



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

the Beacon

Journal of the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church

June 2019 • Price \$2

The Election is over... now we fight back!

EDITORIAL

The election is over, the dust has settled, and by a slight majority the Australian people have returned a government with no real declared policies. It has been said that elections are a demonstration of the maturity of the electorate. Well, this result did not indicate maturity but clear ignorance of the role of this government ... a government with no progressive policies, that rejects the world-acknowledged science of climate change, admonishes the poor for being poor, that cares little for the land's First People, that punishes those seeking a new life in our country, and that hates trade unions representing working people.

The Morrison government went into this election offering no solutions to the increasing problems facing the people: growing poverty, unemployment, low wages, homelessness, a severe housing crisis, a diminished healthcare system, a fund-starved education system, a foreign policy dictated by foreign powers, and a continued attack on human and civil rights.

This government has failed to answer the most urgent issue facing not just Australia but our world: the environmental catastrophe we face that has almost reached the point of no return. The world's scientists are universally warning of this; the world's people already impacted are warning of this; our children who will inherit the disaster are warning of this; but this inept government rejects all of these warnings, makes fun of scientists, regards coal as sacrosanct and sells the population the argument that it is all about jobs. Well, there will be no jobs on a dead planet!

What this election really showed was the futility of our parliamentary politics.

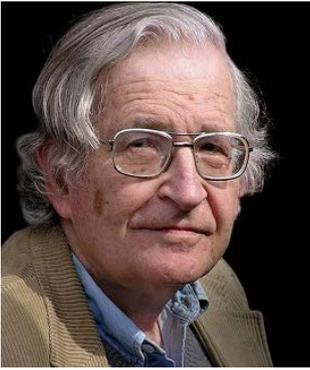
Neither side rejected neoliberalism, which dominates capitalist society. Neoliberalism, beloved of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, means massive tax cuts for the rich, the crushing of trade unions, privatisation

of energy, water, transport, health, education, roads and prisons, and this is all part of the economic stranglehold that we now wear. Neither side of politics dealt in any genuine way with these issues, all of which have a fundamental impact on our lives.

When government talks about austerity, the need for belt tightening, that doesn't apply to the Clive Palmers, Gina Reinharts or themselves. Rather it refers to the mass of the people, those who are the creators of the wealth that flows upwards and never trickles down.

A government with no commitment to resolving our serious problems has been returned. Does this mean that we need to wait another four years for solutions? No, it does not! It means we all need to work harder, together. It means becoming informed, getting involved, creating public opinion, challenging further inroads into our rights and it means explaining why climate change must be tackled decisively as our major issue. It means demanding the development of a policy of new jobs to take the place of coal mining, productive jobs that will protect our environment. It means supporting action to protect our rights. It means using social media to promote progressive ideas; it means every individual counts if we are to protect ourselves and our communities against the further erosion of our democratic rights.

It is now no longer feasible to say, 'someone should', or 'I wish someone would', because all of us who care are that 'someone'. If the situation in health, housing, education, jobs, and global warming were bad before, they will undoubtedly worsen now under this government. While you are reading this editorial in *Beacon*, ask yourself this: What can I do, how can I take a stand? The answer is to get involved – organise. Join an activist group, write a letter, join your union, fight back – whilst you still can.



The Destruction of Freedom:

Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange and the corporate media (Part II)

This is par for the course at the *Guardian* whose journalists are regularly shamed by WikiLeaks and Julian Assange doing the real job of exposing power to public scrutiny. In 2015, *Guardian* reporter Ben Jacobs had even **mocked** Chelsea Manning when she was put in solitary confinement:

And the world's tiniest violin plays a sad song

That, however, did earn a mild rebuke in a tweet from *Guardian* editor Matt Wells. The tweets were subsequently deleted, but not before screenshots had been saved.

The disdain, sometimes outright hostility, towards WikiLeaks and Assange is also reflected in the minimal coverage, and distinct lack of support, for Chelsea Manning's renewed incarceration. The *Guardian* merely published a brief article titled, 'Chelsea Manning jailed for refusing to testify to grand jury in WikiLeaks case'. As WikiLeaks journalist Kristinn Hrafnsson pointed out:

Of the MSM ['mainstream' media] the @guardian benefitted most from material Chelsea Manning was sentenced for in 2013. You might expect a huge story on the yda [yesterday] jailing of @xychelsea [Chelsea Manning] to extort her to testify against Assange/@wikileaks. But nothing except a small AP [Associated Press] based story that quickly lost front.

Hrafnsson **added**:

Every day Chelsea Manning @xychelsea spends in jail for refusing to testify against Assange/@wikileaks adds shame to those journalists who remain silent about this disgrace. This applies especially to those who benefitted most from her brave acts in the past. @guardian @nytimes

The *Guardian* had, of course, **benefitted** in publishing Greenwald's work based on Manning's releases via WikiLeaks; as well as book sales that were generated on the back of WikiLeaks' work. In 2012, veteran journalist and filmmaker John Pilger wrote that the British government's pursuit of Julian Assange was 'an assault on freedom and a mockery of journalism'. He described the corporate media's treatment of Assange as 'a vituperative personal campaign':

Much of it has emanated from the Guardian, which, like a spurned lover, has turned on its besieged former source, having hugely profited from WikiLeaks disclosures. With not a penny

going to Assange or WikiLeaks, a Guardian book has led to a lucrative Hollywood movie deal. The authors, David Leigh and Luke Harding, gratuitously abuse Assange as a "damaged personality" and "callous". They also reveal the secret password he had given the paper in confidence, which was designed to protect a digital file containing the US embassy cables.

A ProQuest newspaper database search on 19 March revealed that there were but four newspaper articles about the imprisonment of Chelsea Manning in the whole of the national print press: *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Herald* and the *Daily Record* (the latter two newspapers are based in Scotland). The *Guardian* article mentioned above, based on an Associated Press release, was published online, but not in the print version. There was also an online *Telegraph* piece that was also just a press release (by Agence France-Presse). As far as we could tell, there was not a single editorial or column in a major national newspaper defending Chelsea Manning, nor pointing to the grave danger to press freedom that her new incarceration posed. That is a disgraceful indictment of our so-called 'free press'.

In an interview last week with Dennis Bernstein on Radio KPFA, John Pilger described the significance, and injustice, of the recent jailing of Chelsea Manning. The irony of her being imprisoned on International Women's Day was first noted, then Pilger pointed to the shameful silence from the women's movement, and other human rights activists:

Where are they [human rights activists] on Chelsea Manning? Why were there only ten people outside the Court House? Where is Amnesty International? Where are the women's groups? Where are the LGBT groups? Where are the Pride people? Why aren't they massing in support of Chelsea Manning? Instead I see Chelsea Manning's story relegated in a sort of, "Oh well, that's almost inevitable this is going to happen." But this [...] is the most significant act of principle; an inspiration to all decent people; to democrats, to people who believe in justice. So where are the groups who have been very loud in their condemnation – rightly – of Donald Trump? Where are they? Why are we not hearing from them?

Discussion then turned to the crushing reality that the corporate media is an extension of an oppressive establishment order:

Dennis Bernstein: it seems to me that journalists believe Chelsea Manning should be in jail. And that Julian Assange isn't a publisher, and that he should be tried for treason because, after all, these journalists are patriots. They're no reporters.

John Pilger: Well, I think I'll stand back a little from that question a little, Dennis. I think we can go on and beat our heads on the media brick wall, and asking these questions on the media. The media is part of an oppressive system in various forms [...]. It is an extension of the established order and these days it is without something it used to have, and that is spaces – limited spaces – but spaces for free and fair comment. Right across the corporate media these spaces have evaporated. So they are part of a system. They have shown this in a most grotesque way by the persecution of Julian Assange – the slandering of him, the distortion of the facts about his case.

Pilger, who is well versed in Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's propaganda model of the media, explained that it has already been clear for some considerable time how and why the corporate media operate in the way they do. It is now time for nonviolent direct action against the media that constantly promotes rapacious Western interests and erodes public freedoms:

It is certainly right for us to protest – and I think our protests against the media should be more of a direct action now: occupy their spaces, occupy their buildings, confront them.

Pilger added that 'people who preserve human decency' – the majority, that is – need to ask ourselves what we are doing about the ongoing state and corporate assault on freedom of expression; and, indeed, on freedom itself:

The Chelsea Manning/Julian Assange case goes to the very heart of everything. It is about freedom. It's not just about freedom of expression. It is about justice. It is about the law: the use of law, the misuse of law. It is about right and wrong. If there is going to be any real debate, I think we have to confront it, and we have to do it on our terms; not through the hopeless cypher of a corporate media.

The corporate media is institutionally opposed to the interests of the vast majority of the public; that is why we reject the label 'mainstream'. The corporate media including BBC News, systematically promotes imperialist and exploitative state interests, together with private power in the form of big business, financial speculation, military forces, the arms industry, the fossil fuel lobby, destructive agribusiness,



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unsustainable food production and rampant global consumerism that is destroying ecosystems, ramping up mass loss of species and endangering human survival through climate chaos. This oppressive system, with the corporate media a vital cog in the apparatus, must be exposed, confronted, dismantled and replaced with a society that truly promotes democracy, justice and human potential. It is up to us to make it happen before it's too late. 

Media Lens is a UK-based media watchdog group headed by David Edwards and David Cromwell. In 2007, Media Lens was awarded the Gandhi Foundation International Peace Prize. We have written three co-authored books: Guardians of Power -The Myth of the Liberal Media (Pluto Press, 2006), Newspeak In the 21st Century (Pluto Press, 2009), and Propaganda Blitz (Pluto Press, 2018).

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

Traditional owners of the Kulin Nation, past Warriors, Elders past and present.



**We find hope
in indigenous
solution**

**New climate report
calls for action,
not desperation**

For years indigenous peoples in the Amazon have been sounding the alarm about the dramatic changes they are seeing in their forests, rivers and crops throughout their territories. Droughts when it should rain. Floods during the dry season. Extreme heat. Hail storms. Changes like these are putting their cultures, food sovereignty, access to water, and their very lives at risk, as well as the protection of a crucial rainforest that the entire world relies upon for climate stability. So far, this early warning call from those who live closest to the earth, in intimate relationship with the rhythms and cycles of nature, has gone unheeded.

But scientists have finally caught up with the lived experience and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. As the Florida Panhandle picks up the pieces and North Carolina recovers from its second hurricane in less than a month, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued its most dire warning yet.

Climate change is here. It's not an issue for future generations. Millions are already living with the impacts of stronger hurricanes and typhoons, longer fire seasons, droughts, floods, and egregious inequality while glaciers melt, forests burn, and the White House peddles climate denial and dismantles environmental protections. If there weren't already a scientific mandate for extinguishing the fossil fuel industry, the IPCC report provides further evidence of the inescapable reality: there must be no new exploration, no new infrastructure, and a rapid decline of existing fossil fuel production if we have any hope of maintaining an inhabitable planet.

What some once considered a faraway, distant risk to future generations is actually an urgent, existential

threat to humanity. In our lifetime. Scientists have determined that several of the worst projected impacts will materialise by 2040. This is not a burden for our children. It's ours. Pardon the cliché but it's literally time to sink or swim.

The litany of climate impacts outlined in the IPCC report aren't new: oceans acidifying and dying, rising waters threatening to submerge small island nations and coastal communities, an increase in extreme weather events, forced displacement, drastically changing ecosystems. The findings aren't even surprising, because we already see these impacts on the nightly news.

While the overarching message is the same as past IPCC reports, last week's publication is still more sobering. In essence, the report confirms what we've been saying for years: limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees is not merely an aspiration found in the Paris Accord. It's a necessity to ensure the survival of millions around the world. But how we get there and how soon is daunting, to say the least.

The report is packed with key numbers and technical research. It examines 'emissions reductions pathways' for a world with 1.5 degrees C versus 2.0 degrees C of climate warming and comprehensively lists the resulting impacts with varying degrees of certainty. According to the report, there is a very high degree of confidence that over 99 per cent of coral reefs alive today will be dead with 2 degrees of warming; medium confidence that an additional .5 degrees C of warming will increase sea level rise by 0.1 metres, exposing up to 10 million people to 'associated risks'. It underscores the reality that as the planet warms, every degree matters. Even small, incremental

increases raise the likelihood of apocalyptic outcomes. Scientists conclude that carbon dioxide emissions must begin to decline well before 2030 if there's hope of avoiding overshooting these limits without resorting to large-scale carbon capture schemes (high certainty).

This 800-page tome is couched in careful citations and complicated calculations, but the message is straightforward: we have only twelve years before the window for meaningful climate action closes. If we don't undertake transformative action to make our world carbon neutral by 2050 and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, the human and ecological costs will be unimaginably huge and we could cross irreversible tipping points. Alarming, the report underscores that the pace and scale of change that is needed to save ourselves from ourselves has no 'documented historical precedent'.

Clearly, scientists strained to find language to talk about the monumental changes the world might see. The report warns of 'disproportionately rapid evacuation of the tropics'. Seriously? Put another way, we're talking about the dissolution of national borders and a population of environmental refugees greater than the world has ever seen. Behind the dry syntax and cold numbers is the fate of the world, as we know it.

In many ways, it's exactly the same message of urgency that indigenous and grassroots leaders have brought forward, from the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) to the Global Climate Action Summit. And many of the reports' 'emissions reduction pathways' echo these community demands: we must keep fossil fuels in the ground, rapidly shift global economies toward renewable energy and stop financing fossil fuels, and ensure that this unprecedented action balances the need for rapid decarbonisation with the needs of those most impacted by climate change – poor people of colour and indigenous people.

'As indigenous women, we are on the front lines of climate change,' explained Mirian Cisneros, President of the Kichwa People of Sarayaku in Ecuador's Amazon. 'We see it. We feel it. We know it. When we give birth. When we harvest. When our rivers dry. When they flood. We see it happening every day. And when we speak up against the fossil fuel industry, we are threatened or incarcerated. As indigenous peoples, we have solutions, which are the practices and traditions we have been employing in our territories for millennia. We have always protected the forest, the water, and our spirits. We will continue to do so. And we need the world's help in doing so – if it knows what's good for it.'

Making this just transition is a tall order and the coming decade will mean everything. As a recent op-ed put it:

Stopping Climate Change is Hopeless. Let's do it: It

begins with how we live our lives every moment of every day.

The glimmer of hope for our collective future lies in our ability to mobilise. Now. And it depends on our willingness to fight, not freeze, in this historic moment.

We need to transform business as usual across all sectors of society and economy and to elect representatives who care about our health and wellbeing. If any of this is going to happen, it will be because people-powered movements will be holding politicians and businesspeople accountable for their actions and inaction. It will be because people heed the warning of this report and take seriously the knowledge and prescience of indigenous and frontline communities fighting for their survival. It will be because we refuse to let fossil fuel CEOs and corrupt politicians sell away our future. We have so many of these visionary leaders to guide us and give us hope in the face of uncertainty – we just need to listen to them.

At Amazon Watch, we are inspired by the U'wa of Colombia, who told us over two decades ago to keep the blood of Mother Earth in the ground, and by the many indigenous nationalities who have taken up this rallying cry around the world. We are encouraged by the US students who sparked a global divestment movement that has shifted trillions of dollars in capital away from fossil fuels over the past six years.

And we are also committed to doing our part in one small but essential piece of the fight to stop catastrophic climate change: protecting one of world's largest rainforests by supporting indigenous rights in the Amazon.

Deforestation is the second-largest driver of climate change after fossil fuels, which is why the Amazon has recently switched from serving as a vital carbon sink to a net source of carbon. We know that indigenous peoples are the best stewards of their lands, and they set an example for all of us by putting their bodies on the line to protect their territories from unwanted industrial development. We will continue to stand with them and use our international reach and campaigning to effect change on an international stage.

This IPCC report does not change our work it simply provides us with a renewed sense of urgency. As we look through this window of opportunity, this small window in which a liveable world is still possible, we cannot despair and we must act.

In the words of Rebecca Solnit: 'Hope just means another world might be possible – not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope'.

This article was originally published at Amazon Watch. It has been republished at IC with permission.

Source: Adelaide Voices December 2018 – May 2019

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The world is still reeling in horror from the deadly Sri Lanka bombings that may have been the work of Islamic State madmen. Poor Sri Lanka has suffered so much after three decades of civil war and communal strife. We weep for this beautiful and once gentle nation. But behind the horror in Sri Lanka, a huge crisis was building up of which the world has so far taken insufficient notice: renewed tensions in the oil-producing Gulf. This is the latest attempt by the United States to crush Iran's independent-minded government and return it to American tutelage.

The Trump administration has demanded that the principal importers of 1.2 billion barrels of Iranian oil halt purchases almost immediately. This imperial diktat includes China, South Korea, Turkey, India and Japan. The comprehensive embargo is very close to an all-out act of war. In 1941, America's cut-off of oil to Japan provoked the attack on Pearl Harbour.

The oil embargo not only violates international law, it sets the US on a collision course with some of its most important allies and vassal states. Brazen threats against Iran by Trump's two main enforcers, National Security advisor John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have reinforced America's unfortunate image as an imperial power that threatens war against disobedient satraps and independent-minded nations.

Iran, a proud, ancient nation of 80 million has become, with Turkey, the most effective opposition to America's imperial domination of the Mideast and a key supporter of Palestinian rights and statehood. This has put Iran on a collision course with Israel and its influential American supporters, notably the Evangelical hard right which somehow believes that Jesus will only return to earth after Israel expands its border and mankind is destroyed. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration, which has now become indistinguishable from Israel's hardline far right ruling coalition, has declared virtual war against Iran.



**IRAN...HAS BECOME,
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To benefit Israel, the White House cancelled a \$20 billion order from Iran for Boeing aircraft, embargoed trade with Iran, reneged on the internationally backed nuclear deal with Tehran, cut off all aid to Palestinians, and keeps sustaining the savage Saudi/Emirati war against Yemen that has caused mass starvation and epidemics.

Trump has just unilaterally approved Israel's illegal seizure of Syria's Golan Heights, an act worthy of the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty dividing up the Ottoman Mideast between Britain and France. US threats against

Venezuela and Cuba grow louder. Washington plans to use its naval forces massed around Iran to interdict Tehran's oil exports. Two US aircraft carriers are now on station within striking range of Iran. I went to sea on one, the 'Abraham Lincoln'.

China faces dire trade punishments for dealing with Iran. Welcome back to 19th century gunboat diplomacy. Even Washington's European allies may be scourged for buying Iranian oil.

Iran, which has faced similar threats in the past, is digging in and threatens to close the strategic Strait of Hormuz if its oil exports are interdicted. Twenty per cent of the world's oil passes through the Strait. At its narrowest point, this strategic passage is only 21 miles (34 km) wide.

Iran could seriously interfere with oil tankers in the Strait, using armed speedboats, mines and land-based, Chinese-made missiles. Equally important, insurance rates for tankers would skyrocket. Add all this together, and Trump & Co.'s warlike actions will cause the price of gasoline to surge, just as America's busy summer driving season is getting underway.

America's satraps Saudi Arabia (which just cut off the heads of 37 of its subjects) and sidekick the Emirates have promised to make up oil shortfalls, but neighbour Iran's special forces may have very different ideas. Look for missiles and commando attacks on Saudi oil installations.

Adding to this dangerous mess, Beijing may slow down or even abort its trade talks with Washington, which are of vital importance to the US economy. US markets have already factored in a deal being made.

Trump's irrational quest to crush Iran could very well turn the rest of the world against Washington. But Trump & Co. don't seem to care. Someone must tell Trump's out-of-control administration to stop trying to overthrow governments it does not like around the globe and promoting itself as the Second Coming of Christ.



**THIS IS THE LATEST
ATTEMPT BY THE
UNITED STATES
TO CRUSH IRAN'S
INDEPENDENT-
MINDED GOVERNMENT
AND RETURN IT TO
AMERICAN TUTELAGE.**



'Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad'.
Verily. 

Eric S Margolis is an award-winning, internationally syndicated columnist. His articles have appeared in the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, Times of London, the Gulf Times, the Khaleej Times, Nation – Pakistan, Hurriyet, – Turkey, Sun Times Malaysia and other news sites in Asia. <https://ericmargolis.com>

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BY SISTER PATRICIA FOX, AUSTRALIAN MISSIONARY NUN

A TALK GIVEN AT THE MELBOURNE UNITARIAN CHURCH ON 14 APRIL 2019



In the Philippines at present is a comprehensive reign of terror where the law is weaponised, human rights are disregarded and where Duterte only tolerates mouthpieces around him. He has done all to retain military support. There have been intensifying attacks on trade unionists, peasants, indigenous peoples, peace advocates and social activists. International human rights groups are saying it is worse than Marcos. He came to power promising a change and while there has been a culture of impunity since Marcos, yet it has not been so blatant or intense as now. And this has been totally systematic and planned. Apart from an estimated 25,000 people killed (mostly urban poor) in his war on drugs, Karapatan has recorded (up to December 2018) 222 victims of political killings, 281 victims of frustrated killings, 111 tortured, 2171 illegally arrested, over 500 political prisoners, 85,236 threatened and harassed, while 447,963 were subjected to forced evacuations. Among

those killed were 62 environmentalists, 38 lawyers and 13 journalists. Most of those killed, arrested and displaced have been peasants and indigenous people.

The numbers have increased since then, especially with Duterte's Memorandum Order 32 in November 2018, which gave national emergency guidelines not only in Negros. This gave rise to the local police and military operations – Synchronised Enhanced Managing Police Operation (SEMPO) and Oplan Sauron for the military. Under these programs, there have been a series of raids, arrests and extrajudicial killings in Negros. The latest was when 14 farmers were summarily executed just recently and 50 arrested. Most were leaders of peasant organisations. The Police claimed the victims fought back but a fact-finding mission found they were all killed up close and that the police and military had burst into the homes. This followed two other massacres: in October where nine peasants were killed in Sagay, including three women and two children, and on December 27, six were killed in the town of Guhilnan. To date, 40 farmers have been killed in Negros since Duterte's time.

The killings, arrests, bombings and displacements are part of a national plan termed 'Oplan Kapayapaan', which is based on the United States 'Counter Insurgency Plan' (COIN). This proposes a 'whole nation approach' which subverts all so-called development programs under national security. This has led to targeting of legal democratic mass organisations, including militant political parties. Also, the local programs such as in Negros and the setting up of a task force whose role is spreading black propaganda against legal organisations (especially abroad) that are exposing the massive human rights breaches committed by the regime. There is an Inter-Agency Legal Committee which specifically sets up legal cases against opponents of the regime. Recently a task force against terrorism in Manila has been set up which does not bode well for progressive legal groups based there.

The Government controls Congress, and a Supreme Court Justice with an independent mind was illegally dismissed by the majority decision of the Supreme Court Justices who are also pro Duterte. This resulted in the declaration of martial law in Mindanao lately being extended until December 2019, despite no legal basis. Both Congress and the Supreme Court ruled

in favour of the extension. The brutality in Mindanao under martial law is evident in the bombing of Marawi, the continuing displacement of the Moro residents, the increasing militarisation of indigenous ancestral lands and their evacuations, and the growing number of extrajudicial killings and arrests of leaders of legal organisations. The basis for the continuation of the brutality of martial law is the government plan to increase mining and extend land given to plantations, most of which are foreign owned or controlled. Thus the people have to be moved off their lands.

Apart from the above programs, which are implemented through Executive Orders, proposed changes to laws, and the Constitution itself will further result in the deterioration of human rights. Proposed changes to the Prevention of Terror Act make the definition so broad that it could include any group who protests, rallies, holds strikes or pickets. Persons can be detained for 30 days without charge, just under suspicion, and the military are also given authority under this Act. Apart from extending term limits, proposed changes to the Constitution will entrench warlords and take out the Bill of Rights which currently is incorporated in the current Constitution.

President Duterte has pulled out of the International Criminal Court, disregarded any comments or actions of the United Nations and made statements that he doesn't believe in human rights, admitting that he himself has killed people and committed sexual abuse. Yet, despite this the Australian Government continues to train the Philippine military both here and through a 'Visiting Forces Agreement' and has soldiers on the ground training Filipino soldiers in urban warfare. The military budget for this has been blocked out and is no longer transparent. And the new Ambassador to the Philippines, Steven Robinson, days after the recent massacre in Negros, made the statement that 'many people have said to me that they find the President to be sincere and passionate. I've now experienced that, so I believe that to be true.'

We, as Australians, need to say to our government we will not be complicit in the human rights crimes of the Duterte regime. We are part of one world and need to show our solidarity with those in the Philippines who continue to organise and speak out demanding justice, peace and genuine democracy and will not be silenced. 

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

Climate crisis: Human-caused energy, excess and entropy

Our ecosphere took four and a half billion years to evolve and produce approximately nine million wildlife species. Each of these species interacts with other species and the soil, water and air in a complex network of ecosystems. While humans have impacted these ecosystems and caused regional climate changes and local extinctions since the advent of agriculture, the magnitude and speed of the last 200 years of our disruption is in the 1000s and involves the globe.

Once numerically small as a species, we humans now take up roughly 30% of the planet with another 60% of the arable area for our agricultural crops, livestock and pets. The other 8.9 million organisms are left with the final 10% or less.

We did this through:

- vegetation removal, degradation and fragmentation (land clearing for buildings, roads, farms, etc.; erosion, salinity and desertification)
- introducing invasive species (diseases, pests and weeds, and ourselves)
- pollution (domestic and industrial chemicals; fossil fuels and plastics; radioactive emissions; landfill; acidification; insecticides, herbicides and pesticides; nano particles, etc.)
- food chain, lifecycle disruptions (night lights; endocrine changes; species extinctions; over-harvesting of water, plants, animals and marine species; seasonal variations).

Subsequently with these disruptions the natural cycles of the 64 essential macro and micro elements we need for life have been altered. Three of these macro elements are added carbon to the air, soil and water from once-buried 250-year-old carboniferous forests; excess nitrogen (mostly synthetic from fossil fuels) on crops which poisons waterways and the sea; and the locking of oxygen into the air with the carbon dioxide (CO₂) which in turn fuels fires. Bushfires feed on high temperatures, oxygen and dry fuel. Increased soot, methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) means the air acts as a fuel source amplifying temperatures, an erratic range of flame movements and fire vortices.

These multiple interferences to our energy-nutrient systems cause serious health impacts for all biota, and climate change, as we move beyond genetic and ecosystem tolerances for excess and depletion.

Global warming with accompanying extreme weather events from excess carbon in the atmosphere and sea has been the most immediately felt consequence. Carbon has moved from 280 parts per million of CO₂ in the air in the 1800s to 420 parts per million now, equivalent to a one degree Celsius rise in temperature. Carbon quickly absorbs and loses heat energy,

destabilising the air molecules, temperatures and wind patterns. Thus more frequent shifts from extremely hot to extremely cool conditions occur, drought to flood, storm to hail, snow to heat wave.

Overall, given the huge amount of CO₂, temperatures rise. Thus climate shift means hotter weather, increased evaporation and decreased precipitation, disruption to the rain cycles, increased plant and animal infertility and deaths due to heat stress: fodder for more bushfires, and an increased range of erratic storm events as we are witnessing now. The Arctic, Antarctic and glaciers are melting rapidly worldwide exacerbating heating and methane releases from ground sources.

The recent collapse of our insects globally is another possible concerning result. Insects are the major pollinators of our plants, a substantial food source in biotic life cycles and, along with bacteria and fungi, major consumers of biological waste. Does this signal a further problem in the extinction of our bacteria and fungi? Both provide food for insects, hold and distribute water in the soil and air, breakdown organic material, recycle the elements through the soil, water and air, and transfer essential nutrients through to plant roots. Primarily they are the organisms that hold and distribute water in the soil and air. Without bacteria and fungi, soil, plants and animals die and the cycle of habitat loss, invasive species, pollution and food chain and life cycle disruptions perpetuates. Climate change itself becomes self-perpetuating.

Scientists were alerted to these problems when Eunice Foote tested flasks of air and carbon in 1856, the carbon heating more quickly than air. John Tyndall forwarded the research into climate applications from the 1860s. Warnings on climate change became a feature of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1991 the Kyoto summit set a target of 15 years for carbon reduction to zero. The United Nations allowed 12 years only in 2018. The targets are being ignored. Many scientists now say zero emissions must occur by 2025 to stabilise the biosphere and prevent the worst damage and extinction. We have had 70 years of excess. The situation is urgent.

We have to change our behaviour or die. We have to stop using carbon in the form of fossil fuels and plastics and lock it into the ground by planting vegetation. There is no other solution. There is no other earth. 

THE ROLE OF THE MINORITY REACTIONARIES

PROTECTING THE RULING LIBERAL PARTY

Many voters were surprised at the wide variety of racist, white supremacist and Islamophobic parties offering themselves for the May 2019 federal election.

They are all directing their preferences to the Liberal-National Coalition.

One Nation and the UAP of Palmer are open about their role to garner votes that might go to the ALP and direct them to the Liberal-National Coalition.

'In a statement obtained by the ABC, Clive Palmer said his United Australia Party (UAP) ... amassed enough votes to substantially help the Libs and Nats through preference flow.'

'The goal for the United Australia Party was to ensure the Labor Government did not get into power,' a UAP spokesperson said, adding 'This has been achieved with the collective effort from United Australia Party'.

Deputy Opposition Leader Tanya Plibersek told the ABC News panel that she believed UAP had, in some way, influenced the election through its preference deals [Pedestrian TV 18 May].

The Murdoch Press also reported that 'One Nation and Clive Palmer's United Australia Party gathered enough votes to help the Coalition retain power through their preferences ...' [News.com.au 19 May].

This use of fear campaigns and small parties was used to keep the conservatives in power from 1949 to 1972.

Fear and division were the two main ingredients of the concoction.

FEAR OF BANK NATIONALISATION

The Liberal Party, which Menzies founded, came into its own in the 1949 election with the great hysteria that was worked up over bank nationalisation.

In a speech in Sydney Town Hall within days of the announcement of the policy, Menzies said it was part of 'the Chifley pattern' of 'coming dictatorship in Australia'.

The banks, big business, supported by prominent Catholics like Archbishop Duhig in Brisbane who preached that a vote for the 'socialist' ALP was inconsistent with Catholic doctrines, combined to bring Menzies to power.

This barrage, combined with fear of the Communists, frightened many lower middle class voters who may well have voted Labor in 1943 and 1946.

[<https://thenewdaily.com.au/money/finance-news/2017/06/16/chifley-bank-nationalisation/>]

FEAR OF COMMUNISM

Similar to the 'War on Terror' of the 2000s the 'Communist Threat' was dominant in this period.

As there would soon be another World War, Menzies and the Liberals said that civil rights would have to take second place.

In the atmosphere of fear with the coming of the Korean War, militant unions demanding higher pay and better working conditions were typically attacked as communists and a threat to national security.

Menzies in September 1950 forced an anti-communist Bill through the House of Representatives .

Then in March 1951 the High Court declared the Act invalid so in April the Liberals held a referendum asking for constitutional powers to ban communism.

The intended legislation required 'named' communists to prove their innocence, a reversal of the most basic principle of British law.

The referendum was narrowly defeated.

[<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/menzies-sir-robert-gordon-bob-11111>]

THE CREATION OF FEAR OF THE ALP

The Labor Party was thought to be close to winning the 1954 election when Vladimir Petrov and his wife defected from the Soviet Embassy in Canberra.

Menzies claimed that there was evidence of a Soviet spy ring in Australia, including members of the leader of the ALP, Dr Evatt's staff.

Dr Evatt became quite sure that the whole incident had been manufactured by Menzies to help the Liberals win the May 1954 election.

The right-wing Catholic section of the ALP consequently split from the party and established the anti-communist Democratic Labor Party.

By hiving off a section of working class voters, with the support of a section of the Catholic Church and The Movement of BA Santamaria, the DLP preferences kept the Liberals in power for almost two decades.

The political propaganda of the period portrayed the ALP as being in bed with Communism and undermining national security.

The end of the Cold War and the decline of the DLP after Whitlam's victory in 1972 led to many of the Catholic supporters of The Movement joining the traditionally Protestant Liberals. Tony Abbott was one of the most prominent such members. [<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/abbott--santamaria-and-catholic-liberals>]

SOUNDNESS OF THE TECHNIQUE

The division created in the working class supporters of the ALP by stoking fears of world communism and suspicion of the Labor Party itself, delivered decades of rule to the Liberal Party in Australia.

A section of conservative opinion is today stoking fears of refugees, Muslims and African immigrants to do the same job.

One Nation has transformed from stoking fear of Asian immigrants swamping Australia 20 years ago to the current anti-Muslim rhetoric of the American white supremacist swamps.

A Facebook account in the name of United Australia Party (UAP) candidate Tony Hanley made posts calling Saudi Arabians 'tea towel heads' and said the children of taxi drivers were 'future terrorists' [ABC 3 May 2019].

Although Palmer criticised this as 'unacceptable' his 'make Australia great' Trumpianism focused on distrust of politicians and addressing economic hardship by cutting taxes and raising spending was typically populist.

The fear factor has worked for conservatives for many years. It is a tried and true recipe.

We must try to make it fail this time, although it seems to have worked this May.



from our readers



It was the *Beacon* that first woke me up to the situation in Libya and its merits.

A Jurrjens, Qld

DEAR DONNA

Please find enclosed my sub due April 2019.

Congratulations to the Editorial Board for the continued high standard of articles they present each month.

It is refreshing to get a real and balanced view of world affairs and local politics as well!

Kindest regards

L Dalrymple, Vic

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The Role of the Minority Reactionaries

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MELBOURNE UNITARIAN PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH

110 Grey Street, East Melbourne 3002

Email: admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au

Website: www.melbourneunitarian.org.au

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

Registered by Australia Post

Post Print Approved

100003043

Beacon Editorial Board

Peter Abrehart

Marion Harper

Donna Sensi

Julie Stafford

The Editorial opinions expressed are those of the Editorial Board.

Opinions expressed in the editorial, articles, letters, etc., in the *Beacon* are those of the writers themselves and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Melbourne Unitarian Church or any other organisation to which a particular writer is affiliated.

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