitious nuclear weapons modernisation programs. In the case of the United States, these are estimated to cost some US\$355 billion over the next decade.

Another major challenge is posed by China's rise as an economic superpower and the expansion of its economic and diplomatic influence. There is also the particular challenge of its military muscle, most starkly in the South China Sea. Other critical developments include: North Korea's expanding nuclear capabilities; the intractable post-intervention conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East; the spreading tentacles of violent jihadism; the proliferation of humanitarian emergencies, whether in Syria, Iraq or Yemen; the unprecedented levels of human displacement resulting from these conflicts; and the rise of the far right in different parts of the Western world.

Clinton's response to a complex and changing world

How then does Clinton propose to address these and related challenges? In the words of her election manifesto, by pursuing 'a policy of strength'. This includes preserving and strengthening military alliances, notably NATO; 'standing up to Putin'; holding China accountable for any actions deemed destabilising of the existing order, whether in relation to trade, cyberspace, human rights or territorial disputes; holding on to a 'qualitative military edge'; and maintaining a 'rock solid commitment to the values that have made America great'.

These one-liners are strong on rhetoric and dangerously weak on substance. What does 'standing up to Putin' or 'holding China accountable' mean in practice? The intention one must assume is to preserve the military, diplomatic and economic dominance the United States once enjoyed, even though the strategy is tantamount to King Canute stemming the tide.

We are witnessing a dramatic shift towards a multi-polar, multi-centric world, in which Russia and China, Europe, India, Brazil and others will increasingly help to shape financial, economic, environmental and security outcomes. We will not always share their perspectives and priorities, but there is no alternative to engaging them in a global dialogue. The complex relationships now taking shape cannot be reduced, as Clinton intimates, to cooperation where interests converge, and confrontation where they diverge.

Similarly, when it comes to a resurgent Iran, an impulsive North Korean regime, or an upsurge of Islamist radicalism, responses that rely on the application of military power are unlikely to yield the desired result. Existing alliance arrangements are also likely to be increasingly problematic. Long-term, mutually advantageous economic cooperation and dialogue mechanisms, in which civil society as well as governments are active participants, are likely to bear greater fruit.

On all this, the Clinton campaign has said remarkably little, except for generalities reminiscent of Cold War rhetoric. We've heard nothing about the lessons to be drawn from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now Syria and Yemen, or the 'war on terror' more generally.



Might there be limits to the utility of military power? This is almost certainly not Clinton's view, if one is to judge from her past pronouncements on the invasion of Iraq, the surge in Afghanistan, the use of force in Libya, or the unqualified support of Israel. Similarly, with her voting record in the Senate and her close affinity with Pentagon thinking, and perhaps most strikingly her support for the positions advocated at different times by such key military figures as Generals Stanley McChrystal, David Petraeus (who later served as CIA director) and James Keane (also known as the resident hawk on Fox News).

And what of the future of nuclear deterrence and the prospect of a renewed nuclear arms race? Will a Clinton presidency pursue the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons (clearly articulated by Obama in his first year as president but subsequently abandoned)? Or will it connive with other nuclear states and pressure allies to obstruct efforts to negotiate a new treaty on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons? All the indications are that Clinton will choose the latter course.

Even on such issues as the handling of humanitarian emergencies, responses to the unprecedented number of people displaced by conflict (estimated at 65.3 million), or the urgent need for UN reform and international regulation of financial markets, the Clinton campaign has had virtually nothing to say.

Perhaps the greatest disservice the Trump circus has done to the human future – with the media as its willing accomplices – is the failure to lay bare these deeply entrenched and deeply troubling weaknesses in the Clinton profile. We may be in for a rather torrid time.

BREXIT

AND JEREMY CORBYN

BY **MARION HARPER**



After returning from my long visit to the UK this year, I was asked by a church member to speak on Brexit and Jeremy Corbyn. Much has happened since then of course, but in thinking about it, I decided that we have much to learn from both the Brexit campaign and the role of the British Labour Party leader because we face similar forces and similar effects on our community here.

Let me deal with Brexit first. Bigoted and blatantly untruthful tactics were used in the Brexit campaign by right-wing opportunist politicians, not because they really believed that Britain withdrawing from Europe was better for the British people, but for their own political reasons. Similar tactics are being used by our own leaders relating to justification for their warmongering in the Middle East, justifying their jingoism by marginalisation of the Muslim community and by using terrorism as an excuse.

Some, including myself, believe that the development of terrorism is a direct result of our interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Brexit terrorists, as I call them, such as Nigel Farage (a male Pauline Hanson) and Boris Johnson (a Tory loudmouth who became mayor of London) led the campaign to Brexit. The Tory Party was split, with the extreme right supporting the leave campaign, while Prime Minister David Cameron firmly supported remaining a part of the European Union. Cameron was a captive of his right-wing, just as Turnbull is here.

The Labor Party, while publicly committed to remaining, had many within its ranks who supported Brexit. Referenda can only be a successful example of people consultation if the information they receive allows for informed decision-making. The major problem as I witnessed it was the lack of genuine information provided to the people that would allow them to make an informed decision.

Plebiscites, like the one currently being proposed here on gay marriage, rely strongly on an understanding of the issue being voted on.

This gives the fourth estate, the media, a huge and unacceptable advantage around the world. All the daily media and the television are owned and controlled by magnates of a conservative persuasion. In Australia, there are 2 national and 10 state/territory daily newspapers, 37 regional dailies and 470 other regional and suburban newspapers. All major newspapers are owned either by News Limited, a subsidiary of News Corporation, or Fairfax Media. This gives massive power and control to these corporations with their headlines and two-minute sound bites, more control than our elected representatives, and it means that a plebiscite is not really about hearing the voice of the people but controlling the voice of the people while giving lip service to democracy.

In studio debates held across the UK that I watched, people were pleading for genuine information on what the implications were for staying or leaving and they didn't get it. Instead, what they got was a volume of material cited as factual but which was, in the main, nonsensical and unsubstantiated, stating that by staying we would lose control of our borders (sound familiar?); that migrants would take the few jobs left; housing and health, education and social services would be decimated by the hordes who would descend on our country, providing a convenient enemy to divert attention from unacceptable and sometimes corrupt policies.

The other argument that appealed: 'We should be in control of decisions made that affect us'. We, of course, meaning not the masses of people but those who are powerful. It was interesting in watching these debates to note that there was a significant gap between the older population who wanted to go back 'to the way things were' and the younger citizens who felt the desirability of remaining part of a Europe that they could live, travel and work in.

Few raised the argument that going back is not an option and things could never be the way they were. Brexit would not and could not achieve this. What would continue was control by reactionary governments who all agreed that the bottom line is the economy, and living within our means, while these same governments cut spending and spent the surplus on war and corruption.

With Brexit, the reactionary mantra of 'migrants' taking our jobs, destroying our health service, not respecting our 'way of life', our borders would be flooded was repeated over and over again across the country, in the newspapers and on television, at public meetings and in handouts, and this resonated (particularly in the North) where deliberately imposed austerity has hit the people the hardest. We know that it wasn't the migrants that took jobs, destroyed the National Health Service, used up urgently need housing, schools and social service. It was the Government that targeted local councils, who in the UK provide most of the services in education, health, housing, etc., by cutting funds by at least 30% in all areas, while giving a 30% increase to fighting terrorism.

Gary Porter, chairman of the Local Government Association, said: 'The ability of councils to provide many of the services people take for granted – such as

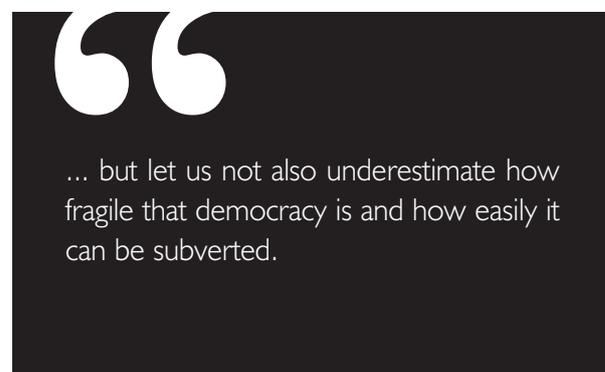
clean and well-lit streets, maintained parks and access to leisure centres – could become significantly impacted and vital services – such as caring for the elderly, protecting children, collecting bins, filling potholes and maintaining our parks and green spaces – could struggle to continue at current levels.' Mr Johnson said that by 2020 some departments would have seen their budgets cut by 50%.

It doesn't matter whether you agree with the arguments to remain or leave in the UK, what does matter is that we need to understand the political chicanery, the media tactics and particularly the far right control of how and what we can know.

It also raises the issue of democracy, a term we use so lightly. Let us not underestimate the importance of democracy. For those of us fighting for it and for a more equitable world, it is vitally important, but let us not also underestimate how fragile that democracy is and how easily it can be subverted. Brexit will not solve the problems of the UK because those problems didn't emanate from Europe, despite the problems of that bloc.

Which brings me to Jeremy Corbyn, twice elected leader of the British Labour Party by overwhelming support from the rank and file of that party.

What does this mildly spoken, long-serving MP espouse that has resulted in the most hysterical reaction from the media, the Tory Party, and Blairites in his own party who have all joined forces to bring him down? The New Labour Blairites, who are barely distinguishable from the Conservatives, and who claim Corbyn is unelectable, would find he would be electable if they spent more of their time supporting his appropriate policies and less energy in opposing him.



So what are the terrible policies that make him unelectable? A few examples of what he has said publicly:

'We will act to protect the future of our planet, with social justice at the heart of our environment policies. We will create a low-carbon economy, using our National Investment Bank. And we will deliver an energy policy for the 60 million, not the Big 6 energy companies, championing community-owned renewable energy.'

'We will build a million new homes in five years, with at least half a million council homes, through our public investment strategy. We will end insecurity for private renters by introducing rent controls, secure tenancies and a charter of private tenants' rights, and increase access to affordable home ownership.'

'We will end health service privatisation and bring services into a secure, publicly provided NHS. We will integrate the NHS and social care for older and disabled people, funding dignity across the board and ensure parity for mental health services.'

'My vision for the NHS will reverse the marketisation of health, integrate social care and improve staff morale to build a high quality, public and universal NHS free at the point of delivery.'

'We will never be a successful society in which everybody is able to achieve their potential until we have full equality for women. We will take action to remove the barriers in our society to women achieving full equality. We will tackle discrimination, sexism and violence against women and girls. We will not transform society overnight but working together we can take us further along the path to an equal society for all.'

Corbyn makes no secret that he plans to re-nationalise transport. On Syria, Mr Corbyn said: 'Two years ago I voted against bombing Syria when the enemy was the Assad government. I oppose bombing Syria when Isil is the target for the very same reason – it will be the innocent Syrians who will suffer – exacerbating the refugee crisis.'

'Cutting off the supply of money and arms to Isil from "some of our supposed allies in the region" would be a more effective way of tackling Isil'.

Mr Corbyn has been criticised in some quarters for his desire to withdraw from NATO, his opposition to the Trident nuclear deterrent and his plea to 'talk to everybody' in order to secure peace in the Middle East ... policies we as Unitarians would support.

Ending austerity is principally Mr Corbyn's objective. He would achieve this by introducing higher taxes for the rich, while protecting those on welfare. He would also introduce a new crackdown on tax avoidance, tax evasion and tax breaks for companies. Contrary to popular belief, he does want to bring down the deficit but will not set an 'arbitrary' date to do so.

National newspapers were 'unimpressed by Jeremy Corbyn's victory' in the Labour leadership election, Roy Greenslade noted in the *Guardian*, surprising no one. Corbyn secured almost 62% of the 506,000 votes cast, up from the 59% share he won in 2015, 'with virtually no press backing whatsoever'.

In reality, of course, Corbyn did not just lack press backing. He won in the face of more than one year of the relentless corporate media campaigning to politically, ethically, professionally, psychologically and even sartorially discredit him. They didn't like the way he dressed. That Corbyn survived is impressive. That he won again, increased his vote share, and took Labour Party membership from 200,000 to more than 500,000, is astonishing.

None of this moves journalists like the BBC's political editor, Laura Kuenssberg, who commented: 'There's been no big new idea or vision this week that Labour

can suddenly rally round'. No big ideas? They sound big to me.

Polly Toynbee explained: 'I and many *Guardian* colleagues can't just get behind Corbyn'. Why? 'Because Corbyn and McDonnell, burdened by their history, will never ever earn the trust of enough voters to make any plans happen.'

Toynbee fails to recognise the nature and scale of the problem. In supporting Corbyn, the public is attempting to shape a genuinely democratic choice out of the sham choices of corporate-owned politics. This awesome task begins with the public waking up to the anti-democratic role of the corporate media in defending, of course, corporate-owned politics. So-called 'mainstream media' are primarily conduits for power rather than information; they are political enforcers, not political communicators. To the extent that the public understands this, change is possible.

Supported by non-corporate, web-based media activism, Corbyn has already smoked out this media to an extent that is without precedent. Many people can see that he is a reasonable, compassionate, decent individual generating immense grassroots support. And they can see that all 'mainstream' media oppose him. It could hardly be more obvious that the corporate media speak as a single, biased, elitist voice.

Forgive me if I have spent such a portion of my address on the policies of Corbyn, but it is important that people understand what has caused such hysteria by the powerful in the UK to destroy him.

I was privileged to attend one of the many meetings he held across the country, with thousands in attendance. I saw a modest, honest, committed politician who is a democratic socialist. Whose expressed policies coincided with much that we as Unitarians believe: in social justice, in real democracy for all and not just a privileged few, for a fairer distribution of wealth, for an end to homelessness, for more secure employment, for an end to privatisation of the people's resources and a return to national ownership, an end to interference in the affairs of other countries and opposition to aggressive wars.

Today, in the US and Australia, similar forces are at work. Sanders was disposed of, in spite of huge groundswell support.

In the US, enormous poverty, homelessness, debt, lack of affordable health services and joblessness go hand in hand with massive spending on war. Policies in Australia under this government and much of the previous government leave us ashamed, disillusioned and unrepresented.

We are rapidly approaching a time when serious consideration will need to be given to accepting that the capitalist society in which we live will never provide for the needs of the majority.

It will be up to all of us to plan for a society that I hope Unitarians will play a leadership role in planning. †

FIDEL IS DEAD AND I MOURN HIS PASSING.

During my three visits to Cuba I saw much to admire. While we drown in slick slogans and corruption and grovel to Washington, Cuba travelled in a totally different direction. Instead of spending money on lethal weapons to support the US war machine, Cuba spends its limited income on the things that really matter: free healthcare and education for all its citizens. It has sent humanitarian missions to 68 countries and trained more than 1800 doctors from 47 poor countries under a free scholarship scheme – hundreds of them from East Timor – and treated free of charge some 26,000 victims of the Chernobyl disaster, most of them children. Cuba has become a world leader in cancer research and development.



Cuba's revolution is green as well as red. While Australia rips up forests in the name of minerals and wood, Cuba has replenished its tropical forests in the name of jobs and the environment. Twenty-six thousand, six hundred and eighty-six hectares of forest in Pinar del Rio of land that had been used for coffee and cattle was awarded biosphere status by UNESCO.

We are witness to a long-running hypocrisy. Those who organised Cuba's previous brutal dictatorships and continue to destroy democratically elected governments subject it to constant scrutiny and harassment. Those who lecture it on human rights look away when the death penalty is systematically and racially applied in the US of A. It seems we are only allowed a single freedom, that of choosing between capitalism and capitalism. Vale Fidel Castro.

Joan Coxsedg

Balwyn North

UNITARIAN PHILOSOPHERS

Henry David Thoreau



Henry David Thoreau's legacy as a poet, philosopher, abolitionist, historian, and transcendentalist makes him one of the most important thinkers in modern history. In his seminal 1849 essay *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau made a compelling case for individual resistance to civil government that would inspire generations of revolutionaries and ordinary nonconformists alike to engage in moral protest against being made unwitting accomplices in the injustices perpetrated by the state. The essay, considered one of the greatest masterpieces of the form ever written, was inspired in part by Thoreau's outrage over slavery in America and the Mexican-American War, and was based on his 1848 lecture 'The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government'. Insights and elements from it have inspired some of the greatest social change agents of the 20th century, including Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience.



26 November 2016
The AIM Network
By Noah Wilderbeest

DANIEL BLAKE AND THE JOBACTIVE PROVIDERS OF DOOM

The new Ken Loach film *I, Daniel Blake* will find resonance with anyone who has dealt with Centrelink over the past two decades. Blake (Dave Johns) is a fifty-something carpenter who, following a heart attack, is forced to deal with the bastardry of the Cameron government's 'welfare reforms'.

Loach pulls no punches in his portrayal of the victims of free market forces and austerity measures: the interminable waiting in telephone queues, the bureaucratic bungling, the deliberate cruelty towards those who dare ask the state for a 'handout', and the ineffective practices and entrenched bullying of the Job Network agencies and Disability Support providers.

Trans-Ed: Working for the Clampdown

Ask Bill Shorten and he'll tell you that the NDIS was to be the centrepiece of the Gillard government's first term and was designed to provide those born with, or who had acquired a disability, a permanent safety net. You know, the sort of thing that civilised administrations do to ensure the wellbeing of those at the greatest disadvantage.

Under the succeeding LNP government and its successive ministers, Andrews, Morrison, Porter and Cash, the rollout of the NDIS meant pushing the whole damned socialist scheme under a bus. This bus is called 'Transitional Education'.

In new-speak, 'Transitional Education' is a generic term which the Abbott/Turnbull government likes to spin in an attempt to foster a sense of a slightly forward motion while actually remaining stock still on the issue of unemployment/underemployment.

Cobbled together from the remnants of Work for the Dole and the reappraised Disability Support Payment scheme, Trans-Ed or Foundation Skills as it is otherwise known, targets 'transitioning' welfare recipients, including those on disability payments 'towards work' as part of the government's ongoing policy of war on welfare.

The scheme comes in two stages of nine months for each stage. For the agencies, contracted at \$15,000 per head, the goal is to run the DSP recipient through both courses and reap between \$300–360,000 of government subsidies per class of 20.

Like Work for the Dole, the new regulations governing payments to the handicapped are sold under the guise of 'providing opportunity', 'helping the disabled gain entry to the workforce' or 'giving youth a chance to learn new skills', when in fact the scheme is simply an extension of the same welfare bashing snake oil in a new bottle.

I should know. I've just spent nine months working as a 'Trainer' with a Jobactive/DSP Provider and all of what follows is true ...

From the outset, everything about the course was wrong. The classroom was surrounded by windows on three sides and flanked by a car-park entrance and the reception area of the Jobactive provider. This meant that not only was it noisy, but the glare from the windows made the white-board which doubled as a screen for the overhead projector all but unreadable, even for those sitting at the front of the room. Not that there was much space to write anything, as the bottom half of the board had been damaged and was unusable.

There were eight antique PCs lined against one wall for the 20 'learners'. Only six worked.

Contradictions abounded. Almost all of the course units required the use of 'research', yet most of the online teaching/learning resources, including YouTube and educational game sites, were blocked. When I tried to have them unblocked, I was told, 'These are really just reserved for job-seekers and not for learners'. Welcome to market forces for the handicapped.

Bullying and authoritarianism were the order of the day. During the early weeks of the course I was constantly reminded by management to 'get tough on 'em, don't be too soft'.

At a 'Professional Development' seminar, the presenter emphasised the importance of keeping a 'professional distance' from the learners, and related the story of a trainer who had loaned a disabled learner the princely sum of \$2.00 to replace a lost library card. 'The trainer did the wrong thing!' he thundered. 'They (the disabled) have got to learn to be independent and stand on their own two feet'. The irony of his statement was lost on him and on his audience who collectively and dutifully nodded in agreement.

It wasn't long before I witnessed the 'get tough on 'em' policy in action.

'Margret', a woman in her mid-50s, suffered from crippling depression. Wan and frail, with heavy dark circles under her eyes, she told me that she had to force herself to leave the house. As a result, she was often late or absent from class. On a day she managed to attend, the course coordinator was taking the class. The coordinator immediately flew into her and began a tirade about punctuality and 'mutual obligation'. Margret was ushered into an interview room. She was joined by her case officer.

I watched for half an hour as the two of them browbeat and bullied the unfortunate woman for the crime of arriving late to class. When Margret left, she never returned.

A few weeks later, her case officer approached me to tell me Margret had been breached (loss of all payments) for three months. I wanted to punch the case officer in the face.

The course material was pure flannel. Designed for the severely intellectually disabled, its main purpose was to engage the 'learner' in cutting pictures from magazines or newspapers and pasting them in workbooks. For six hours a day. Three days per week.

Politics and profit-making, however, are about numbers, and in the case of Class IA, of the twenty claimants only three received a disability payment. The rest, all of whom had made a claim for DSP but were in the process of being evaluated and remained on Newstart, were shunted into the course to make up a quorum.

Some were the victims of war; others are the result of working hard physical labour in factories or on construction sites, and whose bones and muscles were now worn out. Many were simply the victims of 'market forces' and unable to cope with a changing world that views them as redundant.

There were those suffering from epilepsy, depression, and heart conditions that, under the new guidelines, do not exclude them from looking for a job or doing voluntary work. I witnessed a gentle bear of a man have an epileptic seizure, and a talented young artist shaking like a leaf during a panic attack. Both had their claims for disability payment rejected.

Davina, a woman in her early sixties, suffered a heart attack one weekend and, similarly to Daniel Blake, was

left in limbo while her claim for DSP was processed. She scrambled desperately to be allowed to re-join the course but was rebuffed by the management 'because we don't want her having another heart attack on the premises.'

When I left the job, Davina was still in limbo and in all likelihood has had her claim for DSP rejected and remains on Newstart with the requirement of looking for 40 jobs a month.

At the end of the course, the DS provider picked up a cheque for \$180,000 of the taxpayers' hard-earned for the twelve remaining learners in the course and were paid pro-rata for the eight who had either dropped out, or like Margret and Davina, had been forced out.

The learners were handed a piece of laminated cardboard bearing the DS providers logo and assured the world that the above-named had attained completion of Transitional Education Stage One: a \$15,000 government-funded 'qualification' for participating in an employment program that provides as many real world skills as an egg and spoon race.

The three learners classified as intellectually disabled were offered a place in stage two of the Trans-Ed program, the rest were told that they could take a 'discounted' Jobactive Provider approved course – Hospitality, Aged Care – at their own expense.

The corruption and inefficient practices of the privatised, profit-seeking employment agencies have been well documented in the mainstream media and long since exposed as fraud in both Australia and the UK.

The largest slice of the government subsidies pie to the JNS/DSP system is spent on executive salaries, and the car parks of the 'not-for-profit' providers resemble showrooms for late model fuck-off size Beamers and Benz.

The Roy Morgan Research group estimates the real unemployment figures at 9.8% of the workforce and 8.0% for underemployed. According to the Australian Network on Disability, the unemployment rate for the disabled is around 9.4%. That's nine disabled people applying for one job.

The catch is that under the government's new guidelines, the focus is on the 11.3% of the disabled clinically diagnosed as having mental or behavioural disabilities who can qualify for DS payment, leaving the 83.9% of the physically disabled to the tender mercies of the job network providers and a private sector unable or unwilling to provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate disabled employees.

In short, a system designed not to help the disabled but to kneecap the handicapped. I, Daniel Blake accurately and unerringly portrays the struggle faced by the victims of government 'austerity measures' and the cruelty of a system administered by the providers of doom and designed to 'weed out' the 'lifters from the leaners'.

If the Jobactive/Disability Support Provider system were a human body, it would not only be pronounced dead but also in a state of putrefaction. †

I, Daniel Blake is currently screening. Check independent cinema websites for details.



New Hope for the Latrobe Valley

Communities in Central Gippsland's Latrobe Valley, centred around the cities of Moe, Morwell and Traralgon, are facing considerable economic hardship when up to 750 skilled workers/contractors will eventually lose their jobs upon closure in March 2017 of the French-owned Hazelwood coal-fired power station.

This shutdown will undoubtedly improve air quality in the region, but increase electricity prices throughout Victoria. It is also likely to cause an exodus of young people who see no job prospects in the Valley for themselves and their families. Innovative infrastructure developments and associated businesses are therefore urgently needed to create a new sense of optimism for a positive turnaround. Below is one such possibility.

Anecdotal evidence from locals appears to suggest that geothermal energy is trapped in the Valley beneath the extensive multimillion-year-old subterranean deposits of brown coal that will no longer be excavated for electricity generation. Dr Paul Shane, formerly Chief Research Officer of Monash University's 'Monash Sustainability Institute', seems to support this view as he suspects the Latrobe Valley to hold Victoria's largest geothermal energy resource (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 2015). The overlaying seams of brown coal, up to 330 m thick, are believed to effectively insulate that heat energy from escaping into the above ground atmosphere.

A comprehensive survey by experienced geophysicists and civil engineers should now be commissioned by our federal/state governments to ascertain whether the extent and intensity of this suspected natural geothermal energy has potential for commercial application. If so, it could then be utilised for inexpensively 'heating up' the entire water supply for a modern complex of warm pools and hot spas designed specifically for inside/outside leisure, aquatic sports and therapeutic purposes.

Such a complex, when located within attractive treed parkland, surrounded by comfortable and reasonably priced motel-type accommodation, is bound to attract thousands of clientele throughout the year, particularly from the large population of the Melbourne metropolis – a mere 2 hours distant by car, bus or rail. Should 'clean energy' be used as an overall power source, in addition to geothermal energy from beneath brown coal deposits, the complex could then become a world-class, 'state-of-the-art resort' with low running costs, benefitting small local businesses and providing jobs for hundreds of people currently languishing in dole queues.

The resort could be managed through a public/private partnership arrangement if suitable Crown land is

allocated by the Victorian Government. Taxpayers and the private entrepreneurs involved would share the costs for initial consultations, design, construction and maintenance, as well as the profits flowing from such an innovative desirable oasis. Apart from the substantial health benefits on offer, patrons could also enjoy other nearby tourist highlights, including the rich farmlands and lush green rolling terrain, a future brown coal technology museum, beautiful water courses and lakes, the popular Mt Baw Baw bushwalks and snow fields 40 km north of Moe and the magnificent Tarra Bulga National Park just 25 km south of Traralgon.

From spring to winter, a win-win prospect all year round!

Fred Neumann, Frankston, Vic

The Editorial Board

The Beacon

Readers of *Beacon* may be interested in an item on *The Science Show* (ABC, Radio National, Thursday 12 November 2016). At the start of the program was a segment about the Prime Minister's Science Awards. One of the recipients is Maria Joffe, who has researched corporate misbehaviour and developed software that integrates available information to enable the ethical performance of corporations to be evaluated.

She believes that people need this sort of information to help them decide how to spend their money. Her intention is that the software she has developed should be freely available to everyone. Her acceptance speech was brief and followed by a short Q&A session.

This item should be available from the ABC website www.abc.net.au/radionational/scienceshow and makes interesting listening.

J. Endacott, Vic.

The Beacon

Hi,

Enclosed is a cheque made out for \$20 subscription renewal to the *Beacon*.

Thanks for the work you and everyone involved put into this redoubtable magazine. Thanks for the valuable coverage of the Middle East and local, national and international economic issues.

All the best P. Haslem, Tasmania

from our readers



Dear Sir

There could be no greater catastrophe for American democracy than the election of Donald Trump as president. If sensible US voters followed Joel S Hirschhorn's advice, he would be elected. The fanatics, the haters, the Tea Partyites, the KKK – all of them would vote for Trump and the chaos that would follow would be terrible and destructive. The man is a self-confessed molester of women, he encourages his followers to think about violence, he scorns international treaties, he knows nothing of diplomacy of military strategies, he brags that losing a vast sum (of other people's investments with him) has enabled him to avoid paying taxes, he calls the presidential election rigged unless he wins, he threatens his presidential opponent with jail. Not voting for another candidate is the surest way to bring this disaster to the White House. Is that truly what Hirschhorn desires? Democracy in the US may be, in Hirschhorn's mind, delusional – under a Trump presidency, democracy would be dead. The kind of dreadful divisiveness that is now wracking the US would become the way of the government – a terrifying prospect.

I hope American voters ignore the advice not to vote. I hope they turn out in vast numbers to vote against Trump. For the sake of Australia, and for the safety of the world, we all better hope he loses the election, loses it decisively and is denounced by the Republican Party if he refuses to accept the result.

Boycotts are effective when a good result is produced. The election of Donald Trump as president of the USA is NOT a good result.

S Rogers, NSW

Dear Beacon persons

Enclosed is annual sub and donation of \$40 for your battling paper.

Keep up the good work.

P Hendersen, Vic

Dear Sir

Thank you for the courteous reply to my letter that you published in the October edition of the *Beacon*.

Thinking about letter and reply, I have decided that it would be better for all concerned if I lie low for several months or so rather than having a fairly public discussion about any or many of the important matters contained with the framework of my letter.

In due course I might re-enter the fray – either by means of another letter or it could be that I actually submit an article for publication. You might not accept it, of course!

In the meantime I will be interested to keep an eye on the back page of the *Beacon* to see if there has been much in the way of feedback from your impressively high number of 500 paid-up subscribers.

With best wishes

Yours faithfully

R Brummitt, SA

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