



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

the Beacon

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March on May Day

EDITORIAL

Why should Melbourne Unitarians care about May Day? Because it is an international day celebrated by aware people around the world. It is a day set aside to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of working people's struggles down the decades that have provided us all with the many conditions we continue to enjoy, such as paid annual leave, pensions, superannuation, the right to unionise, the right to demonstrate and more.

We have lost and continue to lose many of those rights fought for so bitterly by our forefathers but the fight to regain and retain them continues. Unitarians are firm believers in social justice and so May Day is something we support and we encourage others to support these issues by marching on Sunday May 6 to publicly place people's demands for a better society before the community.

The only other day allowing working people a public voice was Labour Day, originally called the 8-Hour Day, which took almost 100 years to win. The first Labour Day parade was held in Melbourne on 21 April 1856. This annual celebration was taken over by MOOMBA in 1955 and has become mainly a celebration of the business community and not the wonderful achievements of the people.

All those whose quality of life is under attack, who lack affordable housing, whose children are condemned to be taught in run-down schools, who are demeaned because they can't get a job and are forced to live below the poverty line, who have been affected by privatisation through lessened services and higher charges, in other words most working people, should be marching on May Day to express their anger and condemnation of policies that continue to extend the growing gap between rich and poor.

The federal government refers to such talk as the politics of envy. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is very little greed or envy among the mass of the people. Their demands are simple: a secure job whose pay will ensure they can provide for all the needs of their families; affordable housing; protection of the environment; a decent education; healthcare where

required and when required; and the right to organise and withdraw their labour if the situation warrants it.

The trade union movement, which fought for and won all of the conditions so important to a decent life, is now under constant attack both by governments, employer organisations and on many occasions, unfairly, the media.

This is because it has stood in the way of the massive and continuing exploitation of low paid workers, women and youth, and in the era of monopoly capitalism where unbridled greed holds sway, unions have to be destroyed in order for further cuts to our wages and conditions, to our social services and to the loss of many of our democratic rights.

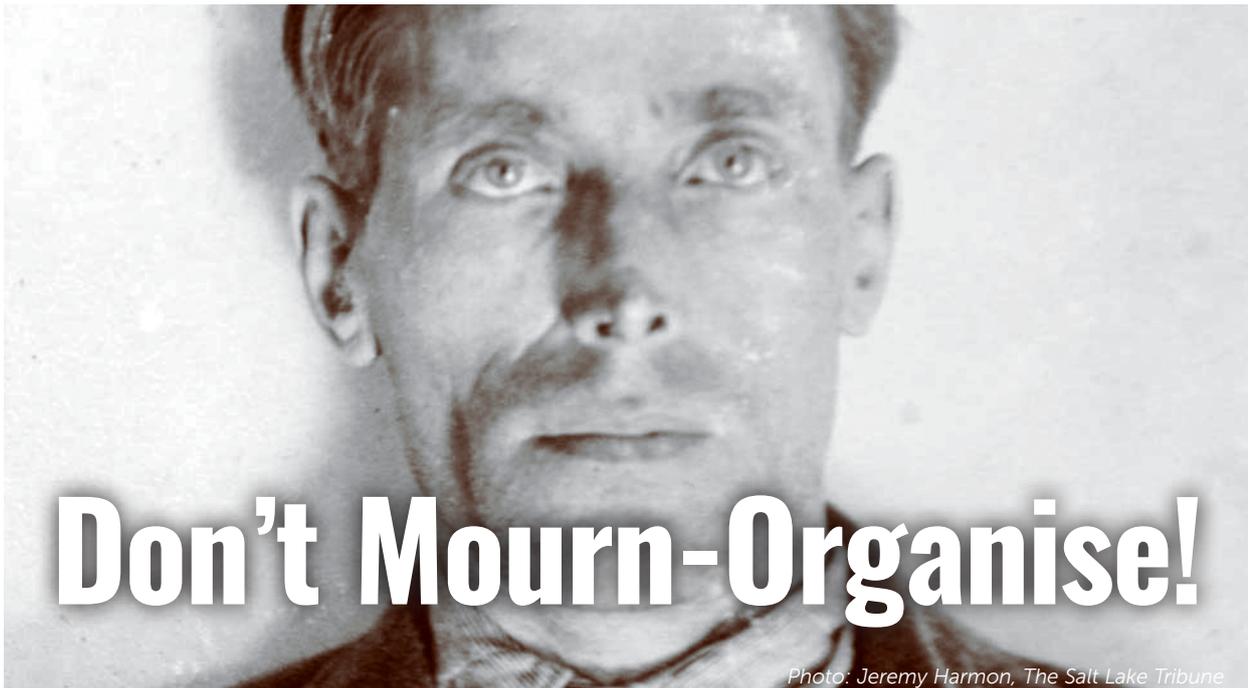
May Day gives us the opportunity to repel this attack, to highlight the kind of society we demand and to demonstrate that we will not continue to tolerate the privatisation of our precious services, the greedy exploitation of our resources and the denial of our basic rights.

This year the May Day Committee is calling for a range of improvements to our wellbeing and quality of life. These include such demands as making the transnationals pay their share of tax, opposition to privatisation, opposition to foreign bases on our soil and opposition to our involvement in wars which slaughter innocent people and enrich the profiteers in the arms industry.

May Day is calling for an end to the victimisation of those seeking asylum, protection of support for Indigenous rights and sovereignty, an end to violence against women, against racial vilification and discrimination, and a reversal of the gap between rich and poor.

Unitarians, indeed the whole community, should take the opportunity to join in on May 6 and demonstrate to the world that we care, that we condemn the government's anti-people policies and that we are prepared to take a stand in opposing the attacks on our rights. We will fight to build a decent society that meets the needs of the people and not just the greedy, parasitic wealthy class. ☺

A TALK GIVEN AT THE MELBOURNE UNITARIAN CHURCH BY MARION HARPER,
HON. SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH ON 4 FEBRUARY 2018



Don't Mourn-Organise!

Photo: Jeremy Harmon, The Salt Lake Tribune

Don't mourn...organise! These were purported to be the last words of Joe Hill, well-known union activist, who was wrongly executed by the US in November 1915. If ever there was a time to heed the words of Joe Hill, it must be now. If we don't organise, if we turn aside and don't challenge the direction of government, the imposition of neoliberalism, the ensuing poverty, the rape of our environment, the attacks on our civil liberties, then we will consign future generations to a world of misery, subjugation and perhaps destruction.

Is this a new role for Unitarians? Absolutely not! And not just in this church or indeed in this century. Let me remind you all of a passage from a book I have quoted from many times, *A Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England*, by Raymond V Holt.

Holt outlined in his book the social justice role played by the Unitarians of that time in the Industrial Revolution, parliamentary reform, local government, health, housing and education. In education, for example, he said:

Unitarians have shown an enthusiasm for education that has amounted to a passion. They have devoted time, energy and money to the spread of education in every form except denominational education...This is quite natural, for if men are to be freed from reliance on an external authority, they must be educated to be independent in judgement. If they are to be responsible citizens, they must be given knowledge.

We all know that the information we are given is heavily biased, strongly politicised and simply amounts to propaganda promoting those in power. Who of us has not watched the news and said to ourselves, 'That's rubbish!' As Unitarians and concerned citizens in this modern age, what are our responsibilities? We in this

church take very seriously the argument that people must be educated to be independent in judgement and must have access to accurate knowledge.

We come to this church not just for spiritual enrichment, not just to be with friends but to be informed, to be challenged, to be involved... because we care. We care that our freedoms are being deliberately eroded in the name of fighting the terrorism that is being practised by the very people who claim to be protecting us from it. Terrorism is not just blowing people up. (Although our governments have had a very good record of doing this!) They have blown up innocent people around the world at the behest of their 'ally', the USA, and they continue to do so today. That is violent terrorism. But terrorism can also be defined by acts of state violence, violence that destroys lives, not with its bombs but with its policies.

Let's look at some of what I call terrorist acts by our government against civilians as it pursues its political aims, which of course are for maximum profits for their big business allies. Let's begin with the environment. Isn't it a form of terrorism when coal mining and fracking are for political and profitable aims and not for the good of the people? Isn't it a form of terrorism when all our utilities are privatised for political and profitable aims, costing us more and diminishing the services available? Isn't it a form of terrorism when governments refuse to recognise global warming for political and profitable aims? Look at the example of the Adani mine project. *Four Corners* exposed Adani for his various criminal indictments in India and many articles expose his environmental vandalism. Articles from Indian journalists exposing him are ignored despite clear evidence and yet our governments (both Labor and Lib/Nats) determine to give this environmental vandal the green light to build his coalmine and even plan to provide a billion dollars of

our tax money to help him destroy our environment. The Queensland Labor premier says we need the mine for jobs. So, we provide jobs and destroy the environment and our Great Barrier Reef in so doing. Surely this is environmental terrorism!

Then there are people's services and privatisation: severe cuts to almost every area of public need, including health, housing, education, energy, postal services, public transport, nursing home services, universities...the list is endless and each attacks and destroys the rights and lives of Australians. Surely these all constitute acts of terrorism against the Australian people by the Australian government. These acts are continuing as we speak, and we have an urgent responsibility to expose them and fight them or we are indeed sadly diminished.

Privatisation, selling off the people's property to large capitalists, is a form of terrorism. It increases prices and lowers services. It makes huge private profit and destroys people's ability to utilise the services. If the established churches in Australia ever come together to make a clarion call for action, it should be against privatisation. Overwhelming evidence clearly demonstrates that privatisation has been a disastrous failure for the people and a huge financial success for big business. Yet governments from both sides continue to support it. There is not one area of privatisation of public assets that has assisted the mass of the people, and it can't do so because its very reason for existence is profits for its shareholders. Worldwide, progressive people, thinking people, are starting to stand up against this robbery of the people's assets whilst governments are adept at hiding the real impact of privatisation and handsomely pay consultants and bureaucrats to conceal the truth.

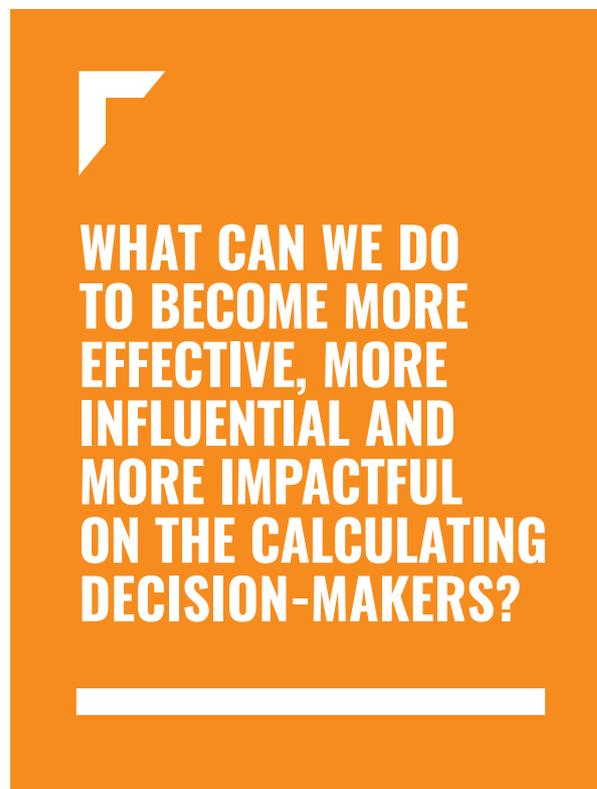
Then there is the terrorism against innocent men, women and children fleeing violence in their countries, violence in which our government is complicit. We bomb their countries to rubble, force them to take their children and flee, then when they reach out to us on our shores pleading for asylum against the mayhem we have caused, we lock them up in concentration camps and reward the criminal politician responsible for doing so by giving him an increased portfolio and one where he can do even more criminal damage to the community.

The history of Unitarianism is rich with examples of our involvement in social justice issues and our determination to fight for a better world. Two previous ministers of our church shone the light that determines our path today. Rev. William Bottomley, minister of this church from 1926–1949, was one such man. In one of the earliest issues of our journal *Beacon*, he said:

We are influenced more than we care to acknowledge by current ideas and party platforms. Those who take an independent line become the objects of suspicion and attack by those who think and act in grooves. The independent thinker is beset by thorns and briars on every hand. On religious grounds, our journal Beacon only expects to appeal to those who are seeking a new and better way of life and thought. It will have no interest for those who are indifferent to the great issues that confront the human race in every field of its activity.

In December 2008 *Beacon*, we said:

All will not be right with the world until courageous people stand together and say enough! Beacon continues to call on people to unite around a common demand for a genuine democracy, for social justice and a dignified life for all.



The struggle for justice continues and is growing, but governments continue to rule in the old way, which should no longer have a place in today's world. Parliamentary politics have failed dismally. There is nothing democratic about voting every four years for a group of people we don't know, we don't like, we don't trust and who consistently sell out our best interests over and over again regardless of their label.

In its latest report, Oxfam tells us that it would require approximately \$20 billion per year to provide life-giving fresh water, education, health and housing to every person in the world. This money is not made available, yet we can find ample money for war and destruction. In total, countries around the world splurged \$1.686 trillion on arms in 2016 (a 0.4 per cent increase on 2015). The United States remained at the top of the military spending league last year with \$611 billion. Imagine a world where disputation was dealt with by negotiation instead of weapons and bombs. This should be the way forward, but our federal government just announced that we will become part of the major armaments industry – a killing industry.

What can we do to become more effective, more influential and more impactful on the calculating decision-makers? What are your ideas for action to combat decisions that will have a deep impact not only on our lives but the lives of our children and grandchildren? Who can we unite with and on what basis? We must remind the unions, for example, that despite vicious legislation denying them the right to represent their members as they should be



able to, they urgently need to work together with the community to combat the drive to excessive neoliberalism and austerity, and worse, legislation that is becoming more and more repressive.

Not long ago, I attended a protest at Longford in Victoria by maintenance workers employed by Esso whose parent company, Exxon Mobil, is the 6th largest company in the world. Yet, despite their huge wealth and enormous profits, they are trying to cut the wages of their workers to increase profits even more. The stoppage entered its 200th day while I was there. Last year this company paid no company tax on the \$8.5 billion profit made in this country by Australian workers. Nonetheless the company is demanding a 30% pay cut, significant cuts to allowances, reduction of annual leave and harsh anti-family shift rosters that would change one week on, one week off, to five weeks on, one week off. What clearer example of attacks on workers' working standards and living conditions is there than this? What better example of greed?

We must build a movement for peace, justice and democracy. The trade union movement has been deliberately targeted and shackled to allow governments to destroy workers' rights, adequate pay and conditions. The right to strike, to withdraw one's labour, is now illegal. That makes us no better than inadequately paid slave labourers.

I challenge each and everyone here today and those who will be listening on our Radio 3CR program to think about these issues deeply because each day in their glass bubble, isolated from the needs of the mass of the people, undemocratic, unsupported and vastly unpopular politicians make decisions based on the lobbying of powerful conglomerates who have no interest in our needs, in democracy, in our future, but only on profit, power and greed.

Sometimes, when I listen to people like Hanson and Dutton on asylum seekers and on the owners of this

land, or Leyonhjelm on guns, or others on global warming, I wonder why we don't have a psychiatric team assessing these lunatics. And when I listen to parliament and hear Turnbull, Joyce and Shorten screaming at each other about stupid irrelevancies that have nothing to do with real life, I feel anarchistic in my desire to remove them from political life altogether.

When I feel these things, I take to reading some of my favourite writers to restore my sense of normality in this crazy 'Alice in Wonderland' upside-down world. One such passage I will share with you now. It was written by the then Dean of Canterbury, Rev. Hewlett Johnson, in his book, *The Socialist Sixth of the World*. He said this:

All human beings are at heart moral beings. The moral sense may be twisted and perverted by the circumstances of life or the immoral character of society. With war impending, men may be taught the art of killing as if killing were the supreme object of life. Ferocity may be developed as a virtue and bayonet practice may teach men the refinements of brutality. But such things are outrages on innate moral feelings: it requires strict discipline to inculcate brutality.

An essential part of fundamental moral feelings is the sense of kinship with one's fellow beings and with the world at large.

Part of our feelings of rightness of things depends upon our sense of community and comradeship. If that is wanting, we are stunted beings. The harmony of life becomes a discord.

The world of financial capitalism produces precisely this sense of disharmony and the root cause lies in the fact that modern industry treats men and women as a means not as ends. They are treated like machines and their only function is to play their part in the making of profit.

Politicians of all sides and of all shades inhabit a different world to us. They are cocooned in a world of privilege; they are highly paid, protected, pampered and corrupted by capitalism. They care about two things: serving capital and getting re-elected. The people, on the other hand, want very simple things: a peaceful world, a secure job, the right to healthcare and education for their families, an affordable and secure home, and the opportunity to exert some control over their lives.

Whatever your political views, it simply isn't right for a few people to control the finances and future of the world when the majority are denied basic needs and rights. These rights will not be given to us...history has demonstrated that. There is a constant struggle to obtain justice and human rights...they are never given. It is our responsibility as a church and as individuals to organise and defend those basic rights and work towards a better society. 🕊

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AUTHOR: THANK GOD FOR THE REVOLUTION, COLD TEA FOR BRANDY,
OLD CUBA-WORLD HERITAGE, NUGAN HAND, CO-AUTHOR: ROOTED IN SECRECY



The Coup

(part two)

PINE GAP AND THE 'LOANS AFFAIR'

A critical date was coming up. The Pine Gap Treaty signed on 9 December 1966 stated that after an initial nine years, either party could terminate the agreement on one year's notice, which would determine the fate of the CIA's most valuable overseas base. Described by Victor Marchetti, who helped draft the treaty, as a 'giant vacuum cleaner that can pick up communications from all around the world', its primary function is the collection of data from CIA sources and transmitters in order to track and target 'the enemy' and to prepare for nuclear warfare, putting Australia in the front line of a prospective nuclear war and elevating our status in terms of strategic matters. The idea that Pine Gap is a 'joint facility' is laughable. 'The CIA runs it and the CIA denies it. That's the way things are done', said Victor Marchetti.

It was widely believed that Whitlam would not have renewed the lease but that may not be true. In response to a series of questions on foreign policy from the Socialist Party of Australia (now Communist Party) first published in *The Socialist* on 22 October 1975, Whitlam gave a detailed reply. He included a quote from Hansard on 3 April 1974: 'The Australian Government takes the attitude that there should not be foreign military bases, stations, installations in Australia. We honour agreements covering existing stations. We do not favour the extension or prolongation of any of those existing ones.' On December 9 Whitlam would have been empowered to act but he didn't get the chance. Parliament returned on November 11 when Whitlam was sacked by Governor-General John Kerr using archaic constitutional powers, dangerous powers still in place.

SUPPLY BLOCKED

Opposition leader Malcolm Fraser seized on the 'loans affair' as the 'reprehensible circumstance' he had been waiting for and on 15 October 1975, the

anti-Labor opposition used its single-vote majority in the Senate to block supply. Five days before, eight leading professors of law had publicly declared that blocking the budget was 'constitutionally improper' and 'against all established convention', but were largely ignored, like a number of vital questions that remained unanswered. Why were so many documents leaked, many of them surfacing overseas, particularly in the US? And who brought out Tirath Khemlani and introduced him to Labor ministers?

A mass movement would have rocked the conspirators and forced the Governor-General to resign, but such leadership was lacking. Bob Hawke, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and member of the ALP Federal Executive flew to Canberra and issued an appeal to workers to 'cool it'. And Whitlam's rage was mainly directed at the Governor-General and not at the powerful elements that stood behind him.

The nature of the dismissal made Whitlam and his colleagues look as if they were convicted criminals, lending credence to the continuing cries of scandal from anti-Labor forces. They were even denied access to information that would normally have been made available. In any event, it appeared as if they were dazed by the coup and incapable of analysing how and why it had occurred.

On December 13 the conservatives regained control of parliament, which they regarded as their birthright. And on 22 January 1976, Fraser became Prime Minister and paid his dues to US imperialism and the CIA by giving them everything they asked for and even before they asked. Aussie crawling at its finest. The National Intelligence Daily reported that: 'the Fraser government had understood the importance of Australia's ties with traditional allies, correcting what it saw as the tendency of the Labor Government to ignore such ties in the pursuit of Australian nationalism ... Canberra will push ahead with the construction of a new naval base on the Indian Ocean coast of Western Australia ... On the matter of port calls by US nuclear-powered warships, Canberra is not expected to impose obstacles ...'

GOVERNOR-GENERAL KERR

Much has been written about the role of Kerr in the removal of the Labor government, about his arrogance and ridiculous pomposity, his close relationship with High Court Chief Justice Sir Garfield Barwick, Chief Justice Anthony Mason and the Queen, but almost nothing about his far-right views and long-standing ties to military intelligence. During WW2 he was a member of the hush-hush 'Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs' that morphed into the CIA. In the 1950s Kerr became chief legal adviser to the 'Industrial Groups' that were strongly linked to the virulent anti-communist Democratic Labor Party whose destructive behaviour kept Labor out of office for 23 years.

Kerr became an enthusiastic member of the elite, invitation-only Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, which in 1967 was exposed in the US Congress as being founded, funded and run by the CIA. The group, like other similar CIA-backed outfits, held seminars and gatherings with the over-arching theme of anti-communism. In the 1960s, as its founding president, Kerr helped organise and run the Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific, travelling to the US to get funding from a tax-free group called the Asia Foundation, a mob also exposed in Congress as a CIA conduit for money and influence.

In his book, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, Victor Marchetti wrote: '... the Asia Foundation often served as a cover for clandestine operations ... the CIA paid for Kerr's travel, built his prestige and even published his writings through a subsidised magazine. He continued to go to the CIA for money.' During Ambassador Green's tenure, Kerr received personal briefings on 'international affairs', giving him special access to matters that were to dominate Australian political life during 1975. When asked about his dodgy connections, Kerr said: 'he was pretty sure he was unaware of the CIA's concern'. What garbage!

But why didn't Whitlam do his homework before appointing this creep? And why do academics who write about the dismissal ignore the abundant evidence of CIA involvement, especially at a time when it was most active and obvious? And why do many play down the profound impact the ousting of the Labor government had on the Australian body politic, spelled out by Whitlam at the Australian National University on 29 October 1975, a mere 11 days before he was sacked: 'the question is whether the people who seek change and reform are ever again to have confidence that it can be achieved through the normal parliamentary processes.' A question that can only be answered in the negative.

The popular view that the Whitlam government fell apart as a result of its own incompetence is hogwash, but any who dared challenge this nonsense were called 'conspiracy theorists' as if conspiracies were not an everyday part of political, economic and social life. Conspiring to make war and destroy democratically elected governments and to murder and torture is what secret agencies do. The danger for us in a so-called democracy is that lies become facts and facts morph into historical amnesia. And we learn nothing.

By 1979 Nugan Hand had 16 branches around the world. Some were just mail drops and others, like the Chang Mai branch in the heart of Thailand's 'Golden Triangle' – a major outlet for drug-pushers – handled

millions of dollars every year, while Sydney was the operations centre for the entire outfit. But all was not well with Nugan Hand. Orthodox bankers regarded its operations as questionable and noted that the bank seemed able to drive a horse and cart through Reserve Bank regulations, whereas others were constrained from transferring funds overseas. Warning bells started ding around the world.

As international investors shied away, Nugan Hand drummed up business from local NSW councils and gambling clubs, offering higher interest rates than the norm, with a number of inner councils investing in the bank using millions of dollars of ratepayers' money. Questions were raised in the NSW Parliament and Labor Attorney-General Frank Walker appointed an investigator. Houghton and Hand flew into Sydney on a rescue mission, although their idea of 'rescue' seemed to be confined to spending time at the shredding machine. Within months, a number of the branches had closed down. And then a passing NSW police car came across a body in an apparently abandoned Mercedes Benz on a lonely stretch of the Great Western Highway. Officialdom claimed the body was that of Frank Nugan, but there were serious doubts about his identity. Few who knew him believe he had killed himself. Whatever the facts, the Nugan Hand Bank started to implode and crashed in May 1980 and was put into liquidation.

Many dedicated people tried to get to the bottom of its activities, but there was only so much they could do against such a well coordinated cover up. In all there were four major official investigations, apart from lawsuits, inquests, criminal complaints, tax cases and commissions looking into the multiplicity of problems, some of which turned up useful information. Nugan Hand's court appointed liquidator, John O'Brien, was given the authority to look into the books, but by the time he 'looked' there wasn't much to find, although it didn't take him long to nut out that the bank had been created by people much smarter than Frank Nugan.

O'Brien discovered that the millions of dollars of 'assets' simply did not exist. And never had. Nugan Hand was nothing more than a giant thieving machine, pinching large wads of money from hapless depositors, with no record of their accounts. It was obvious that a great deal of material had been suppressed, shredded or 'disappeared', but I have put together what is known, including some of my own material written at that time, trying to make sense of the criminal workings of what was virtually a secret government that operated around the world unchecked for more than four decades. 🕯

You can learn more about Nugan Hand

in the booklet *Nugan Hand, A Tale Of Drugs, Dirty Money, The CIA and The Ousting of the Whitlam Government* by Joan Coxsedg postage \$2

...and a great deal more about ASIO, the CIA, the Coup and much else in the book *Rooted in Secrecy* by Coxsedg, Coldicutt and Harant postage \$5



As late as 2014, toleration of right-wing extremism still clung to the Liberals, despite the exposure of the 1970s Liberal Party Migrant Advisory Council.

Speaking at the Croatian Club in Sydney on 13 April, MHR Craig Kelly's words were noted in the Australian Croatian weekly *Boca KroPres*: 'On behalf of the Prime Minister, who is in Japan, I'm conveying his greetings and good wishes on the occasion of the celebration of the 10th of April to you and all Croats in Australia, and those in Croatia' [Independent Australia 23 April 2014].

This was the anniversary of the establishment of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia. It resulted in a 'please explain' from the modern Croatian government.

Traitors by Frank Walker, published this year, is a record of how our Anzacs were betrayed by our own government and by our wartime allies. Although the Moscow Declaration on Atrocities signed by Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt proclaimed that once the enemies were defeated they would 'pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done,' this was not honoured.

Three examples of betrayal, two directly related to my relatives and one to the political character of modern Japan, stood out to me.

The case of an SS doctor's use of five Australian POWs for medical experiments on the transmission of hepatitis, after the defeat of Crete, is outrageous. Lance Corporal George Savage from Melbourne, reported the experiments to the army after he escaped and returned to Australia. His report was filed away and ignored until retrieved by a researcher from the national archives in 2016. The SS doctor involved openly boasted of his research in a German medical journal. He was held for two years at war's end but was soon released and became Director of the Nuremberg Hospital and Professor of Internal Medicine at Erlangen University. One of my uncles was captured on Crete and could have well been used in these criminal experiments.

Experiments on captives were also part of the Japanese war effort. The vivisections of Unit 713 in Manchukuo were the most barbaric, but similar horrors were perpetrated throughout the lands occupied by the Japanese. Ambon, where another uncle died just 10 days

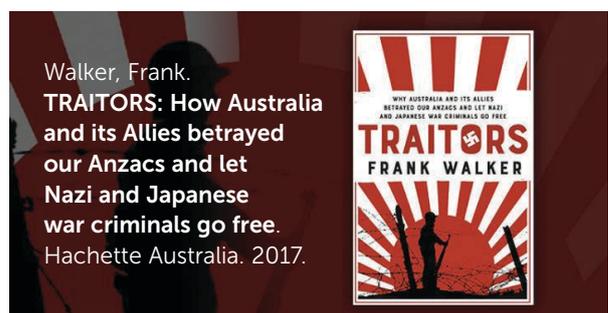
before peace, was a place of human experimentation. Walker recounts that a prison camp doctor took nine groups of ten prisoners, injecting them with an unknown substance which he said was Vitamin B. Fifty of them died soon after. Other places were equally horrid. 'On Guadalcanal two prisoners were shot in the feet to stop them from escaping, and then a medical officer dissected them live, cutting out their livers.'

Unit 731, headed by General Ishii Sato, carried out nightmarish experiments involving operations on prisoners without anaesthetic. Ishii escaped prosecution as in May 1947, General MacArthur requested full immunity for Ishii and his associates. 'He even cited the living human dissections performed at Pingfang as a particular bonus for America.' The question of bacteriological warfare was briefly raised at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials but was immediately suppressed.

The nature of post-war Japan stands in stark contrast to Germany. The German people have recognised the crimes committed in their name but Japan has not. It did not even admit to Unit 731 until 1982. The appointed 'Showa Terror' of colonised Manchukuo, Nabusuke Kishi, and later key member of the Tojo Cabinet who signed a decree conscripting slave labour for factories in Manchukuo, became Prime Minister of 'democratic' Japan in 1957. The present Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, is his grandson.

Frank Walker has exposed the depth of the betrayal of our forces and of our allies by the post-war settlements, where the Cold War was used to justify recruiting Nazis and Japanese war criminals for the coming conflict with the USSR.

As the introduction concludes: 'After reading this book you won't help but wonder, what else did they hide?' 🕯



Australia's OBSESSION with the US alliance

Will we **EVER** come of age?

There is much that Australia can gain from a constructive relationship with the American people. Joint projects and initiatives in the arts, education, medicine, science, urban planning, care for the environment and much else, can be of great mutual benefit. There is indeed good reason for civil society – not just business and government – in the two countries to collaborate faster and more vigorously. Here I have in mind social change groups active around issues of social and economic justice, environment, peace, civil liberties, and educators, writers, artists, trade unions, professional networks, progressive religious organisations, and those engaged in the media.

Regrettably, the military, intelligence and diplomatic partnership, which has steadily expanded since World War II, has been anything but a happy one. During this period we have chosen to align ourselves with the United States militarily and diplomatically, and the US alliance has become the centrepiece of our defence policies.

In the name of interoperability, our armed services are increasingly integrated into US military planning. For many years now, the Australian Defence Force has been spending vast sums on such items as fighter jets, major warships, submarines and heavily equipped land forces. The only rationale for such investment is to fight a major war, which can only mean fighting in support of some US military expedition.

In December 2014, Malcom Fraser put it sharply but not inaccurately when he said:

The relationship with America, which has long been regarded as beneficial, has now become dangerous to Australia's future. We have effectively ceded to America the ability to decide when Australia goes to war.

This is especially troubling given America's almost continuous engagement in war. In the 19th century the US participated in 18 international armed conflicts, that is, on average one every 5.5 years. In the course of the 20th century, the number rose to 38 wars, or one every three years, and the period since 2000 has seen the United States engage in 10 wars, the equivalent of one every 1.7 years.

Notable among these wars are the Korean conflict of the 1950s (close to 1 million battle deaths), the Vietnam War of the 1960s and early 1970s (1.6 million battle

deaths), the Iraq War (some half a million deaths since the 2003 US invasion), and hostilities in Afghanistan and Pakistan (well over 150,000 deaths since 2001). In each of these, the US launched a major military intervention, dutifully supported by Australia.

Our major political parties are largely responsible for committing Australia to these wars, even though they have little to do with Australia's security interests but a great deal to do with US military engagements and strategic priorities. Bipartisan support for the ANZUS alliance has become code word for the complicity in silence on some of the most critical challenges facing Australia. Should we continue our military role in places like Afghanistan and Iraq? What should be our position on Korea, Syria, Palestine? How should we press for nuclear disarmament? How can we most constructively engage with a China on the rise?

This drastic failure of the political class to address these questions, let alone the future of the alliance, reflects powerful domestic as well as external pressures. At home, heavy pressure is exerted by the defence civil and military hierarchy, the intelligence community that has enjoyed an unprecedented expansion as part of the 'war on terror', business interests, trade unions and even state governments that stand to gain from higher levels of defence spending, and powerful media interests that have long promoted the US alliance.

Yet, there is more to Australia's enduring dependence on 'great and powerful friends' than the influence of our political, bureaucratic, military and corporate elites. A number of potent myths appeared to have shaped Australia's sense of place from the earliest days of European settlement. Five myths are worth noting:

- That Australia's identity rests largely on its inheritance and continuing attachment to Western (i.e. British and subsequently American) traditions and values.
- That with a small population and a vast territory to defend, our security ultimately depends on the protection afforded by the imperial power.
- That such protection requires Australia to demonstrate loyalty to the protector.
- That the main threats to our security originate in Asia, where unfamiliar civilisations and huge populations look with envy upon our economic

prosperity.

- That loyalty to the imperial protector and an effective response to external threats requires a policy of forward defence, that is, a willingness to fight side by side with the imperial power 'sooner rather than later' and 'there rather than here'.

These myths express the deep though often unspoken anxieties of an Australian public that understands viscerally how European settlement of this land was the result of invasion. Might it not therefore be possible that, just as we dispossessed the Indigenous people of their land, a future invader may try to dispossess us. This is the fear that still lurks not far beneath the surface, and which politicians are only too willing to exploit in furthering their own interests.

While the decline of the British Empire, greatly accelerated by World War II, was widely viewed at the time with dismay and alarm, the rise of the United States as the preeminent world power afforded much needed reassurance. The transition to dependence on US military protection was consummated with the signing of the ANZUS treaty in 1951. Though not entirely painless, the alliance would over time help to entrench all five myths with only minor adjustments along the way, of which the only significant one was the abandonment of 'white Australia' as the basis of our immigration policy.

Sixty-five years later, the balance sheet of the alliance is most striking for the negligible benefits it has brought us, and the heavy costs it has imposed on our diplomacy, security, budgets, and importantly, the values we supposedly cherish. All too often our commitment to civil liberties at home and human rights abroad has had to play second fiddle to the alliance. Perhaps the most damaging effect has been to strengthen the addiction to empire and the consequent failure to reconcile our history (which connects us to the West) and our geography (which connects us to Asia).

These cumulative costs are now compounded by a profoundly altered international landscape. For some time now, the economic, diplomatic and organisational dominance of the United States has been in steady decline. So has its moral stature and the utility of military power, the one asset where it still enjoys outright superiority. From Korea to Syria, the record is clear: great, powerful military intervention has achieved few, if any, of its objectives, whereas the costs have been severe and enduring. Support for US doctrines, strategies and expeditions has distracted Australian governments from the important and demanding task of cementing relations with Asia, especially with China. The alliance has served to stunt our political discourse, diplomatic capital and bureaucratic skill and competence.

All of this at a time when we need to join like-minded countries to address a series of regional and global challenges of unprecedented magnitude. The long list includes climate change, the re-emerging threat posed by nuclear weapons, continuing fragility of the international financial system, highly destabilising inequalities of wealth and income within and between countries, the devastating impact of foreign military interventions in the Middle East, Africa and West Asia, the poisonous relationship between Islam and the

West, the souring of great power relations and the massive displacement of peoples fleeing war and persecution. In the search for viable solutions, military alliances have proved more of a hindrance than a help.

So, what might be a more promising direction for Australia? Formal abrogation of ANZUS is a tantalising possibility worthy of serious discussion, but not an immediately realisable objective. Much the same can be achieved by a more feasible two-pronged approach. The first prong involves cutting current military and intelligence links which inhibit peaceful settlement of disputes, not least in relation to the South China Sea, removing the US military presence from Australian soil, ending all overseas military deployments which are not explicitly authorised by the UN Security Council, and shifting the authority to commit Australian military forces overseas from the executive to the Australian parliament.

The second prong requires Australia to determine policy positions and initiatives to meet the most pressing challenges to regional and global security. Thought must also be given to the forums where such policies and initiatives can be collectively advanced. A high priority is the comprehensive renewal of multilateral institutions, notably the UN Security Council, the G20, and the Asia-Pacific security architecture. For this we need a culturally sensitive and consultative approach aimed at developing effective diplomatic coalitions of the willing, in particular with our Asian neighbours, notably Indonesia, though not with the likes of Cambodia or Myanmar whose governments routinely engage in the most appalling human rights violations.

Such a program is no doubt highly appealing and at least within the realms of the feasible. Yet, I must be frank with you. Very little of this will come to pass if we rely on governments – and the political parties which run them – to take the lead. The onus lies very much with us. Simply put, Australians must be prepared to take seriously their responsibility as citizens, which means a good deal more than voting at elections. Two tasks are critical to achieving the desired outcome.

The first is education – self-education to begin with, and then education of our children and grandchildren. The latter is a multifaceted task which requires skill and perseverance. It is incumbent on all of us to devote time and energy to enhancing the quality of young people's educational experience. Let's not forget, they spend more time in formal education than any preceding generation.

Sadly, when it comes to nurturing responsible citizenship, our current education programs, whether at school, college or university, leave much to be desired. A good education is one that enhances young people's curiosity, awareness and understanding of the many challenges facing Australia and its place in an increasingly turbulent world. It is one that equips them with the skills and capacity to engage constructively with other citizens in responding to these challenges. There is much that we can do in our interaction with students, parents, teachers, administrators to encourage the introduction of appropriate educational programs, and the training of teachers equipped to deliver such programs.

The second task is conversation. It is within everyone's reach, yet we don't take it seriously enough. We all need to be highly skilled in generating conversations attuned to the needs and possibilities of our time. We need to be able to strike conversations about the future with the people in our networks – family, relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues, students, teachers, and members of the various organisations to which we belong, including sporting clubs, churches and cultural groups.

Conversations must at all times be mutually respectful, place the emphasis on listening as much as on speaking, and relate the personal and the political. They can take place formally in meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences and briefings, or casually, either one-to-one or in small or larger groups. We can converse in person, by phone or email, through the mass media, or the social media.

I look forward to the Unitarian Church taking bold initiatives with the aim of stimulating vibrant public and private conversations, and of mounting high quality educational and training projects. This could help to raise the public and political debate on our future relationship with the United States, and stimulate a well informed discussion on our future security options. 🕯

This talk, given at the Unitarian Church on 11 February 2018, draws on two articles published in Pearls and Irritations <https://johnmenadue.com/tag/joseph-camilleri/>

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May Day: A Brief History

The history of May Day is a history of the struggle of working people to achieve a better way of life, decent pay and working conditions and for a society that meets the needs of the people.

The international labour holiday called **May Day** actually originated in the United States in 1884 at a conference of US and Canadian trade unions.

The conference decided to launch an intensive campaign for the 8-hour day and to culminate the struggle on 1 May 1888.

This campaign led to a bitter struggle. There were 1572 strikes involving 600,000 workers leading up to the May 1 demonstrations. Over half a million workers took part in the May 1 activities. Six workers were killed, 200 injured and others were framed and hanged.

Subsequently, at an international labour congress in Paris, a resolution was carried to declare 1 May 1890 a great day of workers international demonstrations throughout the world. Australian delegates were at this conference.

On this day in Australia, large demonstrations were held in Queensland in Barcaldine and Ipswich by striking shearers. Over 1000 people took part, some 600 on horseback.

Three years after the first celebrations of May Day saw the adoption of socialism as one of the main aims of May Day and the recognition that workers can never be free of exploitation, injustice, and poverty while capitalism exists.

In Victoria, the day was marked by a meeting at the Trades Hall Council. It was later decided to celebrate international May Day by the holding of a march on the first Sunday of every May, calling for better wages, working and living conditions, the end to imperialist wars and for socialism.

May Day marches in Victoria started in 1893 and continued every year up to today, except for 1941 and 1942 (war time).

The Melbourne May Day Committee has continually made representations to the state government to declare May 1 a public holiday, but only public awareness, support and pressure will finally achieve this demand.

Until then, the May Day march is held traditionally on the first Sunday in May so that most members of the community have the opportunity to take part and demonstrate the broad range of issues that affect them.

from our readers



DEAR BEACON

Thank you. Great articles. Keep up the good work.

P Lemoine, NSW

MAY DAY 2018: A LIST OF DEMANDS

The Melbourne May Day Committee, which has organised the May Day events in Melbourne for one hundred and twenty-two years, is establishing a list of demands in order to demonstrate the issues that are concerning the people and to make it clear what May Day stands for.

SO FAR THAT LIST OF DEMANDS IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Condemn the Turnbull government anti-worker policies.
2. Make the rich pay their taxes.
3. Oppose Trans Pacific 'Partnership' deal and other unfair trade deals.
4. Stop subsidising corporate interests.
5. Oppose corporatising the public sector.
6. Controls on foreign investment.
7. Stop and reverse the gap between rich and poor.
8. No foreign military bases or facilities in Australia.
9. Fight for workers' rights and especially the right to strike and oppose the Building and Construction Commission.
10. Rights for asylum seekers and refugees.
11. Protection of workers' pay and conditions.
12. Decrease casualisation, part-time work, sub-contracting of labour and oppose attacks on penalty rates.
13. Protect democratic rights.
14. Oppose the Goods and Services Tax and GST increases.
15. Reject cuts to social services.
16. Protect Indigenous peoples' rights and sovereignty.
17. Demand a stop to violence against women, increase in crime and drugs, racial discrimination and vilification.
18. Demand affordable housing and public housing.
19. Support internationalism and peoples' struggle and support international solidarity.
20. End all imperialist wars and demand an independent and peaceful Australian foreign policy.
21. Fight the cuts to education and health funding.
22. Fight the cuts to Medicare.
23. Fight for democracy and socialism.
24. Stop offshore detention and welcome migrants and asylum seekers.

Join us in the May Day activities in order to publicly support the above program and to help build on that program.

RIGHT TO STRIKE

Any and all talk of a 'fair and balanced' industrial relations system, or 'getting the balance right', is basically rhetoric without substance if the Australian working people do not have the right to strike.

A very qualified right to strike under certain conditions, and then only when an enterprise agreement is being negotiated, is not a right to strike as accepted in most other developed capitalist countries or as accepted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE FUNDAMENTAL

What sort of system is it that ensures that neither of the main political parties will guarantee one of the most internationally recognised, basic human and democratic rights for workers, such as the right to strike?

This cannot be tolerated. Some of the most vocal critics of totalitarian systems in various parts of the world, places where unions and the right to strike have been crushed, are enthusiastic supporters of the 'no strike' policies in Australia.

The right to strike is ultimately the most fundamental right, which distinguishes whether a worker has dignity, workplace rights, and a reasonable standard of life, or must live on their knees begging for fair treatment.

The right to withdraw one's labour is, in the final analysis, the difference between waged workers and slaves.

THIS RIGHT MUST BE WON

The right to strike in Australia must be won. It must eventually become part of the social fabric, accepted as a normal day-to-day right, not to be interfered with by government.

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Julie Stafford

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