



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

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EDITORIAL

Anyone who expected wage or social justice from this tired, discredited, bankrupt government's budget has to be delusional or brain-dead. This is a government committed to supporting big business and neoliberalism, because that is their natural role. They are not 'better economic managers' as they consistently claim; they are dissemblers who hide the truth, who speak with forked tongues, aided and abetted by privately owned media conglomerates whose sole purpose is to keep them in government to serve the interests of their class.

It has been said 'that austerity is a political choice, not an economic necessity.' Absolutely true! This federal government has made that political choice and in doing so has deliberately and callously condemned generations of Australians to a life of misery and abject poverty.

This budget is not a people's budget – it is simply more of the same and it continues to punish all those who have suffered and continue to suffer from this government's deliberate and callous policies. It demonises the impoverished – those struggling to survive, while rewarding those more affluent.

According to the Australian Tax Office, last year at least 730 companies paid no tax in Australia despite a collective income of \$500 billion! Just think what could be done with the massive amount of tax these companies have avoided paying. A budget that serves their interests is not a people's budget; it is a big-end-of-town budget. Should we be angry? Absolutely. Should we demand that the budget be voted down? Undoubtedly.

Wages are stagnant, basic services are either axed altogether or starved of funds. Privatisation has enriched companies, brought poorer services and services that are unaffordable.

The poor are becoming more impoverished and homelessness is rising. Unions are under savage attack while criminals who run important institutions such as banks are protected and subsidised. We see blatant protection for the banking industry, but vicious attacks on the unemployed struggling to exist on \$40 per day. We see subsidies and support for the criminals of big business, but cuts and crumbs for community needs.

Those in government who claim the unemployed can live on the \$40 a day pittance currently served up to them need to publicly acknowledge their base salary of \$195,000 and a daily meal allowance of \$86 per day. This is not the politics of envy, as the government will claim; it is the politics of humanity and social justice.

A government that spends more on war memorials, war and the arms industry than on people's needs is a spent government. It must be removed. It is not serving our interests or those of the people of the world. Churches and similar organisations must stand up and speak out. And it is not enough to remove a reactionary, strife-ridden government that no longer serves the mass of the people if it is to be replaced by another that also fails to serve the people's needs.

The alternative government, the Labor Party, must immediately, clearly and comprehensively provide an alternative program, one that articulates where it stands on austerity, on taxation, on privatisation, on union bashing, on a liveable wage, on housing and unemployment, on making the super rich pay, and it must do this without fear or favour. The problems of the capitalist society in which we live can never be resolved under capitalism, but a genuine Labor Party with realistic policies could make the difference between abject poverty and a fairer society, and we expect no less. ☸



May Day and the Philippines

WHAT MAY DAY MEANS TO FILIPINO WORKERS IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE

If Australia is called the Land Down Under, my country the Philippines is called Pearl of the Orient Seas, because of its natural beauty, rich biodiversity and abundant natural resources. The Philippines is the fifth most mineralised country in the world, with the third largest deposits of gold, fourth for copper, fifth for nickel and sixth for chromite. Our nation's mineral resource assets are valued at around A\$1.32 trillion, but those remain largely untapped.

We are a country of over 7,100 islands clustered into 3 main island groups – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao – and a total land area of 300,000 square kilometres. With the current population at around 103.32 million, it is predicted that by the end of December 2018, it will reach 107.2 million. In Australia, our total land area of 7.692 million square kilometres holds a population of 24.13 million based on the 2016 census.

We have a presidential form of government – just like the United States. Elections are usually popularity contests where most people vote 'personalities' (actors and actresses, models and boxers) over 'principles'. Elections are also fought using gold, guns and goons – the 3Gs.

We are a peace loving, beautiful, hospitable, hardworking and resilient people. But we are also warriors with a long history of fighting oppression, colonisation, tyranny, fascism and dictatorship. The Filipino people's struggle for independence, justice and lasting peace can be traced back to the Spanish colonial period when the Philippine Revolution in 1896 erupted. Its short-term success was crushed by American colonisation at the turn of the 19th century, and is continuing into the semi-colonial rule of US imperialism.

There are currently two governments in the Philippines – the Manila government run by the reactionary Duterte regime and the revolutionary government in the countryside represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

Duterte won the 2016 election and gained popular support due to his pro-poor pronouncements and promise of change. Among his promises were independent foreign policy, end of labour contractualisation, distribution of land to poor farmers and the resumption of peace talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. In the early days of his presidency, it looked like he was keeping true to his promises. He appointed several known activists to some key government positions to effect implementation of some of his promises, but later on his appointees were not confirmed – in other words – rejected by the Philippine Congress. The peace talks with the NDFP were terminated before the second substantive agenda – the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms – was fully discussed.

Duterte is even expanding the neoliberal policies of the past governments. He and his cronies continue to clear his government of opposition, including interfering in the justice system by impeaching justices who are critical of his policies.

Human rights violation is widespread. Duterte's war on drugs has led to more than 13,000 killings of mostly poor Filipinos. The recent killings of 71-year-old Fr Tito Paez after he helped facilitate the release of a political prisoner and Fr Mark Ventura (who – just last week – was gunned down in the presence of children and the church choir) demonstrate the brutality of Duterte's regime. Both Fr Ventura and Fr Paez were anti-mining activists and advocates for the rights and welfare of the indigenous Filipinos.

Human rights defenders are being harassed and attacked. The Duterte government listed more than 600 human rights advocates as terrorists, practically giving a blanket order for their harassment and killing.

Duterte's government has no regard for the law and due process, both local and international. Last month, government agencies harassed an Australian missionary nun, Sister Patricia Fox, who has lived in the Philippines for 27 years. Sister Pat works with the poor and the underprivileged, exploited Filipinos. She has been ordered for deportation even as the investigation into her alleged illegal political activities is still ongoing.

Duterte and his cronies aim to hang on to power. They are pushing for a Charter Change (Cha-Cha) to change the Philippine constitution. The proposed charter change contains a dangerous provision that abolishes the congress and grants Duterte legislative powers that practically abolish the current constitutional commissions, overhauls the judiciary from the Court of Appeals down to the Regional Trial Courts and terminates thousands of government employees and officials. The proposed charter change also paves the way for opening the Philippine economy to foreign control that practically demolishes the 'protectionist economic provisions' in the 1987 constitution. There are other anti-people provisions in the proposed charter change that I will not discuss now.

CONDITIONS OF WORKERS

In any capitalist country, such as Australia, the workers are the first to feel the brunt of economic crisis, to be blamed for slow progress and financial difficulties and receive only the crumbs that fall from the capitalists' pockets. In the Philippines, being a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, the workers' conditions are even worse.

The total labour force in the Philippines, according to the latest labour survey, is 45.8 million. In the same period, jobless Filipinos number 10.9 million. Unemployment has increased from 15.7 per cent in December 2017 to 23.9 per cent in March 2018. This figure does not include the more than 1.7 million Filipinos that leave the country every year or an average of 4,690 daily to work overseas. There are now more than 10 million Filipinos working in other countries, including here in Australia.

The minimum daily wage is P512.00 per day (about A\$14.00 per day) in the National Capital Region. The actual value or the buying ability of this amount is worth P360.00 (about A\$10.00). The supposed family living wage (FLW) for a family of 5 is P967.00 (A\$26.00). Even if both parents are working, the total wage of both will still be short to provide for the family and with an additional cost for house help or child care.

Contractualisation & labour flexibilisation are rampant. With the absence of policy to stop this practice, employers are using various techniques, such as sacking permanent employees and hiring contractual ones, company restructuring to change the status of the employees or establishing its own union to end the collective bargaining agreement and change their hiring system.

Labour flexibilisation includes a compressed working week and multitasking. With this, a total production of 76 hours can be achieved per line with only ordinary pay. This is also being practised here in Australia by employers, especially in process work. Each worker will work for only 3 days per week from 12 to 14 hours per day totalling 38 hours. Machine operators produced for each machine a total of 76 production hours a week

and the employer only pays each employee an ordinary time rate. Sometimes, the employee is asked to come another day to work a shift, with no pay.

UNION/WORKERS ORGANISING

It is not easy to organise workers in the Philippines or to form a workers union, although unionism is legal and getting registered as a union is easy. A union needs only 20% of the workers on a site to form one. The government serves the interest of the capitalists, especially the big foreign capitalists and sees to it that unions are ineffective, and if strong, they are harassed and intimidated and/or coerced.



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Workers forming a group or a union are terminated once the employer finds out about it unless the union was initiated by the employer, which in turn kowtows to the blatant wishes of the employer.

Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), or May First Movement, organises workers through solid organising. Part of their work is organising people within the community. Organisers even work after hours and meet workers after work. They would gather regularly in a house and discuss various workers' issues. Here, they are free to discuss any issue. Part of the discussion and workers' education is the course on 'genuine, militant and anti-imperialist unionism'.

KMU organisers discuss the principles of unionism and clarify the realities of the contradictions between capital and wages and between the capitalist and the workers. This contradiction will never be effaced. Every increase in wages is a decrease in profits. The organiser ensures that every union member understands this and that they are ready for the contradictions they are facing and the possible retaliation of the capitalists. The workers are made to understand that it is not easy to win, that every

benefit, right and entitlement of the workers has to be fought for.

A militant standpoint for united action is the only way. The workers cannot depend on anyone else other than their own united strength. The workers cannot depend on any political party or legal recourse. They need to understand and be well versed in local and national issues so they know where they stand.

The workers' strike is legal in Philippine law but in practice it is not. There is a de facto 'no union no strike' policy in many big companies, especially in export-processing zones and agro-industrial zones where there are big concentration of workers. There are workplaces where you will find various armed guards, police, military and company goons.

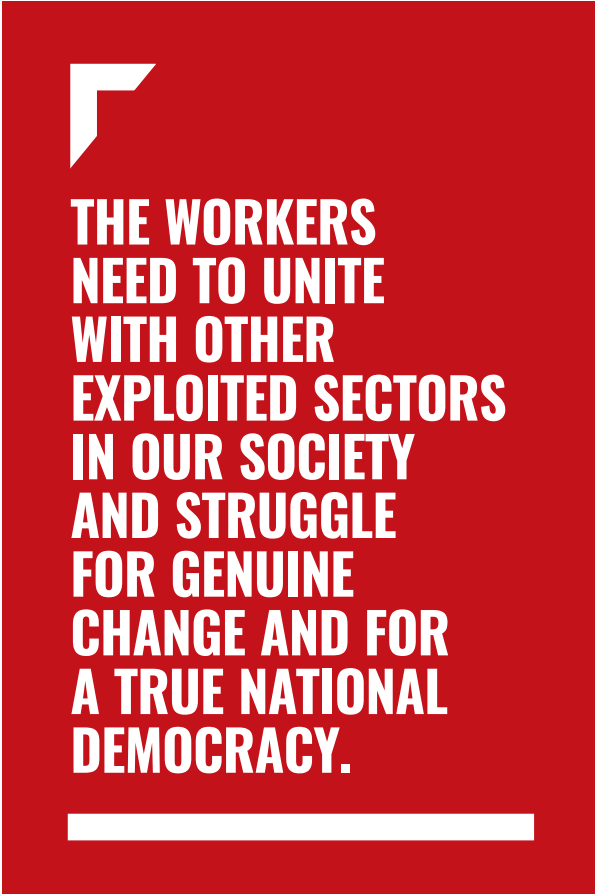
The Duterte regime, a puppet of big foreign capitalists, is being protected by the imperialists, led by the United States. Being a puppet, the Duterte regime will never side or even consider the interests of the workers. It is prepared (as other past regimes have done) to use force to quell the unions or anyone that counterbalances the capitalist agenda and its neoliberal policies. So, union struggle is not enough to offer any meaningful change on the conditions of labour. Whatever success in their struggle or any reform in the labour policy is achieved can easily be overturned later. We see this happening so many times here in Australia. One example is penalty rates for overtime work.

The workers need to unite with other exploited sectors in our society and struggle for genuine change and for a true national democracy. Without this, all those hard-won entitlements, benefits and workers' rights will one by one disappear in time.

MAY DAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Filipino workers see May Day as the yearly culmination and celebration of the workers' struggle. It is a day to show their unity with workers and exploited people throughout the world. May Day in the Philippines is not just a celebration, it is a day of big protests in various parts of the country against the exploitation of workers and for better pay, better working conditions and the recognition of workers' rights.

May Day celebrations in the Philippines occur for a period of more than a week. KMW organises the biggest workers' gathering. It includes an international gathering (ISA) where delegates from different regions in the Philippines and delegates from other countries join to share their experiences and discuss current workers' issues. There are exposure tours organised to regional areas. There are field trips to worksites where delegates, especially the international delegates, hear organising experience, stories and the workers' struggles. These trips focus on factories and other workplaces with a high rate of short-term contractual workers. Sharing is done mostly on picket lines.



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The biggest event on the May Day celebration calendar is the May Day march and rally.

Last Tuesday, the May Day rally was a historical first with about 60,000 in metro Manila and 150,000 people nationwide marching – a very strong show of the workers' growing frustration, disappointment and dissatisfaction over President Duterte's failure to fulfil his promises. Rival labour federations across the political spectrum marched together. They formed an alliance after Duterte turned on his promise to end labour-only contracting. As the alliance said: 'We are utterly frustrated. Despite our desire to continue sitting at the negotiating table and follow reason, the President has decided on retaining business-as-usual, by siding with local and foreign investors who have no respect for security of tenure.'

In solidarity with Filipino workers, I enjoin you to:

Write a short email to President Duterte, calling on his government to respect workers' rights, increase the minimum wage to P750 per day or P16,000 per month, end contractualisation, stop large-scale mining projects on ancestral domains, stop the 'drug war' slaughter, end harassment and attacks on activists, and re-start the peace talks with the NDFP.

Long live workers' solidarity!

Maraming salamat! Thank you! 🙏

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Write down: I, Uri Avnery, soldier number 44410 of the Israel army, hereby dissociate myself from the army sharpshooters who murder unarmed demonstrators along the Gaza Strip, and from their commanders, who give them the orders, up to the commander in chief.

We don't belong to the same army, or to the same state. We hardly belong to the same human race.

Is my government committing 'war crimes' along the border of the Gaza Strip?

I don't know. I am not a jurist.

It seems that officials of the International Criminal Court believe that the acts of our soldiers do constitute war crimes. They demand an international investigation.

To prevent that, our army command proposes an Israeli military investigation. That is manifestly ridiculous – an army investigating itself about acts committed on direct orders of the Chief of Staff.

As was published in advance, sharpshooters were posted along the border fence and ordered to kill 'ringleaders' of the unarmed protesters on the other side of the fence. The Gaza leadership had announced that these unarmed protests were to take place every week, after Friday prayers, until Naqba Day.

During the first two Fridays, 29 unarmed people were shot dead and more than a thousand wounded by sharpshooters.

For me this is not a judicial question. It is a crime, not only against the unarmed protesters. It is also a crime against the State of Israel, against the people of Israel and against the Israeli army.

Since I was a member of that army on the day of its foundation, I think that it is also a crime against my comrades and me.

This week a short video, recorded by a soldier at the time of such an action, was widely seen in Israel.

It shows the action from the angle of a soldier who was obviously standing next to a sharpshooter. The sharpshooter sees the demonstrators from a distance of hundreds of yards. The hairs of his sights move at

random, then settle on an individual. He shoots. The person drops on the spot.

A joyous cry 'Yesh' is heard all around from unseen soldiers who have been watching. 'Yesh' means 'got him', a jubilant yell, such as would accompany a hunter's success in killing a rabbit.

Many hundreds of thousands of Israelis have seen this film by now, since it was shown for the first time on TV. **Except for a few articles and letters to the editor (in Haaretz), there has been no protest.**

This did not happen overseas, in some remote colony. It happened right next to us, 45 minute's drive from my home.

The killer was not a hardened mercenary. He – and the joyous soldiers around him – were just ordinary youngsters, drafted at the age of 18 like most Jewish Israelis.

All of them were just 'following orders'. (Remember?) We have not heard of one single case of a soldier refusing orders.

Until two weeks ago, I had the highest respect for our highest officer, the Chief of Staff, Gadi Eizenkot. Surrounded by officers who are mere military technicians, he seemed an officer who, in spite of his unmilitary appearance, was well capable of upholding the dignity of the army against the punk who serves as Minister of Defense.

No more. Eizenkot has given the murderous orders. Why, for heaven's sake?

Like the British in India and the white racists in the US, the Israeli government does not know how to deal with unarmed protest. It has never encountered it. It does not exist in Arab tradition.

By chance this week I saw the classic movie about Mahatma Gandhi. The British tried everything – they beat him and myriads of others into pulp, they shot thousands of others. When Gandhi and his followers suffered this torment and did not hit back, the British eventually admitted defeat and went away.

So did the white racist opponents of Martin Luther King in Alabama. A Palestinian follower of his came to this country at the beginning of the occupation and tried to convince his countrymen to try this method. The Israel army opened fire, and the Palestinians reverted to the armed struggle.

Not this time. The (violent) Islamic Hamas in the Gaza Strip call on the population to try unarmed protest, tens of thousands follow. This can lead to unforeseen results. One of them is the sharpshooters' order to kill more or less at random.

When I stated publicly that I am ashamed, a reader accused me of hypocrisy. He cited from my two books about our (1948) War of Independence, in which I had described atrocities to which I was a witness.

Sure, there were atrocities (as in every war). The perpetrators were soldiers of all ethnic and social groups. But they were denounced by some of their comrades (also of all ethnic and social groups). Most soldiers were in the middle, following the most persuasive.

Now the picture is different. Not only is the shooting of the unarmed protesters, far from the fence, done by order, but there seem to be no other voices. The military and political leadership is united. Even in civilian society, voices against the mass murder are very few.

How do the Israeli media react? Well, they don't. This momentous event in Israel's history is almost ignored.

Fortunately for the perpetrators, there are plenty of events to take our minds off them and their actions. President Bashar al-Assad has apparently used chemical weapons against his rebels. The Israeli media are having a feast. How awful! How barbarous! How Arab!

Then there is the problem of the 36,000 'illegal' (meaning non-Jewish) African workers who have entered Israel. The government wants to throw them out. Decent Israelis very properly want to prevent this. That is a full-time job. No time for the Gaza Strip.

And there is, of course, Holocaust Memorial Day, which happens conveniently this week. One can write endlessly about this awful chapter in our history. What is Gaza compared to that horrible event?

What about our media?

The sorrowful fact is that the Israeli media have reverted to what they were in the early days of the state: an instrument of the government. It took my news magazine dozens of years to break that habit. For many years we had a decent press, with some wonderful journalists and broadcasters.

No more. A few are left, but the great majority of the press is now coordinated with the regime

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('gleichgeschaltet' in German). Two minutes on Gaza. Twenty minutes on what's happening in Syria. Ten minutes for the latest (imaginary) outbreak of anti-Semitism in the British Labor Party.

Most of the journalists and broadcasters, honest and well-meaning people all, are not even conscious of what they are doing (or not doing). They are innocent of any other thoughts.

Where is the 'Left'? Where is the so-called 'Centre'?

They have not disappeared, as some lament. Far from it. A shift of some per cent or a move of one of the small parties would suffice to topple Binyamin Netanyahu.

But they all seem to be paralysed. Nobody dares to speak out against the killing, apart from some faint whispers. Even the many admirable groups of youngsters who fight against the occupation, each on some special sector, are silent about the Gaza killings.

No mass demonstrations. No huge protests. Nothing.

So we, too, are to blame. And perhaps more than others.

Please write down: I am guilty! ☹

Uri Avnery is an Israeli journalist, co-founder of Gush Shalom, and a former member of the Knesset.

*This article first appeared on the website of Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc) – an Israeli peace organisation
<http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1523632747>*

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



Damascus:

the Sarajevo of the 21st Century?

Sarajevo is synonymous with the trigger that ignited World War I in 1914, which led to over 10 million deaths. It saw the demonic birth of modern wars of mass destruction.

Lazare contends that the American, French and British air strikes on April 14 are just the 'first step in a far more aggressive US military campaign against Syria'.

He added: 'The US cannot leave Syria, it will never leave Syria, greater US military aggression is to come ... Damascus is the Sarajevo of the 21st century.'

History rarely repeats itself exactly. But history certainly can rhyme, so to speak, meaning that repetition of approximate patterns are discernible.

Exactly a century after the very first worldwide, industrial-scale war ended in 1918, there is a real risk of a similar conflagration erupting in Syria. Only, if this were to happen, the danger of escalation is even greater, given that potential combatants have nuclear weapons.

It is not inevitable that history repeats, or even rhymes. It is not inevitable that Syria's seven-year war will explode into an international war. But, nevertheless, the danger is proximate.

As with Sarajevo in 1914, the burgeoning configuration of rival powers is present. All it would take is for one spark to ignite the powder keg of forces.

One such spark was the US, French and British air strikes against Syria earlier this month. Syria and its allies, Russia and Iran, denounced the military attack as an aggression, a violation of international law owing to the alleged pretext of revenge for a chemical weapons incident on April 7 near Damascus was patently fraudulent.

The tragedy of the looming conflict in Syria is that few politicians or citizens would want an all-out war to eventuate, knowing that the consequences could be so utterly horrific.

There is every reason to believe that US and Russian military commands are maintaining close communications to avoid any accidental clash in Syria, and thus avoid a confrontation.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, in a lengthy interview with Russian media, said that Moscow had warned Washington about 'red lines' in Syria, which he said the American side abided by when it conducted the air strikes earlier this month. There were no casualties and the minimal extent of damage suggest that the air strikes were more for show than for any real military purpose.

Lavrov also said that he was confident the present American and Russian leaderships would not allow an escalation of conflict in Syria.

The foreign minister said: 'Speaking about the risk of a military confrontation, I feel absolutely confident in assuming that the militaries will not allow this, and of course neither will President Putin nor President Trump. They are leaders, after all, elected by their people and responsible for their peace.'

Nonetheless, getting back to the Sarajevo analogy, the fiendishly perplexing thing is that the configuration of forces is such that the logic of war can override what leaders say with rationality. It is probably fair to say that European leaders back in 1914 did not want nor foresee how events would unravel in an uncontrollable and catastrophic way.



**IT IS IMPERATIVE
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A SELF-DETERMINED
POLITICAL PROCESS,
AS SEVERAL UN
RESOLUTIONS HAVE
MANDATED.**

In Syria today, we have American, French and British forces operating on the ground and in the air. A US aircraft-carrier battle group has now arrived in the Mediterranean within striking distance from Syria. All of these NATO forces, including Turkey, it should be said, are illegally threatening Syria.

There seems little doubt that the recent build-up of NATO military power threatening Syria is a result of their proxy terror groups having been defeated after a seven-year war. That strategic defeat can be attributed to Russia and Iran's intervention on the side of its Syrian ally following a legal request for help from Damascus.

US President Trump has lately been talking about withdrawing American forces from Syria. That could be idle bluster from Trump given that the Pentagon seems determined to do just the opposite. Also, if Trump manages to draw down some US troop levels in Syria, he has stated a desire to replace those forces with military units from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab regimes, as well as possibly contracting private mercenaries under the charge of his friend Erik Prince, the founder of infamous Blackwater USA.

Then we have French President Emmanuel Macron this week urging Trump to maintain the US military presence in Syria, warning that the Western states cannot afford to let Iran gain influence, despite the fact that Iranian forces are legally present in Syria under request from Damascus, and despite the fact that Iran, along with Russia, helped defeat the Western-backed covert war

for regime change using terrorist proxies. The sheer arrogance of Macron!

Adding to the combustible mix is Saudi Arabia and Israel who have said they are willing to join in any future US-led air strikes on Syria.

It seems clear that the Saudis and Israelis are itching to start a war with Iran which they obsessively view as their nemesis.

Almost a week before the April 14 US-led air strikes, a far more dangerous incident occurred on April 8, when Israeli air-launched missiles hit the T-4 military airbase in central Syria. Among the dead were seven Iranian advisors. Again, it was another spark jumping at the powder keg.

Iran's national security chief Ali Shamkhani this week warned of 'consequences and retaliatory actions' for what was an outrageous act of war by Israel.

In response to this legitimate statement of Iranian self-defence, Israel's Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman had the chutzpah to say: 'Israel doesn't want war but if Iran attacks Tel Aviv we will hit Tehran.'

Apart from Lieberman's arrogant irrationality, what his statement implies is that a false-flag incident is begging in order to give Israel a pretext for more aggression against Syria and Iran.

The danger in Syria is not just the accumulation of military forces but the dynamic of many moving parts. An incident involving Israel and Iran could be the flashpoint that explodes with impact on the concentric forces aligned.

Politicians and military leaders in the US and Russia may have no intention of all-out war. They may even genuinely abhor such a scenario.

But that is why the Sarajevo analogy invoked by Daniel Lazare holds. Disastrous consequences can follow ineluctably from the circumstances, regardless of better intentions.

This is why it is imperative that all military forces in Syria must stand down and let the country pursue a self-determined political process, as several UN resolutions have mandated.

The legal and moral onus is first and foremost on the US, France and Britain to stand down their military forces, and to stop interfering in Syria. They, after all, are illegally present.

Ominously, however, the NATO allies do not seem willing to comply with international law. They are recklessly piling up the powder keg. And to their shame, the United Nations and the European Union are cowardly complicit in acquiescing to the belligerence of Washington and its allies. The UN and EU should be explicitly demanding the NATO powers to desist from their illegal activities towards Syria. But no. Cowardly silence.

In that regard, Damascus, fearfully, looks increasingly like Sarajevo in 1914.

Against that, we might recall that the Syrian city is also synonymous with 'conversion' and 'repentance' – as

goes the story of Saul the Jewish mass murderer of early Christians who then 'saw the light' of divine righteousness to turn away from iniquity to become peace-loving St Paul.

However, given the arrogant, deluded mass-murderers among the US-led NATO alliance, such a timely conversion seems unlikely. ☹

Finian Cunningham has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. He is a Master's graduate in Agricultural Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in newspaper journalism. He is also a musician and songwriter. For nearly 20 years he worked as an editor and writer in major news media organisations, including The Mirror, Irish Times and Independent.

Source: Information Clearing House:



In 2013 Theresa May, who was then Britain's Home Secretary, announced a 'hostile environment' for illegal immigrants. Since that time, cases have emerged of Windrush children (now adults), who have lived in the UK for more than several decades, are facing threat of deportation. They travelled on their parents' papers and were never issued with their own.

WHO ARE THE WINDRUSH GENERATION?

The British government invited the Windrush generation, named after the ship that brought them to the UK as citizens, to help rebuild this country in the wake of World War Two. The children of these migrants from Africa and the Caribbean are now adults and have lived in the country for decades. They are currently facing possible deportation.

WHO IS AFFECTED AND HOW?

The Migration Observatory at Oxford University estimates that there are about 500,000 people resident in the UK who arrived before 1971 from Commonwealth countries as a result of the invitation.

Examples: PW, a former cook at the House of Commons restaurant arrived from Jamaica in 1968, aged 10 years. She built a life in the UK and was a

grandmother by the time she was taken to the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre last October for 'failing to prove her right to remain'. The case against her was finally dropped but it was revealed that hers wasn't an isolated case.

AT, a 63-year-old who arrived in London from Jamaica as a teenager has been refused NHS treatment for prostate cancer because he could not prove he was entitled to care. He was told he would have to pay £54,000 for radiotherapy.

Thousands are said to be too scared to come forward and admit they lack documents.

A letter calling for amnesty for the Windrush children has been signed by 140 MPs across the political spectrum.

The issue has led to the resignation of the current Home Secretary for 'inadvertently' misleading information over the levels set for voluntary removal of migrants. More than 130,000 have signed a petition demanding an amnesty for these immigrants who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1971.

We are obviously not the only country with Dutton policies. ☹

A FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

(WRITTEN BY A WELL-KNOWN UNITARIAN, **CHARLES DICKENS** IN 1841)

I'll sing you a new ballad, and I'll
warrant it first-rate,
Of the days of that old gentleman
who had that old estate;
When they spent the public money
at a bountiful old rate
On ev'ry mistress, pimp, and scamp,
at ev'ry noble gate,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

The good old laws were garnished
well with gibbets, whips, and chains,
With fine old English penalties, and
fine old English pains,
With rebel heads, and seas of blood
once hot in rebel veins;
For all these things were requisite to
guard the rich old gains
Of the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

This brave old code, like Argus, had
a hundred watchful eyes,
And ev'ry English peasant had his
good old English spies,
To tempt his starving discontent
with fine old English lies,
Then call the good old Yeomanry to
stop his peevish cries,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!
The good old times for cutting
throats that cried out in their need,

The good old times for hunting
men who held their fathers' creed,
The good old times when William
Pitt, as all good men agreed,
Came down direct from Paradise at
more than railroad speed ...
Oh the fine old English Tory times;
When will they come again!

In those rare days, the press was
seldom known to snarl or bark,
But sweetly sang of men in pow'r,
like any tuneful lark;
Grave judges, too, to all their evil
deeds were in the dark;
And not a man in twenty score
knew how to make his mark.
Oh the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

Those were the days for taxes, and
for war's infernal din;
For scarcity of bread, that fine old
dowagers might win;
For shutting men of letters up,
through iron bars to grin,
Because they didn't think the Prince
was altogether thin,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!
But Tolerance, though slow in flight,
is strong-wing'd in the main;
That night must come on these fine
days, in course of time was plain;




The pure old spirit struggled, but its
struggles were in vain;
A nation's grip was on it, and it died
in choking pain,
With the fine old English Tory days,
All of the olden time.

The bright old day now dawns
again; the cry runs through the land,
In England there shall be dear bread
– in Ireland, sword and brand;
And poverty, and ignorance, shall
swell the rich and grand,
So, rally round the rulers with the
gentle iron hand,
Of the fine old English Tory days;
Hail to the coming time!

Courtesy 'Quest' Winter 2012

DID YOU KNOW?



There's class warfare, all right, but
it's my class, the rich class, that's
making war, and we're winning.

— Warren Buffett —

AZ QUOTES

from our readers



TO BEACON

A wonderful publication!

Sorry for the delay: an avoidable family illness.

K Muir, NSW

DEAR DONNA

Please find enclosed \$10 concessional fee for one year's subscription for *The Beacon*.

The Editorial Board do a great job in presenting a very interesting and informative journal.

Kindest regards

L Dalrymple, Vic

DEAR SIR/MADAM

Enclosed subscription for concession \$10 – plus \$10 donation for 2018.

Thank you for your very informative publication and articles regarding current and public issues.

Yours faithfully

K Baldini, Vic

DEAR BEACON

A highly developed siege mentality

During Israel's 2008–2009 attack on Gaza, journalist Patrick Cockburn observed:

*Israeli society was always introverted but these days it reminds me more than ever of the Unionists in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s or the Lebanese Christians in the 1970s. Like Israel, both were communities with a highly developed siege mentality **which led them always to see themselves as victims even when they were killing other people.** There were no regrets or even knowledge of what they inflicted on others and therefore any retaliation by the other side appeared as unprovoked aggression inspired by unreasoning hate.*

Much the same appears to be true again...

Comment from a Beacon reader

A UNITARIAN DOXOLOGY

Our philosophy consists of those actions, purposes and experiences that are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to a unitarian. It includes labour, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship – all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living.

We seek the fulfilment of life in the here and now – this is the explanation of our social passion.

We do not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but rather we insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relevance to human needs.

Our religious emotions are therefore expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social wellbeing.

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