N Stallon

This Invasion Day, 26th January 2022, marks the 50th anniversary of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, Ngarbri, Ngunnawal Country.

On 26th January, 1972, when Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Bertie Williams, and Tony Coorey travelled from Redfern to Canberra, where they planted a beach umbrella and a sign that read “Aboriginal Embassy” opposite (what is now known as) Old Parliament House. So began the world’s longest-running protest for Indigenous land rights, sovereignty, and self-determination.

The establishment of the Tent Embassy came as a retaliation to the McMahon government’s commitment to assimilation policies and refusal to recognise Indigenous land rights.

The Tent Embassy was not only a protest against the government of the time, but an ongoing assertion that no treaty had been signed, sovereignty was never ceded, and Aboriginal people were not aliens in their own land.

The Tent Embassy was widely supported not only by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their allies, but First Nations people throughout the world.

The Embassy grew in size, becoming both a hub for activists as well as a place for conversations, public forums, and political meetings from which emerged many great Indigenous activists and leaders.

Seeking an end to the Embassy, the McMahon government amended the Trespass on Commonwealth Lands Ordinance 1932-1966 (ACT) to ban camping, squatting, and erecting tents on the lawns of Parliament, before ordering the Australian Federal Police to break up and dismantle the camp on the 28th July 1972.

This led to widespread protesting and the police re-erected and dismantling of the camp an additional two times by the 30th of July 1972.

When in September 1972 the ACT Supreme Court ruled against the Ordinance that permitted the eviction of the Tent Embassy, the Embassy was erected and removed by the Embassy staff in demonstration of their rights.

The Tent Embassy was next re-erected in late 1973 after the election of the Whitlam government, who agreed to meet with representatives of the Embassy. The Embassy remained until 1976, when its removal was agreed on after the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Between 1976 and 1992, the Tent Embassy was erected in various sites around Canberra, before returning to its permanent site on the lawns of Old Parliament House, despite being destroyed by fire in 2003 in a case of suspected arson.

Shortly after its inception, members of the Tent Embassy on the 6th of February, 1972, issued a list of demands to the government. These demands are held to this day. They are:

• Control of the Northern territory as a State within the Commonwealth of Australia; the parliament in the NT to be predominantly Aboriginal with title and mining rights to all land within the Territory;
• Legal title and mining rights to all other presently existing reserve lands and settlements throughout Australia;
• The preservation of all sacred sites throughout Australia;
• Compensation monies for lands not returnable to take the form of a down-payment of six billion dollars and an annual percentage of the gross national income.

The first win for the Land Rights movement came with the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. However, this bill, originally drafted by the Whitlam government, granted land rights only in the Northern Territory.

While the states passed their own Land Rights laws at various dates, it was not until the 1992 Mabo case and the subsequent Native Title Act 1993 that Native Title was recognised as a legal concept throughout Australia.

However, land rights and native title are different systems with the potential of conflict.

Land rights differ from native title in that it does not require a previous connection to country. However, it may only be granted for land deemed unused and not needed for essential public purposes.

In comparison, native title recognises the pre-existing traditional and customary rights and interests Indigenous peoples have in their lands. However, it does not necessarily grant ownership of these lands.

Applying for land rights or native title is a costly and time-consuming endeavour. The number of unresolved cases in NSW alone is 37,000.

Currently, the “rights and interests in land” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are only formally recognised over about forty per cent of Australia’s land mass.

Of this forty per cent, only about half includes exclusive possession, almost all of which is in isolated, remote regions of Australia, certainly not “in and around all Australian capital cities.”

The recent destruction of a 46,000 year old sacred site at Jukan Gorge by Rio Tinto last year has led to renewed calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s to protect sacred sites.

Continued on page 2
Minister Scott Morrison has rebuffed calls for access to ten free RATs over three months – the rest of us are out of luck. Furthermore, Prime Minister Morrison on whether a sacred site will be protected.

While the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Draft Bill 2020 gives Traditional Owners a right of appeal, the final decision ultimately remains with the minister.

The draft bill has been flatly rejected by Traditional Owners on the basis that the Government failed to properly consult with them, as well as the bill favouring industry and the government at the expense of Traditional Owners.

Beginning in December 2021, fascist groups have attempted to infiltrate and cause confusion at the Tent Embassy under the guise of equivocating an anti-vaccination stance with climate change, Indigenous struggle, etc.

A “smoking ceremony” that recently set fire to the doors of Old Parliament House, led by several Indigenous men and women who have been notably involved in the fascist-led “freedom” rallies, the group has participated in a series of virtual meetings with non-Indigenous fascist activists.

The group calls for “sovereign citizens” and Indigenous “Original Sovereigns” to converge on the Old Parliament House, which they believe to be the true seat of power in Australia.

A campaign set up by the group nearby the Tent Embassy has been dismantled after police evicted its leader.

Many First Nations activists, including founders of the Tent Embassy, have condemned the group and its activities.

Gamilaraya and Kooma woman Ruby Whangaroa Pearson for the Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance, stated in regards to attempts to compare the sovereign citizen movement with Indigenous sovereignty that “it’s delusional for any kind of comparison to be drawn here. It’s absolutely not the same and never will be.”

Gary Foley, a long-time Gumbunggir activist and academic involved in the establishment of the Tent Embassy said that “I think the challenge for the those at the embassy is to come up with something on the occasion of the 50th anniversary that excludes all anti-vaxxers and white supremacists, which in particular, focuses on the people who made the first embassy so effective and especially those who are no longer with us.”

This is not the first attempt to co-opt the Indigenous sovereignty movement.

“ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE”

Last year it was reported that on the 26th of January, an application has been lodged with IP Australia to trademark the words “Always Was Always Will Be.”

According to the Australian Museum, the origins of the phrase “Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land” can be traced to the 26th of January, an application to trademark the words “Always Was Always Will Be.”

According to the Australian Museum, the origins of the phrase “Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land” can be traced back to the Aboriginal land rights movement in far-western New South Wales in the 1980s from the late Barkandji activist Uncle William Bates.

While the trademark, if successful, would not give the applicant exclusive use of the phrase as a brand name.

John Paul Janke, a Wuthathi and Meriam man and co-chair of the National NAIDOC Committee, said “I think there are certain phrases or political slogans that belong to the wider community, the wider Indigenous community, and should always belong to them.”

The phrase does not belong to the applicant; it belongs to the Indigenous community. This represents a shallow attempt to co-opt the Indigenous sovereignty movement for profit, and should be rejected.

Fifty years on, it is clear that the demands of the Tent Embassy have been continuously ignored and co-opted by successive Liberal and Labor governments.

Gary Foley in his history of the Tent Embassy reflected that, “it has endured for [five] decades as a potent symbol rejecting the hypocrisy, deceit and duplicity by successive Australian governments in a testament to the refusal of large numbers of Aboriginal people to concede defeat in a 200-year struggle for justice.”

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is an impressive achievement that demonstrates the strength, dedication, and commitment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Allies must assist in this struggle until all of the demands of the Embassy are met. Land rights, political recognition, treaty, and reparations.

Any attempts to co-opt the movement, such as for the advancement of fascism or for personal profit, must be firmly rejected and opposed.

There is no justice without First Nations justice. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal Land.
As the CPA develops its Peace fraction and seeks to build up momentum to overturn the AUKUS pact, it is useful to look behind the headlines so as to gain a fuller picture of what is going on.

Let me build up the picture with some observations. To begin with, early in 2020 the Canberra regime announced that the borders were firmly shut. No one was allowed to enter, few were allowed to leave, and all who were not Australian citizens were told to “go home.” Even Australian citizens overseas – about 40,000 – were effectively blocked from returning, and abandoned.

If one allows the last two years to unfold, there has been a growing sense of unease among many in Australia. Some have expressed this in terms of a desire to flee, to escape at the first opportunity. In 2020, the number of those who managed to get out was 100,000. In 2021, the number is about the same. To put this in perspective: in the year 2019, there were about 200,000 people granted permission to enter Australia – to study, work, and settle down. In other words, for each of the last two years, there has been a massive reversal of 500,000 per year.

We also saw the explicit manifestation of state-level racism. Unusually, racism is understood in terms of bourgeois civil society. In these terms, racism entails acts by individuals or groups which legitimate the existence of bourgeois civil society. However, the real racism is at a state level. Initially, it was directed against China, and the Anglo-supremacist racial state.

China was always a racial project, enacting a brutal system of servitude and slavery that set new lows in human history. As Marx already observed in 1853: “The profound hypocrisy and inherent absurdism of bourgeois civilization lie unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked.”

As the CPA works for the realisation of a racial-empire, it is useful to consider the broader picture. The CPA has always been at the forefront of the peace movement, but also against racism in Australia. Today, the two are once again connected and need to be addressed. The times are against the racist regime, and seeks to build up momentum to overthrow the AUKUS dream of recovering the empire might be realised. Further, as the Italian communist, Domenico Losurdo, has pointed out: “The USA has always been a white supremacist racial state, manifested today in its master-slave culture. And in its effort to seize the opportunity of a pandemic, the AUKUS ruling class is seeking to realise, at last, the project which always laid at the foundation of the colonies – and became a country in 1901.

As the CP is all in all about struggles that set new lows in human history.
“No Rapid Antigen Tests available” – the now ubiquitous message can be found at almost every supermarket and chemist in the country. Supplies of Rapid Antigen Tests for COVID-19 (RATs) are drastically low, leading testing facilities to be overwhelmed. At the same time, cases are skyrocketing throughout the country. Businesses are operating at reduced hours (if at all) due to staff shortages, and supermarkets such as Woolworths have released public statements apologizing for chronic supply line shortages. You’d be forgiven for thinking the virus is at a crisis point. Scott Morrison insists we won’t be going back to lockdowns, and perhaps full-scale lockdowns have outgrown their effectiveness. However, clearly some measures are needed to keep the virus under control.

Many states have now reintroduced pandemic controls measures like mask mandates and density requirements. Public events have been limited or cancelled. Many people are choosing to limit their exposure by staying home when they can. Without a vaccine, there is one set of rules for the rich and another for the working class. Members of the Pentecostal megachurch Hillsong – with which Scott Morrison is affiliated – were captured on video, singing and dancing maskless during a “youth camp” more like a music festival than a church gathering. This came as Australia recorded its highest 7-day rolling average since the beginning of the pandemic, 107,000 cases. The church attempted to skirt COVID-19 regulations in NSW, which prohibit large public gatherings but do not prohibit religious services.

While NSW Health Minister Brad Harwood said the gathering was “clearly in breach of both the spirit and intent of the [COVID-19] regulations,” Hillsong has its defenders. The Church argues that the gathering videoed was only a “small part” of the service. Singer-songwriter Holly Rankin has accused the pandemic measures of “discrimination” against the recording industry. Basedless accusations of discrimination have been a theme in the media this past week as Novak Djokovic had his visa cancelled on the ground that his presence in Australia may “foster anti-vaccination sentiment.” Djokovic’s father was quick to get on his soapbox about “discrimination” against his son, even comparing Novak’s treatment to Jeanne Heurtelou.

Djokovic has many supporters in the Australian public, who have not been quiet about “free speech” “rights” and “freedoms.” Unfortunately, most of these people are not using their voices to call for justice for the refugees who have been detained by the Australian government for up to eight years. On Monday 17th January, the Federal Court upheld the government’s decision to cancel Djokovic’s visa, and the tennis star was deported from Australia. The PM is already hinting that Djokovic’s three-year ban may be ended early but is noticeably silent on the fate of the refugees still imprisoned in the Park Hotel.

The law consistently carves out concessions for the ruling class and special interests, which promote and reproduce the capitalist mode of production and its ideological foundations. Even though Djokovic was eventually deported, his case challenged the government and general public discourse around vaccination and human rights. This same discourse is not being had around refugees. Regardless of the outcome, the law plays a clear ideological role.

When a poor middle eastern refugee is detained and tortured by our government, the law drags its feet through years of appeals. Meanwhile, these men live in limbo. But when the detainee is a European tennis star, the case is heard in less than a week. And, as with Hillsong, people spring to the defence of the economy, rights and religious freedoms. The ruling class thinks the rules don’t apply to them – and unfortunately, they often don’t, at least not in the same way as they apply to the rest of us. There is an old idea that the law is both a sword and a shield. This is true. It is used to oppress the marginalised and the working class, while it protects those in power. Make no mistake, it is designed to work this way.

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Casey Davison

“You can’t make everything free,” said Prime Minister Scott Morrison in response to Australia’s desperate plea to make not only Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) available for all but also funding for small businesses suffering from the outcomes of the chaotic COVID mess, or supporting those front-line casual workers. The latter is forced to work regardless of the dangerous circumstances. Meanwhile, the Australian government chooses to spend an extra $3.5 billion on war tanks that have no economic benefit or means of protecting Australia.

The Australian government should focus its concerns on the most pressing threats, including the pandemic or climate change, yet instead, it focuses its investment on 120 tanks which will have no economic or social benefit for Australians. Even Greg Sheridan, foreign editor for The Australian is skeptical about the decision to invest in these ridiculous US military machines, rather than focusing on peace, trade, and stability. Morrison has refused to make RAT tests widely available regardless of the current situation, which sees thousands of Australians isolated, scared, and financially unable to make ends meet.

This decision to spend billions on pointless military equipment is clearly an operation to fuel the US military-industrial complex and further work in conjunction with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy to contain China. Australia is a small power, and should not be aggressively scheming to present itself as a threat to this major power. The premise that China presents a threat is a ridiculous one. China is focused on its own potential and alleviating the Global South from its shackles. China can choose to continue trading with Australia, or eventually choose a better trading partner once another country they have been supporting has built up its capabilities.

The working class of Australia needs to stand against the government, and should refuse funding for military tanks, submarines, and air force. Shockingly, the Australian population sits in crisis, unable to find out if they have COVID-19 or have zero government support while employees are in close contact or contract the virus themselves.

It is a disgrace that the Australian working class should take the fall for a global pandemic, which has been managed carefully elsewhere. Australians should be up in arms about the inadequate response to this crisis, and they deserve to be treated with much more respect and dignity by being given free access to RAT tests and not being subjected to the clearly inequitable decision of buying military tanks.

As the clear drawbacks of the AUKUS military pact become more apparent, it is imperative that the working class find a way to discourage continued aggression, and to find a way to diplomacy, not only for the region but for all living in Australia.
AUSTRALIANS “SHIELDED” FROM SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS DURING PANDEMIC

E Lennon

NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet’s laissez-faire public health policy has rattled systems across the state.

Alexander Michaels is a Scientific Officer for Laverty Pathology and says that people are aware of problems in the health system but not to the full extent.

“There is a deliberate whitewashing of the situation, which ultimately serves to convince the Australian people that they are fine, and things are okay when our health infrastructure is crumbling in real time,” he says.

Michaels is a Health Services Union (HSU) delegate and worked as a COVID-19 collector before his current position. In his time doing collection work, he saw the pressure and poor conditions that collectors face daily. Through his work organising as an HSU delegate, Michaels remains close to these workers, and they say circumstances have not changed.

“Despite this reduction in testing, workers are still dealing with horrific conditions: working without breaks in scorching weather, not having access to water or a bathroom, working in clinics that provide inadequate shelter from the elements, in drive-thrus that are poorly governed where accidents can happen very easily,” he says.

Michaels attributes the dysfunction to a lack of preparation, privatisation, and deregulation of COVID-19 testing.

“At the start of the pandemic NSW Health did the majority of tests; they gradually siphoned off this responsibility to private pathology companies who were held only to a profit motive. The profit motive is incapable of preparing for a crisis, and any time we have had a rise in cases, the system has bent,” says Michaels.

“This time, it has bent too far. There was no way that private companies would invest in large labs dedicated to PCR, or meticulously trained staff with robust infrastructure and ensured supplies just in case of a catastrophic outbreak.

“This same model can be seen in our lack of ventilators and ICU beds. Neoliberal economics crumbles under the pressure, and the system became completely overwhelmed.”

When asked about why he thinks the State and Federal Government both decided to “let it rip,” Michaels says that he believes it went completely against their interests. He doesn’t accept the straightforward answer that it was “for the economy.” He says that there is an element of denialism and a misunderstanding of science.

“They decided to hope for the best and plan for even better, possibly with the hope of marketing their grand re-opening of Australia in time for an election. The one constant is a non-scientific approach and supreme arrogance,” says Michaels.

In Michaels’ view, things can become much worse than they are currently. Whether that’s a deadlier and more vaccine-resistant strain of work that it doesn’t matter how hard we work,” says McDermott.

“The final spectre hanging over us are the semi-regular positive cases at work that make people worried and cut into available manpower because people have to isolate, which I had to do last September for two weeks,” McDermott says that their bosses don’t tell them about cases unless it is “absolutely necessary.” This means that he and his co-workers often find out about positive cases from talking to one another, usually some-time after the fact.

At McDermott’s workplace, the company has hired many new casuals; however, they are only trained on COVID-19 forms and put into cases only to process them. On top of the newer workers being expected to learn the job quickly, it often changes just as fast, with memos coming down requiring the clerks to learn new codes and procedures “on the fly.”

McDermott also says that they are instructed to process incorrectly filled out forms, rather than file them for troubleshoot.

“The main thing to be done to fix the pressure from my point of view is to increase testing levels to get a higher throughput on tests, not just in my department but across the board. I can’t speak to the specifics, but I think this one area of pathology not under pressure in the finances,” he says.

“We’ve heard that my company charges the government 150 dollars per covid swab, and the company had enough money to provide staff bonuses across the board in 2021 so I do not believe paying staff levels is beyond their capacity.”

McDermott says that the governments have not handled the situation “well at all.” He says that it’s been two years and that the capacity of the health system isn’t where it needs to be. Not in pathology, hospitals, or aged care.

McDermott says that the government should be willing to spend money on saving lives and maintaining living standards. Ultimately, he attributes the government’s relaxed attitude to its desire to “keep the wheels of the economy turning.”
SOVEREIGNTY
NEVER
CEDED
AUSTRALIA’S MILITARY DEAL WITH

Graham Holton

On 13th December 2021, Australia signed an unprecedented billion-dollar defence contract with the Republic of South Korea (ROK) that will undoubtedly further increase tensions between Australia and the socialist countries of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The Australian Defence Force’s contract with the South Korean company Hanwha is for thirty self-propelled howitzers; fifteen armoured ammunition resupply vehicles; and weapon locating radars that help find enemy artillery. Hanwha will also build military tools in Geelong, creating 300 jobs.

The contract is the fulfillment of a plan initially announced in 2019, and positions Hanwha as a frontrunner for Australia’s planned AU$100 billion contract to build new military fighting vehicles for the army. This military agreement elevates our status to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) from the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA), signed on 12th December 2014. This comprehensive bilateral trade agreement is expected to increase the economic benefits between Australia and our fourth-largest trading partner, South Korea.

The historic signing occurred during a four-day visit by President Moon Jae-in, who laid wreaths at the Australian War Memorial and the nearby Australian National Korean War Memorial, commemorating the shared sacrifices of the Korean War. The Australia-ROK military relationship began with Australia’s participation in the United Nations Command (UNC) in the Korean War (1950-1953), in which some 27,000 Australian personnel served and 340 died.

Moon’s gesture symbolically coincided with the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and South Korea, having established full diplomatic relations in 1961. The ROK Consulate-General opened in Sydney in 1953 and was elevated to an Embassy in Seoul. The timing also marked 71 years since the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) entered the war on 1st November 1950, forcing the UN troops back from its border, along the Yalu/Amrok River. Australia and North Korea are technically still at war, which is seen today in Australia’s hard-line foreign policy towards China, a DPRK supporter during the war.

AUSTRALIA-ROK RELATIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY

To understand why the ROK-Australia military deal was done, it is important to understand the history behind the agreement. The truth of what happened in June 1950, and what followed, has been buried for decades beneath a narrative woven from disinformation, deceit and lies by the Australi

The 2010 Truth and Reconciliation report reveals that the ROK government had murdered up to 1.2 million people.

The Australian government knew full well that President Rhee was not a beacon of peace and democracy but a vicious anti-Communist killer. Patrick Shaw, head of the Australian diplomatic mission in Tokyo, wrote that at the British consulate he was known as “a dangerous fascist, or lunatic.” Rhee’s government was not an elected democracy but a brutal dictatorship, kept in place by the Department of Defense. Yet this is the government that Menzies sought to protect by sending in Australian forces.

US websites state that it was the North Koreans who attacked with an unprovoked invasion on Sunday, 25th June, 1950. Most US Websites simply state that “North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) invaded South Korea,” even though there is ample evidence that the opposite is true, that the South Koreans attacked first, and then the North Koreans crossed the 38th Parallel to attack the ROK troops already amassed there. A declassified Soviet telegram from Pyongyang to a Russian operative clearly states that North Korea was attacked first. The radio report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the 25th of June, 1950, reads: “Early on the morning of 25th June, 1950, troops of the so-called ‘army of national defence’ of the puppet government of South Korea began a surprise attack on the territory of North Korea along the entire 38th Parallel.” The DPRK then sent troops into the ROK as self-defence.

However, the US Army Center of Military History webpage claims: “North Korean forces cross border with South Korea. North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) numbers approximately 335,000 men; Republic of Korea (ROK) Army contains 88,000 soldiers.” This figure neglects to add that the US had four divisions in Japan and the 7th Fleet and the 5th Air Force were available for support. Australian websites simply state that “North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) invaded South Korea.”

John Foster Dulles, special advisor to President Harry S Truman, flew into Seoul via Tokyo on 17th June, 1950 and examined the South Korean positions along the 38th Parallel: “If the war goes to plan, the communists will eventually lose their domination over North Korea.” According to Kim Joon Hyok in his DPRK-US Showdown (2014), Supreme Commander Kim Il Sung ordered a counter-offensive: “When the enemy launched a surprise attack on the north, five out of eight divisions of the south Korean army formed the first echelon and the remaining three the second echelon and their main group was concentrated along the 38th parallel, especially the main roads in Uijongbu and Seoul in the north of the Han River.”

The National Museum of the Marine Corps website explains that the United Nations Security Council was called into an emergency session. The Soviet Union boycotted the session because Taiwan was granted a permanent seating on the United Nations but not the PRC. The DPRK had not been granted representation either. What the website fails to mention is that this boycott allowed anti-Communist governments to push through The United Nations Security Council Resolution 82, which authorised UNC forces to assist the ROK to push the DPRK forces back above the 38th Parallel.
Bombs in Malaya than the US would later
ish and Australian bombers dropped more
the military forces of the British Empire. Brit-
National Liberation Army (MNLA) against
pro-independence
fought in British Malaya by the communist
Liberation War (1948–1960), a guerrilla war
Emergency, or the Anti–British National
was already heavily involved in the Malayan
Communist Party Dissolution Act in October
1949 and signed the ANZUS treaty with the
USA and New Zealand in 1951. Australia
1950 and signed the ANZUS treaty with the
Commitment to dissolve the Communist Party in
Australia, firmly believing that Communism
was a great scourge and danger to the “Free
World.” The Menzies government passed the
Communist Party Dissolution Act in October
1950 and signed the ANZUS treaty with the
USA and New Zealand in 1951. Australia
was already heavily involved in the Malayan
Emergency, or the Anti–British National
Liberation War (1948–1960), a guerilla war
fought in British Malaya by the communist
pro-independence fighters of the Malayan
National Liberation Army (MNLA) against
the military forces of the British Empire. Brit-
ish and Australian bombers dropped more
bombs in Malaya than the US would later
drop on North Vietnam. Australian troops
later trained US troops in jungle warfare in
the Vietnam Conflict.
On 28th June, three days after the com-
 mencement of the Korean War, Robert
Menzies committed Royal Australian Navy
(RAN) assets to the Korean War. Following
the US, Australia was the first country to
commit units from all three military services
to Korea. An Australian Navy frigate joined
the conflict on 26th June, followed by the
Royal Australian Air Force’s 77 Squadron,
the first British Commonwealth and UNC
unit to see action in the War. Menzies clearly
laid bare his staunch anti-Communism by
giving Australia a strategic role in defeating
the DPRK.
Over the next few weeks, 77 Squadron
flew numerous sorties against KPA forces
slowing down the North Korean advance.
On 1st July, HMAS Bataan and HMAS
Shoalhaven left Japanese waters to escort
US troop ships to Pusan, Korea. The 3rd
Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, from
the Australian component of the British
Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF)
in Japan, was committed to ground opera-
tions in South Korea on 26th July.
In mid-July General Douglas MacArthur
was appointed Supreme Commander of the
UNC forces in Korea, and ordered the land-
ing of marines of the 1st Marine Division at
Inchon on 15th September. Two days later,
UN troops took part in the breakout from
Pusan, where the ROK troops were trapped.
The US bombers dropped more bombs on
North Korea than they did during all of the
Second World War. Every village, town and
city were levelled, leaving millions home-
less. MacArthur said that whoever controls
Korea controls the coast from Vladivostok
to Singapore, alarming the Russian and
British governments on the US’s true intent
in the peninsula. In the end, this was the
first major war the US fought at the start
of the Cold War, which it effectively lost,
and seventy years later is still trying to
win. By the time of the Armistice on 27th
July, 1953, over 2 million people, two per-
cent of the Korean population, had been
killed. Wing Commander Dick Crosswell
later said of Australia’s role in the vicious
war: “I wasn’t new to operational com-
mend nor to the ground attack role except
this war in Korea was a very different, and
very ugly war.”
The US government learnt from its
mistakes in the Korean War and went on
to overthrow the elected governments in
Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia and Brazil. It
continued its war against Communism in
Its foreign policies have not changed, as seen
by the overthrow of governments in Iraq,
Afghanistan and Libya.
That the Menzies government sent
troops to defend President Rhee’s brutal
government says much about the Liberal
Party of the time, and now. The LNP is still
defending the ROK and continues the war
against the DPRK and its defender, the PRC,
for a war we lost 70 years ago. The present
government continues along the path set by
Menzies, supporting Capitalist countries,
no matter how brutal the government,
and destroying Communism, no matter how much
it is supported by the people.

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path set by Menzies, supporting Capitalist
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and destroying Communism, no matter how much
it is supported by the people.
Don’t Look Up is the latest of dark political comedies by Anchor- man director/writer Adam McKay (The Big Short and Vice). The film – produced by Netflix – has polarised audiences and these reviews alike and there’s a lot to say about the movie, so let me break it down:

For those of you who don’t have much time, let me briefly summarise my opinion:

This movie is a fun satire about the current state of American politics – 6 to 8 out of 10, depending on how much you worry about its imperfections.

For those with a bit more time, below is a longer look.

DON’T LOOK UP CONSIDERED

Humanity is facing an existential threat. We are in a position to do something about it and yet we do nothing. Disaster is inevitable. I’m not talking about “disaster” as in “massive in size” or even “a lot of deaths.” I’m talking disaster as in “almost every human being on the planet will die of all of them.” Instead of leaping into action, our leaders ignore the problem. When it can’t be ignored, elected leaders put off effective action because some people already obscenely wealthy think they may make even more money from it.

Does this sound familiar? It should, because this is the world you and I live in right now. It’s also the world of “Don’t Look Now” – with some important differences, we’ll see more later. In our world, the existential threat is climate change. In “Don’t Look Now”, a nine-kilometre wide comet is heading towards earth and will cause the extinction of all life within six months of scientists finding out about it. There’s no time to delay, but the US president (Meryl Streep) doing her best impersonation of either a cross between Donald Trump and Ralph Palin, or just her best impression of what Donald Trump might be like if he were female and a former Playboy model) is an idiot who only thinks of her own advantage.

The science (Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence, and Rob Morgan) go public, but it doesn’t work. Lawrence is harassed by the FBI and described as crazy by her ex-boyfriend, while DiCaprio is duchessed by the establishment and a popular morning TV show. When it looks like effective action is possible, it’s sabotaged by a crooked billionaire who seems to own every mobile phone on the planet (Mark Rylance, combining the creepy smarter-than-you spookiness of Shylock and Mark Zuckerberg, with a voice channeling Herbert from Family Guy). In other words, the rich have a plan to either make money from the comet or somehow escape.

Despite its many imperfections, Don’t Look Up works as a simple satirical novel of American culture that has been in our faces for at least the last four years – as far as US presidents are concerned – and for a lot longer than that as far as climate change goes. Meryl Streep has a ball being a really awful scandal-prone president, appointing her son (Jonah Hill, playing the type of character Jonah Hill usually plays) as Chief of Staff, and her boyfriend as an unqualified Supreme Court justice, and doing whatever the billionaire phone-magnate tells her to do.

Honourable mention goes to Cate Blanchett, who is note-perfect as a morning TV host, all gleaming fake smile, wide eyes, and perfect hair, also to Ariana Grande who sporting plays a shallow popular called Riley Bina who is like a lot of people’s idea of what Ariana Grande is like.

However, there are some missteps with this movie. Don’t Look Now telegraphs very clearly that it’s a funny movie about climate change. That’s what we go to see it for if we’ve been paying any attention to the trailers. So it gives us denialism, people not taking the issue seriously (the terrible president decides she wants to “assess” meaning “do nothing.” We are also served up with delaying tactics (“jets make sure there’s a consensus”), mainy techno fixes, with plans to mine the approaching comet standing in for carbon capture and storage, or Scott Morrisons appeal to technologies that don’t yet exist, but which he’s so sure will exist that he doesn’t have to make any effective use of the technology we have now. Not all of this stuff works and the importance of peer-reviewed science compared to just making things up goes by us a lot faster than the spaceships in the movie.

Ron Perlman’s turn as a lovable right-wing gun-mut celebrity fits past with no impact. Jennifer Lawrence’s parents fall for the line that the comet will bring jobs so quickly they just say it at her through a screen door. Early in the movie, a senior White House official rips off Jennifer Lawrence over a bag of peanuts. Lawrence keeps coming back to this, and it’s funny, but she comes back to the gag again and again long after it stops being funny.

More importantly, a major difference between Don’t Look Up and the actual situation we’re in that this movie is about is that all the profit from the comet that’s going to make awful billionaires even richer is all potential.

In our world, a lot of billionaires either owe their money to climate change or are making fortunes from making it worse, while associated media and politicians are making serious money from helping them. A closer analogy would be if the cartoonishly evil rich in Don’t Look Up were somehow making their billions from a machine that pulled comets towards us. As climate and clean-tech author Ketan Joshi has observed: “the engine of the entire problem is absent.”

I’m in two minds about this film. On the one hand, Don’t Look Up is the kind of movie that leaves a lot of viewers mentally editing it, throwing out the bits that didn’t work. My critical eye noticed a lot of mistakes, but as a viewer, I enjoyed the experience overall. There don’t seem to be any other climate change analogies comedies on offer just now. Some climate scientists seem grateful for the movie because it mirrors what they’ve been going through for ages. I don’t expect Don’t Look Up to change any minds, but I’m glad they made it.

In Solidarity,

Eileen

Perth, WA
For weeks, the US corporate media have harped on in declaring that Russia, having positioned tens of thousands of its military troops near Ukraine’s border, may be about to invade Ukraine. US State Department spokesmen have been threatening Russia with punishing economic sanctions. Even before there was an invasion, Daily, if not hourly, TV viewers are shown satellite images, purportedly showing Russian troop concentrations on the Ukrainian border, accompanied by unflattering photos of a scowling Vladimir Putin, depicted as the evil source of the new US-Russia tensions.

The cold war with Russia, fostered since 2014 and the US-backed coup in Ukraine, may be potentially even more menacing than the new cold war with China. If the armed standoff between the Ukrainian military and the Russian and the US-backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, becomes – bymisculation or by happenstance – operational, or even more menacing than the new cold war with Russia, NATO might well escalate into nuclear war.

This is the second Ukrainian crisis in a year. In March, the US announced $125 million in military aid to Ukraine, including armed coastal patrol boats and radar equipment, with another $500 million package in June. This included radar, communications, and anti-drone warfare equipment for the Ukrainian Air Force. This latest package appears to include deploying US training personnel to Ukrainian air bases. According to published reports, Turkey, another NATO state, is supplying Ukraine with the same drones it provided to Azerbaijan for its war with Armenia over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020.

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In April 2021, the Russian-British group of officials met with President Zelensky in Kiev in October, reiterating US support for Ukraine’s future membership in NATO, promising further military support and blaming Russia for “perpetuating the war in Eastern Ukraine.”

Russian diplomats are well justified in warning that current US/NATO policy in Ukraine risks crossing Russia’s security “red lines” and facts on the ground support their concerns:

- Consider the fact that even US and NATO promise to keep NATO away from Russian borders and have been broken for thirty years.
- Consider the fact that since 1990, NATO – which ought not to exist since its antagonist, the Warsaw Pact, went out of existence in 1991 – has moved inexorably eastward. In 1990, with German reunification and the announcement of the GDR, all of Germany became part of NATO. In 1991, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland joined NATO. In 2004, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (all former Soviet republics), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO. In 2009 Albania joined NATO. In 2017 Montenegro joined NATO. In 2020 North Macedonia joined NATO.
- The incorporation of Ukraine into NATO would move Russian weapons and troops even closer to the heartland of Russia. This would be a clear and irrefutable signal that the fact, that, within living memory, the Russian people suffered invasion from the West. In 1941-45 Hitler’s armies, 4 million strong, devastated the country in a genocidal war that took some 27 million lives.
- The US announced a press conference on the 23rd of December, Putin stressed that “Further movement of NATO eastward is unacceptable. They are on the threshold of our heartland. Total exorbitance and subset system near our home? Is there some way we can talk about this? One need not be an unqualified admirer of the politicians of Vladimir Putin to acknowledge that the Russian leader has legitimate security concerns.

In mid-December, Russia took a diplomatic initiative and presented a list of security proposals to the US. According to Col. Wall Street Journal, these proposals handed to the US and published by Russia’s Foreign Ministry include a promise for each side to refrain from carrying out activities affecting each other’s security, preventing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s expansion further eastward to include Ukraine, and abandoning any NATO military activities in all parts of Eastern Europe, Transcaucasus and Central Asia.

It is vitally strategically important for us that the guarantees of Russian security are put on paper and [are] as legally binding as possible,” Russian Foreign Deputy Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters Friday. “There is no other option, since a characteristic feature of the current type of relations between Russia and the collective West is a complete lack of trust.”

The proposals also call for no deployment of NATO’s nuclear weapons and troops and weapons outside the countries in which they were stationed before the former Cold War. The US and Russia are NATO nations joined the alliance in May 1997, unless both sides agree. Each side should refrain from deploying intermediate and shorter-range missiles wherever it disposes of any military installations in the territory of the other side, and not use the territory of another state to carry out any military exercises against the other. Among Russian proposals were also an agreement for both sides to regularly exchange information about military exercises and refrain from conducting military exercises and other actions with more than a brigade in the agreed border zone.

The new Russian proposals are a realistic basis for beginning negotiations. So are the Minsk II Accords (2015) agreed to by France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine and endorsed unanimously by the US Security Council, including the United States. The Accords provided for demilitarisation of eastern Ukraine, restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty over the eastern regions, and full autonomy for the Donbas region. Despite occasional lip service, they have been largely ignored by the US and NATO.

It is welcome that the US has agreed to talks in Geneva on the 10th of January, 2022 on the new Russian proposals for legally binding security guarantees. It is also welcome that on the 30th of December, President Biden had another phone conversation with President Putin. But the US has already rejected several of the Russian security demands, including one that both countries commit to not stationing nuclear weapons outside of their own territory. And there are signs that the Russian side is already skeptical of US good faith. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has stated, “It is important that our proposals aren’t wound up in endless discussions, which the West is famous for.”

Despite the diplomatic efforts, powerful institutional and economic forces in the US – the military-industrial complex, Lockheed-Martin, Boeing, Raytheon Technologies, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, and others – eager for a new cold war with Russia, which would provide them with boundless opportunities for building new and existing contracts. The US military-industrial complex needs enemies like human lungs need oxygen. When there are no enemies, they must be invented,” an astute writer observed recently, [...]
The ten richest people on Earth have doubled their wealth during the pandemic – while ninety-nine per cent of the human race has got poorer, Oxfam revealed in a devastating report last week.

Labour letterwriters echoed the charity’s call for a wealth tax following the findings in the Inequality Kills study, which said 21,300 people die every day from inequality, amounting to “economic violence.”

The grotesque fortunes of billionaire investors, such as Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Tesla tycoon Elon Musk, have grown during the coronavirus crisis than in the previous fourteen years, Oxfam said.

The top ten plutocrats’ combined wealth has more than doubled from $700 billion to $1.45 trillion – an increase of $1.4 billion a day or $15,000 a second. In the same period, the world’s poorest have been forced into poverty.

“If these ten men were to lose 99.99 per cent of their wealth tomorrow, they would still be richer than ninety-nine per cent of all of us,” said Oxfam International’s executive director, Jimmy Reid.

“They now have six times more wealth than the poorest 3.1 billion people.”

“Their wealth is built on the backs of others and devastating inequality has been baked into our global economic system,” the charity warned, calling for a wealth tax.

Billionaires this year have profited from the pandemic as they have from global warming, Oxfam said.

“Billionaires have had a terrific year,” said Oxfam’s international director, Gabriel Rocol. “In the EU and Britain, the 107 richest people own more wealth than the bottom 2.9 million citizens, Oxfam adds.

“The pandemic has not just highlighted the grotesque inequalities baked into our global economic system – it has made them much worse. While millions have really suffered during this pandemic, billionaires have increased their collective wealth by a sickening $5 trillion,” he said.

“Instead of taxes on working people, as we are seeing under the Tories, we need to step up the fight for a wealth tax,” Trickett told the Morning Star.

And Leeds East MP Richard Burgon, the secretary of the Socialist Articulation Group of MPs who has submitted a private member’s bill calling for a wealth tax to replace the Tory’s National Insurance hike targeting ordinary people’s incomes, said inequality had reached “obscene” levels.

“The pandemic’s worst impacts have been felt by working people, who are bearing the brunt of the tragedy baked into our global economic system, including defunding public health, cutting public services, and putting working people on zero-hours contracts.”

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“The pandemic has posed grim challenges to global economic, social, and environmental cooperation systems. In an era of deepening economic and financial crises, China has provided a strong guarantee for promoting cooperation in key areas for the green development of the BRI. In 2017, China’s Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE, then Ministry of Environmental Protection) issued the Belt and Road Ecological and Environmental Cooperation Plan, and jointly released another document titled Guidance on Promoting Green Belt and Road with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOC).”

These documents have detailed major tasks and roadmaps for the construction of green Belt and Road, and proposed cooperation on green development covering such aspects as policy dialogue, information support, for a sound technological exchanges.

Last year, the MOC and the MEE jointly issued a document titled Green Development Guidelines for Overseas Investment and Cooperation. It set out ten priorities for overseas investment and cooperation under the framework of the BRI, including defusing green risks, following green rules and standards, building green infrastructure, and promoting green production and operations, pointing out the direction and key elements for the green development of overseas investment and cooperation in countries along the routes of the Belt and Road.

Moreover, through continuously deepening cooperation with relevant countries on ecological and environmental protection, China has provided important underpinning for global economic recovery and sustainable development since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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