



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY the Beacon

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EDITORIAL

The Morrison government is a government of propaganda and hate. It manipulates the truth, aided by a corrupted mass media; it produces legislation that destroys our democratic rights; it lacks any genuine commitment to the majority; it has no policies to meet people's needs; and its servility to the US carries us towards more illegal wars that further enrich the military/industrial machine and further impoverishes the Australian people.

Morrison himself is a prime example of the poor quality of this government. He purports to be a 'man of the people', to represent the 'quiet Australians' as he calls them, which really refers to those who accept their status, remain silent in the face of growing poverty and allow him and his associates to rape our resources. These are the Australians of which he approves.

In fact, an assessment of Morrison's voting patterns since being elected to parliament tells a very different story. He has vigorously and consistently voted against social, environmental and political programs that would alleviate some of the impoverishment experienced by a large section of our community. He is intent on punishing those who suffer from his policies, such as Newstart recipients and the unemployed. He voted strongly against such important key issues as same-sex marriage, a carbon price, Aboriginal land rights, increasing the availability of welfare payments, and voted for decreasing funding to the ABC and SBS, to name just a few.

This is a government slavishly committed to the destruction of the trade union movement and to preventing any attempt by the Australian people to fight back and defend their future. This is a government that was installed by lies, misinformation, a captive media and a huge influx of funds from the mining

industry whose interests this government is committed to. It was also assisted by a lacklustre Opposition whose courage to take a stand on issues important to the people failed on the altar of compromise.

Our country is in turmoil. Homelessness, poverty and the alienation of minorities is growing. Indigenous Australians, people of Islamic faith and asylum seekers are all being targeted as 'different and therefore suspect'. The truth is being denied and lies become their truth. These lies aim to set Australians against each other to allow the forces of reaction to shape our future.

They will fail. The people are challenging the lies, exposing the truth and organising to protect their families, their future, the country and, indeed, the planet.

Their threats to our environment, to our precious water supply, their support for Adani are being challenged across the country and these protests will continue to grow. The attacks on the trade union movement will be opposed and unions will be defended. Opposition to this government's savage belittling of the unemployed is growing and their proposal to drug test and control people's meagre pensions is being exposed. Horror at the treatment of those seeking asylum from wars we participate in is intensifying.

We can defeat this sordid, dysfunctional government that fails us in every area of need; indeed, we must, for failure to do so leads us along a very dangerous path, one that was rejected by the world in 1939. We cannot afford to tread that path again. Every person in this country who cares about democracy, who hungers for justice, who rejects war and demands a better form of society will rally to defeat this one-term government.

COURAGE WITHOUT MATESHIP



As a preamble, I would like to thank the Unitarian Church for its contribution to Melbourne. I have given a number of lectures here to the Existentialist Society, and in the 1990s, I chaired meetings of Whistleblowers Australia here.

Whistleblowing is a test. Whistleblowers reveal truths that others do not want revealed. I am a whistleblower. I was involved in two whistleblowing cases. Unlike films, whistleblowers are not supposed to do sequels. To paraphrase the words of Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: 'To blow the whistle once may be regarded as a misfortune; to blow the whistle twice looks like carelessness...or at least naivety.' When I first blew the whistle in 1992, I had not heard of the term. I looked it up in a thesaurus and found it was synonymous with betrayal. By that I think they meant the whistleblower betrayed the institution they worked for. Yet it is the whistleblower who is usually betrayed: by the institution, regulators, colleagues, friends, and sometimes by their family. They become a pariah. When I appeared at a Senate inquiry in 1994, I offered this view of whistleblowing.

The exercise of whistleblowing is akin to removing a cancer growing in a public institution. The whistleblower identifies the cancer, attempts to remove it, and then is attacked by it. Unlike others who fight a cancer, the whistleblower receives little support from bystanders. The whistleblower is variously cast as a troublemaker, a zealot,

a crusader, a pursuer of trivia. There are many observers of the harassment, but virtually no preventers.

Australia has failed its whistleblowers...and repeatedly failed them. I have not been alone.

Although whistleblowing has always existed, the modern meaning of the term began with a conference in Washington in 1971, organised by Ralph Nader. Australia's first prominent whistleblowing cases began in the 1970s. To name a few: Bill Toomer, a quarantine officer in Western Australia; Mick Skrijel, a crayfisherman in South Australia; Vince Neary and other whistleblowers at the New South Wales State Rail Authority; Alwyn Johnson at Tasmania Bank; David Rindos at the University of Western Australia; Debbie Locke in the New South Wales Police; Karl Konrad in the Victorian police. Many cases were profiled in two Senate Committee inquiries in 1994 and 1995, in Quentin Dempster's book *Whistleblowers* and Bill de Maria's book *Deadly Disclosures: Whistleblowing and the Ethical Meltdown of Australia*.

There seems to be more reason to blow the whistle today than when I first blew the whistle in 1992. Our society is so overtaken by money and dominated by self-interest that whistleblowing has become more necessary than ever. But who is listening? Corruption is pervasive. Every week *Four Corners* profiles corruption. Every day the Fairfax media profile corruption. Every royal commission profiles corruption. But who is listening? We have converged

to a world where a federal politician can spend more time in the Philippines than in the House of Representatives yet still stand for re-election; where a President can tell 10,000 lies in the first two years in office yet still have an approval rating of 40%; and where foreign students can pay fees of \$150,000 for a three-year undergraduate degree at an Australian university and no one seems to question why. The recent comments of the banking royal commissioner Kenneth Hayne amplify how whistleblowers feel. Politicians and regulators are too captured by vested interests to care about the public interest.

Whistleblowers are pushing the public interest against a tide of self-interest. The legislative framework established to protect whistleblowers is mainly window dressing. It ticks boxes for politicians and regulators but not for whistleblowers. Whistleblowing legislation is designed for the marginal, not systemic, problem. Systemic corruption is reserved for royal commissions...until the next royal commission. We need to look back and ask why. Why was a separate Public Interest Disclosure Agency (PIDA) as recommended by the 1994 Senate Committee never established? Why did it take twenty years for federal whistleblowing legislation to be enabled? Why has it taken this long for a national integrity commission to be considered? Why has there been no prosecution for retaliation against a whistleblower in Australia? Why do we not have a False Claims Act as in the US? Recently, I attended a presentation by the Commonwealth Ombudsman. I asked him about whistleblowing. He indicated that it was still work in progress. What will it take to change our culture to let the white hats win just once? Let us hope we know one day.

In 2004, I wrote a paper entitled 'Courage without mateship' for WBA's whistleblowing conference in Melbourne. In preparing this talk, I revisited that paper and noticed my thoughts were the same...except ten-fold. In 'Courage without mateship', I attributed the emergence of whistleblowing to five factors: money, corporatisation, complexity, bystanders and networks.

Let me revisit these with the benefit of another fifteen years' experience. Money may not be the root of all evil, but it sure comes close. The problem with money is that it changes the way we look at things. The material becomes more valued than the spiritual, the tangible more than the intangible, the paid consultant more than the one who gives free advice. The most important things in life can never be put in terms of money. The problem for whistleblowers is that truth is not priced; that the benefits we confer are not put into dollars. Transparency International and other agencies estimate that corruption costs the typical firm 5% of revenue. Extrapolating to Australia as a whole, corruption costs this country more than \$50 billion every year, yet we don't have an anti-corruption act like the US False Claims Act.

When I first blew the whistle, universities were becoming businesses.¹ When universities became corporations the values of scholarship were replaced by values of the market. The old university was a centre of learning. The assets were intellectual not physical, the return the return on ideas not the return on assets, and the language the language of ideas not

the language of management. Right and wrong were determined by fairness rather than codes of ethics; governance by academics rather than a CEO. Like so many of our institutions, universities lost their soul. Like so many, I was caught up in the transition.

The problem with a corporation is line management. Line management protects those higher up the line. When a whistleblower blows the whistle on a supervisor, they have to disclose to someone closer to the supervisor than to them. Internal auditors defer to senior management. External auditors do the same. The Senate Committee in 1994 found the main problem for whistleblowers was getting regulators to be not captured by those they regulate. Whistleblowers are independent regulators but we need to be empowered. Perhaps a person on every governing body to receive complaints but not answerable to the governing body.



**THERE SEEMS TO BE
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Our society has become too complex for most of us...and for regulators. We are information-rich but poor at joining the dots. Whistleblowers provide the red flags on corruption but regulators often fail to act. The history of royal commissions in Australia is a history where red flags are ignored, as illustrated by the banking royal commission.

Regulators must adopt a red flag approach and join the flags. A False Claims Act would help because it would establish precedents. But it would also help if regulation were transparent. Regulators should require institutions to have websites with a governance section documenting their whistleblowing cases. We need to be able to look at an institution and see their history. We need to see more to understand more.

¹ Sawyer K, Johnson J & M Holub (2009). *International Journal for Educational Integrity* 5(2), 10–28.

At my first Senate hearing, I suggested bystanders were like accomplices. The maxim 'evil prevails when good people do nothing' has never been more relevant. It is evidenced in the Republicans underwriting Trump; the regulators who did not act prior to the banking royal commission; and it is crystallised in whistleblowing. Whistleblowing is a story of bystanders converging to become the wrongdoers. If you stand by and watch, you are



REGULATORS USE OUR DISCLOSURES BUT DON'T PROTECT US FROM THE REPRISALS THAT FOLLOW.

just as much a wrongdoer as the one doing the wrong. The bystanders are the underwriters. How do we incentivise bystanders to do something? One possibility is Good Samaritan laws like those which followed the 1963 Kitty Genovese case in New York. We should protect bystanders who support whistleblowers as much as we should protect whistleblowers. It is the right thing.

One of the best measures of corruption is the gap between the career path of the whistleblower and those on whom the whistle is blown. Over the last 30 years most whistleblowers have become unemployed; many have died from stress; few have received compensation. But no one wants to know. After the story disappears from the front pages, the whistleblower is on their own. How many times has a newspaper done a story 'Where are they now?' profiling a whistleblower from the past? Never. Yet whistleblowers are the bread and butter of journalists and regulators. The Senate Committee in 1994 recommended a national whistleblowing advisory board that included whistleblowers. It never happened. Regulators use our disclosures but don't protect us from the reprisals that follow.

Whistleblowers blow the whistle on networks. Vince Neary, Karl Konrad, Debbie Locke, David Rindos, Mick Skrijel and Albert Lombardo blew the whistle on networks of corruption. Australia is more networked

today than in 1978 when Mick Skrijel first blew the whistle, but the networks now are networks of indifference. Journalists are more interested in click bait than the long-term public interest; academics more interested in citations than speaking out; regulators more interested in protecting their reputations rather than the public interest. As corruption has grown, indifference has grown. To lie used to be a problem. To lie 10,000 times is now the standard. To register with the public, a scandal needs to be bigger than the previous scandal.

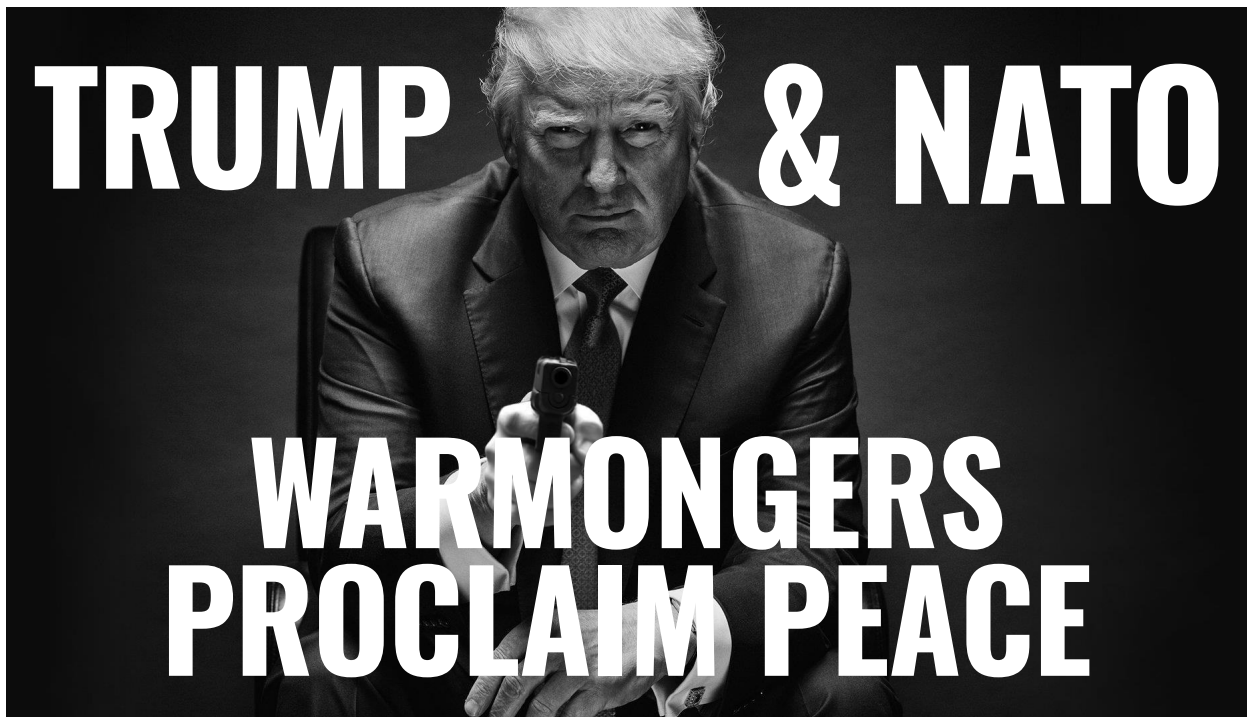
Two other issues are now more relevant than when I wrote 'Courage without mateship' in 2004. There is greater inequality of wealth. With wealth comes power. Many potential whistleblowers are trapped by low income and high debt. They cannot afford to blow the whistle. Whistleblowing is a test of the less powerful against the powerful. The powerful are now more powerful. A second issue relates to belief. Most Australians believe that Australia is the best country in the world, a belief reinforced across the generations. Dissent is for the pub not the workplace. Most have self-belief, belief in family, belief in mates and belief in a fair go for them. They do not believe there is systemic wrongdoing. Whistleblowers are the true non-believers. In 1985 Athol Moffitt wrote a book concerning organised crime *A Quarter to Midnight*. Moffitt contended that organised crime had become more widespread than politicians acknowledged. *A Quarter to Midnight* was a portent of what Australia was to become. Corruption is now present in most networks and most institutions. We have become inured to it. We tolerate it. Athol Moffitt's clock is now closer to midnight.

Let me provide some concluding comments which may surprise you. I have spent more than a quarter of a century advocating for whistleblowers. It has been a negative experience but there has been an upside. It has turned me from a non-believer into a believer, someone who believes there is meaning, but a meaning very hard to interpret. It is as if we are on the cusp of a new era that is waiting to emerge. I hope so. I have detailed some of my thoughts in various papers including a paper published last year in the Royal Statistical Society entitled 'Synchronicity and the Search for Significance'. We do not know whether we are being calibrated or whether we have a soul. We are bounded by ignorance. However, my sense now is that our lives are calibrated, that we do have a soul and there is a karma that arbitrates injustice. It is a sense that could only have emerged because of my experience.

I dedicate this talk to Alwyn Johnson, a whistleblower in Tasmania responsible for the first Senate inquiry into whistleblowing. A great injustice was done to Alwyn Johnson. He saved taxpayers in Tasmania tens of millions of dollars and he saved hundreds of jobs. Yet he has never worked in banking again. He regulated from his kitchen table. He did the job that the RBA should have done. The taxpayers of Tasmania are indebted to Alwyn Johnson. The whistleblowers of Australia are indebted to him. Let's hope future generations will know.

I thank the Unitarian Church for the opportunity to speak.





At the 75th anniversary this week of the Allied assault on Nazi-occupied France, US President Donald Trump and other NATO leaders issued a 'D-Day Proclamation'. In it, they pledged never 'to repeat the horror of World War Two'.

The US and 15 other nations, including Britain, France, and Canada, also declared their commitment to '*resolve international tensions peacefully*'.

If the so-called D-Day proclamation sounds like a load of PR twaddle, that's because it is.

Evidently it was hurriedly put together for some feel-good effect as Trump and others commemorated Operation Overlord to the strains of an army brass band and Vera Lynn's wartime paean 'We'll Meet Again'. The noble sacrifices of soldiers and civilians in the defeat of Nazi fascism would have to be given some token of decorum in the form of a peaceful proclamation, so it seems.

However, the proclamation by Trump and his gang of NATO warmongers has to be seen as nothing but cynical lip-service.

While commemorating a past naval offensive '*for peace*', the US has at the very same time deployed warships and nuclear-capable B-52 bombers in the Persian Gulf in a blatant show of aggression towards Iran. Washington is flagrantly using military force to subjugate Tehran to its geopolitical demands. So much for '*resolving international tensions peacefully*'.

Trump this week told media that he did not want the stand-off with Iran to become an all-out military conflict. Yet he continues to threaten that the US is ready to deploy the military option against Iran. Last month, he cryptically warned about the '*official end*

of Iran' while also offering '*talks*' with Tehran. Trump's occasional words of peace are therefore meaningless.

Washington's apparent problem with Iran is based on claims that the latter is 'supporting regional terrorism' and has 'ambitions to build nuclear weapons'. That amounts to paranoid hearsay, sourced from the Israelis and Saudis. It is hardly the grounds for justified military force. In reality, the US is simply using aggression – which is a war crime – in order to exert its political will on Iran.

Another contemporary case that flies in the face of the D-Day Proclamation is the Trump administration's threat to use military force against Venezuela. That threat is wielded because Washington doesn't want the elected socialist president Nicolas Maduro in power, and instead wants to replace him with their preferred pro-Washington opposition figure who has never been elected by the people. This is not even a case of '*resolving tensions peacefully*'. It is a straight leap to militarism by the Trump administration towards a sovereign country whose internal affairs should be none of Washington's business.

If Britain, France, Germany, Canada and other members of the NATO military alliance were genuinely committed to this week's D-Day Proclamation they would be forthrightly telling the US to halt its aggression towards Iran and Venezuela. But none of them have. The Europeans may have expressed concern about US tensions with Iran, owing to their selfish instincts for their own safety, but they have not been nearly as robust in censuring Washington to cease its criminal use of aggression. Their mealy-mouthed attitude is in effect a cowardly form of passive aggression.



EVERY ILLEGAL WAR AND COVERT OPERATION LAUNCHED BY THE US HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE NATO ALLIANCE EVER SINCE ITS FORMATION IN 1949.

No surprise there, however. Every illegal war and covert operation launched by the US has been supported by the NATO alliance ever since its formation in 1949. When did the bloc ever oppose any American military intervention, no matter how egregiously unlawful and destructive? It automatically issues a blank cheque of seeming '*multilateralism*' to cover for US war crimes, the most recent of which include the wars in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia and covertly in Syria, where the NATO powers covertly sponsored jihadist terror proxies in a bid for regime change against President Assad.

Some of the NATO minions go off on their own national adventures. France's President Emmanuel Macron, who likes to pontificate about '*saving the planet*', has currently ordered French troops to '*fight terrorism*' in Mali, Niger, Cameroon and other former colonies in Africa.

Maybe if France stopped looting those countries with its control over their national finances through the colonial-era African Franc system whereby those countries are mandated to deposit their gold reserves in Paris, then many internal African '*tensions could be resolved peacefully*'. As is it, the military option is the preferred one because it flatters the French national ego on the world stage and makes huge profits for France's weapons industry.

What NATO member has ever stood up and questioned the Washington-led policy of aggression

towards Russia and China? All 29 members of this militarist club indulge the US ringmaster and its gung-ho strategy of encircling Russia and China with missile systems, encroaching bases, warships, and warplanes.

Just last month in an address to West Point graduates, Vice President Mike Pence 'promised' that US soldiers would one day be on a battlefield '*for America*'. He said it was a 'certainty'. Ominously, Pence mentioned China as a potential target because it has the audacity to 'rival American power'. Again, so much for commitment to resolve tensions peacefully.

Here is the stupendous irony. NATO was formed in the ashes of World War Two, not because the US and Britain defeated Nazi Germany. It was the Soviet Union that largely destroyed the Nazi war machine. The overdue D-Day landings in June 1944 were finally ordered by American and British rulers because they feared the Soviets would conquer all of Germany singlehandedly. The Red Army at that stage in the war was rolling up the Third Reich, eventually taking Hitler's Berlin in May 1945.

Before the outbreak of the war, American and British capitalism had fostered the rise of Nazi Germany during the 1930s as a bulwark against the Soviet Union and the spread of socialism among their own working classes. Nazi Germany would not have become the fearsome force were it not for massive foreign investment from Wall Street and American corporations like Ford, General Motors, Du Pont, ITT and others, as documented by historian Jacques Pauwels. When the Nazi regime went rogue, Western powers were obliged to liquidate it, as they usually do, as seen with other client regimes down through history. Iraq's Saddam Hussein being a choice case.

The D-Day event is therefore not at all what it seems. There is no disputing the courage and conviction of ordinary American and British soldiers who went to war against fascism. But that principled motivation did not apply to their ruling classes. A concomitant of the ambiguity and contradictions is demonstrated in the way that NATO was promptly set up after the war, and for the primary purpose of confronting the West's supposed wartime ally, the Soviet Union.

Another concomitant is the way the US and NATO powers have in the decades after the war continued to use militarism and aggression as a matter of policy to achieve their geopolitical interests. The US and other Western powers never really had a problem with Nazi Germany based on political, legal or moral principle. The latter's termination came to be a matter of pragmatic urgency in order to safeguard Western geopolitical interests of stability and spheres of influence. The root problem for Western capitalist powers was always Russia as a power perceived to be in defiance of their objectives.

That's why the D-Day Proclamation of peaceful intent issued by the US and its gang of NATO warmongers is a travesty. It's the exact opposite of their policy and practice of aggression.





DID YOU KNOW?

The world's major corporations continued to inflict enormous ongoing violence (in a myriad of ways) in their pursuit of endless profit at the expense of living beings (human and otherwise) and Earth's biosphere by producing and marketing a wide range of life-destroying products ranging from nuclear weapons and nuclear power to junk food, pharmaceutical drugs, synthetic poisons and genetically mutilated organisms (GMOs). These corporations include those involved in the following industries: weapons manufacturers, major banks and their 'industry groups' like the International Monetary Conference, asset management firms, investment companies, financial services companies, fossil fuel (coal, oil and gas) corporations, technology corporations, media corporations, major marketing and public relations corporations, agrochemical (pesticides, seeds, fertilisers) giants, pharmaceutical corporations, nuclear power corporations, food multinationals and water corporations. You can see a list of the major corporations in this article: 'The Global Elite is Insane Revisited'.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

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

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.

US Sanctions are Meant to Cause Deliberate Human Suffering

'To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more: this is a hard saying but an ancient, mighty, human, all-too-human principle [....] Without cruelty there is no festival.'

– Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals/Ecce Homo*

Why do powerful governments revel in their ability to cause human suffering in order to bring about a desired political change? The West, led by the United States, has become the initiator and prosecutor of purposeful pain and suffering, and is continuing to advance policies that breed anguish and hardship against the innocent in many countries. These innocent, many of them children, are left starving, left without medical care, and are forced to live in fear due to the horrible conditions placed on them by the Western world.

Much of this agony is due to brutal economic sanctions being levied against those countries that do not bow down to the hegemony known as the US. The ruling elites are boastful in their support for these harsh policies, as what they claim to seek from these atrocious sanctions is regime change or major policy change by extreme force. But is that the entire story, or do they also find joy in the festival of causing harm to the people of countries they claim as enemies? Do they secretly gain pleasure from this planned cruelty? It seems evident that those implementing this suffering do take satisfaction in their ability to cause pain in order to gain power.

The idea of sanctions has become the norm. It is even anticipated and desired by not only the political class, but by many in the general population as well. Why is this so? Is it due to false beliefs? Is it because the propagandised masses fear that without these sanctions, other countries might rise up to be aggressors threatening our 'national security'? Is it because by destroying others economically, Americans believe they will be more prosperous? Does the average person really believe that sanctions will prevent these countries from attaining weapons of mass destruction? Or do many in the general populace also take pleasure in witnessing human suffering at the hands of their rulers?

There are a few pretend dissenters in the mainstream media, and even some in the alternative media, who talk out of both sides of their mouths about this issue. While some claim to expose the brutality of these economic sanctions, they in many cases give cover to the narrative by using the excuse that these sanctions are not effective in bringing about regime change. If they were effective in causing regime change, would that then make this strategy moral, or right? How can an aggressive act of war like that of forcing sanctions on an entire country or region, ever be warranted because it might affect regime change?

Many of these so-called defenders of human rights also claim that even though sanctions are levied with 'good intentions', the results are not positive. How can deliberately starving entire populations, depriving them of medical care, destroying their means of economic survival, and generally decimating their lives, have ever been considered a good intention? It is useful to understand language, as what people say and write should not be taken lightly, it should be scrutinised and studied. In most cases, people will eventually say what they really mean, and many will either speak with a forked tongue, or fashion their position using a double-edged sword. Excusing heinous behaviour by suggesting it was only heinous because it did not achieve a certain goal, is not only a weak argument, it is completely immoral. This is a very common way to take both sides of an issue, while falsely claiming the high ground. In other words, it is a lie.

The truth about economic sanctions is that they are abhorrent. It is the intentional use of power and control by governments to purposely brutalise an entire population of innocent men, women, and children, in order to advance a political agenda. This is the definition of terrorism. It is done without compassion or caring for the mass suffering that will always result. It is a knowingly planned destruction

of entire societies, which can only lead to the mass suffering of innocent people. It is unholy.

The United States, with the help of its complicit allies, is now sanctioning countries around the world. Some of the more brutal situations are occurring in Iran, Venezuela, North Korea, Cuba, several countries in Africa, Syria, Yemen, and many others, of course. The people of Venezuela have been persecuted by US sanctions and are literally starving in the streets. Iran's economy is in dire condition, as horrendous economic sanctions are being enforced there.


This is all being done with the full knowledge that many millions of people will suffer terrible consequences. There is malnutrition, starvation, sickness, disease, lack of medical care, lack of medicine, and in many cases, families are forced to abandon their homes and country. This is strictly due to the outside pressure of sanctions and aggressive war. This is true cruelty, but the attitudes of the ruling elite and political class are only consumed by indifference. This is what they desire; this is what they seek.

How can anyone ever forget the ice-cold words of Madeleine Albright when she was Secretary of State under Bill Clinton, as Iraq was suffering under barbarous sanctions? Over 500,000 children under the age of 5 died due to those sanctions, and they

died horrible deaths. On national television, the question asked by Lesley Stahl and answered by Albright in a very calm, calculated, and matter-of-fact manner was this:

Lesley Stahl on US sanctions against Iraq: 'We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?'

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: I think this is a very hard choice, but the price we think is worth it.

The current face of deliberate US terrorism is steeped in economic sanctions that cause massive human suffering. Sanctions are acts of war, and when committed by US power brokers against so many innocents around the world, they are terrorist acts. These economic sanctions are cold, heartless, and evil, and can only lead to the total destruction of what little is left of human decency and compassion in this fallen country called America. 

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Sent in by Beacon reader Ann Jurrjens.*

BY MARION HARPER

AN ADDRESS (IN TWO PARTS) DELIVERED AT
THE MELBOURNE UNITARIAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2019

PART ONE

Corrupt, Incompetent and Lacking Integrity



The state of the world today is a direct result of the unplanned, disorganised, profit-driven politics of capitalism. We live in a world that has become corrupted, ideologically unsound and divorced from the reality of decency, justice and democracy.

We live in a capitalist world which is broken and no longer acceptable. The world has become a giant chessboard in a game in which the world is

plundered and desecrated in pursuit of profit and power, and it is a game in which we are not allowed to participate.

Today, more and more people are rejecting the politics of capitalism, the corruption, the greed, the failure to provide for people's needs and the constant wars of aggression. Most despise politicians, yearn for a decent society, but are seduced by the decision-making processes of the worst populist elements, giving us the most incompetent, most corrupt and most racist individuals as parliamentary leaders. Thus America has its Trump, the UK Boris Johnson and we have Morrison.

What is the state of capitalism when three such unprincipled incompetents can become leaders of these powerful so-called world democracies? It is because parliamentarians are simply the willing puppets or pawns of the powerful corporations who really run our country and indeed most of the world.

WHEN ONLY THE POWERFUL CAN PLAY

What is the value of universal franchise when the world has become a huge chess board and only the powerful can play? That capitalism is in deep crisis is undeniable. Neoliberal policies promoted by US imperialism have destroyed democratic rights, impoverished the many, sold off our infrastructure, demonised sections of the community, destroyed our fragile planet and rather than solve the problems of capital they have exacerbated them. These policies have simply deepened the gap between rich and poor, created trade wars, and worsening aggressive wars across the world for control of depleting resources and land, ignoring global warming and the future of the majority.



**THE RICHEST 10% OF
HOUSEHOLDS HOLD
44% OF ALL WEALTH.
THE POOREST 50%,
BY CONTRAST, OWN
JUST 9%.**

The capitalist system worldwide is in its worse crisis since the Great Depression. Here at home, *The Age* of 4 July 2019 says 'The economy is slowing, and ominous clouds loom...inflation is non-existent, new building approvals are drying up and per person living standards have gone backwards for three consecutive quarters, the labour market is weakening with unemployment rising to 5.2%.' Add to this the stagnating wages and the refusal to increase the below poverty line Newstart that constitutes a policy of further punishing the unemployed by drug testing them, despite there being only 241,000 available jobs for 712,000 seeking work. We are seeing a savage attack on the trade union movement, while at the same time the rejection of an integrity commission that would expose the corruption that is rife.

THE CIRCLES OF CORPORATE AND POLITICAL POWER

Each day the corporates impose changes that seek to control, weaken and destroy our civil rights. This

is clearly demonstrated with the introduction of repressive legislation, an attack on our unions, the shackling of any progressive media and criminalising whistleblowers. What better time for them to slowly and insidiously install changes to dismantle our flimsy democracy? Am I being alarmist? I think not. There is much historical evidence to shine a light on what happened in the 1930s. Do people think it can't happen again?

As the economic crisis intensifies, as it will, there will be further attacks on workers' rights, on wages and conditions, on social services, and an even more serious increase in repressive legislation. More lies will be told, more diversions to distract us from the real situation, more attacks on our services. More scapegoating of minorities. More wars to carve up the world's diminishing markets and resources.

Already the Morrison government, not even yet settled in government, proposes a savage attack on the trade union movement. Its misnamed Ensuring Integrity legislation is carefully designed to destroy the ability of unions to represent their workers, to fight back. That a government so lacking itself in integrity should demand integrity from our unions who exist to serve their members is grossly insulting. However, they desperately need to dismantle unions, particularly the most active ones because the economic crisis will increase poverty and repression and they need to prevent an organised fight back.

Poverty and economic crises are inherent in capitalism where too many around the world live on less than \$10 per day. In the US, a nation that purports to set the standards for the world, by official statistics there are 13.0% or 44.9 million people living below the poverty line (almost double the population of Australia). The top 10% in the United States now own more wealth than the bottom 90%.

UK PEOPLE IN POVERTY

In the UK, the fifth richest country in the Western world, an estimated 14.2 million people live in poverty that includes 8.4 million working age adults, 4.5 million children, and 1.4 million people of pension age. That is around 22% of the public and nearly 33% of children (Government stats. 17 May 2019).

The richest 10% of households hold 44% of all wealth. The poorest 50%, by contrast, own just 9%. Infrastructure in the UK is savagely attacked, with cuts to councils resulting in bankruptcy and a loss of services. The national health system is in danger of collapse, charity food banks are growing, and homeless numbers are rising.

In Australia in 2016 ACOSS released a report revealing that poverty is growing with an estimated 2.9 million people or 13.3% of all Australians living below the internationally accepted poverty line. The wealthiest 10% of Australians with an average per capita wealth of over \$2 million hold 48.3% of net wealth while the poorest 50% of Australians have seen their total share of net wealth fall to 3.7%.

More than 116,000 Australians were homeless in Australia on census night in 2016, up from 90,000 a decade earlier. The Newstart real rate has not had an increase in 25 years. The rate is so low it

presents a barrier to the unemployed finding work. The homeless and those on Newstart are already in a depression, their lives on hold, and this government and indeed the Opposition ignores Newstart and ignores the housing crisis. There are currently 82,000 people waiting for public housing and this grows daily by 125. Balancing the books and arms for new wars take precedence over our needs, even though the economic debt was not created by us.

Scott Morrison and his government believe that wealth is something deserved, due not through luck of birth or connections, but just hard work. The harder you work, the more you earn – and thus if you do not earn enough, clearly you are not working hard enough despite the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) estimating that 38% of those living below the poverty line are in work and 15% of all people who work part-time are in poverty.

CAPITALISM WITHOUT POVERTY?

So, we need to ask whether poverty can be eliminated under capitalism? Well, it never has, but can poverty be eliminated? Of course it can... but it requires a system with a planned economy, not planned for private profit but planned to ensure that community needs are met. It requires full employment, in jobs that serve the needs of the community; jobs that are adequately paid and with acceptable on-the-job conditions. It requires affordable housing for all, social security programs, state-provided healthcare and full and free education.

It requires an involved participatory electorate, the elimination of racism, protection of our environment and, above all, a world without war. Can this ever happen under capitalism? Can we make capitalism people-friendly? I believe not. History says not. Experience says not. An understanding of the inherent greed of capital says not.

Almost every condition we enjoy today has been initiated or won by mass action, either through our unions or direct people's action. This is why it was so important to capital that compliant governments and unions prevail, why a controlled media is essential. That is why there is such a savage campaign to remove Jeremy Corbyn in the UK. Corbyn is no revolutionary, he is not calling for the overthrow of capitalism. He is simply proposing a campaign based on the slogan: **For the Many, Not the Few**. It is a program based on a fairer capitalist society, similar to the Whitlam program, and Corbyn is facing a similar fate to Whitlam. His own party, the capitalist media, the powerful Zionist lobby, the Tory Party and US imperialism combine to bring him down. The economic and political crisis of capitalism is even worse in the UK where the façade of parliamentary democracy is being exposed daily. The capitalist system in the UK is being torn asunder by the Brexit crisis which is designed to benefit US imperialism in its quest for world control. The whole British system is now under threat. In the world chess game, they are playing for high stakes.

End of Part One

from our readers



DEAR EDITOR

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Many thanks

K Coupe, Vic

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