



SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

the Beacon

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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Just when we thought the federal government couldn't sink any lower, we have the story of the 'Bileola' family of four, two of whom are Australian born. Their name isn't Bileola, of course. That is the name of the wonderful Australian town that they called home and whose residents have been lobbying hard to get the family back. 'Sick, trapped, scared' and separated from the real world, this small family have been subjected to the worst kind of mental torture simply because they wanted a better and less threatening place to live than in their home country of Sri Lanka. If it were possible to nominate a town for Australian of the Year, it would have to be Bileola, for demonstrating the real Australian 'values' that this federal government merely talks about. The people of Bileola are walking the talk. They are demonstrating the 'values' in practice.

This government, mired as it is in scandal, corruption, ineptitude, and self-interest, is in no position to make judgements around the issues confronting this family. To the Australian people the matter is clear: two people came to this country seeking asylum. They met and married and in due course produced two Australian-born children. They demonstrated their commitment to Australia and its values by working hard and becoming part of a warm and caring community that is determined to ensure that this family remain in Australia.

Judgement is being waged by a government that has lost the respect of the Australian people, and it is based on the ridiculous premise that should this family be allowed to remain in Australia, it will lead to a resumption of people smuggling.

So, to perpetuate this ludicrous argument they locked up this small family, two of whom are Australian born, on an island isolated from others. These two small children were deprived of education and denied the level of healthcare that is expected in a civilised country, to the extent that the youngest child developed sepsis, which was being treated on the island with Panadol!

This imprisonment has come at no small price economically for the people of Australia either. The Australian government has spent more than \$4.5 million in its attempt to expel this Sri Lankan family of four. That figure doesn't include keeping the married couple and their two young children on an island far from the Australian mainland while they fight deportation. Since late August, Nades, Priya and their daughters, Kopika and Tharunicaa, have been the only people held on Christmas Island, an external territory of Australia.

A last-minute injunction issued by the Federal Court granted them temporary reprieve from deportation. A case looking at whether Tharunicaa, the younger daughter, is entitled to a protection visa, is ongoing.

Bileola residents have called for the family to return to Queensland under the banner of the 'Home to Bilo' campaign. Thousands have come out to protest their detention. But the government has held firm to its hard line – strong borders come before human rights. This case has made Australia a subject of derision and contempt around the world.

It has highlighted the whole issue of human rights and asylum seekers. It is past time that the Australian people said enough is enough and we must adhere to the United Nations Charter of which we are signatories.

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

(Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 3(1))

The Australian people have demonstrated their support for this family through petitions, direct action and contact with their politicians. It is time that this family were given their freedom to return to Bileola and continue their lives. 🕯



For many familiar with the excesses of Cold War rhetoric and the hyped-up fears used to justify our ill-fated interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the current China bashing is a case of déjà vu. But the latest bout of politically contrived anti-China hysteria is especially troubling.

Over the last few weeks, we have seen the extraordinary spectacle of Australian ministers and senior bureaucrats beating the drums of war, blissfully unaware of the consequences of their words and actions.

How can we best characterise such conduct? The proverbial bull in a China shop readily comes to mind, though the comparison may well do a disservice to the bull's judgement and sense of decorum.

In a keynote address delivered on 15 April to India's premier geopolitical conference, Prime Minister Morrison stated that Australia was seeking to build 'a strategic balance that favours freedom', leaving his audience in no doubt that freedom was codeword for the West generally and the United States in particular.

A strategic competition, he went on to say, was under way between authoritarian regimes (read Russia and China) and liberal democracies (read the United States and its allies and friends).

These prime ministerial utterances reflect the thinking of the newly invigorated Quad, which brings together the United States, Japan, India and Australia.

At their first-ever summit held in March, the four Quad governments made it clear that their objective was to contain China's rise. They pointedly agreed to collaborate in maritime security 'to meet challenges to the rules based maritime order in the East and South China Sea'. Which order, one may ask? The order which a dominant America had created in the aftermath of World War II, and which has sustained its dominance ever since.

Another clear signal of what was to follow was given by the Pentagon in early March with its submission to Congress requesting more than \$27 billion over the next six years to bolster capabilities across the Pacific region.

This expansion of what is now known as the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, or PDI, uses the language of deterrence to mask an increasingly antagonistic containment policy based on forward-deployed long-range weapon systems. These will include armed ground-based cruise, ballistic and hypersonic missiles, more advanced missile defence systems, new space-based and terrestrial sensors, and enhanced access to airfields, ports and other facilities needed to support these deployments.

The undisguised aim is to acquire highly survivable, precision-strike networks along the 'First Island Chains', a wide area across China's immediate

maritime periphery that includes the disputed South China Sea and the increasingly tense Taiwan Strait.

It is now known that Australia and the United States have been consulting closely about contingency plans in relation to Taiwan. Against this backdrop of heightened tensions, former defence minister Christopher Pyne made a surprising public intervention, describing Taiwan as the most likely next flashpoint.

Leaving little to the imagination, he spoke of the prospect of a 'kinetic war', offering the following graphic description:

'Not a cyber war, but a real one involving loss of life, destruction of military platforms, with aggressors and defenders on different sides.'

'This isn't rhetoric, this is something that you and I may well have to confront in the next 5 to 10 years.'

On reflection this was not an altogether surprising foray into the public arena. Having occupied the defence industry and then defence portfolios between 2016 and 2019, Christopher Pyne was well-versed in the mindset of the security establishment. Upon retiring from Parliament, he has reinforced these connections by establishing a lobbying firm that advises several defence industry clients, as well as by serving as a director or advisory board member of multiple defence-related companies.

Within days of Pyne's carefully timed intervention senior government figures issued a series of broadsides with China as the implicit and often explicit target.

Following Morrison's intervention noted above, Assistant Defence Minister Andrew Hastie told military personnel their 'core business' was 'the application of lethal violence', a position closely aligned with the directives which newly appointed Defence Minister Peter Dutton had issued to the ADF's top brass.

Interviewed on ANZAC Day on the ABC program *insiders*, Dutton spoke of the possibility of conflict erupting between China and Taiwan. He based that assessment on 'the rhetoric that is coming out of China, from spokesmen particularly in recent weeks and months' and the 'significant amount of [military] activity', which one must assume was a reference to China's military exercises near Taiwan.

On the same day came the intervention by Home Affairs Secretary, Mike Pezzullo. Reminding his audience that this was the 70th year of Australia's principal military alliance, he left little doubt that China, though not mentioned by name, was the target of his comments:

In a world of perpetual tension and dread, the drums of war beat – sometimes faintly and distantly, and at other times more loudly and ever closer ... We must search always for the chance for peace until we are faced with the only prudent, if sorrowful, course – to send off, yet again, our warriors to fight the nation's wars.

Two days later during a visit to Darwin the Prime Minister unveiled the \$747 million spending package



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on four key training bases in the Northern Territory. This, we were told, was not a signal to China. But since its primary purpose was to enable more joint exercises with US forces in the region, how else could it be interpreted?

Adding further grist to the mill in his latest comments to *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Peter Dutton has now declared that Australia is 'already at war' in the cyber world. From this hyper-charged premise, he went on to argue that Australia 'needed to be in a position to defend its waters in the north and west as a clear priority.' For added dramatic impact we were told the ADF was prepared for action.

This is but the latest in a long series of highly publicised and suitably choreographed denunciations of China's conduct at home and abroad. What is perhaps most revealing about what Australian ministers, senior civil servants and security agencies have had to say on the subject is how little new hard evidence of Chinese misdeeds they have added to what is already on the public record.

In any case, China's alleged efforts to wield political influence in Australia and elsewhere are but a pale imitation of what the United States has been doing for decades. The reach of its defence establishment, security agencies and other institutions within Australia is hardly denied and seldom questioned.



**THE PREVAILING
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DEFENCE CIRCLES IS
THAT THE FLEXING OF
MILITARY MUSCLE
AND EXPANSION OF
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ONLY PATH TO
PEACE.**



It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that what drives Australia's megaphone antipathy to the Chinese government is not so much its commitment to so-called liberal values, as it is to America's continued predominance in the Asia-Pacific region. And this helps explain why Australian criticism of China's Taiwan policies has become increasingly vitriolic.

Yet, little in China's stance on Taiwan has changed over the years. Ever since October 1949, Beijing has steadfastly proclaimed that there is but one China, and that Taiwan is part of China. The projection of US military power right across the Pacific rim has been the principal obstacle to the achievement of that goal.

Not surprisingly, US-China tensions over Taiwan have simmered for the best part of seven decades, reaching crisis point on three occasions – in 1955–56, 1958, and 1995–96.

What makes the present situation especially dangerous is the rising level of US military and diplomatic support for Taiwan, which may in turn

incline a Taiwanese government to miscalculate and take a more assertive step towards a declaration of independence. Such a step would almost certainly invite Chinese military intervention.

What can the United States and its allies do to resist the 'curse of war'? The prevailing orthodoxy in US defence circles is that the flexing of military muscle and expansion of the US military presence is the only path to peace.

A safer and more effective response would be to honour the spirit and letter of the Shanghai communiqué agreed to by China and the United States during Nixon's historic visit to Beijing in February 1972. The United States acknowledged that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. It undertook to abide by this position and reaffirmed its support for a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.

Translated into the present context, this would mean that the US and its allies, including Australia, would restate their support for the one-China policy and strongly discourage Taiwan from taking any unilateral moves towards independence. For its part, China would be expected to reaffirm its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question.

In addition, Australia, together with ASEAN or particular middle powers in the region, notably Indonesia and Malaysia, could convene regional discussions that include China to explore confidence-building measures, including active collaboration on climate change, the COVID pandemic, and other transnational challenges to security. Over time, these efforts could pave the way for concrete steps towards regional demilitarisation.

This is the only sane response to our current predicament. Sadly, it is not the path that those who presently navigate the ship of state will wish to follow. If there is to be movement in this direction, it will not come from political parties, at least not in the first instance.

It can come only from a reinvigorated civic engagement. This means a wide-ranging, well organised and sustained intervention into the national conversation by thoughtful, well informed citizens, using all the personal and collective channels at their disposal. 🙏

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

Source: Pearls & Irritations John Menadue's Policy Journal

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

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

BY REYVI MARIÑAS

RESEARCH FELLOW AT MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL. HE IS THE CURRENT SECRETARY OF PHILIPPINES-AUSTRALIA SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION (PASA) AND A COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE LAWYERS FOR PEACE. AN ADDRESS DELIVERED VIA ZOOM ON SUNDAY 27 JUNE 2021.

Protecting the Vulnerable:

The situation of migrant workers and international students in Australia under neoliberalism



This article briefly discusses the situation of migrant workers and international students in Australia under neoliberalism. The article will focus on the experiences of Filipino migrant workers and international students in Australia, which is based on the work that I have conducted with Migrante, a Filipino community organisation in Melbourne, Australia, from 2012 to 2020. The first part of the article will explain the idea of neoliberalism and will situate the context of overseas Filipino migration in Australia under this current condition. The second part then identifies the forms of exploitation and vulnerabilities of temporary migrants in Australia and how these conditions continuously exist in Australia as a result of neoliberalism. The third and final part will conclude by looking at possible courses of action for protecting the rights and welfare of migrant workers and international students in Australia and in the Philippines.

NEOLIBERALISM IN THE MIGRATION CONTEXT: PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA

The notion and practice of neoliberalism goes to the heart of migrants' vulnerabilities and exploitation. In this context, I am using the idea of neoliberalism in two ways. The first referred to the idea of neoliberalism as a 'process'. This notion looks to the broader economic and geographical perspective of neoliberalism. It is related to the historical uneven development of the world capitalist system, from the oil crisis in the 1970s to the 1980s and 1990s, where the state has exerted a more interventionist role through the facilitation of changes around the globe through trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation of the economy.

The second way of understanding neoliberalism is through the idea of neoliberalism as a 'political project'. It is a political project because it is advanced



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by an elite (bourgeois) class of people who possess a particular 'ideology', which is based on the values of market competition, entrepreneurship and individual responsibility. In other words, neoliberalism has been cemented as a 'way of life' or a 'norm' in society that is embedded in our institutions (i.e. family, civil society and the legal system). Here, the state plays an active role in facilitating these norms and values at every level of society. However, these values have an enormous impact on the precarious condition of migrants because they subvert their agency and their ability to become active participants in the community.

Neoliberalism in the Philippines' labour export policy

In the Philippines there is a dire need for people to migrate and find a better job overseas because of extreme poverty, high unemployment and the chronic political and economic crisis in the country. Recent data shows that there are 13.7 million Filipinos who are jobless, and about 5,000 Filipinos leave the country every day to find better working conditions abroad. The Philippines is one of the poor countries in the region because of the peculiar character of Philippine society – that is, it is a 'semi-colonial' and 'semi-feudal' society. By semi-colonial, it means that the Philippines is still being controlled by big powerful governments like the US and China in terms of its politics, economy and its military. By semi-feudal, it indicates that the country still relies on an outdated mode of production that is mainly

agricultural and pre-industrial, which is dominated by the combination of a big capitalist class in the city and landlord elites in the countryside.

The current neoliberal policy in the Philippines has created a 'push' factor – that is, the state itself facilitates the migration of millions of Filipinos around the world through its so-called 'Labour Export Policy' (LEP). The LEP is one of the major neoliberal projects of the Philippines and was introduced by President Marcos in the 1970s as a temporary measure to address the debt problem brought about by the first oil crisis in the Middle East. The LEP then became an alternative development strategy of successive governments, and to this date, labour export has become a permanent part of the economy because it generated billions of dollars into the economy. For example, in 2019, it hit 33.5 billion US dollars of money remittances from migrants that was pumped into the Philippine economy.

But it is the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who suffer the most as a result of the LEP. The LEP is one of the most exploitative schemes used by the government because it extracts so much profit from OFWs. For example, an OFW who wishes to work temporarily in Australia would have to pay between AU\$12,000 and AU\$15,000 as a recruitment fee to a private agency, apart from the pre-departure fee of around P20,000 pesos (approximately AU\$550) that they have to pay to the government before they leave the country. This puts them in a debt-ridden situation and many of them are placed in an abusive and vulnerable situation as a result of this exploitative scheme.

Neoliberalism in Australia's migration program: Temporary skill shortage visas and student visas

If there is a 'push' factor from the Philippines, then there is also the 'pull' factor that attracts migrants to come to rich countries like Australia to work and to study. The Australian government indeed encourages and facilitates the selection of migrant workers and international students through its immigration law and policy. The state and its legal system act as a 'gatekeeper' in selecting temporary migrants for maximum profits that bring competitive advantage and economic benefits to Australia.

The Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) subclass 482 visa, formerly known as the subclass 457 visa, is a classic example of this neoliberal strategy that Australia employs. The TSS visa facilitates the sponsorship of the migrant worker to work temporarily in Australia. The TSS visa is valid for two years or up to four years depending on the nominated occupation. The TSS visa worker is precluded from changing employers, and if they work for another employer, their visa will be subject to cancellation, which may lead to a possible deportation in the future.

So, this is where the problem lies – it is the worker's continuing tie to the employer in the form of sponsorship that puts them in a most vulnerable situation. Because of the conditions attached to the employer's sponsorship, migrant workers have limited rights and freedom in Australia – that is, they have

limited freedom to change an employer, they have no access to the Medicare subsidy, restrictions with public transport concessions, and lack of education subsidy to dependent children.

The student visa program is another example of this neoliberal strategy of profit-making that is designed to attract thousands of international students to Australia. The education industry generated \$40.4 billion dollars for the Australia economy in 2019; that is why, when the pandemic hit early in 2020, universities struggled so much on how they keep their staff because they have relied so much on international students as a source of revenue. In the past few decades, the student visa program has become a pathway for students to become permanent residents (PR) in Australia. In my view, it is the students' goal of gaining a PR that really attracts them to come to Australia regardless of their financial burden and other forms of insecurities.

FORMS OF EXPLOITATION AND VULNERABILITIES

In this context, my definition of exploitation is wider than the legal definition that can be found in Australian law and the trafficking convention. Generally, exploitation is something that can be measured in economic terms, but I would argue that exploitation also has a moral dimension. Thus to take advantage of someone, and to use their vulnerabilities for one's own benefit, is morally wrong. Here, vulnerability is the person's weaker bargaining position and shows the asymmetrical power relation between two parties. It is clear that exploitation is a complete domination and control of the person's vulnerable position based on their class, gender, race or ethnicity.

Migrant workers and international students experience different types of abuse and exploitation. These include unpaid hours, excessive recruitment fees, discrimination and racism, threat and coercion, and misrepresentation and false promises of gaining a PR. Here, it is also important to stress

the 'extra' vulnerability factor that migrant workers and international students possess – that is, their temporary 'migration status'. Temporary migrants are different to other Australian workers in terms of their 'status' because they are not citizens and are not permanent residents of Australia. They can easily be deported from Australia once their visa expires or gets cancelled. They are always at the mercy of their employer sponsor or their education agents because of their 'temporary' status in Australia.

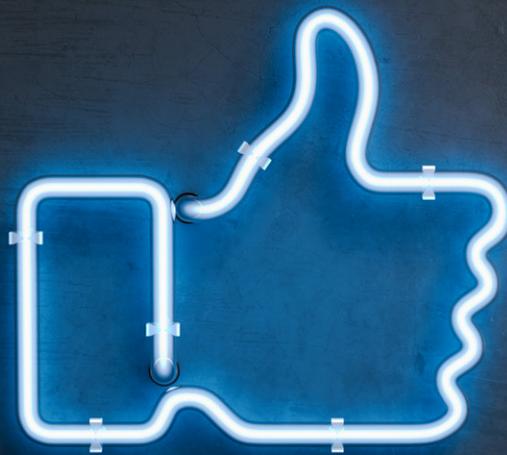
CONCLUSION: WHAT CAN WE DO?

To conclude, it is important to highlight migrant workers and international students' condition of 'temporariness' in Australia as one of the major causes of their vulnerabilities and exploitation. This is crucial for understanding this issue because it is their 'temporary' condition and status that puts them in the most vulnerable position in terms of their wish to stay permanently (PR) in this country.

Second, the issue of migrants' exploitation and vulnerabilities may well be regarded as the icing on the cake. The central issue that needs to be looked at is the perpetuation of neoliberal ideology and practices of both the sending and receiving states. Neoliberalism promotes profit-making and competition, which therefore puts migrants and ordinary citizens in Australia in the most vulnerable and exploitative conditions.

Third, and finally, collective action and an education campaign are important to raise awareness of these issues in the community. At the grassroots level, it is crucial to provide advocacy for these groups of people and to make sure that their basic rights and welfare are protected in Australia. At a government level, it is vital to put pressure on the sending and receiving states to dismantle their neoliberal policies and the practices that exacerbate the problem of exploitation and precariousness of migrant workers and international students in Australia and in the Philippines. ✎

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.



DOES THE PRESENT EVIL HAVE A SILVER LINING?

WHEN WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH EVIL, WE NEED TO ALSO CONSIDER THE LESSONS IT OFFERS AND THE POSITIVE CHANGES IT USHERS IN.

At present, here in Australia, we are confronted with a federal government which locks up asylum seekers indefinitely on offshore islands with inadequate medical protection.

A government which is reluctant to provide those unemployed, through no fault of their own, with adequate financial assistance.

A government which permits billionaires to accept JobKeeper despite huge profits, but which hounds welfare recipients on the basis of an algorithm, pushing perhaps 2000 to suicide.

The judiciary accused the government of a 'shameful chapter' in public policy.

A government unable to handle the pandemic by providing fit-for-purpose quarantine facilities for overseas arrivals or adequately managing the purchase, production and distribution of the vaccines that will save the people and the economy.

A government which threatens the continued functioning of the NDIS with computer-generated 'robo' budgets. A 'sustainability action taskforce' has a goal over the next six months to dramatically reduce the scheme's budget. A 'robo' calculation will decide the level of care disabled people should receive [17 April 2021 *Saturday Paper*].

A government which has mishandled its privatised residential aged care to the extent that it has not vaccinated the residents or their staff despite the fact that most COVID-19 deaths in Australia were in those very federally controlled facilities. In Victoria, there was not one COVID-19 death in the state-run, aged care residences.

A government which has so politicised the public service that it disguises reality. Australia's post COVID-19 recovery is behind that of other nations on critical indicators but that is not what is coming from Treasury.

According to Alan Austin: 'No developed country has tumbled further' [31 May 2021 *Independent Australia*].

A SILVER LINING?

One of the positive effects of this exposure of the federal government, alongside the tempered voice of the corporate media, has been greater public attention to the nature of that media.

The nobbling or outright destruction of major ABC programs like *Lateline*, the downgrading of *Q+A* to unwatchable status, the profound change to *Insiders*, the making of the *7.30 Report* into a friendly place for those it should be holding accountable, under a chairman and ABC board apparently appointed with

ideology in mind, have served to reduce investigative reporting from the formerly independent media to almost nil.

Only *Media Watch*, *Foreign Correspondent* and *Four Corners* have survived thus far.

The sale of *The Age*, the *SMH* and the *AFR* has reduced their independent stance although some journalists are still struggling to maintain quality.

Stokes Media, with its advocacy of the Right, support for the 'Disneylandisation' of the Australian War Memorial, and other conservative causes, has been on a similar path.

The dying newspapers like the *Herald-Sun*, the *Courier* and the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as *Sky News Australia*, have shown themselves to be tenacious but seem to be failing to keep the LNP in power. The WA and Queensland elections have shown they no longer wield the power they had in 1975 when they supported Fraser after the coup against Whitlam.

THE RISE OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA

The exposure of the conservative mainstream and partly nobbled ABC media has fostered the proliferation of independent media.

As well as community monthlies like the *Australasian Muslim News* or the bilingual *Al Wasat*, there is a growing fleet of trustworthy publications, most online.

INDEPENDENT AUSTRALIA

This website deals with issues avoided or distorted by the corporate media and gives the community a voice. Some of its most recent articles include:

- The Liberal Party redefines scrutiny: No questions asked
- Palestinian hopes paralysed under new Israeli government
- AFP/FBI sting recalls history of criminal activity on our wharves
- Science has made the idea of 'race' non-existent

JOHN MENADUE. PEARLS AND IRRITATIONS

Top stories not being covered by the corporates, but essential reading include:

- We've got you on file: Australia's McCarthyist moment
- Australian democracy is fading fast
- Government rorting is now the Australian way of doing business
- Stalinist-style prosecutions of Witness K and Bernard Collaery

MICHAEL WEST MEDIA

'What's the Scam' is an interesting series on this website.

It also typically deals with areas the corporate media tries to skate over. For example, one area rarely dealt with recently featured: 'Governments back privileged in education, public schools bear burden'.

There are also more expensive media offerings which, despite the cost, deliver worthwhile journalism.

THE SATURDAY PAPER

This is most attractive for its outstanding journalists Richard Ackland, Paul Bongiorno, Mike Seccombe, Rick Morton, Margaret Simons, to name but a few. Each article deals with hidden issues so far as the mainstream corporate media is concerned.

CRIQUEY

Its 'A Dossier of Lies and Falsehoods' is outstanding in holding this government to account.

It also employs outstanding journalists, such as Bernard Keane, Amber Schultz, Guy Rundle, David Hardaker, Georgia Wilkins, Kishor Napier-Raman being some of them.

THE FUTURE

The corporate media tends to exclude dissident voices, including the voice of the Labor Opposition and the Greens, but democracy relies upon faith in the intellectual capabilities of the people to see through lies and obfuscation.

The rise of independent media and the spread of social media such as Facebook and Twitter mean that lies are harder to hide and the corrupt become nervous. Although anti-democratic ideas can be spread on social media, the overwhelming popular voice favours evidence and truth.

Loony conspiracies like QAnon, with its Islamophobia and COVID-19 denial, might have support from high political levels, but most people are not stupid, and it is hard to brainwash the literate.

Democracy is indeed under attack, and it is certain that this federal government will be unable to deal with the rise of right-wing extremism, given that its response has been put in the hands of Senator Paterson of IPA fame, replacing Andrew Hastie, formerly SAS and part of the right-wing rump of the LNP.

However, the federal government is not Australia.

Extremism and cruelty have very tiny support in this population.

The recent state election in WA showed that. ☹

INCREASE OUR CIRCULATION:

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PAUL ROBESON

DID YOU KNOW?

Who is Paul Robeson, the man? He had just about as good a mind, body, will, and voice – all in one person – as functioned in the first half of the twentieth century. Honoured throughout the world as an outstanding drama, film, and concert performer, Robeson transferred this artistic prestige to that of a political spokesman on behalf of those seeking to gain and to retain freedom. His friendship with, and active support of, Third World freedom fighters Azikiwe, Kenyatta, Nehru, and Nkrumah attest to this. To the United States State Department, the House Un-American Activities Committee, the renters of major US concert halls, the National Football Hall of Fame, and numerous Rutgers alumni, his political utterances brought infamy and, from some, cries of disloyalty.

So, while there is a Mount Paul Robeson in the USSR, a Paul Robeson Archives in the German Democratic Republic, and an International Stalin Peace Prize in Robeson's possession, his own government would not even permit him a passport to go abroad to practise his profession; entrepreneurs denied him the privilege of singing in the Carnegie Halls of

America for eight long years. His failure to continue supporting a political-economic system whose military efforts against fascism he had actively backed during World War II by recruiting, by publicly justifying, and by entertaining troops at military installations and workers at defence plants, was interpreted by some as treasonable.

Robeson was in the vanguard of significant developments related to black intellectual and political assertion. He was an intellectual forerunner in scholarly publications on African culture and linguistics in the 1930s. His warning to President Truman in 1946 – that unless the US government began to protect black Americans from lynchings, blacks would take the necessary steps of self-defence – preceded the teachings of Malcolm X, Robert Williams, the Deacons for Justice, and the Black Panthers. Robeson had a concrete liberation program. His proposed tactics of using two mass-based organisations – the churches and the labour unions – was an important contribution to black political thought.

Harold D Weaver Jr

WELL DONE TO THE BEACON READERS!

In response to our request for help in building on the number of *Beacon* subscribers, the readers below have responded generously with their support. Well done to all of them. Never before has the need for material based on our philosophy of 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity' been so great, and to increase the circulation of *Beacon* is an easy way to achieve this. Please, *Beacon* readers, keep up this campaign and send us new people who may enjoy our journal.

from our readers



THE EDITORIAL BOARD, THE BEACON

We really appreciate receiving the *Beacon*. It contains such a wealth of material dealing with our everyday lives, social and environmental issues and international events.

It was an excellent decision of the committee of management to conduct the Sunday services by ZOOM during COVID.

Thank you for a job well done during these difficult times.

Warmest regards

J Rutherford, Vic

THE BEACON

Following your request in the latest *Beacon*, I wish to nominate two good friends to receive an issue of *Beacon*. I hope they will then subscribe. I hope to send more contacts over the next few days; bit of a delay because I'm speaking to them about it first and getting their imprimatur.

I've passed the latest issue around to friends. I found the AstraZeneca article by Rob Watts particularly interesting; he presents a powerful argument for a fairer world.

Keep up your wonderful work.

Kind regards

G Debney, Vic

THE BEACON

Thanks to the *Beacon* for the June 2021 edition, one of the best ever. Detailed but clear presentation of COVID-19 statistics by Rob Watts.

And, keeping the plight of those on the JobSeeker frontline highlighted, a good letter from Peter Sutton. And, no, your MP has no idea what it is like to live on JobSeeker benefits. All MPs should do a stint on JobSeeker before being considered eligible for office.

Regards

P Haslem, Tasmania

MELBOURNE UNITARIAN PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH

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Does the present evil have a silver lining?

Did you know?

Letters to the editor

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