



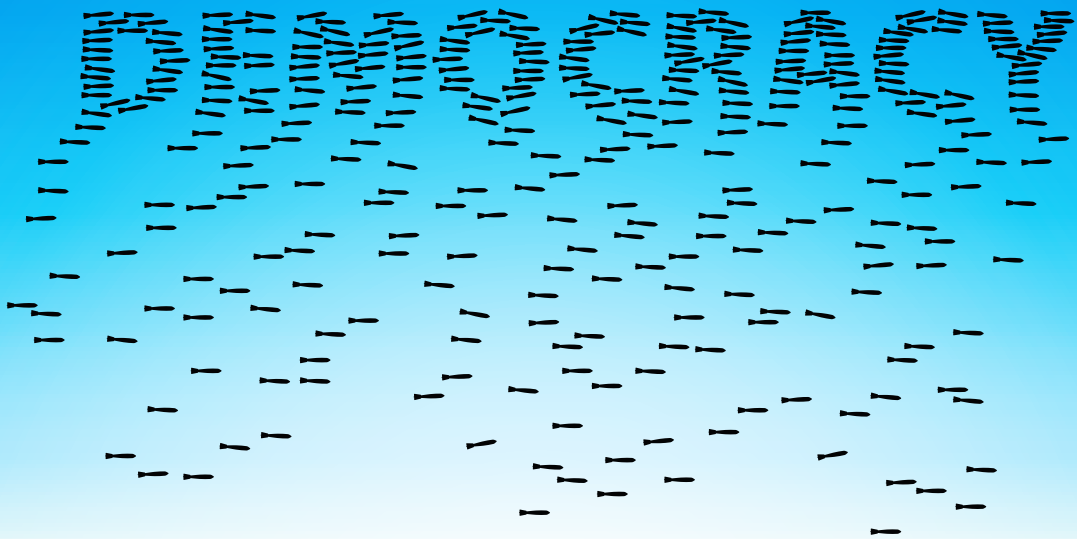
the Beacon

SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

Journal of the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church

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Concentrating private power dilutes



EDITORIAL

The first truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism – ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or by any other controlling private power ... Among us today a concentration of private power without equal in history is growing. – Franklin D Roosevelt

The recent suspension of senior lecturer Tim Anderson from his work at the University of Sydney (and later from the university campus itself) comes as no surprise at a time when there is a massive move to suppress democracy, not just in Australia, but across the world. His suspension and ban is an unacceptable offence to all supporters of democracy and has been opposed by Tim's fellow academics. In their letter of support they say in part, 'Academic freedom is meaningless if it is suspended when its exercise is deemed offensive.'

This attack on democratic freedom and of Tim Anderson for his anti-war statements and for his support of the Palestinian people is a symptom of a much wider and more sinister modus operandi. It is another step towards suppression of the truth and it is a stride towards stifling political understanding and awareness that fosters community action. It is a deliberate attempt to ensure that there is no opposition to their plans for wars for profit and to protect the military/industrial complex which has become such an important part of capitalist economies.

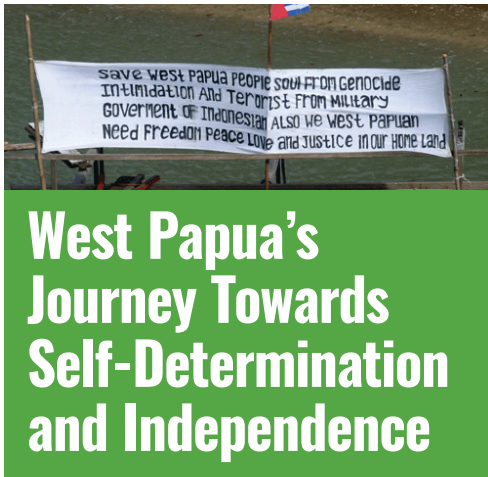
There is nothing new in the process we are witnessing. History is littered with examples of human suppression and the violation of human dignity. What is new is the growing sophistication of the means of suppression that now exist.

We know that already there have been massive pieces of legislation introduced that will be used to restrict our right to defend our conditions and way of life. We know that they are being introduced ostensibly to deal with 'terrorism' but they are capable of being used against any attempt by the people to defend their rights.

The ruling class of each nation utilises such means to suit the political situation in their country and the state of rising opposition to their increasingly austere methods. So, in some countries there is outright fascist control, as in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines; in others there is a preparedness for an upsurge of outrage and action, as in France; and in others like Australia where the myth is still strong that parliamentary elections will protect our democracy, and that by electing one of the two major parties our future will be secure, they are still preparing for an upsurge in political action.

The need for a federal bill of rights has never been more urgent. While we know that such a bill is not the full answer to curb the move towards a more repressive state, it will afford us some important protection in the fight for human rights. Such a bill has been rejected by both major parties. We need to ask why?

A TALK GIVEN AT THE MELBOURNE UNITARIAN PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH
ON 25 NOVEMBER 2018 BY LUCIUS ITLAY, WEST PAPUAN REFUGEE



West Papua's Journey Towards Self-Determination and Independence



My name is Lucius Itlay. I am the Secretary of the Melbourne West Papuan Community and a representative from the West Papuan Office in Docklands.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri people of Kulin, and humbly pay my respects to the past, present and emerging leaders of this land where I am standing.

Today, I would like to talk to you about the West Papua struggle for self-determination and independence. But first, I will tell you a bit about myself and how I arrived here in Australia.

I am from the Dani tribe in the Baliem Valley of the Central Highlands of West Papua.

Our ancestors have been in West Papua for sixty thousand years! Torres Strait was formed during the last Ice Age, six thousand years ago. But we were there, on our land, sixty thousand years ago. Jesus was alive two thousand years ago. Imagine that!

MY ESCAPE FROM WEST PAPUA

When I was fourteen, I got on a traditional canoe with 42 other West Papuans. We circumnavigated my huge island home then we crossed through Torres Strait and landed at Mapoon in Far North Queensland.

It was an unforgettable journey for us. Just crossing Torres Strait took us five nights and six days. The storms and waves were huge, the currents were strong, and we got lost due to a broken motor engine. We didn't have

a compass or anything to guide us, so we were hoping for the wind to carry us in the right direction.

We arrived in Australia on 17 January 2006. We were granted Temporary Protection Visas after spending two months on Christmas Island, and relocated here in Melbourne later that year.

You probably know why we came to seek refuge in Australia, but I would like to tell you a bit about who the West Papuans are and what happened in the 1960s.

SO, WHO ARE THE WEST PAPUANS?

West Papuans are the indigenous peoples in the west half of New Guinea Island. We have more than three hundred tribes, and our tribal cultures are very strong. It is our tribal kinship system that holds us together in resistance and in nation making.

THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN WEST PAPUA

Most of us became Christian after the arrival of Protestant missionaries on the north coast in 1855 and Catholics on the south coast in 1892.

Protestant and Catholic missions introduced formal education in the 1920–30s and remained responsible for the sector until the end of the Dutch colonial era. Since the transfer to Indonesia in 1962, there has been a public education system, although the parents make great sacrifices to send their children to religious based-institutions.

It was through God's eyes, looking down from above,



Dani tribesmen from the highland of West Papua dressed up with feather headdresses and wearing penis guards. Dani women wear grass skirts with their body and face painted. They dress up for war or for special occasions.



Women and men from the coastal areas and Island people of West Papua dress up with beautiful, bright, colourful dresses, face paint and feather headdresses. They are known to be great musicians and dancers.

not our own eyes looking out to our tribal border, that we saw the nation of West Papua for the first time. Our struggle for freedom from Indonesia is based on *justice, peace, and love*, which is our understanding of self-determination.



The famous Asmat tribe with their amazing woodcarving skills that can be found in many museums in the world wear their traditional grass skirts and head covers. They are also great musicians.

SO WHAT HAPPENED IN 1961?

Around this time, Indonesia's economy was about to collapse. There was a deal done between the US President John F Kennedy and President Sukarno for \$900,000 worth of helicopters and a \$100 million economic aid package. In return, Sukarno agreed to the US proposal for a short interim UN Trusteeship followed by an Indonesian takeover and the promise to control the Indonesian Communist Party.

<https://www.freewestpapua.org/documents/the-new-york-agreement/>

Have you heard people talk about the 'hidden' or 'slow motion' genocide in West Papua?

In 1962, after decades of Dutch colonialism, West Papuans constituted 99% of the population. Under Indonesia, since May 1963, we are now less than 47% of the population, with an annual growth rate of 1.8% (in contrast to the non-Papuan rate of 10.8%).



By 2020 we are calculated to be a 'small and dwindling minority' of just 28% of the population. Why? Because the Indonesian government is using systematic, slow motion genocide to destroy the sovereignty and cultural integrity of the West Papuan people.

SLOW MOTION GENOCIDE

The United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948, lists examples of genocidal acts to include:

- killings
- causing serious bodily and mental harm
- the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to cause the destruction of a group
- (in other words, extreme poverty and lack of essential health services)
- the forcible removal of children to another group.

Slow motion genocide is blamed for more than half a million missing West Papuans since the last Dutch census – people were shot, poisoned, exiled, starved, born dead or not at all. Women are sterilised. Activists were often confined and tortured – even assassinated. Foreign media is outlawed; even Indonesian journalists have been assassinated.

Extra judicial killings happen on a regular basis and there is no justice for West Papuans. Violence in West Papua often leaves many West Papuans living in trauma. They are constantly on the run – in fear and displaced from their own homeland.

On a video of the recent incident on 15 September this year, police started shooting students in Timika for having a peaceful gathering. The incident resulted in one person killed and several other students severely wounded.

THE LAND

For us West Papuans, the land is the people's source of spirituality and sustainability; however, it has been ravaged by miners and loggers. There is no justice in Indonesian West Papua. There is no peace in Indonesian West Papua. There is no love in Indonesian West Papua.



The Australian Attorney-General, Sir Garfield Barwick, convinced Prime Minister Menzies to abandon Australia's support of the Netherlands self-determination program in West Papua, and to vote for the New York Agreement on 15 August 1962 that effectively handed West Papua to Indonesia.

Destruction of the land in West Papua is happening through illegal logging and mining. Miles and miles of rainforest are cut down for palm oil plantations.

The huge Grasberg gold and copper mine in Timika is operated by the multinational mining company Freeport McMoran, with almost half now acquired by Indonesian companies Persero and Inalum. Its mining waste has polluted the whole river system downstream, also including agricultural land and the forests.

In the sea in Bintuni Bay – BP Petroleum is destroying the coral and the beaches for export gas and oil.

West Papuans don't benefit from any of this resource harvesting and extraction.

SO, WHAT DO WE WEST PAPUANS WANT?

We want justice, peace and love. That, for us, is self-determination and independence. For West Papuans, justice means our right to determine what we want, and for people to respect and honour that. Peace means our land is not overwhelmed with tanks and soldiers and mosques. Love means not destroying our resources. And it also means staying friends with Indonesia after our independence, like the East Timorese managed to do.

The support for West Papuan's struggle for independence and self-determination continues to grow from the 1960s. From 2012 to the current date,

the West Papuan issue has been raised in the following forums: the Melanesian Spear Head Group and the larger Pacific Island Forum, the Africa Caribbean Pacific bloc in the UN and the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

Next year we are taking our case for independence to the United Nations General Assembly, and we want Australia to vote for us, not against us. We want Australia to vote 'Yes' rather than 'No'. So we need your voice and your energy to tell the Australian Government what to do.

It is because of the violence of the Indonesian state that we West Papuans want to be free. We want all police and military brutality to cease.

Justice. Peace. Love. These are the driving principles of our life and our negotiations. We did not have a FREE CHOICE regarding our future and by appealing to the United Nations we are hoping for this now. We want a chance for self-determination. We want the civil and human rights of West Papuans to be acknowledged and free choice for our future to be granted to our people.

Lucius Itlay, Secretary, Melbourne West Papua community and representative of the West Papua Office in Docklands.

The office always welcomes new volunteers and supporters, and you can contact the office on 0420 250 389 or email us at frwpwomensoffice@gmail.com. 🕊

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.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

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

As British Quakers divest from the Occupation, Jewish leaders seek to discredit and smear them



Last week, Quakers in Britain became the first Christian denomination in the UK to adopt a responsible investment policy towards the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian land. It was the first denomination but I doubt it will be the last.

Within hours of the announcement, the Board of Deputies, the body that asserts its right to represent Jewish interests in Britain, had issued a statement of rebuke from its president, Marie van der Zyl. In a few short paragraphs, van der Zyl gathered together all of the usual anti-BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) talking points and fired them in one almighty blast at the Quakers.

The Board's statement is worth examining in detail since it reveals so much about the Jewish establishment's mission to set the parameters of acceptable debate on Israel to the detriment of interfaith relations.

A MORAL DUTY

Paul Parker, recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, explained why the Quakers had taken the decision:

Our long history of working for a just peace in Palestine and Israel has opened our eyes to the many injustices and violations of international law arising from the military occupation of Palestine by the Israeli government.

With the occupation now in its 51st year, and with no end in near sight, we believe we have a moral duty to state publicly that we will not invest in any company profiting from the occupation.

The Quakers also reaffirmed a 2011 decision to boycott goods produced in Israeli settlements.

President van der Zyl's response was a verbal assault that showed no respect for the Quakers after nearly 400 years of commitment to peace and justice in Britain or the practical experience it has in bringing reconciliation to some of the world's most troubled places. Instead, Marie van der Zyl was an inch away from accusing the Quakers of antisemitism.

The appalling decision of the Friends House hierarchy to divest from just one country in the world – the only Jewish state – despite everything else going on around the globe, shows the dangers of the obsessive and tunnel-visioned approach that a narrow clique of church officials have taken in recent years.

There's a lot going on in that opening salvo but all of it is devoid of historical or political context.

What exactly is so 'appalling' about a Christian denomination with a natural concern for what takes place in the Holy Land, choosing to demonstrate its historic commitment to non-violence by implementing a policy of divestment from companies which profit from the occupation of Palestinian land?

INCONSISTENCY?

Quakers have used boycotts as a tactic many times over the centuries. In the 19th century, they boycotted produce produced by slave labour, even refusing to put sugar in their tea. In the mid-20th century, American Quakers supported boycotts in support of

Black Civil Rights. In the 1980s, Quakers backed anti-apartheid boycotts. Today, Quakers in Britain refuse to invest in fossil fuels.

The Board ignores this ethical tradition, preferring to distort the Quakers' motivations by accusing its leadership of being solely concerned with 'one country', 'the only Jewish State' and thereby planting the idea that there must be something antisemitic in all of this.

The Board knows full well that no country or group has ever applied boycotts consistently, and that includes Jews and the State of Israel.

In the 1970s, Jewish activists boycotted Soviet Union sponsored culture events in the UK. Should they have also boycotted Idi Amin's Uganda before they had the right to campaign for Soviet Jewish rights? Must Israel today call for trade sanctions against every distasteful regime around the world before it can talk about Iran? The British Quakers are naturally focused on a part of the world where they have obvious interest and decades of experience. What on earth makes it antisemitic?

But the Board ignores another critical consideration in the Quakers' decision that goes a long way in explaining why its divestment tactic is being applied to Israel. The Palestinian people, including a comprehensive coalition of Christian organisations, have themselves called for this form of global support.

INTERNATIONAL

The Board condemns the Quakers for ignoring 'everything else going on around the globe' but a quick look at the Quakers' website shows how ignorant this accusation is.

The Quakers International Work page shows its commitment to challenging corruption and abuses of power in Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi and its conciliation work in South Asia. This is alongside its longstanding work in coordinating the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). In recent decades the Quakers have also been actively involved in conciliation work in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.

In contrast, if you look at the Board of Deputies' website, you'll find nothing about concern for the rest of the world apart from Israel and the Middle East.

So which organisation is displaying a lack of global awareness? Which organisation is 'obsessive' and 'tunnel visioned'?

NARROW CLIQUES

As for the 'narrow clique of church officials', the Board's president really ought to visit some Quaker meetings around the country if she thinks this decision will not have considerable support from Friends at the grassroots.

I've spoken about my Jewish solidarity for the Palestinian people all over the country and, invariably, I find myself speaking in Quaker Meeting Houses. That's because Quakers are willing to allow their buildings to be safe spaces for free speech in the name of peace and justice.

I'm yet to find a synagogue offering me the same hospitality. In fact, Board of Deputies officials are in the habit of trying to stop me speaking. So where in reality is the 'narrow clique' controlling the debate? Friends House or Torriano Mews?

ONE-SIDED PROPAGANDA

The statement from Marie van der Zyl notes that there was:

... no particular trigger incident for this decision, just the ongoing insistence of certain Quaker bureaucrats of feeding a diet of one-sided propaganda to those unfortunate enough to rely on them for information.

The reason there was no 'trigger incident' is precisely because Quakers in Britain has taken its time in reaching this decision. It's not a knee-jerk reaction to anything. It's recognition that 25 years of 'peace process' has made the situation worse with the prospect of justice and peace further away than ever. A different approach is needed to shift the dial.

As for 'one-sided propaganda', I haven't noticed the Board of Deputies ever offering a broad spectrum of views on Israel.

CONTROLLING THE DEBATE

What's interesting to observe about the Board's attitude is the presumption that it has the right to dictate to other faith communities what their policy on Israel should be. Marie van der Zyl contrasts the Quakers' independent thinking with how she prefers church denominations to behave:

While other churches have reached out to the Jewish community at this time of rising antisemitism and polarisation to work together to tackle prejudice and promote peace in the region, the Quaker leadership has chosen to import a divisive conflict into our country, rather than export the peace that we all want to see.

In other words, let us tell you what to think and what to do when it comes to Israel.

And note how criticism of Israel is placed firmly within the context of 'rising antisemitism'. Only the Board, it appears, understands how to 'tackle prejudice' and 'promote peace'. Anyone that considers an alternative course of action is just 'importing a divisive conflict'.

Van der Zyl concludes her diatribe by calling on Quakers in Britain to reverse its decision and 'join those of us looking to build bridges instead'.

But what is the Board's idea of bridge building? What kind of church behaviour on Israel is considered acceptable to Marie van der Zyl?

'INVESTING IN PEACE'

We've seen the answer this month with a series of events around the UK organised by the Board of Deputies and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland with the title Investing in Peace.

The Board brought together Jewish Israeli and Palestinian peace activists with a message not

to 'take sides' but to 'build bridges' through grassroots relationships.


I've got nothing against any of this in principle. It's good as far as it goes. But it's designed not to go too far. I can tell this from van der Zyl's quote in the accompanying press release:

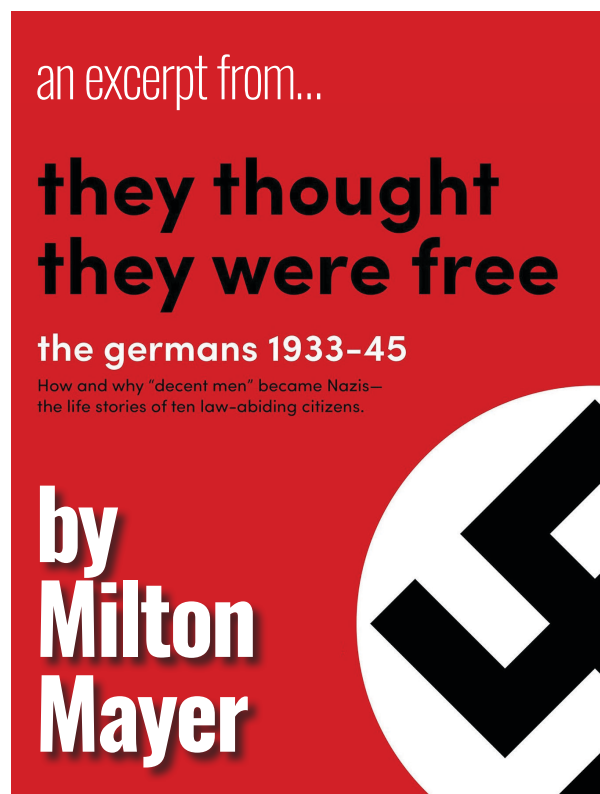
'At a time when tensions and emotions are understandably running high, it is so refreshing to have balanced, nuanced dialogue on this topic.'

So, Investing in Peace sets up the discussion within a paradigm of 'balance' and 'nuance' as if the lack of such things has been the stumbling block to peace over all these years. It's a narrative that ignores the power dynamics on the ground. The dynamic of

oppressed and oppressor in Israel/Palestine. But if that true relationship is not acknowledged and confronted, neither justice nor peace is likely to emerge.

The Board of Deputies has shown itself incapable of understanding why Quakers in Britain could be justified in adopting a divestment policy. That's because the Board of Deputies is acting not as a Jewish community body in the UK but as a plank of the pro-Israel lobby. In that role it's determined to maintain the illusion that Israel/Palestine is a 'conflict' requiring 'balanced' debate and a heavily managed interfaith conversation.

The Quakers, on the other hand, have grasped the reality and seen through this distortion. I hope others will follow them. 



'What no one seemed to notice,' said a colleague of mine, a philologist, 'was the ever widening gap, after 1933, between the government and the people. Just think how very wide this gap was to begin with, here in Germany. And it became always wider. You know, it doesn't make people close to their government to be told that this is a people's government, a true democracy, or to be enrolled in civilian defense, or even to vote. All this has little, really nothing, to do with knowing one is governing.'

'What happened here was the gradual habituation of the people, little by little, to being governed by surprise; to receiving decisions deliberated in secret; to believing that the situation was so complicated that the government had to act on information which the people could not understand, or so dangerous that, even if the people could not understand it, it could not be released because of national security. And their sense of identification with Hitler, their trust in him, made it easier to widen this gap and reassured those who would otherwise have worried about it.

'This separation of government from people, this widening of the gap, took place so gradually and so insensibly, each step disguised (perhaps not even intentionally) as a temporary emergency measure or associated with true patriotic allegiance or with real social purposes. And all the crises and reforms (real reforms, too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter.'

'You will understand me when I say that my Middle High German was my life. It was all I cared about. I was a scholar, a specialist. Then, suddenly, I was plunged into all the new activity, as the university was drawn into the new situation; meetings, conferences, interviews, ceremonies, and, above all, papers to be filled out, reports, bibliographies, lists, questionnaires. And on top of that were the demands in the community, the things in which one had to, was 'expected to' participate that had not been there or had not been important before. It was all rigmarole, of course, but it consumed all one's energies, coming on top of the work one really wanted to do. You can see how easy it was, then, not to think about fundamental things. One had no time.'

'Those,' I said, 'are the words of my friend the baker. "One had no time to think. There was so much going on."

'Your friend the baker was right,' said my colleague. 'The dictatorship, and the whole process of its coming into being, was above all diverting. It provided an excuse not to think for people who did not want to think anyway. I do not speak of your "little men", your baker and so on; I speak of my colleagues and myself, learned men, mind you. Most of us did not want to think about fundamental things and never had. There was no need to. Nazism gave us some dreadful, fundamental things to think about – we were decent people – and kept us so busy with continuous changes and "crises" and so fascinated, yes, fascinated, by the machinations of the "national enemies", without and within, that we had no time to think about these dreadful things that were growing, little by little, all around us. Unconsciously, I suppose, we were grateful. Who wants to think?

'To live in this process is absolutely not to be able to notice it – please try to believe me – unless one has



a much greater degree of political awareness, acuity, than most of us had ever had occasion to develop. Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, “regretted”, that, unless one were detached from the whole process from the beginning, unless one understood what the whole thing was in principle, what all these “little measures” that no “patriotic German” could resent must some day lead to, one no more saw it developing from day to day than a farmer in his field sees the corn growing. One day it is over his head.

‘How is this to be avoided, among ordinary men, even highly educated ordinary men? Frankly, I do not know. I do not see, even now. Many, many times since it all happened I have pondered that pair of great maxims, *Principiis obsta* and *Finem respice* – “Resist the beginnings” and “Consider the end”. But one must foresee the end in order to resist, or even see, the beginnings. One must foresee the end clearly and certainly and how is this to be done, by ordinary men or even by extraordinary men? Things might have. And everyone counts on that might.

‘Your “little men”, your Nazi friends, were not against National Socialism in principle. Men like me, who were, are the greater offenders, not because we knew better (that would be too much to say) but because we sensed better. Pastor Niemöller spoke for the thousands and thousands of men like me when he spoke (too modestly of himself) and said that, when the Nazis attacked the Communists, he was a little uneasy, but, after all, he was not a Communist, and so he did nothing; and then they attacked the Socialists, and he was a little uneasier, but, still, he was not a Socialist, and he did nothing; and then the schools, the press, the Jews, and so on, and he was always uneasy, but still he did nothing. And then they attacked the Church, and he was a Churchman, and he did something – but then it was too late.’

‘Yes’, I said.

‘You see,’ my colleague went on, ‘one doesn’t see exactly where or how to move. Believe me, this is true. Each act, each occasion, is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join with you in resisting somehow. You don’t want to act, or even talk, alone; you don’t want to “go out of your way to make trouble.” Why not? – Well, you are not in the habit of doing it. And it is not just fear, fear of standing alone that restrains you; it is also genuine uncertainty.

‘Uncertainty is a very important factor, and, instead of decreasing as time goes on, it grows. Outside, in the streets, in the general community, “everyone” is happy. One hears no protest, and certainly sees none. You know, in France or Italy there would be slogans against the government painted on walls and fences; in Germany, outside the great cities, perhaps, there is not even this. In the university community, in your own community, you speak privately to your colleagues, some of whom certainly feel as you do; but what do they say? They say, “It’s not so bad” or “You’re seeing things” or “You’re an alarmist”.

‘And you are an alarmist. You are saying that this must lead to this, and you can’t prove it. These are the beginnings, yes; but how do you know for sure when you don’t know the end, and how do you know, or even surmise, the end? On the one hand, your enemies, the law, the regime, the Party, intimidate you. On the other, your colleagues pooh-pooh you as pessimistic or even neurotic. You are left with your close friends, who are, naturally, people who have always thought as you have.

‘But your friends are fewer now. Some have drifted off somewhere or submerged themselves in their work. You no longer see as many as you did at meetings or gatherings. Informal groups become smaller; attendance drops off in little organizations, and the organizations themselves wither. Now, in small gatherings of your oldest friends, you feel that you are talking to yourselves, that you are isolated from the reality of things. This weakens your confidence still further and serves as a further deterrent to – to what? It is clearer all the time that, if you are going to do anything, you must make an occasion to do it, and then you are obviously a troublemaker. So you wait, and you wait.

END PART ONE



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Why is Julian Assange a hunted man?

WikiLeaks, founded by Julian Assange, is an organisation which accepts and publishes documents that expose lies used by our media to hide the truth about our society. Governments and corporations work behind a curtain of secrecy

for one reason: if we knew about their illegal or corrupt behaviour we would work to stop them.

WikiLeaks cannot be ordered, bribed or coerced not to publish documents others want to be hidden. This means that Julian Assange and WikiLeaks have many powerful enemies. The reaction of governments to WikiLeaks' revelations is to categorise the exposing of a crime to be a crime. This is the only 'crime' for which we can say Julian Assange is 'guilty'.

MEDIA MANIPULATE US WITH LIES TO PROTECT THE SUPER-RICH

WikiLeaks releases copies of documents given to them anonymously. Generally the media will not release these documents because they expose illegal or corrupt activity by governments, individuals and large corporations.

Why does the media not report these illegal activities? The media is owned by a handful of very wealthy individuals like Rupert Murdoch, who have significant investments in many corporations. Furthermore, the super-rich direct governments to act on their behalf. They are determined to make their investments as profitable as possible. They seek to control the governments of most countries to ensure that politicians never do anything to interfere with their profits.

As a result, the media does not reveal the truth about what is going on and does not explain why governments do what they do.

Instead, the role of the media is to fabricate a picture, an image of our society that hides from us the inner workings of the super-rich, their corporations and the governments they control. This is particularly clear in the coverage of the many illegal wars we have seen in the last two decades.

It is said the US and its allies invaded Iraq, Libya and Syria to remove evil dictators and bring democracy to these countries. In fact, the wars were intended to remove leaders opposed to the policies of the US government and the corporations which control it.

These illegal wars have also created a refugee crisis as great as that after WW2. However, no media outlet will connect the dots between the suffering of the refugees and the illegal wars initiated by the US.

In the same way, the media will insist that our giant banks and corporations are essential to economic growth. However no media outlet will explain that our falling living standards, increased homelessness and unemployment are a direct result of dangerous austerity policies to cut government spending and decrease taxes on these same corporations.

HOW DOES WIKILEAKS DESCRIBE ITSELF?

The three central principles of WikiLeaks are truth, transparency and justice. These are essential to any democracy. They also provide the basis for prosecuting illegal activity. WikiLeaks specialises in the analysis and publication of large datasets of censored or otherwise restricted official materials involving war, spying and corruption. It has so far published more than 10 million documents and associated analyses.

WIKILEAKS IS NOT A JOURNALISTIC OUTCAST

Julian Assange is not a hacker. He is a publisher of documents given to him by others, just like the *New York Times*. WikiLeaks has contractual relationships and secure communications paths to more than 100 major media organisations from around the world. This gives WikiLeaks sources negotiating power, impact and technical protections that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to achieve. WikiLeaks, its publisher and its journalists have won 17 awards, including:

- Time Magazine Person of the Year, People's Choice (2010)
- Sam Adams Award for Integrity (2010)
- Sydney Peace Foundation Gold Medal (2011)
- Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism (2011)
- Walkley Award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism (2011)
- Voltaire Award for Free Speech (2011).

We need to keep this in mind when seeing the way Julian Assange and WikiLeaks are described by journalists. Most of them do not have even one of these journalistic awards. Many are jealous of Julian Assange because he does what they cannot: report the truth. Any journalist who investigates

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events, rather than just reporting what governments and corporations have said, will find themselves driving taxis.

MYTH BUSTING

No charges were ever laid in Sweden against Julian Assange. Under Swedish law a person can be arrested for questioning without being charged with anything.

Standard police practice in Sweden was ignored in the case of Julian Assange:

- One of the women interviewed was a personal friend of the interviewing officer.
- On 20 August 2010, the two women alleging rape were interviewed together, not separately.
- The interview was not videotaped as required by law. Only a written record was made.
- The interviewing officer was instructed by the prosecutor, Maria Kjellstrand, to interview the woman known as SW under the presumption of 'rape' although neither woman alleged rape.

The first on-duty prosecutor disclosed Julian Assange's identity and the allegations against him to the press only hours after the interview was held. Assange was described as a 'double rapist' that same evening in the tabloid *Expressen*. It is illegal in Sweden to disclose such information to the press under any circumstances.

On 21 August 2010 the arrest warrant for Julian Assange was withdrawn. Prosecutor Eva Finne said there appeared to be insufficient evidence for an allegation of rape or any other crime, but 10 days later Swedish police questioned Assange, who again denied the allegations. One day after this questioning Sweden's director of prosecutions, Marianne Ny, reopened the rape investigation.

On 27 September Julian Assange departed Sweden for Britain.

On 18 November 2010 a Stockholm court approved a request to detain Julian Assange for questioning and two days later Swedish police issued an international arrest

warrant for him, even though there were no charges.

On 8 December 2010 Assange surrendered to police in London and was detained pending an extradition hearing. After several days of legal manoeuvring he was granted bail after supporters pledged £240,000 (\$375,000) in cash and sureties.

On 24 February 2011 the District Court in Britain ruled that Assange should be extradited to Sweden and later that year, on 2 November, the High Court rejected his appeal against extradition.

On 5 December 2011 Assange was granted an appeal to the Supreme Court that was rejected on 30 May 2012. Soon after, Assange asked the Supreme Court to reopen the case but this was refused on 14 June.

A few days later on 19 June 2012, Julian Assange entered the Ecuadorean embassy in central London seeking asylum. Police set up a round-the-clock guard to arrest him if he steps outside. Later that year, on 16 August, Assange was granted political asylum by Ecuador.

Two years later, in September 2014, Assange's lawyers submitted a complaint against Sweden and Britain to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, claiming his situation in the embassy amounts to illegal detention.

Julian Assange claimed 'total vindication' when, in February 2016, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that he was unlawfully detained and recommended that he be immediately freed and given compensation. Britain and Sweden said that the finding will have no impact on their policy. This year, on 28 March 2018, following the election of right-wing President Lenin Moreno in Ecuador several months earlier, the Ecuadorean embassy has cut all Mr Assange's communication with the world and banned all visitors except his lawyers.

Julian Assange has committed no crime. He has courageously exposed lies used by our media to hide the truth about our society. Justice demands that his freedom be secured.

Source: Adelaide Voices Sept–Nov 2018

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.

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from our readers



HI DONNA

Here is my subscription (pension) for a further 2 years ... plus a \$20 donation.

I enjoy reading the articles in the Beacon ... and am a regular listener on Saturday morning.

Thank you all for the informative lectures and the Beacon.

Blessings to you all.

E Kosanovic, Vic

Thank you so much for your excellent Beacon. Sorry to be so late with my subscription.

Keep on working for PEACE and TRUTH.

Very sincerely

M Morrison, NSW

TO EVERYONE ON THE BEACON EDITORIAL BOARD

Thanks for another great year of articulate and informative editions of the Beacon. Enclosed is my cheque (plus donation) for another year's subscription.

Regards

P Haslem, Tasmania

In a mountain of electronic and printed rubbish, the Beacon is a priceless gem. What a shame it's not read by everyone.

D Porter, NSW

GREETINGS, DONNA

As always, I'm genuinely inspired by the *Beacon*. Its ideas and principles being timely and relevant, I enjoy supporting their unwavering reiteration.

In solidarity

Dr Alf Liebhold (Sydney)

DEAR EDITOR

Having just read a book on the subject submitted by I Jones, WA in the last *Beacon*, I consider the views expressed need challenging.

The writer was concerned about Beacon's 'very one-eyed view about Israel'. According to Peter Rodgers' book *Herzl's Nightmare: One land two people*, the Jews have been slowly forcing out the long-time inhabitants of this land.

For instance, from page 5 of this book ... in the 1880s the country was anything but unpopulated. Palestine's population was some 460,000. Of these, around 400,000 were Arabs (the term 'Palestinian' would not come into play for another generation), 40,000 were Christian (mostly Greek Orthodox), and the remainder Jews. Jerusalem's population was about 30,000, about half of whom were Jews.

Over the years the Jewish population has slowly spread out over a great area. If an alien tribe did the same to us here in Australia would we just be happy sitting back and watching our land being taken away from us?

I don't follow the problems of the country, but it is not as simple as Jones suggests.

G Cook, Qld

I did not judge all Irish Catholics by the actions of the IRA.

I do not judge all Italians by the actions of the Mafia.

And I will not judge all Muslims by the criminality of an equally tiny minority within their community – to do so would be patently irrational.

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Letters to the Editor

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