

SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY



Principled Local Councils Deserve Our Support

EDITORIAL

The current debate precipitated by sections of local government about Australia Day is timely, important and necessary. It is an issue that concerns us all, and in particular the First Australians, the Aboriginal people whose country, seized by British colonialists in 1788, was declared to be terra nullius (land belonging to no one.)

This is not a debate about ending Australia Day; it is not about denying all Australians the opportunity to celebrate together the great achievements won by the people over the last 200 years; it is not about obscuring the truth. It is about recognising the enormous impact that the terra nullius decision had on the people of Australia at that time, and the continuing impact it has on succeeding generations up to today.

The date we 'celebrate', 26 January, is not one that has been long established. Indeed, it was in 1935 that the states and territories used the name to mark that date and it wasn't until 1994 that it became a public holiday.

Governments, both state and federal, have had ample opportunity to recognise the date as inappropriate for the Aboriginal people and to take appropriate action, but they have failed to do so, to their shame.

So, three Victorian local councils have stepped up. Yarra Council, Darebin Council and Moreland Council have begun this important debate by consulting with their Aboriginal communities, recognising their deep concerns, and have called not for the abolition of Australia Day, as has been incorrectly claimed, but for it to be celebrated on a day that will bring all Australians (old and new) together to celebrate a cohesive and meaningful Australia Day.

They showed great leadership and courage and should be commended for paving the way for a genuine, united celebration of our country. But instead of congratulating them, and offering to work together to establish a new date, what did our Prime Minister, the leader of our country, say in response?

He said, 'An attack on Australia Day is a repudiation of the values the day celebrates, freedom, a fair go, mateship and diversity'. So let us examine that statement to see whether it stacks up.

'Freedom': freedom for whom and from whom?

'A fair go': certainly not for all when the gap between the rich and the poor has never been wider.

'Mateship and diversity': when we demonise asylum seekers, treat Aboriginals as second class citizens, introduce an English language test for migrants that requires university standards, condemn the homeless and the unemployed to further poverty.

Not much mateship and diversity there, Prime Minister!

It has been said that local government is the closest form of government to the people, and indeed it is. We don't agree with everything councils say and do, but when they take a stand on such an important issue, we should be joining with them in solidarity.

We owe it to the Aboriginal people, to new arrivals and to old Australians to be able to celebrate on a day that unites us all. Let us work towards that!



These three Rs, just like reading, writing and 'rithmetic, are the only options facing society today. Not only are we in a severe economic slump, but an increasing number of people, indeed more than two million Australians, are struggling to subsist, mainly unseen, unemployed, underemployed, homeless or living unaffordably – living in poverty.

In the 1930s we had the Great Depression, where people such as the above were clearly visible, but now they are hidden, so I want to read you an excerpt from a book called *The Big Slump* by John Harris because it reminds us of what is happening outside our purview and it puts the three Rs into more perspective.

In factories and shipyards, the cranes were growing red with rust and grass was growing where thousands of feet had marched about their duties. And what was worse, to the unemployed, nobody seemed to care. The attempts to help them seemed feeble, unco-ordinated and uninspired and the efforts of politicians who had no great interest in their plight were few. The Government had run out of ideas. All the authorities could think of was to cut and cut and cut, dole, public assistance, every kind of relief.

In their homes, when they returned from street corners where they spent their days, there was little to comfort them. There wasn't even the cheer of a radio, because that had long since gone to the pawnshop. There probably wasn't even the ease of an armchair because the means test, that evil inquisition into their ability to

contribute to their own support, had insisted that everything that might realise money must be sold before relief could be given.

This was unemployment and there were millions of unemployed. Britain was stagnating. This was the Depression.

And this was capitalism in the 1930s and today it is happening again. Today we are more sophisticated. Our poor are mainly hidden from view and when they dare to show themselves, the reactionaries in government and their media pals punish them for being poor. While my views may not be popular, I believe they are justified.

So, reactionaries: These are they who would take us back to a more primitive form of society where there were masters and the masses were slave workers without even the façade of so-called democracy today.

Reactionaries want a world where workers know their place and accept their lot. Reactionaries use their control of the state apparatus, the police, the courts and the armed forces to ensure that they can manipulate history to suit their narrative.

By this, reactionaries ensure that any leaders that do emerge to lead the masses out of this vicious cycle are sufficiently vilified to lose all credibility with the people and become the villains. History abounds with examples of popular and incorruptible leaders being so vilified, and the more popular and the more incorruptible they were, the more vicious the vilification.

Reactionaries are masters of propaganda and use their control of power to manipulate the people. Their writings, their policies, their political activity, their control of all forms of media work for their political purpose. We have today, federally, a government of reactionaries. We know they lie, distort, betray and corrupt in order to maintain their power and control society.

Reformists are a slightly different kettle of fish, although at no time in history have reformists in office solved the problems we face today. Reformists often talk progressively and like to appear as one with the mass of the people, but they implement policies only a little different to reactionaries. They introduce unpopular legislation, and try to justify such legislation with words that appear democratic but in practice are often reactionary.

Reformists, like reactionaries, have as their first priority protecting their positions of power, and they believe that they can work within the capitalist system to make it more acceptable. Under reformist leadership anywhere in the world, poverty continues unabated. Of course there are some reformists who are more advanced, like Corbyn in the UK and Sanders in the US, but they too want to make the capitalist system more acceptable, less greedy and shared more equitably.

This is not possible. The very purpose of capital is to maintain their power, to maximise their profits and to control the people. If we don't believe this, after watching events unfold both here and across the world in recent times, then we are not reasoning or rational.

The last of the Rs are the revolutionaries. Now, revolution is very different again, as we all know. Revolutionaries in the main are those who have come to recognise the futility of capitalism, who know that without a planned economy based on community need rather than profit, we can never solve the problems of injustice, poverty and exploitation.

Revolutionaries come in many forms, but generally they want to abolish capitalism and replace it with another form of society. Revolutionaries are small in number but exert considerable influence. That is why both reactionaries and reformists are united in their absolute hatred of revolutionaries.

Currently we have a reactionary federal government, we have a reformist Opposition and we have a growing number of people who are disenchanted with both reaction and reform but who as yet have seen no other way forward for Australia and don't embrace revolution. At 85 years of age, and having seen much of the political development both here and around the world, I do not expect to see a revolution in Australia before I die. What I do want, and hope to see before I die, however, is a growing debate about what the people see as the future for this country, a wide discussion about the system under which we live, and whether it can or will resolve our problems.

Given that this year is the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the first successful people's revolution in history, I think the time is ripe for such a debate and certainly to look at that revolution with open minds to see what it was all about. In 1917 the Russian people reached the end of their tolerance and rejected the reaction of Czarism and the reformism



CAPITALISM HAS THROWN US MORE CRUMBS THAN THOSE GIVEN TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE PRIOR TO 1917.



of the Kautsky leadership of the labour-party type. Their choices were simple: watch their children die of hunger, watch their ruling class wallow in wealth while they suffered, or change the system.

Now revolution is not something one talks about lightly nor is it something that will happen in the next couple of years, but if we agree that capitalism is failing, if we reject both reaction and reformism as failing, then we have two alternatives. We can shrug our shoulders and accept what we currently have or we can discuss the kind of society we want and fight for it.

We all know that capitalism has failed. We know that neoliberalism has created the mess we are in and we know that austerity is the only way forward for capital. So, if reaction and reformism can't solve our problems, then what is our path forward?

Why did the Russian people rise up in 1917? They rose up because they had reached the end of the road. They rose up against cruel oppression, poverty, the huge gap between those with obscene wealth and those who created that wealth but had no share in it. They rose up against war, against hungry children, against having no right to healthcare, against corruption and decadence and violence and brutality. They rose up against the lack of democratic rights and their sell out by opportunist leaders, reformists, who threw in their lot with the ruling class of their country and consistently voted to maintain the status quo. Does that sound familiar?

So, it seems to me that there are important questions to be asked 100 years later in this land of ours, a rich and fertile land with a very small population, where we have the scientific, social, environmental and political knowledge to resolve all of our problems, and yet poverty, exploitation, degradation of our environment and economic instability are rising. We know that the rich are getting obscenely richer and the poor are getting more impoverished.



LET'S BEGIN WITH THE THREE MOST BASIC ELEMENTS REQUIRED FOR A DECENT LIFE: A JOB, SHELTER AND SUSTENANCE.

It isn't easy to question society. It takes courage and a commitment to honest and rational thinking, because questions require answers and answers require action. While almost everybody here would agree that action needs to be taken, that poverty, homelessness and injustice must be dealt with, it is quite a massive step to think about solutions and what is possible under capitalism.

Experience has shown us that neither major party in Australia has ever really solved the problems faced by the mass of the people. Poverty, inequality, unjust laws, unemployment and homelessness are accepted as an unfortunate but integral part of the capitalist system. Does this mean we are committed to accepting this as inevitable forever?

Now, I am not comparing the situation in Russia in 1917 with life in Australia today. Capitalism has thrown us more crumbs than those given to the Russian people prior to 1917. However poverty and injustice in the 21st century in a wealthy First World country needs to be examined with honesty because there is simply no justification for such poverty or austerity in the midst of such wealth. Malcolm Turnbull, our millionaire prime minister, says when we talk about wealth we are 'promoting the politics of envy.' I say we are promoting the politics of justice, democracy and equality.

So let us honestly examine some of the problems faced by the Australian people in this land of plenty, as well as those around the world, and look for answers. Let's begin with the three most basic elements required for a decent life: a job, shelter and sustenance. Not a lot to ask for. But in order to buy food, pay water bills and provide a secure shelter, we need an adequate income – not wealth, not millions, just enough to allow us to live a decent life and allow us to participate in our country and our future (our country which has a relatively small population of about 25 million in a land replete with wealth).

ACOSS says, 'Long-term analysis indicates an overall trend of persistent and entrenched poverty over the decade.' – persistent and entrenched poverty?

Has our country become poorer or Third World? Is there an inability to resolve the problems? Hardly! There is enormous wealth in our country; the problems are that the wealth is inequitable. Yet wealth is created by the very people suffering from poverty. What the Russian Revolution clearly demonstrated was that workers can exist without capitalists, but capitalists can't exist without workers. Our reactionary government says that the gap between the rich and the poor is narrowing. Let's have a look at some facts.

The following are the richest people in Australia:



ANTHONY PRATT
cardboard packaging
\$12.59 billion, up from
\$10.35 billion in 2016



HARRY TRIGUBOFF
with wealth of
\$11.45 billion



GINA RINEHART
with wealth of
\$10.41 billion,
up from **\$6.06 billion**
last year as commodity
prices improve



FRANK LOWY
on the list with
\$8.26 billion wealth



IVAN GLASENBERG
Glencore boss with
\$6.85 billion wealth

The total wealth of the rich list is up to **\$233.1 billion**. The average wealth per person on the rich list rises to a record **\$1.16 billion**, up from **\$987 million last year**. So things are not tough for the wealthy.

Now, despite the claims of Turnbull about the politics of envy, I cite these figures not out of envy, but out of anger that much of the wealth accumulated by these

capitalists was created by the very people who struggle today to provide shelter, food and water for their families. Internationally, Australia's poverty rate remains above the OECD average, despite our prosperity.

In population terms there were 2.99 million people living below the poverty line after taking account of housing costs in 2014. The poverty rate for children remained significantly higher than for adults at 17.4%, affecting 731,000 children. This was little changed from 2012 when the child poverty rate was 17.7%. Of concern, the child poverty rate for children in lone parent families increased from 36.8% in 2012 to 40.6% in 2014. So our 'fair go' country is not as fair go as it should be for the mass of the people, but it is pretty good for the rest whose wealth is soaring.

Across the world the gap is also widening. On the world stage, Mark Goldring, chief executive of Oxfam GB said: 'This year's snapshot of inequality is clearer, more accurate and more shocking than ever before. It is beyond grotesque that a group of people who could easily fit in a single golf buggy owns more than the poorest half of humanity. When eight men own more than 3.6 billion people do: our economics is broken.' In other words, capitalism is broken.

While one in nine people on the planet will go to bed hungry tonight, a small handful of billionaires have so much wealth they would need several lifetimes to spend it. The fact that a super-rich elite is able to prosper at the expense of the rest of us at home and overseas shows how warped our economy has become. Have we as a society become so complacent that we can tolerate the rampant corruption that has been exposed in most areas of government this year alone: in the banking industry, in police and border force, in big business, in the recycling industry, in education, in nursing homes, in housing and in our treatment of asylum seekers?

Have we become so complacent or so indifferent that we continue to accept the lies and the manipulation offered us by politicians and business leaders to cover their malfeasance? By both reactionaries and reformists? Now some would say it has always been this way, and indeed it has, but across the world a significant change is taking place. Not a revolution with guns, but a revolution nevertheless. People are taking to the streets, they are organising and they are

challenging capital. The capitalist system is in deep crisis. It can't provide for the needs of the people and more and more people are asking how we resolve the issues. In the US, Sanders challenged capital, in the UK Corbyn has gone even further. What they are calling for is a revolution – not to end capitalism, but to curb its excesses. This is a gigantic step forward. My personal view is that we will never resolve our crisis until we develop a planned economy and remove the drive for profit, but today that is still a step too far.

However, governments have never been so isolated from the people as they are today, and as they continue their commitment to privatisation, austerity, destruction of our environment and global poverty, all in their desire for more wealth and power, people are beginning to say 'Enough!' Parliamentary politics no longer serves, despite the propaganda churned out by the Murdoch media. Poll after poll demonstrates that the people are sick of voting every three years for parties and people that are self-serving and not public-serving. In response, reactionary leaders will impose more and more repressive legislation to control the rising unrest and reformist leaders will bleat about this but do nothing.

Democracy is clearly under threat with new legislation almost weekly challenging our democratic rights. Homelessness is increasing while governments sell off public land to private developers. Jobs are disappearing with no plans for future growth. Free healthcare is under threat despite a growing need. Punitive legislation is introduced to punish the unemployed as if they were responsible for their situation. Monopolies evade their tax responsibilities and government sits on its hands. Corruption grows and goes unchecked.

Reactionaries and reformists have contempt for the people. They attack our unions, punish the poor, privatise our services, close down our institutions, go to war, and on these fundamental issues they never consult the people ... but on the right to marry they need a survey? How long will we continue to allow reactionaries to take us back? How long can we wait for reformists to solve our problems?

We can hide our faces, avoid the truth, pretend things are okay, but the question confronting us all is can capitalism resolve these issues, and if the answer is no, then we need to examine our options. 🙄

Did You Know?

'Surely if we can produce in such abundance in order to destroy our enemies, we can produce in equal abundance in order to provide food, clothing and shelter for our children. If we can keep people employed for the purpose of destroying human life, surely we can keep them employed for the purpose of enriching and enhancing human life.'

– Tommy Douglas, Premier of Saskatchewan 1945

Quote from Saskatchewan Peace News Vol. 24 No. 2 June 2017



Friends celebrate 85 years of ABC

In 1938, just six years after the establishment of the ABC, the Postmaster-General – the government minister for the ABC – was AG Cameron. Cameron was a Country Party man from South Australia. At his first meeting with the Chairman of the ABC and two ABC Commissioners, he greeted them thus: ‘I know nothing about broadcasting. I am not interested in it. If I had my way I would stop all broadcasting. No time for these mechanical things. Don’t know anything about music. As for people who give talks and commentaries over the air, if I had my way I would poison the blanks blanks – would bring them under the Vermin Act’ (*This is the ABC*, Ken Inglis, 2016).

It seems there is a long tradition of political antipathy to the national public broadcaster. And commercial antipathy too. Sir Keith Murdoch, owner of both newspapers and radio stations, bitterly opposed the establishment of the ABC, and with other press proprietors insisted that news be limited to ‘one bulletin five minutes long, broadcast no earlier than 7.50 pm, when people could be assumed to have finished the evening papers.’ It took the Second World War to bring about change.

The politicians and the ABC’s commercial competitors may wish to cripple the public broadcaster, but the Australian people are its greatest friends and allies. I learnt this from my own experience, when Friends

of the ABC were battling the Howard government’s determination to dramatically reduce the broadcaster’s funds. (Cabinet considered one recommendation of a 23% reduction in funding.) In 1996, the Friends held a massive gathering in Melbourne. The Town Hall (provided for no cost by the Mayor) was full, and the overflow filled the neighbouring Athenaeum hall and spilled over the tram lines in Swanston St. In boxes in the Town Hall foyer was *Save Our ABC*, a booklet of information and comment from well-known Australians, produced in seven days on the initiative of the publisher, Hyland House, and the marathon efforts of its two editors, Morag Fraser and Joseph O’Reilly.

That gathering left little room for doubt about the Melbourne community’s support for the ABC – and as people from all over the country were making themselves heard, the government was forced to listen. The funding cut of 10% that was finally announced was bad, but nowhere near as destructive as was the government’s original intention.

The ABC is our lifetime educator, our source of cultural riches, intellectual diversity, entertainment – and it is beholden to no corporation or political party. Is it perfect? Far from it! Friends of the ABC have always been critical friends. But we need to ensure that it survives for at least another 85 years! —

Source: *Friends of the ABC August 2017*

BY PAUL STREET



The United States has killed, maimed, displaced and otherwise harmed an astonishing number of people in its 241-year record of murder and mayhem – including more than 20 million killed in 37 nations since 1945.

MURDER: DIRECT AND PROXY

Direct

A grisly distinction exists between those Uncle Sam has directly assaulted and those he has more indirectly attacked. Here are just a few examples from the long record of direct US-military mass murder since 1945:

- **Hiroshima** (146,000 killed with a single bomb – what President Harry Truman called ‘the greatest thing in history’) and Nagasaki (80,000): The arch-criminal atom bombings were unnecessary and savagely carried out even though the US high command knew Japan was defeated and ready to accept US surrender terms.
- **Iran Air Flight 655**: On 3 July 1988 the USS Vincennes crossed into Iranian waters and shot down an Iranian civilian plane, blowing 290 people out of the sky. The Vincennes’ commander was granted an award for ‘exceptionally meritorious conduct’.
- **The ‘Highway of Death’**: US fighter jets engaged in a frenzied slaughter of tens of thousands of surrendered Iraqi troops in 1991. Lebanese-American journalist Joyce Chediak testified that ‘US forces continued to drop bombs on the convoys until all humans were killed. So many jets swarmed over the inland road that it created an aerial traffic jam, and combat air controllers feared midair collisions’.

- **Fallujah**: The US Marines waged chemical warfare and used radioactive ordnance in the process of levelling a great Iraqi city in April and November of 2004.
- **The US drone war program** (2001 to present), aptly described by Noam Chomsky as ‘the most extreme terrorist campaign of modern times’: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reports a minimum number of 3,734 US drone strikes with nearly 10,000 killed, including 1,427 civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, ‘since the Bureau began collecting data’.

Indirect

Dreadful as such incidents of direct imperial butchery are the United States may well have killed, maimed and displaced more people indirectly through proxies and clients.

In 1954 a CIA-orchestrated coup removed the democratically elected and leftist Guatemalan government of Jacobo Árbenz. Over the next four decades, US-backed right-wing Guatemalan regimes killed tens of thousands of peasants, workers, students and activists.

In 1960 the CIA killed Congo’s first independent head of state, the leftist anti-colonialist leader Patrice Lumumba. The United States subsequently backed the brutal Congolese dictator Joseph Mobutu, who killed hundreds of thousands of people. The US has been significantly responsible for as many as 3 million deaths in that resource-rich country ever since. It sponsors and protects the Rwandan dictator Paul Kagame, whose body count in his own country and Congo runs into the tens of thousands.

In 1965 and 1966 the United States worked with Britain and Australia to help orchestrate the overthrow of the

democratically elected leftist government of Indonesia and the subsequent massacre of somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million Indonesian peasants, workers, intellectuals and activists. Coup General Suharto received military and economic assistance from the US over three decades of subsequent authoritarian rule.

In December 1975 Suharto got a green light from his sponsors in Washington to invade East Timor. The Indonesian military received advanced weaponry from the United States and the US client Israel as it brutally annexed the poor island nation and killed at least 180,000 of its inhabitants.

In 1973 a CIA-engineered coup overthrew the democratically elected socialist government of Chilean President Salvador Allende and replaced him with the fascist butcher and close US ally, General Augusto Pinochet. Pinochet's regime killed 30,000 workers, students, peasants, intellectuals and activists while introducing US-imported economic policies from the University of Chicago during the 1970s and 1980s.

A US-sponsored and -equipped fascist regime in Argentina and allied death squads killed as many as 30,000 workers, students, intellectuals and activists in that country between 1974 and 1983.

In the late 1970s and 1980s Washington, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan created the extremist Islamo-Wahhabist forces that became al-Qaida and the Taliban as part of the US Cold War with the Soviet Union in order to destabilise a pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan. These Sunni jihadist forces have killed hundreds of thousands of people in Southwest Asia and the Middle East ever since.

US-sponsored authoritarian regimes in Central America killed more than 300,000 people during Ronald Reagan's two terms. Lavish funding, training and equipment from Washington fuelled this epic bloodshed. Victims were murdered and maimed as punishment for – and warnings against – participation in popular struggles to redistribute land and improve working and social conditions for peasants and workers in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Tens of thousands of Iranians were executed, with US economic, political and military assistance and sponsorship, by the Iranian dictator Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was installed into power after a CIA-engineered coup overthrew Iran's democratically elected leftist government in 1953.

Between 1980 and 1988 the US backed Iraq in an epic war with Iran. This horrific conflict produced at least 1 million Iranian casualties, including 300,000 soldiers killed and untold thousands still suffering from Iraqi chemical weapons developed with US assistance.

Saudi Arabia, the most reactionary government on earth, has slaughtered tens of thousands of dissenters and ethnic (Shiite Muslim) minorities with US arms, economic assistance and diplomatic cover. It is home to the extreme Sunni-Wahhabist ideology that has fuelled mass-murderous jihadists affiliated with al-Qaida and Islamic State, which have received lavish funding from Saudi Arabia. The Saudi kingdom is a prized US ally. It has been visited by both Barack Obama and President Trump in recent years. Trump went to Riyadh in May to seal a \$110 billion arms deal with the Saudis. ↵

A UNITARIAN DOXOLOGY

Our philosophy consists of those actions, purposes and experiences that are humanly significant.

Nothing human is alien to a Unitarian. It includes labour, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship – all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living.

We seek the fulfilment of life in the here and now – this is the explanation of our social passion.

We do not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but rather we insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relevance to human needs.

Our religious emotions are therefore expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social wellbeing.

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We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs.

This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

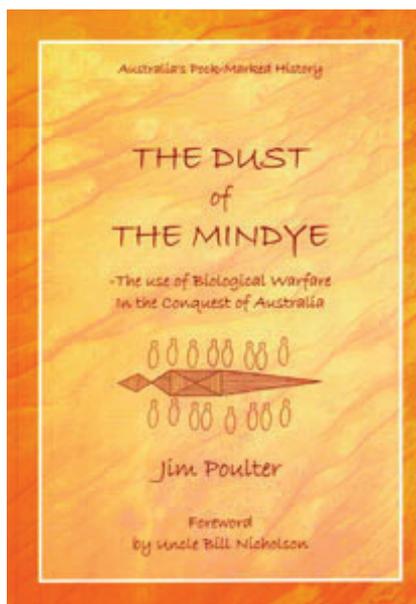
These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. ↗

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



Jim has written a number of books on Indigenous history, Marngrook footy and children's books from the Indigenous 'dreamtime'. Jim is not an academic historian, but a qualified forensic social worker, with great-grandparent ancestors of early settlers who associated with the local people.

As can often happen, a passionate 'amateur' can be more thorough than an accredited academic, and in this his latest book he tells of how two military men used smallpox as a biological weapon having seen how useful it was in the 'American Wars' that they had participated in.

It was apparently known in the late 1700s that if one contracted smallpox and survived they would be immune thereafter, so there was some form of immunisation knowledge known and practised then. Smallpox was used as a biological weapon in the American wars against the French and the local Indians so there was knowledge of how dangerously effective the disease was.

Major Robert Ross and his colleague Captain James Campbell of the 'First Fleet' eventually managed to acquire a jar or jars of smallpox pustules that the doctors of the fleet had picked up in Capetown on the voyage out. These two men were very antagonistic towards Governor Phillip's rule and this came to a head when seven Marines under Campbell's command

were found guilty of robbing the government stores and six of these men were duly convicted and hanged for theft. They used an American Indian seaman Joseph Jeffries [who had sided with the British in the American wars] to deliver smallpox contaminated blankets and clothing to the local people. Jeffries was perhaps the only person to have friendly relations with the locals and he subsequently died a few weeks later from the disease.

In a very short time the pox spread right across the nation, wiping out up to two-thirds or more of the people. The disease affected mostly the older and younger members and thus a lot of the Aboriginal marriage and kinship lore was lost or damaged and caused a breakdown in what was an extremely well organised and civilised society. No wars, no fences, no rulers accumulating wealth at the expense of others, no jails, temples or invasions.

Our European history is written from what was seen after the pox plague, so it is a very skewed view of primitive 'hunters and gatherers' squabbling amongst themselves. The truth as always is something very different and this is another book that should also be in the national school curriculum!

Jim's books can be bought from his website – <http://www.jimpoulter.com>

In conclusion, I feel that all these books should be broadcast by whatever means to all of us here *now* and have the knowledge in these books along with a history of trade union struggles summarised in a welcoming package to newcomers so they know to whom they owe a debt for a better lifestyle than the country they left.

By Mike McKeon ↵

from our readers



DEAR DONNA

Sorry to be late with my subscription – I thought I had paid it. Yours is a great magazine. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely

J Michie, NSW

DEAR EDITOR

Please find enclosed cheque for \$20, being \$10 concession subs for 1 year and a tiny donation.

I also apologise for my tardiness.

I love my *Beacon*, so thank you and keep it coming.

Yours

J Collins, Qld

TO THE EDITOR

This cheque is for a 2-year subscription. Thank you for all the articles published.

A Vouros, NSW

DEAR EDITOR

At our recent meeting of Just Peace here in Brisbane, members commented on how great it felt opening their August issue of the *Beacon* and finding a flyer for this year's IPAN conference.

When all of those desirous of a more peaceful world join forces then surely it will be achieved.

Your support was very much appreciated.

**M Bryn Burns, Member of Just Peace Queensland
IPAN Independent Peaceful Australia Network**

DEAR SIR/MADAM

I sometimes listen to your local radio program and would like to subscribe to *Beacon* for a year.

I enclose a cheque for \$100 for your 'church' as I'm not sure of the cost of the above.

We get very little science or truth down here on the Mornington Peninsula and I see that the anti-vaccination crew are moving into or morphing into the Lyme disease brigade and placing their 'literature' in the local libraries! (Lyme-like disease also causes autism, etc., or 'mimics' these other conditions).

This problem of emails, gobbledygook and Facebook fictions and fantasies persisting over science and reason is a really serious problem. (And they take no responsibility for the damage they do.)

Apparently the Byron Bay community contributes seriously to these distortions re climate change, anti vaccination, now Lyme disease, etc., but we have a number of groups promoting this nonsense on the Mornington Peninsula; most of it all comes (and is often concerned with) from the extreme right in USA. All worse since Greg Hunt spoke out against anti vaccination.

From a teacher at Flinders College, science teaching has to be careful and include or allow for 'creationism'.

Maybe you have dealt with this issue of distorted information but thought you might be interested if not. Have not tracked all your podcasts to date.

K Mackay, Vic

DEAR DONNA

I think the reference to Australia Day is more than a little sad. England did not invade Australia in the normal sense of the word. If it had been possible the convicts would have gone to America, but this was not possible. Nobody denies the Aboriginals received some shocking treatment, this is well documented, but the past is the past, to be acknowledged, and then to provide for Aboriginal kids the best education available. Changing Australia Day does nothing other than drive a wedge between groups which is more than regrettable.

Regards

B Revill

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