



# SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY the Beacon

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photo by Miguel Henriques

EDITORIAL

In line with our creed of 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity' we are looking at the state of our society, indeed our world, and asking what kind of society we want. What kind of society will serve the needs of the majority rather than a privileged few?

Since primitive times, dramatic changes to society have occurred, moving the world from pre-slavery to capitalism. Nothing remains forever; society moves forward based on particular existing societal criteria. There are those who believe that we have reached harbour and capitalism is that final berth – a scary thought given the appalling record of this system.

The truth is, however, that capitalism is not the 'final berth' and society will move on to its next phase, which will be socialism. In 1917, Russia demonstrated this clearly. Capitalism in Russia was a corrupt, exploitative, destructive force that condemned millions to lives of misery and allowed the country's leaders to wallow in luxury while people starved. History shows that the Russian people had had enough. They threw off capitalism and began to build a new society. That much cannot be denied. However, in order to prevent other countries from taking similar action, a deep threat to capitalism, there needed to be a comprehensive and systematic condemnation of the new system that would safeguard capital and ensure the continued slavery and exploitation of the world's people. Socialism had to be cremated, not just physically, but in the hearts and minds of the world's people, to ensure that no other nation's people had the temerity to challenge capitalism again. The finest examples of

academia, the media, disenfranchised capitalists and writers were employed to ensure that socialism in the minds of the people became synonymous with Armageddon.

Today, however, even before the pandemic, capitalism in all its evil, corrupt, exploitative, racist forms has been exposed as never before. There is corruption at every level, dramatic levels of exploitation of the people to protect profits, racism that is being exposed worldwide, and destruction of our whole world environment, again to promote and protect profits. Illegal wars are designed to create new power structures, there are starving people worldwide. We cannot afford this system. This system does not deserve support. The next step is social ownership.

The means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole so that the fruits of the labour of the majority cannot be acquired by a minority.

Socialism isn't perfect and it can and has been manipulated and betrayed, but it is a system that can ensure and has indeed been seen to have ensured, full employment, a better form of democracy, opposition to exploitation and a more equitable share of the wealth created by the majority.

The question surely is can we afford to continue the current system, or should we be moving on to a better alternative? It seems that post pandemic, with its acute economic breakdown, that now is the time for this debate.



# A Police State?

**We're getting there...**  
(part 1)

photo by Wesley Marçal

In 1982, almost 40 years ago, I co-authored a book with Ken Coldicutt and Gerry Harant, called *Rooted in Secrecy*, detailing the destructive role played by Australia's secret agencies. On the back cover we wrote about our deep concerns at the direction our society was taking: In the 16th century, **English essayist Thomas Nashe wrote: 'A man were better to be a hangman than an intelligencer...a sneaking eavesdropper, a scraping hedge creeper and a piperly pickthanker.'**

Today's 'intelligencers' may no longer be full-time hedge creepers. Their eavesdropping is now carried out by the world's most sophisticated technology on a scale undreamed of 400 or even 40 years ago, and their sycophantic 'pickthanking' is directed towards multinational corporations rather than to some local petty tyrant. The underlying philosophy of maintaining existing power and privilege, however, remains the same.

**As the Establishment fear of an impending economic collapse deepens, the drive for repression, headed by the global intelligence network, deepens with it. This book describes how these clandestine forces increasingly dominate our entire political life. Unless others join with those few of us who recognise and oppose this dangerous trend, our future will not be determined by where we want to go, but rather where we will be allowed to go...**

And, so it has proved to be. In this climate of manufactured fear and political chicanery, a heartless economy and a divided and distracted public, we are entering an extraordinarily dangerous period. And Australia has form in the anti-democratic stakes. PM

Menzies' Bill outlawing communism was defeated by the merest whisker, with concentration-style camps at the ready to incarcerate anyone with a 'leftish' tendency. Years later, when Whitlam got the chop in a CIA-orchestrated coup, the army was put on full alert to take over our streets.

## EXPLOSION OF 'ANTI-TERROR' LAWS

Prior to 9/11, Australia had no national laws dealing specifically with terrorism, but after the September 11 attacks, there was an explosion of 'anti-terror' laws. Since that date, Australia has enacted a staggering 82 anti-terror laws running to many hundreds of pages, a new law on average every six to seven weeks, more than any other comparable country and far exceeding the volume passed in the UK, Canada and in the United States, with even more in the pipeline. It is not only the sheer number of laws, but also their scope. Australia's response has been described by a Canadian academic as 'hyper-legislation'.

Laws once considered 'extreme' that ought to have been limited in their application, have now become accepted as a 'normal' part of our criminal justice system, which in turn have given rise to even more draconian legal measures that have a profound and permanent impact on our constitution. In this highly politicised 'war on terror', habeus corpus and the Magna Carta have been thrown out the window.

They include laws restricting freedom of speech through new sedition offences and broader censorship rules; the secret detention and interrogation for up to a week by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) of Australian

citizens not suspected of any crime, including family members, journalists, children between the ages of 16 to 18, now to be lowered to 14, with refusal to answer ASIO's questions or to give false or misleading information landing you in the slammer for five years; the banning of organisations by executive decision; control orders that can enable house arrests for up to a year; detention without charge or trial for up to 14 days; warrantless searches of private property by police officers.

## A NEW RAFT OF CONTROL ORDERS

The repression goes on and on. In the wake of the London bombings in July 2005, our government was at it again with a new raft of control orders while adding to existing ones as part of a much larger package of legislation, orders that can be imposed on people neither convicted nor even charged with a criminal offence, a decision made by the Attorney-General of the day. The maximum duration of a control order is 12 months, at least in theory, but this can be extended indefinitely. Penalties are savage, extending in some cases to imprisonment for up to 25 years.

Even worse was the lack of time for even rudimentary parliamentary scrutiny or deliberation by the relevant parliamentary committees. The then Attorney-General Ruddock allowed a miserable six days for public submissions with three days of hearings and ten days to prepare the final report, an urgency that was totally unjustified, but was clearly a deliberate attempt to close down debate.

## AUSTRALIA HAS NO BILL OF RIGHTS

As these laws demonstrate, powers and sanctions once thought to lie outside the rules of a liberal democracy, except during wartime, have now become part and parcel of the Australian legal system, **laws made easier to enact because Australia has no bill of rights**. Such laws create new precedents, understandings, expectations and political conventions when it comes to the proper limits of government power and the role of the state in protecting human rights.

Which our government failed to do spectacularly in 2004 in Dili when an ASIS agent was instructed to bug key offices of the Timor-Leste government to reveal its negotiating tactics and views of cabinet ministers at a time when seasoned diplomat Peter Galbraith was desperately trying to get a fair deal for the fledgling nation from the massive oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. Success would have given Timor-Leste, one of the poorest countries in the world, between \$40 and \$50 billion, but the game was rigged.

Equally shocking was the government's defrauding of Australians of the revenue that would have accrued from helium, a by-product from the petroleum resources under the Timor Sea. It was sneakily given to an American fuel mob, ConocoPhillips. We then had to buy it back from them!

The ASIS operation was kept secret and the treaty was duly signed. Australia secured a 50/50 split of



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the Greater Sunrise fields, an excellent deal for our government and a boon for the multinationals led by Woodside. Australia's duplicitous action would have been buried had it not been for the courageous ASIS agent called 'Witness K', who felt so unhappy about the operation that he approached the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security who gave him permission to speak to 'approved lawyer' Bernard Collaery.

Collaery, a barrister and former ACT Attorney-General, was helping Timor-Leste build a case against Australia at The Hague, alleging the bugging had rendered the treaty void, revelations that were splashed across our mainstream media, profoundly embarrassing powerful elements within the government, our secret agency network and corporate Australia. 'Corporate greed was a major part of it, because the Howard and Downer governments were shrills for the corporations', Galbraith said. 'It was quite shocking'. **After leaving office, Alexander Downer went on to work for Woodside as a 'consultant'.**

## RAIDS

At the beginning of 2013, 24 hours after Collaery had flown to The Hague to prepare Timor-Leste's case, ten ASIO agents and police raided his chambers using a warrant, most of which had been blacked out. The snoopers spent more than six hours rifling through





## LAWS ONCE CONSIDERED 'EXTREME' THAT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN LIMITED IN THEIR APPLICATION, HAVE NOW BECOME ACCEPTED AS A 'NORMAL' PART OF OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM...

Collaery's documents, especially those relating to the dispute between Timor-Leste and Australia. While all this was going on, a second raid was taking place at the home of Witness K who was preparing to join Bernard Collaery at The Hague, but his passport was seized, preventing him from leaving the country. 'Straight out intimidation' said a furious Collaery.

His later attempts to publish a book of the affair brought government threats of gaol, but he persevered and in 2020 he published *Oil Under Troubled Water*, describing Australia as a **'...pariah state that lacked even sufficient skill to benefit its own citizens with the proceeds of the plunder in the Timor Sea'**.

In March 2018, Timor-Leste dropped its case against Australia and signed a new treaty on the Timor Sea that was far more favourable to the small nation. But Australia's Director of Public Prosecutions is still forging ahead with criminal charges against Collaery and 'Witness K' for 'conspiring to breach Section 39 of the Intelligence Services Act and the Criminal Code', a prosecution specifically designed to punish whistleblowers. The former spy will plead guilty to the charges, but Bernard Collaery will contest them.

### TWO FORMER TIMORESE PRESIDENTS

His lawyers have provided affidavits from two former Timorese presidents (Xanana Gusmao and Jose Ramos-Horta), from former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans, as well as from former Australian defence chief Admiral Chris Barrie, affidavits all directly challenging the assertion by Federal Attorney-General Christian Porter that disclosing the evidence threatened 'national security'. The latest hearing was set down for Monday 25 May 2020, to continue until 3 June in the ACT Supreme Court.

But why did it take so long to launch a prosecution against the pair considering ASIO and the Australian Federal Police raided their homes back in December 2013? An ABC program suggested there were divisions among the security agencies and even with Attorney-General Brandis about proceeding with the charges, although it seems that his successor, Christian Porter, has no such qualms. Within six months of taking office, he agreed to prosecute the case.

And then we heard about an earlier case involving a former military intelligence officer dubbed 'Witness J' who was tried and gaoled under our national security laws in similar circumstances. No one would have been any the wiser but for a dispute within the ACT prison system that found its way into our courts exposing the secret charges, a secret hearing and a secret sentence. **'Witness J' had already served 455 days in prison before some details started emerging. 'There's never been another case, at least in peacetime Australia, where all of it has been conducted in secret...I would not like to see it repeated,'** said James Renwick SC, Australia's terror laws watchdog. But of course it was repeated and will continue to be repeated because there's nothing to stop it happening again and again. (end of part I) 🕯

**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.**

# Can We Rescue the China Relationship from the Abyss?



**For some time now we have been routinely mishandling our relations with China. Our petulant demand for an international COVID-19 inquiry, whose thinly veiled purpose was to point the finger at Beijing's misdeeds, is the latest in a long series of missteps.**

We can do better.

The 2016 Defence White Paper and the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper placed the US military alliance front and centre of Australia's security policy. Then came a succession of inflammatory condemnations of Chinese actions in the South China Sea side by side with effusive support for the forward projection of US aerial and naval power in the Pacific.

Since 2017 we have seen renewed engagement in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. The Quad, as it is known, enables the United States to consult at senior level with military planners in Japan, India and Australia. It is seen by many as an 'Asian NATO' in the making, a network to contain the rise of China. Adding bite to the Quad is the series of bilateral and trilateral military exercises in which Australia is an active participant. Last month Australian naval exercises were conducted with US forces in the heavily disputed waters of the South China Sea.

And on the domestic front yet more fuel was added to the fire. Unsubstantiated claims have come thick and fast. A classified report leaked to the media suggested that the Chinese Communist Party was attempting to influence Australian politics at all levels. Rumours soon spread that Chinese students in Australia were promoting the policies of the Chinese government, while Australian universities were said to have entered compromising contracts with their Chinese partners. For its part, the US administration was pressing hard for Australia to toughen its stance against China.

In June 2018, sweeping national security legislation stiffened penalties for leaking classified information, broadened the definitions of existing crimes like espionage, and added 38 new crimes to the record. China, though not named, was clearly the intended

target. As for the multiple channels of influence regularly used by US Administration officials, intelligence agencies or the US Embassy in Canberra, there was no suggestion that any of this would ever come under scrutiny.

To signal its displeasure, China cancelled visas to Australian business leaders and called into question the motives of Australian politicians. This did not deter the Turnbull government from banning telco giant Huawei from supplying equipment to Australia's 5G mobile network. In line with Washington's firmly expressed wishes, national security concerns were used to justify the ban, as well as the blocking of takeovers by Chinese companies and the refusal to participate in China's signature Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Yet well over 70 countries, including US allies, had already signed BRI agreements.

These government actions echo the hawkishness of Australia's political discourse. Andrew Hastie, chair of the influential parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and other Coalition backbenchers with appropriately loud voices justify their China bashing by portraying themselves as defenders of Australian sovereignty. They are supported and abetted by influential centres and think tanks with close links to their counterparts in Washington and by elements within Australia's intelligence and military establishments. Other willing contributors include the Murdoch newspapers and a motley group of journalists, academics and commentators, few of whom are acknowledged China experts.

As for the Labor Opposition, its contribution is best described as meagre. Party leader Anthony Albanese and his predecessor have made periodic noises counselling against megaphone diplomacy,

but have steadfastly refused to question the general thrust of government policies or the conclusions of the national security agencies. As shadow foreign minister, Penny Wong has been less than distinguished in her pronouncements on China. She vociferously condemns the Government's performance, but focuses her criticisms on form and generally ignores content. She accuses the Government of being bereft of ideas but consistently fails to offer any ideas of her own. It is left to a few former luminaries, notably Paul Keating and Bob Carr, to make weightier interventions, but with strikingly little support from the present Labor leadership.

As for the Greens, they seldom address the failures of Australia's China policies, let alone propose any coherent alternative. They can be fairly described as irrelevant.

In the ensuing climate of unconcealed mistrust bordering on hysteria, an Australian prime minister has not visited China since 2016. The agreement struck in 2013 between then prime minister Julia Gillard and President Xi Jinping to hold annual leaders' meetings is now a distant memory. Other ministerial visits have been few and far between. The failure of trade minister Simon Birmingham to have his calls returned by his Chinese counterpart simply confirms China's decision to put Australia in the deep freeze.

The Australian government has made a great play of its role in gaining support for an inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. But the heavy lifting to get the necessary support for the resolution adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) was done by the European Union (EU) not Australia. It is EU diplomacy that brought many African countries, and crucially China, on board.

The EU's negotiating skills produced a resolution that speaks of an 'evaluation' not an inquiry – not an external evaluation, but one with external input. The evaluation will cover not just the origins of the pandemic but its spread to other countries, and how it has been managed by the WHO and national jurisdictions. The contrasting performance of China and the United States in the speed and effectiveness of their respective lockdowns and levels of testing will no doubt feature in the evaluation.

The resolution speaks in glowing terms of the WHO and reaffirms strong support for the organisation, about which Australia has said noticeably little. The timing and logistics of the evaluation will probably be at the discretion of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in consultation with WHO members, and require China's agreement if WHO officials are to have access to Chinese facilities and research. Not exactly what the Australian government had intended.

It is likely that the same resolution could have been achieved without Australia going out on a limb and unnecessarily incurring Chinese hostility. Australia could have done much better had it considered approaching China early in the piece in a spirit of collaboration to see whether jointly with other Asian neighbours they could agree on a way forward. Such an approach would have had a twofold aim:



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to identify key lessons to be learnt from the present pandemic, and to devise national and international plans that can more effectively prevent – and if need be respond to – the almost certain threat of future pandemics.

As it is, we are now left to deal with a number of avoidable bushfires on the trade front. It is well and good to speak of diversifying our exports. Excessive dependence on one trading partner is unhealthy at the best of times. The question is: why have we not attended to this over the last decade or two?

Australian exports to China have grown from \$1.6 billion in 1990–91 to \$153.2 billion in 2018–19. Over these three decades, our exports to China as a percentage of total exports have grown from 2.4% to 32.6%, and still growing. It's difficult to see how trade diversification will progress, especially at a time when so many economies are in lockdown or just beginning the long and uncertain road to recovery.

International trade is already at its lowest level in four years. US unemployment rose to 14.7% in April and is still rising, while US GDP fell at an annual rate of 4.8% in the first quarter of 2020, with worse to come. As for the Eurozone economy, GDP is expected to contract by 7.4% in 2020, causing damage on a par with the Great Depression.

For now, few economies will need more of our exports, and some will be fiercely competing with us for a share of the Chinese market. The odd Gulf state may be persuaded to import more from Australia, but

there is nothing in sight that can substantially dint our current dependence on China.

A serious commitment to diversification requires large-scale, long-term restructuring of the economy, a rejuvenated, ecologically sustainable manufacturing sector, and massive government intervention, none of which is currently on the horizon.

In the meantime, our relations with China are in need of urgent repair. At stake are trade interests, but so much more, not least regional security and our ability to manage a host of regional and global challenges. Our national interest requires effective responses to climate change, nuclear proliferation, pandemics, organised crime, human trafficking, cybersecurity and much else. Little of this can be accomplished without China's active participation.

A well thought through, consultative and culturally sensitive partnership with China is no simple task.

Australia will at times wish to take issue with a number of Chinese domestic and foreign policies. We can do this effectively only if three conditions are met: we are committed to developing a thriving bilateral relationship with China that encompasses not just its government but Chinese society as a whole; when dealing with contentious issues, our rule of thumb is to do so through private diplomacy or multilateral forums, and then preferably in concert with Southeast Asian and Pacific Island neighbours; we see ourselves and others see us as an independent middle power periodically prepared to take its distance from the embrace of great and powerful friends.

*Joseph Camilleri is managing director of Alexandria Agenda, Emeritus Professor at La Trobe University in Melbourne, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.*

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BY MEDEA BENJAMIN

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16 JUNE 2020 'INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE'

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

## Trump Hammers Cuba While Cuba Cures the Sick

A team of 85 Cuban doctors and nurses arrived in Peru on June 3 to help the Andean nation tackle the coronavirus pandemic. That same day, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced another tightening of the sanctions' screws. This time he targeted seven Cuban entities, including Fincimex, one of the principal financial institutions handling remittances to the country. Also targeted was Marriott International, which was ordered to cease operations in Cuba, and other companies in the tourism sector, an industry that constitutes 10 per cent of Cuba's GDP and has been devastated globally by the pandemic.

It seems that the more Cuba helps the world, the more it gets hammered by the Trump administration. While Cuba has endured a US embargo for nearly 60 years, Trump has revved up the stakes with a 'maximum pressure' strategy that includes more than 90 economic measures placed against the nation since January 2019. Josefina Vidal, Cuba's ambassador to Canada, called the measures 'unprecedented in their level of aggression and scope' and designed to 'deprive the country of income for the development of the economy'. Since its inception, the embargo has cost Cuba well over \$130 billion dollars, according to a 2018 estimate. In 2018–2019 alone, the economic impact was \$4 billion, a figure that does not include the impact of a June 2019 Trump administration travel ban aimed at harming the tourist industry.

# WE ACKNOWLEDGE

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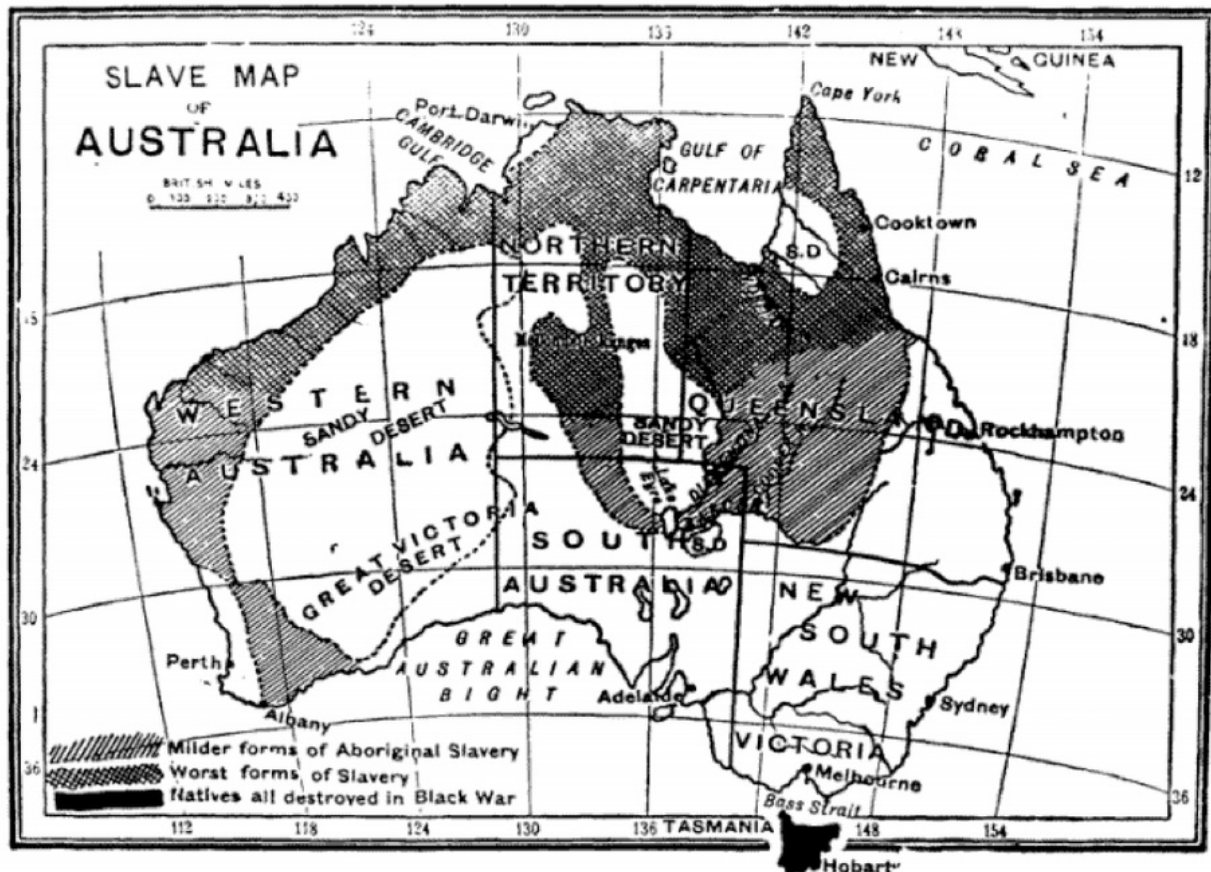
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11 JUNE 2020 THE CONVERSATION

# Was There Slavery in Australia?

## Yes. It Shouldn't Even Be Up for Debate



In 1891 a 'Slave Map of Modern Australia' was printed in the British Anti-Slavery Reporter.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison asserted in a radio interview that 'there was no slavery in Australia'.

This is a common misunderstanding which often obscures our nation's history of exploitation of First Nations people and Pacific Islanders.

Morrison followed up with 'I've always said we've got to be honest about our history'. Unfortunately, his statement is at odds with the historical record.

This history was widely and publicly documented, among other sources, in the 2006 Australian Senate report 'Unfinished Business: Indigenous Stolen Wages'.

### WHAT IS SLAVERY?

Australia was not a 'slave state' like the American South. However, slavery is a broader concept. As Article 1 of the United Nations Slavery Convention says:

*Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.*

These powers might include non-payment of wages, physical or sexual abuse, controls over freedom of movement, or selling a person like a piece of property. In the words of slavery historian Orlando Patterson, slavery is a form of 'social death'.

Slavery has been illegal in the (former) British Empire since the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade of 1807, and certainly since 1833.

Slavery practices emerged in Australia in the 19th century and in some places endured until the 1950s.

### EARLY COVERAGE OF SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA

As early as the 1860s, anti-slavery campaigners began to invoke 'charges of chattel bondage and slavery' to describe north Australian conditions for Aboriginal labour.

In 1891 a 'Slave Map of Modern Australia' was printed in the British *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, a journal



that documented slavery around the world and campaigned against it.

Reprinted from English journalist Arthur Vogan's account of frontier relations in Queensland, it showed large areas where:

*...the traffic in Aboriginal labour, both children and adults, had descended into slavery conditions.*

## SEEDS OF SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA

Some 62,000 Melanesian people were brought to Australia and enslaved to work in Queensland's sugar plantations between 1863 and 1904. First Nations Australians had a more enduring experience of slavery, originally in the pearling industry in Western Australia and the Torres Strait and then in the cattle industry.

In the pastoral industry, employers exercised a high degree of control over 'their' Aboriginal workers, who were bought and sold as chattels, particularly where they 'went with' the property upon sale. There were restrictions on their freedom of choice and movement. There was cruel treatment and abuse, control of sexuality, and forced labour.

A stock worker at Meda Station in the Kimberley, Jimmy Bird, recalled:

*...whitefellas would pull their gun out and kill any Aborigines who stood up to them. And there was none of this taking your time to pull up your boots either. No fear!*

Aboriginal woman Ruby de Satge, who worked on a Queensland station, described the Queensland Protection Act as meaning:

*if you are sitting down minding your own business, a station manager can come up to you and say, 'I want a couple of blackfellows' ...Just like picking up a cat or a dog.*

Through their roles under the legislation, police, Aboriginal protectors and pastoral managers were complicit in this force.

## SLAVERY WAS SANCTIONED BY AUSTRALIAN LAW

Legislation facilitated the enslavement of Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. Under the South Australian *Aborigines Act 1911*, the government empowered police to 'inspect workers and their conditions' but not to uphold basic working conditions or enforce payment. *The Aborigines Ordinance 1918* (Cth) allowed the forced recruitment of Indigenous workers in the Northern Territory and legalised the non-payment of wages.

In Queensland, the licence system was effectively a blank cheque to recruit Aboriginal people into employment without their consent. Amendments to the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* gave powers to the Protector or

police officer to 'expend' their wages or invest them in a trust fund – which was never paid out.

Officials were well aware that 'slavery' was a public relations problem. The Chief Protector in the Northern Territory noted in 1927 that pastoral workers:

*...are kept in a servitude that is nothing short of slavery.*

In the early 1930s, Chief Protector Dr Cecil Cook pointed out Australia was in breach of its obligations under the League of Nations Slavery Convention.

## '...IT CERTAINLY EXISTS HERE IN ITS WORST FORM'

Accusations of slavery continued into the 1930s, including through the British Commonwealth League.

In 1932 the North Australian Workers' Union (NAWU) characterised Aboriginal workers as 'slaves'. Unionist Owen Rowe argued:

*If there is no slavery in the British Empire then the NT is not part of the British Empire; for it certainly exists here in its worst form.*

In the 1940s, anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt surveyed conditions on cattle stations owned by Lord Vestey, commenting that Aboriginal people:

*...owned neither the huts in which they lived nor the land on which these were built, they had no rights of tenure, and in some cases have been sold or transferred with the property.*

In 1958, counsel for the well-known Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira argued that the *Welfare Ordinance 1953* (Cth) was unconstitutional, because the enacting legislation was:

*...a law for the enslavement of part of the population of the Northern Territory.*

## PROFITS FROM SLAVES

Australia has unfinished business in repaying wages to Aboriginal and South Sea Islander slaves. First Nations slave work allowed big businesses to reap substantial profits and helped maintain the Australian economy through the Great Depression. Aboriginal people are proud of their work on stations even though the historical narrative is enshrined in silence and denial.

As Bundjalung woman Valerie Linow has said of her experiences of slavery in the 1950s:

*What if your wages got stolen? Honestly, wouldn't you like to have your wages back? Honestly. I think it should be owed to the ones who were slave labour. We got up and worked from dawn to dusk ...We lost everything – family, everything. You cannot go stealing our lousy little sixpence. We have got to have money back. You have got to give something back after all this country did to the Aboriginal people. You cannot keep stealing off us.*

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Further information (not required for membership, but useful for church organisation)

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☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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APPROVED BY CoM \_\_\_\_\_, MUPMC Secretary

# from our readers

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## TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Thanks for your marvellous newsletter that covers all the hot global topics in a sensible, humanitarian and ethical way. This perspective is sorely missing during the reign of Trump here in the USA. It has all the dangerous markings of the rise of fascism before World War II. Angry white people with an axe to grind have always been a dangerous force.

I LOVE YOUR MOTTO TO 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Amen to that noble mission.

The daily ugliness that the White House creates on an hourly basis is frightening. So, when your newsletters arrive, they are a beacon of hope and reflection.

Under Scott Morrison, Australia is certainly in its own void of leadership and an aura of pandering to political mobs and one-sided financial interests.

My husband and I had the good fortune to live in Australia for almost five years when he was the assistant FBI attaché at the US Embassy in Canberra. I also found work as an instructor at Canberra University and as a writer for a company called the Bureau of National Affairs (which was not government affiliated). During my time, I wrote almost 500 articles. Prior to being posted in Australia, I also worked with CNN and was fortunate to be a stringer for them when the first President Bush came to Australia and was part of the press pool.

In 2018, I had the good fortune to head back to Australia for my 10th time since we left our posting there. My aim to give four academic talks – in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. And I attended a meeting in Brisbane on behalf of the Australian Institute for International Affairs.

All initially went well. I had a stop in Byron Bay to visit two friends I had known for 28 years when we all lived in Canberra.

With little warning, I suffered a medical emergency that almost killed me. It wasn't the 'usual suspect' like crocodiles, poisonous snakes, sharks, nasty spiders or deadly mushrooms. No, I got a bleeding ulcer that was not accompanied by any pain. When I got to the emergency room, the oxygen in my blood had plummeted. A usual reading is supposed to be 12 to 15. Instead, I was down to 5, and they told me if it had fallen to 4, I would have died.

Fortunately, I got sick in a place where there was comparable medical care to the USA, and that the staff spoke English. Unfortunately, we are one of the few countries that doesn't use the metric system, so when they told me my temperature was 33, I thought I was almost dead already, since we would expect a normal temperature to be 98.6.

The first emergency medical facility I went to was too small for further treatment, so I had my very first ride in an ambulance that took me to the Tweed Hospital in NSW, where I got three blood transfusions, had significant surgery and spent five days in the hospital, and many weeks back in the USA recovering.

Thus, I didn't make it to Melbourne where I had hoped to look up your organisation and to give a first-hand round of applause for the intelligent publication you provide.

My Australian friends – Sue Rogers of the Blue Mountains and Ian Dodd of Sydney – had sent me a subscription to your publication for the last two years. I noticed that it is now running out and I would like to renew it. Just last week, I was reading your March 2020 issue, which captured my complete attention, with the sobering headline on the front page: 'We are supporting repressive governments'. That is equally true for the USA and for Australia. The same holds true for your discussions on climate change, corruption and the verbal assaults on the World Health Organisation. Trump is a disgrace with his non-stop on the WHO, especially during this pandemic. Our countries are dealing with COVID-19, but WHO is also dealing with plights like Ebola, malaria, childhood diseases and other plagues that are the scourge of those living in Africa and other Third World places.

Perhaps you heard of Trump's diatribe on April 23 when, in one of his ignorant and raging rants, he speculated on the 'medical possibilities' of deadly household cleaning products like Clorox and Lysol could be given to patients internally to kill germs. I am not making this up!

I would also like to take advantage of your wonderful outreach efforts to send it for three free months. Can you let these people know that I was the one who gave their names to you, so they aren't worried about open solicitation?

**K Burns, USA**

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## DEAR BEACON

Lovely to hear from you.

Your publication is always such a bright spot in the dark world of Donald Trump.

It is hard to believe such a morally bankrupt person is president of the USA.

And that more than 100,000 people are dead – with more to come – because of his inept and unscrupulous oversight of the pandemic.

**K Burns, USA**

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Equally troubling is that the Republicans are all marching in lock step, just like the Germans did for Hitler.

I think my Australian friends for whom I have requested introductory subscriptions will find your publication as interesting as I do.

So many shocking things that your staff unearths. Keep up the good work!

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**Editorial: The time for debate is now!**

**Feature: A Police State? We're getting there ...(Part I)**

**Can we rescue the China relationship from the abyss?**

**Did you know?: Trump hammers Cuba while Cuba cures the sick**

**Was there slavery in Australia? Yes. It shouldn't even be up for debate**

**Membership form**

**Letters to the editor**

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