



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

the Beacon

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The Elusive Truth

Many years ago, in our church, the then minister Reverend Victor James, gave a sermon about seeking the truth and serving humanity. He described truth-seeking as an ongoing, lifelong activity, calling it a zig-zag path on a journey to finding what is truest. He quoted the British academic H Levy, who said:

Truth is the summation of man's experience at any given moment, truth is a lantern that illuminates his next few steps, past truth becomes incomplete as a greater truth replaces it, truth is an instrument for the creation and working out of human purpose, becoming sharper and more effective as that purpose becomes itself clearer, and as man's reading of natural process becomes more and more accurate.

We could ask what the greatest impediment is in the quest to seek what is truest in our world today: a world of conspiracy theories, both real and imagined; misinformation; and the dearth of credible information. Government secrecy helps breed conspiracy theories. It's easier to control people's ideas through the creation of a 'narrative' world rather than what exists in the 'real' world.

We clearly see examples of the 'real' world: the role of the CIA in 'facilitating' both directly and indirectly regime change in numerous countries over many decades. The narrative that is pushed by governments and the mainstream media has included the justification for 'shock and awe' carpet bombing of countries such as Iraq and Vietnam, the former based on non-existent weapons of mass destruction and the latter on the fictitious Gulf of Tonkin incident.

We could think of dozens, probably hundreds of false 'narratives' promulgated by governments and

their associated agencies, aided and abetted by a compliant media. As we go to press there is much discussion about the unemployment benefit and the Morrison government's refusal to lift the benefit above the poverty line. The old narratives are trotted out – 'dole bludgers' and the more subtle claim that job seekers would lose the incentive to seek employment if the benefit was raised ('the poor need the stick' philosophy).

And it gets worse ... they also add more punitive measures against the unemployed, such as the 'hotline' enabling an employer to dob in a person for not taking up a particular job. As far as the 'real' world goes it is rather easy to find the truth from a government body, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Their figures show that the ratio of job seekers to actual vacant jobs varies from between 15 and 20 unemployed to every job; this does not take into account the number of underemployed, estimated by ABS at over 1 million in both 2018/19, neither does it take into account the fact that the definition of 'employed' is working over one hour per week.

The human cost of wars and unemployment, not to mention the catastrophic effects of climate change, are systemic to the imperialist nature of the capitalist system. The human cost of unemployment is described in an extract from a media release by Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS):

We cannot leave people to make impossible choices between food, rent, bills, basic toiletries and medications. Everyone should be able to cover the basics of their life, including people with disability and single parents who are on the JobSeeker payment. We must ensure people can meet the costs of job search, including transport, communications and clothing.

It should be noted that Australia has the lowest unemployment benefit in the OECD and that no real increase has occurred for over quarter of a century.

Finally, we would argue that our current capitalist economic system and its imperialist nature is not fit for purpose. No amount of fudged narrative can hide the 'real' world effects of such a system. To perpetuate a society that meets the needs of global imperialism, the real world must be obscured as much as possible, aiming to both misinform and exhaust our critical thinking to push an agenda that is relatively simple – the accumulation of wealth and power by exploiting the planet and those who live on it by all means possible.



SALARIES, CORRUPTION & FASCISM

Prime Minister Scott Morrison is among the world's highest paid political leaders, earning an annual salary of \$549,229 – more than German Chancellor Angela Merkel and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

That figure includes a new \$11,000-a-year pay rise, which the Prime Minister secured last week when some of Australia's lowest paid workers had their penalty rates cut. Mr Morrison's generous salary is about seven times the national wage, which the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates to be about \$1600 per week. Salaries of this nature continue to remove leadership from an understanding of the needs of the people they are supposed to be leading.

Salaries aside, and more importantly, we need to look at political corruption – an issue that has earned headlines in the past few months, and rightly so. Corruption in government and industry has never been higher or more publicly exposed. Corruption exposes the myth of parliamentary democracy.

But it isn't just the corruption that takes our taxes and deprives us of basic services, but the attitude of 'It is our right'...that demonstrates the arrogance and determination of those with power to use it for their own purposes.

We have witnessed corruption at the highest levels: government, industry, councils, and much of it is unchallenged, distorted by the media, or swept under the carpet. This corruption costs the community huge sums of money that should be spent on the needs of the people. The government and the media make much of what they term corruption in other nations but ignore it when it is practised here in Australia.

In *The Age* (4/ 1/2021), Ross Gittins writes an article entitled 'Capitalism is best – it just needs regular maintenance'. He claims in this article that

'the market system (capitalism) fits most easily with democracy'. It certainly fits most easily with parliamentary democracy because it is the system that allows them to get away with the corruption that is so rife today. In fact, hovering over the whole capitalist system is the Sword of Damocles, suspended by strands, waiting to fall, and no one knows when or how.

There is no greater example of the precarious nature of capitalism than what we are witnessing in the USA today where the former most powerful nation in the world is now divided, weakened, and in shock that the forces of fascism (purported to be under the leadership of an incompetent, narcissistic, racist president) has rocked the nation to its core. I say purported because, of course, Trump is simply a tool of the worst and most extreme right-wing forces whose agenda for world domination is being challenged by the more moderate but still aggressive leaders elected to Congress. Trump was a tool they thought they could control...but with his dangerous and delusional nature, they lost control.

Investigative journalists will continue to trace and disentangle the funding networks that facilitated 6 January. The list of names will grow longer and the sum of individual and corporate contributions greater. But already it is clear that what happened at the Capitol was not just the unintended consequence of specific capitalists' ill-advised campaign donations; it was an expression of a deeper, ongoing crisis of capitalism, and the attempts of the ruling class (sometimes contradictory) to manage that crisis.

According to a report released late last year by the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness, the 651 billionaires in the United States added more than \$1tn to their

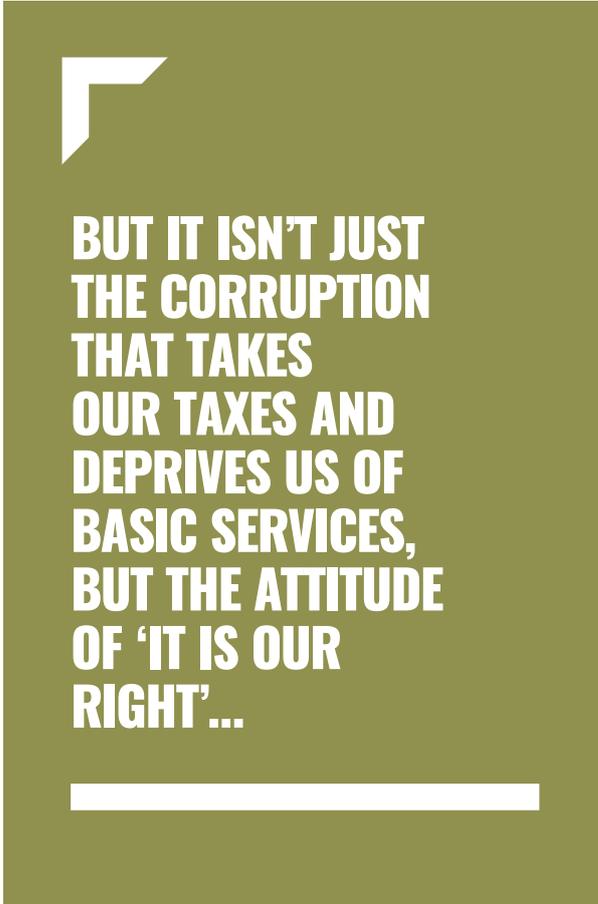
collective wealth since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing the total to slightly more than \$4tn. Meanwhile, the racialised distribution of labour in the United States – the concentration of workers of colour in both essential industries, where they are more likely to be exposed to the pandemic, and service and hospitality industries, where layoffs have been rampant – means that Black, Latino, and Native Americans are significantly more likely to be hospitalised and die of COVID-19 than non-Hispanic white Americans. This serves as a stark reminder of the white supremacist character of the decades-long effort to defang and declaw the American labour movement – an effort funded and organised by the same far-right capitalists who laid the groundwork for 6 January.

History records that this has happened before, and I have spoken of this in former addresses. In Germany, Adolph Hitler was also a delusional and dangerous psychopath who was appointed to leadership by a ruling class fearful of a revolution in Germany at a time of deep depression. They too thought they could control him and lost that control resulting in the development of a fascist Germany and a resulting war which cost the world dearly.

The rise of the Nazis in Germany was intricately linked to the nation's post-war economic problems. Following its defeat by the Allies, Germany was branded an international villain and saddled with high war reparations by the Treaty of Versailles. In the years that followed, the nation struggled to come to terms with its defeat, as well as to make payment on its war debts. The government's monetary policies, which included printing large amounts of money to pay the debts, resulted in hyperinflation throughout Germany in 1923. Although the government corrected the problem by negotiating a repayment plan with the Allies, and enacting a new economic strategy, these policies were insufficient to protect Germany from the effects of the Great Depression during which nearly six million Germans were unemployed.

Economic conditions dramatically increased popular discontent with the government and prompted many to look for a new leader who would restore Germany to its former glory. That leader soon emerged in the form of Hitler. An ardent nationalist with strong anti-Semitic convictions, Hitler argued that Germany had been defeated in World War One because of weak leadership, Jewish and Communist influences in the government, and an international conspiracy. Hitler advocated strong authoritarian leadership through which he believed Germany could re-establish its dominance in Europe.

Hitler was elected chair of the Nazi Party in 1921. In 1923, in the beer hall where the Nazis held their meetings, Hitler announced his intention to lead a putsch (or overthrow) of the government. The rebellion was immediately quashed and Hitler was jailed. While in prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, an autobiographical treatise in which he outlined his beliefs. The book's publication helped to disseminate



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his political philosophy and attracted numerous followers to the Nazi Party when it was reorganised in 1925.

During the late 1920s, Hitler sought to acquire power through the electoral system. At the onset of the Great Depression, the Nazi Party held 12 seats in the Reichstag (German parliament), and its popular support steadily increased as the economy worsened. By 1932, the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag. Hitler took advantage of the party's standing to demand that he be named head of the cabinet. In 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg acquiesced and Hitler was named chancellor of Germany.

Hitler immediately used his new position to pursue complete control over the nation. He convinced Hindenburg to hold new elections for the Reichstag in March, in which the Nazis won nearly 44 per cent of the vote. With their majority in the Reichstag, the Nazis passed a resolution that granted Hitler practically unlimited power over the German government. Hitler further consolidated his power through the elimination of opposition groups and the use of propaganda.

Today, in the US, whole American cities have been ravaged by job losses and massive homelessness due to the loss of their homes through no work and evictions. Where medical services have been unavailable and social services almost extinct, a 'salesman' like Trump was able to promise that he would 'Make America Great Again' and would protect the impoverished from the corporations and government who had let them down. Just as Hitler had done in Nazi Germany.

Hitler had argued that the German people had been let down and deserted by those in power. He promised to build a new Germany that he said would make Germany great again – as did Trump. Hitler built a force of armed thugs who were independent of the police or other national security bodies and these forces burned down their parliament in order to blame the left who were mobilising against the enormous poverty that existed.

In the US, Trump encouraged his thugs to invade parliament and smash and loot, and some sections of the media are trying to blame the left by saying that they led this putsch, not the fascist elements supporting Trump.

Michael Moore, in a recorded statement on Facebook, made it clear that those who invaded the Senate were indeed armed, dangerous and encouraged mobs, not unlike the German Brownshirts in the 1930s.

Even the President of the Unitarian Universalists of the US in her statement made this clear when she said:

One thing we must be honest about is the reality that our democracy is under attack and has been for a long time. Almost daily, there are efforts, whether by policy or inflammatory rhetoric, to systematically undermine faith in our elections. Shameful examples of voter suppression and the trampling of rights are happening all across the country.

History teaches us that, in the United States democracy has never been available to everyone. Its expansion and protection have always come through struggle, organizing and protest. This time is no different.

–President UUA, USA, Oct 2020

So, what are the lessons for us here today in Australia? Undoubtedly, we must understand the fragility of parliamentary democracy; the failure of both sides of politics to resolve the urgent problems facing society; the danger of excessive poverty alongside massive wealth; and the resolve of those in power to maintain that position.

Post-pandemic, when some normalcy has returned, we must look to re-organising: encourage the trade union movement to involve itself in social issues and work towards developing cooperation and coordination between all those organisations concerned about the issues. Our church can play an important and positive role in working with other churches and like-minded organisations in developing strategies and campaigns for democracy, for peace and for a new society.



**MICHAEL MOORE,
IN A RECORDED
STATEMENT ON
FACEBOOK, MADE IT
CLEAR THAT THOSE
WHO INVADED THE
SENATE WERE INDEED
ARMED, DANGEROUS
AND ENCOURAGED
MOBS, NOT UNLIKE
THE GERMAN
BROWNSHIRTS IN
THE 1930S.**



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PROTECTING EVERYONE'S RIGHTS BENEFITS US ALL

It's easy for many of us living in a country like Australia to take our human rights for granted. For most of us, most of the time, Australia is a great place to live.

But the downside of this can be a complacency about our own rights protection, and, more importantly, ignorance or misunderstanding about the importance of protecting the rights of those less fortunate. We need to understand that when everyone's rights are protected, our society is stronger and healthier. We all benefit.

Recently, Australia's human rights performance was closely scrutinised in a major UN review that happens every four to five years. Known as the Universal Periodic Review, the process involves a peer review with other countries asking questions and making recommendations to Australia to improve our rights protection.

One hundred and twenty-two nations participated in Australia's review, making close to 250 recommendations to improve rights. One key concern was Australia's very low age of criminal responsibility, which is out of step with world standards.

Australian laws currently allow governments across the country to arrest, prosecute and lock up children as young as 10. In just one year across Australia close to 600 children aged 10 to 13 years were locked away in prisons.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately impacted, accounting for 65 per

cent of the younger children locked away. Evidence shows there are far better ways of ensuring young kids who are in trouble can be helped back on track.

The engagement from the Morrison government with the review was lukewarm at best. As part of the process, the government made only modest, unambitious commitments to improve rights protection, essentially re-packaging things it was already doing.

Despite Australian civil society and several nations highlighting climate change as a human rights issue and the need for Australia to do more, the Australian government didn't even mention the issue in its report to the UN.

The Morrison government's indifference is disappointing and also a missed opportunity. As a wealthy, stable democracy, Australia could lead the world on human rights.

There has been progress since Australia was last reviewed five years back. Marriage equality, legislation to combat modern slavery and the ratification of a torture prevention treaty are all important steps forward.

Australian governments have delivered generally effective public health responses to COVID-19 that have saved thousands of lives. Despite its gaps, the Morrison government also provided a vital safety net for millions facing economic hardship during the pandemic.

Yet this progress has been undermined by repeated failures to protect rights in critical areas, particularly around the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and of refugees and people seeking asylum.

When Australian governments, at both the federal and state level, breach people's rights, it is not only morally and legally wrong under international law, it is against our national interest. Human rights belong to all of us, no matter who we are or where we are.

They are the vital ingredients we all need to lead a decent, dignified life. They reflect shared values like freedom, equality, respect and dignity. When human rights are respected, our lives are better and our communities are stronger and healthier.

Respect for human rights is also the key to international stability, peace and prosperity. Yet Australia's reluctance to better protect rights undermines our ability to promote rights in our region and globally. It affects our ability to promote compliance with other critical international laws on trade, maritime boundaries and more that matter to us. Why should other nations play by the international rules that the Australian government ignores to suit its short-term political interest?

The Morrison government can and should continue to criticise China's brutal crackdown on democracy activists in Hong Kong and the detention of around a million Uyghur people. As a developed democracy, we have a responsibility to speak out and promote rights globally.

But our calls would have stronger force if the government wasn't raiding the offices of journalists or

detaining refugees eight long years after they arrived in our country seeking safety. Australia's human rights failings open up ground for authoritarian governments to reject international pressure to protect the rights of their own people.

Australia needs to live up to the human rights promises it has made under international law. It also needs to implement those promises under our domestic law.

Australia is the only Western democracy without a national Charter of Human Rights or similar instrument. Australian politicians often talk about the importance of freedom of speech, assembly and association, but none of these rights are properly protected in Australian law. This must change.

Australia played an important role in establishment of UN and the international human rights framework, including by helping to draft the UN Declaration of Human Rights, one of the pinnacles of modern human achievement. We have so much to gain by leading on rights. We need to recognise that protecting rights is in all of our interests.

Hugh de Kretser is the executive director of the Human Rights Law Centre who jointly led the NGO coalition participating in Australia's Universal Periodic Review. The coalition report was endorsed by over 200 Australian NGOs.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/protecting-everyone-s-rights-benefits-us-all-20210201-p56yc9.html>

Source: *The Age* – Opinion

No Favourable Economic Winds for Morrison's Australia

Sent in by Bilal Cleland

To put the Government's \$507 billion stimulus commitment into perspective, it's almost ten times larger than the Rudd government's global financial crisis response package.

It's enough to give each and every household in Australia an average income of over \$50,000.

It's enough to house every single one of the 116,000 homeless people in the country and still have over \$489 billion left over (based on the average cost of newly constructed WA social housing).

It's enough to maintain the current rate of the JobSeeker supplement (\$250 per fortnight) for 1.5 million recipients for another year and still have over \$497 billion left over.

So, for less than six per cent of the total stimulus spend – not including the money the Government will get back in additional tax revenue – we could effectively eliminate most homelessness and ensure that unemployed Australians are provided with a more adequate social safety net.

Biden's Iran Policy is just Trump's Iran Policy with a Rainbow Flag Emoji

By **Caitlin Johnstone**,
an independent
journalist based in
Melbourne, Australia.



In a new interview with *CBS Evening News*, President Biden confirmed that his administration will not be lifting sanctions imposed upon Iran in order to bring Tehran to the negotiating table for the restoration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal.

'Will the US lift sanctions first in order to get Iran back to the negotiating table?' Biden was asked by CBS's Norah O'Donnell.

'No,' the president replied.

'They have to stop enriching uranium first,' asked O'Donnell.

Biden nodded in response.

With Iran resuming its enrichment of uranium, we asked President Biden if the US will lift sanctions first in order to get Iran back to the negotiating table on a nuclear deal.

'No,' President Biden says, affirming that Iran will have to stop its enrichment program first.

Norah O'Donnell w(@NorahODonnell)
7 Feb 2021

There are a few things that are ridiculous about this, the first being that the JCPOA does not require that Iran 'stop enriching uranium' at all. As explained by Al-Monitor's Arash Karami, the deal only calls for Iran to 'keep its level of uranium enrichment at up to 3.67%', a level it only began exceeding when the Trump administration backed out of the deal and imposed sanctions. The administration later clarified that Biden meant Iran would have to return to its JCPOA levels before negotiations could begin, but the fact that neither the United States president nor the high profile reporter interviewing him appear to have been clear on this says a lot about the vapid nature of America's political/media class.

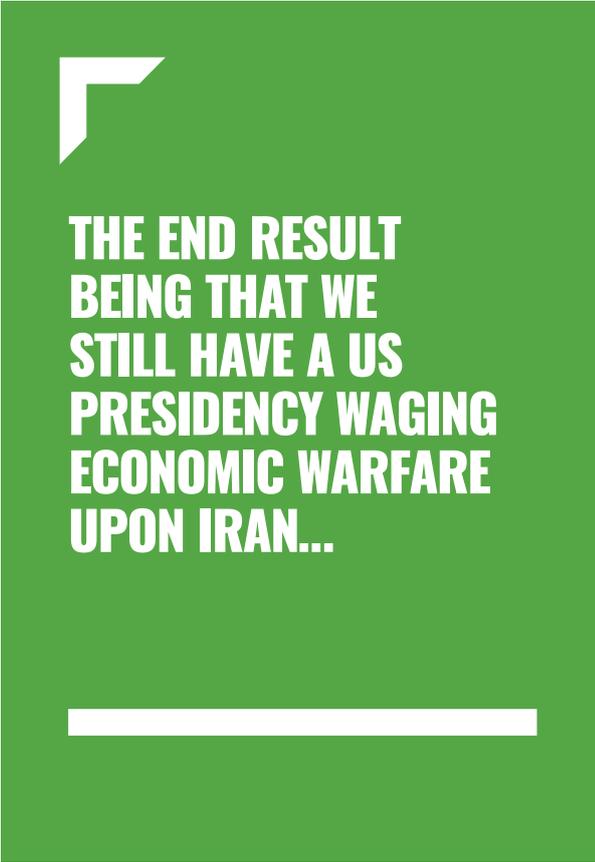
More importantly, this is confirmation from the horse's mouth that Biden is in effect continuing Trump's Iran policy. Trump began strangling Iran with crushing sanctions in an effort to force it to obey US dictates, and Biden is continuing that exact same strangulation while continuing to demand compliance with its dictates. The demands might be a little different, but the effect is identical since Tehran would never bow to either of them.

The Iranian government has repeatedly made it abundantly clear that it will not be rejoining the JCPOA until the United States comes back into compliance, since it was the US who first abandoned it. It claims, correctly, that it was in full compliance with the agreement when the Trump administration unilaterally backed out in May 2018. The argument that it is therefore Washington's responsibility to come back into compliance first is indisputable. Why would it re-enter a deal with a government that is clearly acting in bad faith and could just back out and impose civilian-killing sanctions on the nation again?

Biden's foreign policy team is entranced by the belief it can repeat what it thinks was a big victory over Iran in the JCPOA by exploiting the sanctions inherited from Trump to force #Iran to accept new US demands. But it isn't going to work that way.

Gareth Porter (@GarethPorter) 26 Jan 2021

And that's just getting back to the negotiating table for re-entering the deal as it is written. Gareth Porter reported last month that the Biden administration may plan on using the sanctions regime it inherited from the previous presidency as a 'Trump card' to try and coerce Tehran into agreeing to a modified version of the deal.



**THE END RESULT
BEING THAT WE
STILL HAVE A US
PRESIDENCY WAGING
ECONOMIC WARFARE
UPON IRAN...**

Neither of these things are going to happen. Iran will not modify the deal, and it will not come back into compliance before the government which first abandoned the deal comes back into compliance. And the Biden administration appears to be perfectly fine with this, reportedly toying with the idea of waiting all the way until after Iran's presidential elections in June to even begin approaching the deal.

The end result being that we still have a US presidency waging economic warfare upon Iran in exactly the same way it was before the 20th of January. Civilians are still having the life squeezed out of them by a far more powerful nation which does not view them as human beings, and it's only a matter of time before this administration or a

subsequent one causes another flare up which pushes things to the brink of hot war like we saw a year ago.

Biden's Iran policy is in effect just a continuation of Trump's Iran policy that liberals can feel good about. It's Trump's Iran policy with gender pronouns in its bio.

Trump's Iran policy: You will be crushed with crippling sanctions until you bow to US dictates.

Biden's Iran policy: You will be crushed with crippling sanctions until you bow to US dictates #BlackLivesMatter

— Caitlin Johnstone (@caitoz) 7 Feb 2021

Choosing to continue an immoral course of action is just as immoral as choosing to initiate an immoral course of action. If you're beating someone up and you leave when I get there, and then I choose to continue assaulting that person, I am just as culpable in that assault as you are. Presidents who choose to perpetuate one another's depraved policies are just as guilty of that depravity as their predecessors.

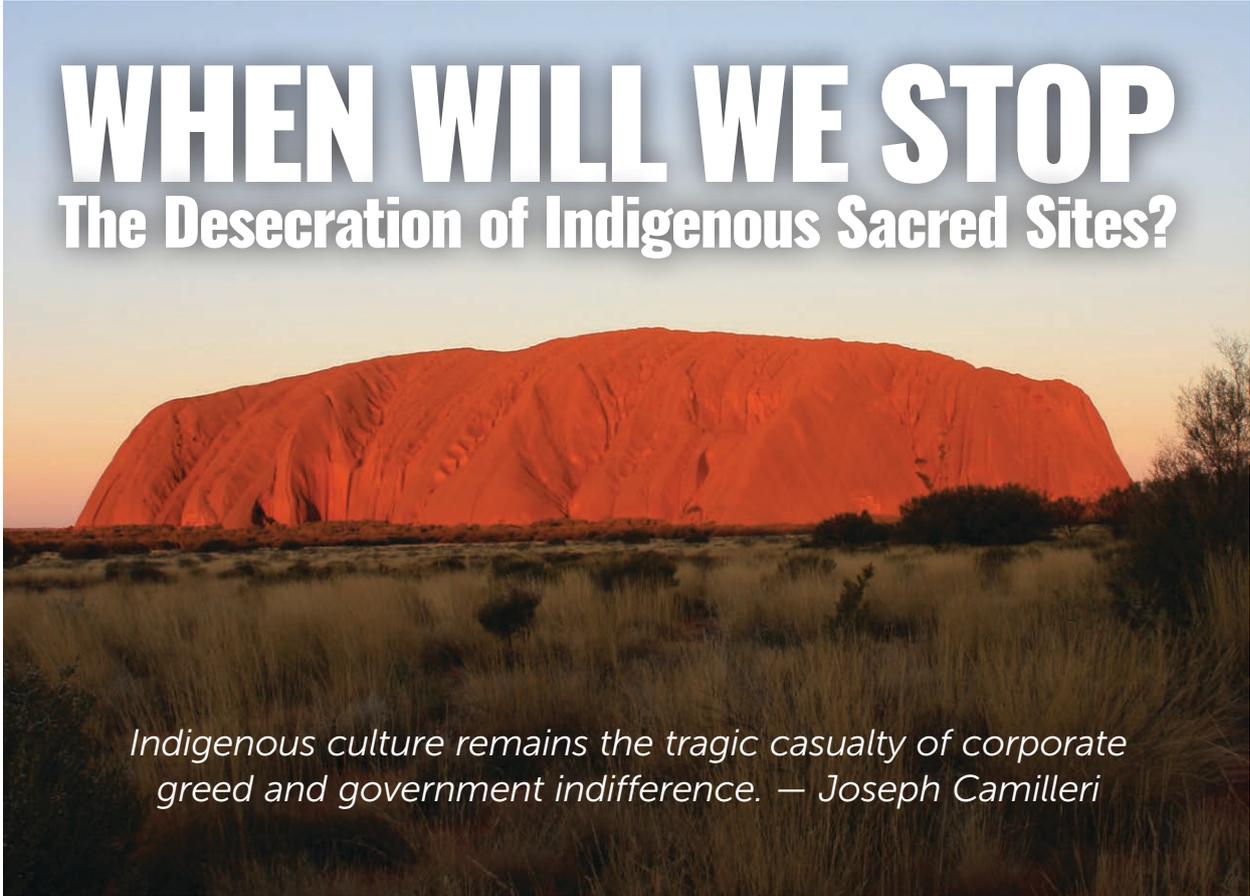
Starvation sanctions are the only type of warfare in which it is considered normal and acceptable to deliberately target a civilian population with deadly force. But it is not normal, and it is not acceptable. Biden and his team of ventriloquists fully own the effects of their warmongering. They don't get to just scribble 'TRUMP'S FAULT' across them in crayon and act like they're innocent.

The mainstream media are fixated on the differences between the Biden administration and the Trump administration, just as they were fixated on the differences between the Trump administration and the Obama administration four years ago. If you can mentally mute that vapid soundtrack and look at the similarities between administrations instead, regardless of party affiliation and campaign platforms, you'll learn a lot more about what's really going on in the world. 

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.

WHEN WILL WE STOP

The Desecration of Indigenous Sacred Sites?

A photograph of Uluru, a large sandstone rock formation in Australia, illuminated by the warm, orange light of a sunset. The foreground is filled with dry, scrubby vegetation.

Indigenous culture remains the tragic casualty of corporate greed and government indifference. — Joseph Camilleri

A SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS

Just today, we heard that the Fortescue Metals Group, the world's fourth largest iron ore mining company, has apologised for clearing a key Aboriginal site in Western Australia without following proper procedures. Work to expand the mine went ahead in the absence of community elders who were meant to salvage artefacts and perform cultural rites.

This is hardly an isolated incident. Other recent examples include:

- Earlier this week, BHP admitted a rock fall in the Pilbara – not part of an active mining operation – had damaged a sacred site.
- Last May, Rio Tinto blew up an ancient Aboriginal cave system at Juukan Gorge in Western Australia. Rock shelters dating back 46,000 years and showing continuous human occupation through the last Ice Age were wiped out.
- In Tasmania, the state government has asserted control over access to the sacred Wargata Mina, even though the Aboriginal community is supposed to own and manage it. The cave contains a series of hand stencils dating back over 15,000 years.
- Burrup Peninsula in north-western Australia is under increasing threat from a gas project, even though the site contains more than one million rock carvings (petroglyphs).

These are not isolated incidents, but the latest in a tragic series of destructive acts that have caused great distress to traditional landowners and an irretrievable loss for future generations.

While it is an offence to impact an area that has national heritage listing, many ancient Aboriginal sites have no such listing. This means that federal legislation has no application, leaving sacred sites at the mercy of state and territory jurisdictions, where laws are often weak or poorly enforced.

The Graeme Samuel's recent review of federal environment law said the government should bring in greater protections for Indigenous heritage 'immediately' as the only effective antidote to endless tokenism and empty symbolism.

Regrettably, the Morrison government seems intent on excluding the necessary protections for Indigenous heritage from its proposed environmental reforms. We are offered instead a promise of unspecified reforms at some unspecified future date.

In the meantime, the current bid to devolve Commonwealth powers to give state governments control over environmental approvals of developments will make a bad situation worse.

WHAT IS NEEDED

The first step must be to acknowledge that Aboriginal cultural heritage is a fundamental part of Aboriginal community life and cultural identity. Society as a whole must come to appreciate the global significance of this heritage and recognise it as integral to the heritage of all Australians.

To this end we should consider the adoption of a national charter that affirms the value and deeper significance of Indigenous sacred sites, and beyond that the cultural and spiritual connection that the First Peoples have with the land, which for them is the source of law.

Once such a charter is proclaimed and widely understood, the path towards a statutory framework that delivers nationally consistent protection for Aboriginal sacred sites will be that much easier to achieve.

This will be a system of protection that not only provides for consultation with traditional owners but gives them a decisive voice on how their land should be managed. The Indigenous peoples of this land, not others, should be responsible for determining the cultural significance of an object or area, even if this means that the cultural heritage needs to have priority over economic interests.

Little of this will come to pass if it is left to the corporate sector, or even to federal and state parliaments or the parties that hold sway in them. The initiative will emerge only from a wide-ranging and vigorous national conversation.

Such conversation will need the active and culturally sensitive engagement of our schools and universities, our mainstream and social media, the professions, the environmental and other social movements, and our religious institutions which claim a special relationship to the sacred. It is time to shift this conversation to a higher gear. 

The views expressed here are purely those of the author and not of Conversation at the Crossroads.

Joseph is Emeritus Professor, La Trobe University and Managing Director of Alexandria Agenda. He was founding Director of the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University (2006–2012), and has authored or edited some thirty books and more than 100 book chapters and journal articles. He is the recipient of the Order of Australia Medal, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.

https://crossroadsconversation.com.au/?page_id=359

Source: *Conversation at the crossroads*

from our readers



DEAR BEACONERS

World War Three would be the end of all species on Earth and its violence would probably ruin the delicate balance of our sun's planetary system. After World War Two, soldiers were given farms as land grants as compensation for their sacrifice in that war.

However, since then most armies on our planet seem to me like guns for hire to enforce their country's cultural bias against the lands in which they wish to wage war and the resources of those countries they wish to have. This requires little personal sacrifice and loss of life by the military since these days most rockets and bombs can be sent from a safe distance by firing remotely. Any land forces seek to divide the peoples in those lands and destroy their resources, their environment e.g. the use of Agent Orange, so they can better target the people who desperately try to defend themselves against the invaders. The weapons and bombs destroy their businesses, farms and homes.

On returning to their own countries the military are considered by most people as brave and are given land stolen from national parks or protected forests or Indigenous peoples, despite the fact that no one has sent bombs in their direction.

Even worse – each bomb heats up the atmosphere exacerbating global warming.

WORLD PEACE NOW.

A Sutherland, Qld

DEAR EDITOR

Please find enclosed the \$100 for my subscription and part donation. I wish the money to be split up as follows: a three-year subscription to the *Beacon* and the rest as a donation.

I always look forward to the *Beacon* arriving. I find the articles informative and generally aligned with my own ideas and knowledge.

Keep up your good work.

T Wilson, Vic

from our readers



DEAR SIR

Please find cheque for \$60 – great publication.
I've done a few of these ditties – I'm open to advice and opinion.
Cheers and best wishes for Xmas and 2021.
May the 2020 vision deliver us a cared for, non-rat race, cooperative world.
Love to all

A Nettleton, NSW

*The big attraction re MMT
it really is, REPAYMENT free
State CREATES credit –, lends to itself,
employing those, left on the shelf.
Check it against B of E prospectus
@ making plain, why we're cactus.
We've the rights to interest, on all credits
which we will create, @ confer as debits.
Our wants keep growth and the wheels turning
But hey! That's why – Goldilox is burning!
Patriarchy is greed, he's a fighter a risker,
put care of our ONLY, to his cooler, sister*

Kia Ora Team!

DEAR EDITOR

We really value your work.

A & J Bagnall, New Zealand

DEAR BEACON BOARD

Thanks for the December/January 2021 edition of the *Beacon*. Inequality in Australia is an issue which needs to be challenged. It's so unnecessary, it goes against our beloved national image and it is bad for the economy. Keep up the good work.

Enclosed is the (late) payment of my subscription and donation.

Regards

P Haslem, Tasmania

DEAR EDITOR

Happy Blessed Christmas and may you have the strength of David's tens of thousands to carry on your work.

M Powley, Qld

DEAR EDITOR

Two years' subscription.
Thank you for telling us the true state of affairs here and overseas.

D Porter, NSW

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Salaries, corruption and fascism

Protecting everyone's rights benefits us all

Biden's Iran policy is just Trump's Iran policy with a rainbow flag emoji

When will we stop the desecration of Indigenous sacred sites?

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