

WHOSE FREEDOM? THE ATTACK ON CHARLIE HEBDO

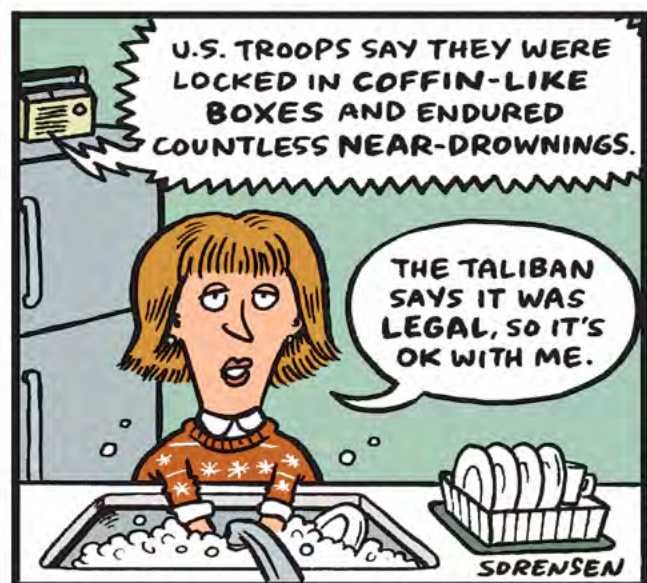
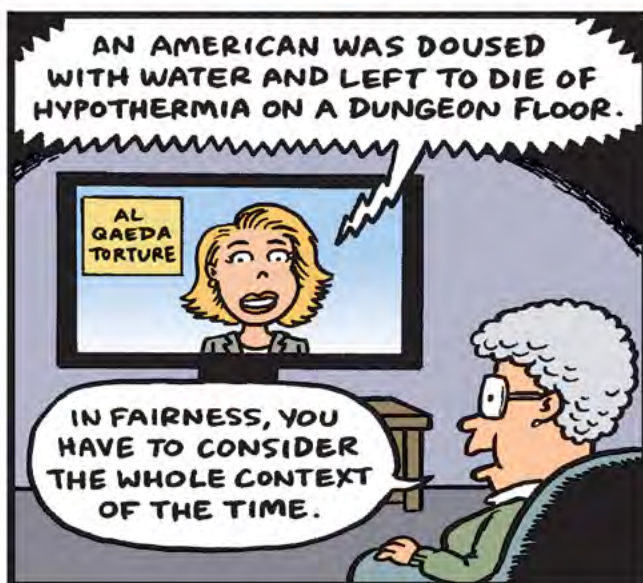
CRITICAL ESSAYS BY DAVID EDWARDS, CHRIS HEDGES, RICK SALUTIN, JONATHAN COOK, LARRY CHIN, TREVOR GRUNDY

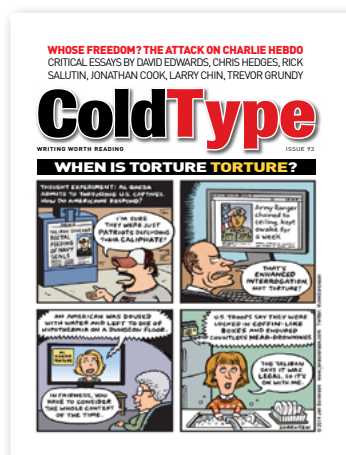
ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING

ISSUE 93

WHEN IS TORTURE **TORTURE**?





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It's safe to say that if the acts described in the US Senate's torture report had been committed against American troops, people like Dick Cheney would be singing a different tune

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The Torture Distort

Less than 10% of the US Senate's recently released "torture report" is publicly available, but it is still possible to arrive at a rough approximation of a truth the CIA does not want you to know, writes **Stan Winer**

In its most important contribution, the recently released *Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program* sifts through some six million classified documents to rebut the CIA's claim that torture produced actionable intelligence. All the agency's assertions that torture somehow stopped terrorist plots or led US special forces to Osama Bin Laden were shown to be false, and sometimes knowingly so. Immediately after release of the report, CIA director John Brennan was forced to admit that any link between torture and actionable intelligence is "unknowable."

The Senate committee's study, otherwise known as the "torture report" fails to ask or answer a critical question: If the intelligence yield from torture was so consistently low, why was the CIA so determined to persist energetically in these brutal but unproductive practices for so long?

Among the many possibilities or probabilities the Senate failed to explore is that the CIA's torture programme was not primarily intended to obtain information but to reverse the loyalties of captured enemy combatants or even abducted civilians, so that after being tortured and psychologically "turned" they worked for American special forces in "pseudo operations". The term "pseudo operations" as it is referred to in intelligence parlance, indicates the use of organized teams disguised as guerrilla or insurgent groups for



Psychological torture of detainees at secret US prison sites includes the staging of mock executions, as shown here

long- or short-term penetration of insurgent-controlled areas. As retired US Army Military Intelligence officer Dr Lawrence E Cline describes it in his monograph *Pseudo Operations and Counterinsurgency*, published in 2008 by the US-based Strategic Studies Institute, the role of "turned" insurgents who have been "persuaded" to change sides by torture or by threats against their families, is "critical" in counter-insurgency operations.

Such operations, according to Dr Cline, have been "a very successful technique used in several counterinsurgency campaigns ... providing critical human intelligence and

If the intelligence yield from torture was so consistently low, why was the CIA so determined to persist energetically in these brutal but unproductive practices for so long?

TURNING POINT

Captured freedom fighters who resisted “turning” were injected with a drug having the effect of leaving the victims fully conscious but physically paralyzed, before being thrown into the Atlantic from military aircraft

other support.” He explains that pseudo team success is based largely on weakness in insurgent command and communications systems, so that pseudo forces can thrive in environments in which guerrilla forces have problems in their communications and in which centralized control of the insurgent groups has been weakened.

As detailed in *Pseudo Operations and Counterinsurgency*, and in other reliable studies, pseudo-team strategy and tactics are not a recent phenomenon. American forces used it in 1948 against communist insurgents in the Philippines. It was developed and used routinely as part of the CIA’s infamous Phoenix programme in South Vietnam. From there it was exported to Latin America and Asia under the guise of police training programmes. It was also used by British colonial forces in Kenya and Malaya, and by France in Algeria during the 1950s, again by Britain in Northern Ireland during the 1970s, and more recently by apartheid forces in Rhodesia and South Africa.

It is possible, at least notionally, that in the Levant, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and northern Pakistan, pseudo operators under the supervision of Western coalition special forces are deployed to this day in the “war on terror”. Such clandestine activity might include the acquisition by pseudo operators of GPS coordinates on the ground for precision air strikes using laser-guided missiles aimed at assassination targets. That may well be speculative at this time, but it is certainly true that the manner and method of pseudo operations are flexible and varied, tailored to shifting political agendas, dictated by local conditions, and virtually boundless in their subversive application.

In post-apartheid South Africa, for example, the Truth Commission in the 1990s heard evidence of how “turned” freedom fighters were used by counter-insurgency forces during the apartheid era to incite internecine factional violence, and also to lead genuine anti-apartheid cadres into ambushes by government security forces. Pseudo op-

erators, referred to by the security forces as “askaris” were also trained to tamper with explosives and hand grenades, which would later explode prematurely in the hands of loyal cadres.

The South African Truth Commission heard evidence of how, in South West Africa (now Namibia), captured freedom fighters who resisted “turning” were injected with a drug having the effect of leaving the victims fully conscious but physically paralyzed, before being thrown into the Atlantic from military aircraft. In apartheid Rhodesia, “turned” guerrillas posing as genuine liberation forces murdered Christian missionaries and bombed churches – atrocities that were then propagandized by the media to demonise the national liberation movement as consisting of “communist atheists”.

The use of pseudo teams by Rhodesian and South African counter-insurgency forces was nothing new in Africa. In Algeria during the 1950s, “turned” agents infiltrated the national independence movement and mingled with cadres in areas where they were known and trusted by the local population. The agents planted incriminating forged documents, spread false rumours of treachery within the ranks of the liberation movement and succeeded in fomenting distrust among the independence fighters. It resulted in a frenzy of throat-cutting and disemboweling among the confused and suspicious cadres. A scholarly article titled “France and the Algerian War: Strategy and Operations”, published in the June 2002 issue of the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, quotes a former senior counter-insurgency officer of the French colonial army in Algeria: “Nationalist slaughtered nationalist from April to September 1957 and did France’s work for her.”

Strategy and tactics of that nature are applauded by the Strategic Studies Department of the US Joint Special Operations University in Florida, USA. An unclassified 2005 monograph published by the university under the title “*Dividing Our Enemies*”, states in glowing terms: “Having our enemies eliminate



Prisoners at Guantánamo Bay wear blacked-out goggles and industrial earmuffs which cause sensory deprivation and psychological disorientation.

The CIA acknowledged it had “experimented” with brainwashing, claimed it “did not work”, and allegedly destroyed its research records

each other offers advantages over slug-it-out methodologies ... While lacking the glamour of direct action missions, the effects of special operations teams on the ground conducting unconventional warfare, psychological operations, and civil military operations are absolutely central to achieving an end-state of realizing democratic and viable governments. These are the special operations ways and means that can lead to successfully leveraging inherent human fault lines to counter terrorism.”

A comprehensive list of known pseudo operations is not within the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that the term “turning” or its pejorative variant “brainwashing”, and the use of pseudo operators, are notably absent from the heavily redacted torture report. But, despite the CIA’s ability to selectively shape the narrative through redaction and omission, copious documentation acknowledging the existence such operations is available in the public domain, and there is nothing the CIA or the US Department of State can do

about it.

The CIA cannot claim ignorance of the subject, since it was the CIA itself that had first coined the term “brainwashing”. The first printed use of the word was in September 1950, when the *Miami News* published an article by Edward Hunter titled “Brain-Washing Tactics Force Chinese into Ranks of Communist Party”. Hunter, a CIA propaganda operator working under cover of a journalist, subsequently turned out a steady stream of articles on the subject.

Facing congressional investigations in 1973, the CIA acknowledged it had “experimented” with brainwashing, claimed it “did not work”, and allegedly destroyed its research records. In short, brainwashing existed only when the communists did it – as if the parameters of torture had not been well known to interested parties for a number of years.

The closest both the CIA and “Torture Report” come to acknowledging the practice of brainwashing, otherwise known as “conditioning”, “mind control”, “conversion”, “turn-

TURNING POINT

The CIA never did explain what torture or “enhanced interrogation techniques” have to do with “security”

ing”, “behaviour modification”, or even “mind kineses”, is at least one declassified admission by the CIA quoted in the Senate’s largely overlooked Minority Report which accompanied the main report. In that admission, the CIA asserts that “enhanced interrogation techniques” were applied “not only for security but for other valid reasons” including “transitioning”. The CIA never did explain what torture or “enhanced interrogation techniques” have to do with “security”, nor did it specify what exactly were those other, supposedly “valid reasons” or “transitions”.

Nor did the Senate committee, in its quest for edification, bother to seek clarification of those particular “transitions”, which were meant by the CIA to justify practices such as: continuous loud noise; 24-hour shackling in stressful positions, including sometimes standing on broken bones; hooding; sensory disorientation; extended sleep deprivation; temperature manipulation; suffocation and the sensation of drowning through “water boarding”; forced rectal “hydration”; sealing detainees into coffin-like boxes; staging of mock executions, as well as making threats to kill or rape detainee family members; and the general inducement of pain, humiliation and anxiety.

Perhaps, in its investigations, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence thought these “enhanced interrogation techniques” had nothing to do with brainwashing or the “turning” of prisoners. This is odd, given that physical and psychological torture have directly and through its proxies been integral to US foreign policy and covert strategy since at least the end of World War II. Among documents in the public domain is the Senate’s own 1976 report, Project MKULTRA, the CIA’s Program of Research in Behavioural Modification, compiled by the Senate ‘Select Committee on Health and Scientific Research. The report established that the CIA and other US government agencies had since 1950 conducted ultra secret experimental research into psychological conditioning experiments performed on human subjects, the hidden

costs of which eventually reached nearly a billion dollars a year.

Perhaps the CIA’s most recent plunge into the cesspool of psychological operations is buried somewhere among the redactions of the 2014 torture report. Or perhaps nobody on the committee wanted to accept that human nature is so pliable that prisoners can actually be “turned”. Or perhaps they just wondered: “Where’s the science?” Whatever the reason or reasons for the Senate report’s omissions, it is certainly true that the science is there, and has been for a long time.

The Science

It all started with the Russian behavioural scientist Ivan Pavlov during his famous experiments with dogs in the early 1900s. Pavlov’s experiments with animals, documented in a 1928 paper titled *Lectures on Conditional Reflexes: The higher nervous activity (Behaviour) of animals*, opened the door to scientific investigations with humans.

In June 1956, US Airforce psychiatrist Dr Albert D Binderman presented a paper at a Senate hearing and before the Academy of Medicine in New York the following year, in which he identified several stages that “subjects” of psychological torture go through in the “turning” or conversion process. Binderman, who had never served in Korea or been a prisoner of war, nonetheless claimed his research was based on methods “used by Chinese torturers” during the Korean war. In 1961, he later co-edited an academic book titled *The Manipulation of Human Behaviour* published in New York by John Wiley and Sons. Among other things, it endeavours to provide a scientific explanation for why, after the Korean ceasefire, a number of former American prisoners of war had renounced their American citizenship and elected to remain in Korea rather than return to the US. Hollywood, the mass media and the scientific community dutifully lapped it up. The ex-POWs had been “brainwashed”.

According to behavioural scientists and neurophysiologists contributing to *The Ma-*

nipulation of Human Behaviour, a state of behavioural collapse can be induced by physical and emotional stress prior to inducing new patterns of actions and beliefs in a phenomenon known scientifically as “transmarginal inhibition”, a term first coined by Pavlov, meaning behavioral conversion or TMI for short. Successful application of this conditioning process requires psychological torturers to have total control of the environment. Existing mental programming can then be replaced with new patterns of thinking and behaviour. The same results can be obtained in contemporary psychiatric treatment by electric shock treatments and even by purposely lowering a patient’s blood sugar level with insulin injections. A scientific protocol was developed by the torturers, involving the measurement of hormonal fluctuations. Saliva and blood samples are taken at regular intervals to assess their levels of reaction and susceptibility to the conditioning process.

The ways to achieve conversion through TMI are many and varied, including sensory disorientation through temporal and environmental manipulation such as sleep deprivation, protracted isolation, and extremes of heat and cold, light and dark, noise and silence, isolation and intensive interrogation. The usual first step in achieving TMI is to work on the emotions of an individual or group until they reach an abnormal level of anger, fear, excitement or nervous tension. The progressive effect of this mental condition, when combined with pain and the threat of imminent, death, is impairment of judgment and increased suggestibility. The more this condition can be maintained or intensified, the more it compounds, leading to total behavioural conversion.

A report by Senate’s Armed Forces Committee on Detainees had in 2008 already confirmed the existence of a “Behavioral Science Technical Team” at Guantánamo naval base, acting in liaison with US Army Special Forces Command, and with the approval of the Bush administration. At this behavioural science “laboratory” (sic), Binderman’s teachings were

applied, supplemented by a modified version of Pavlov’s early theories. This modified version had been developed through more recent “therapeutic” research consisting of clinical tests on human subjects, conducted by Professor Martin Seligman, a former president of the American Psychological Association. Involved in supervising the Guantánamo torture laboratory were two civilian psychologists operating as a commercial company registered under the name Mitchell Jessen & Associates. From 2005 to 2010, their firm was paid \$81-million by the US government. Although the Senate’s 2014 torture report declined to refer to the two psychologists by name, reputable investigative journalists in leading US media, to their credit, later exposed the psychologists’ identities.

Since these civilian psychologists were not trained interrogators but were none the less physically present at Guantánamo and other secret torture centers, it is reasonable to deduce that their presence was not intended to obtain information or confessions, but to assist behavioural conversion or “turning” through psychological conditioning.

“Some folks”

It appears from the declassified version of the 2014 torture report that Senate investigators were content to conduct only 119 case studies of detainees tortured from 2002 to late 2009. The report seems to turn a blind to the untold thousands of “terrorist” detainees delivered by the CIA, or by the US military or Special Forces units, to military detention centers at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, Bagram in Afghanistan, and to 50 or more secret “black site” prisons in US client states scattered around the globe. The report also fails to acknowledge the sequestration and interrogation of prisoners aboard US Navy vessels stationed in international waters.

According to an investigation conducted by researchers for the British-based human rights organization Reprieve, no less than 17 US Navy amphibious docking vessels equipped with hovercraft and helicopters were or still are deployed in this particular as-

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TURNING POINT

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pect of the CIA's "interrogation" programme. The vessels, being flat-bottomed, are capable of operating in the shallow coastal waters of the Middle East, making them ideal for secret abduction operations and also for quietly returning "turned" prisoners or abductees back to the mainland, for reintegration into insurgent groups where they would be known and unsuspectingly trusted as genuine loyalists.

The declassified sections of the torture report apparently ignore an earlier 226-page study compiled by United Nations experts and submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2010. The culmination of a year-long investigation, the human rights study compiled by the Council's working groups on arbitrary detention and enforced or involuntary disappearances of what the CIA described as "high value targets".

Referred to by the Council as "ghost detainees" they were held without being accounted for by the US military police, without the military police knowing or revealing their identities, or even the reason for their incarceration. Some "ghost detainees" were also hidden from inspectors of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in flagrant violation of reporting and monitoring requirements under the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war.

The US, in applying extreme secrecy around the incarceration of "ghost detainees", conceivably drew inspiration from Israel, its closest ally in the Middle East, with decades of experience in the torture and interrogation of Arab insurgents. Israeli intelligence is known to have operated for many years a "ghost prison" in Israel for political detainees and suspected insurgents. This secret prison for so-called "special cases", code-named Facility 1391, is absent from maps of the region, it has never been openly acknowledged by the Israeli government, and it exists within the walls of a secret army base to which Red Cross inspectors were denied access. Nor has Facility 1391 ever been officially declared a detention facility, as required by Israeli law.

What is known with some certainty though,

is that the question of disappearances, abductions and "ghost prisoners" did raise embarrassing public questions for the US government, questions that the United Nations never did pursue openly, nor did the US government ever respond to the UN Human Rights Council's study – with the exception only of President Obama's lame admission in late 2014: "Yes, we did torture some folks".

"Some folks"? Reputable independent analysts and researchers have calculated the number of prisoners tortured over the years to be at around 80,000. Official declarations attempt to justify the secrecy surrounding the torture programme by claiming US military actions are dictated by the mandates of an "exceptional kind of war against a uniquely treacherous and broadly-defined enemy." The CIA's extensive redaction of the torture report, over a period of nine months, is consistent with the fact that in 2005 already the CIA had covertly destroyed 92 videos of detainee interrogations, according to a bipartisan US Senate Armed Services Committee report published in November 2008.

But over time, following the work of investigative journalists and independent researchers, and especially after leaks from within the CIA itself, the problem of CIA and US Joint Special Forces accountability grew so large as to become impossible to hide the monster that the US and its allies had created. This may be why the Senate was eventually authorized and obliged to report on the matter, in order to impart at least some veneer of respectability and democratic accountability on US foreign policy.

The fact remains that less than 10 percent of the more than 600 pages of the 2014 torture report and its accompanying minority report compiled by Senate panel investigators are available to the public. The remainder of the report remains classified. There is no telling when, if ever, the public may eventually get to read it. Until then, the torture report – five years in the making and nine months in the redacting – might more appropriately be referred to as the "torture distort". **CT**

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When the cameras lie

Our surveillance society needs a dose of integrity to be reliable, write **Joshua Gans** and **Steve Mann**

At this moment, there are likely many eyes on you. If you are reading this article in a public place, a surveillance camera might be capturing your actions and even watching you enter your login information and password. Suffice it to say, being watched is part of life today. Our governments and industry leaders hide their cameras inside domes of wine-dark opacity so we can't see which way the camera is looking, or even if there is a camera in the dome at all. They're shrouded in secrecy. But who is watching them and ensuring the data they collect as evidence against us is reliable?

We all have varying opinions on how we feel about this pervasive surveillance. Being watched feels creepy, but if surveillance is in a public place, others are being watched too, with potential safety benefits for all of us. We are often watched by lifeguards at a beach or pool, and the benefits are often comforting. So, while it may be easy to claim you don't like being watched, it is sometimes the case that you actually want someone watching over you.

Permission plays an important role in our attitudes about being watched. We don't mind being watched if we have given our consent to do so. But many public surveillance cameras are being used without our consent. And other individuals might just start recording us without our permission.

Moreover, individual police as well as police forces in North America are being equipped with body worn cameras. Police and citizens alike have often spoke out in favor of this practice.

But who will it really protect? Will the video only be available in situations where it supports the officer's side of the story? Will the camera be said to have mysteriously malfunctioned when the video would have supported a suspect's side of the story? Is there not a conflict-of-interest inherent in one party being the curators of the recordings they make of highly contested disputes with other parties?

Surveillance has become a "one-way mirror." We're being watched but can't watch back. Our contention is that the key word missing from most discussions of surveillance is "integrity." To understand this contention, it is useful to think of its opposite: hypocrisy. In many establishments there is often a surveillance camera pointed at you, while, at the same time, you are prohibited from using your own camera. We see this, for example, at shopping malls, stores, and even in allegedly public spaces.

Store owners are recording your actions so they have evidence if they accuse you of doing something wrong, such as shoplifting. But if you catch them doing something wrong, like having their fire exits illegally chained shut, or if you simply want to prove

In many establishments there is often a surveillance camera pointed at you, while, at the same time, you are prohibited from using your own camera

WHO'S WATCHING?

After the Menezes shooting, London's Metropolitan Police seized the four recordings of the event and reported that all were blank, even though transit officials had already viewed the shooting

your innocence from their allegations of wrongdoing, you might want to record them. If there is a dispute, the two recordings might make it more difficult for either party to falsify their recording.

A plausible reason that a surveillant – be it a shopkeeper, corporation or government – might try to impose a one-sided approach on their surveillance, is the issue of control. If they do something wrong, they can choose to not use or retain their recordings. This one-sided preservation of memory is a serious blow to the surveillance's integrity.

Consider the case in July 2005 at the Stockwell subway station in London. The London Metropolitan police shot Jean Charles de Menezes seven times in the head with hollow-point bullets, rendering his body “unrecognizable.” Hollow-point bullets are used by law enforcement but illegal in war. It turned out the police shot the wrong person (he looked similar to a suspect they were looking for). It was a case of mistaken identity. After the shooting, the police seized the four recordings of the event and reported that all were blank, even though transit officials had already viewed the shooting.

The same issue is at play in any form of surveillance: the surveillants have control over their recordings, and if these are the only ones, the one-sided curation of the evidence undermines their integrity.

How can we resolve this problem of integrity in surveillance? Some solutions are taking effect as we speak, while others will require a gradual change in laws or public attitudes. And some will even create new economic and business opportunities in new markets for integrity-based solutions.

The increase in so-called cyborg technologies – in which a person's sight or memory disability is augmented with a wearable computer vision system – may help resolve the problem of one-sided surveillants falsifying their recordings. A storeowner may not legally deny entry to a person with such a device, and that recording or a logfile of it could be-

come evidence that the store's own recording of an incident was tampered with. Failing eyesight and memory among our aging population, along with technological breakthroughs, mean that we're going to see more and more instances of people with wearable or implantable cameras to help them see and remember better.

Similarly, the growing prevalence of smartphones and wearable computers with cameras means we're entering an era of inverse surveillance in which, by sheer number, people are likely to record events even if there is a rule against recording. For example, police brutality is often captured by a large number of individuals from different recording angles. Even when police try and prohibit or destroy the recordings, it is difficult for them to guarantee that all the recordings have been destroyed, especially in the age wireless communications and live transmission.

Beyond that, we propose a whole new model or alliance (which we call the “Privellance Institute”) to resolve the lack of integrity in our surveillance society. That is, to force the surveillants (such as shopkeepers or corporations) to bear a cost if they forbid the rest of us from recording them in return.

A “Veillance Contract,” for example, would deny the surveillant the right to use its recordings as evidence if it doesn't allow others the right to make their own recordings. Or if the surveillant destroys anyone's tapes or files of an incident. By prohibiting others from recording, the surveillant increases the economic cost for a court to determine what actually happened, thus making justice more expensive to administer. **CT**

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Charlie Hebdo and the war for civilisation

David Edwards finds a liberal dose of hypocrisy in media reporting on the protection of journalists and their right to free speech

In 2003, a top security expert told filmmaker Michael Moore, “there is no one in America other than President Bush who is in more danger than you”. (Michael Moore, “Here Comes Trouble – Stories From My Life,” Allen Lane, 2011, p.4)

Moore was attacked with a knife, a blunt object and stalked by a man with a gun. Scalding coffee was thrown at his face, punches were thrown in broad daylight. The verbal abuse was ceaseless, including numerous death threats. In his book, “Here Comes Trouble”, Moore writes:

“I could no longer go out in public without an incident happening.” (p.20)

A security company, which compiled a list of more than 440 credible threats against Moore, told him:

“We need to tell you that the police have in custody a man who was planning to blow up your house. You’re in no danger now.” (p.23)

But why was Moore a target? Had he published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad?

The problem had begun in the first week of the 2003 Iraq war when Moore’s film “Bowling For Columbine” won the Oscar for best documentary. At the March 23 Academy Awards ceremony, Moore told a global audience:

“I’ve invited my fellow documentary nominees on the stage with us. They are here in solidarity with me because we like



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nonfiction. We like nonfiction, yet we live in fictitious times. We live in a time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons. Whether it’s the fiction of duct tape or the fiction of orange alerts: we are against this war, Mr. Bush. Shame on you, Mr. Bush. Shame on you! And anytime you’ve got the Pope and the Dixie Chicks against you, your time is up! Thank you very much.” (p.5-6)

About halfway through these remarks, Moore reports, “all hell broke loose”. On arriving home from the ceremony, he found three truckloads of horse manure dumped waist-high in his driveway. That night, Moore witnessed for himself the extent to which US corporate journalism defends the right to offend:

“...as I flipped between the channels, I listened to one pundit after another question my sanity, criticise my speech, and say, over and over, in essence: ‘I don’t know what got into him!’ ‘He sure won’t have an easy time in this town after that stunt!’ ‘Who does he think will make another movie with him now?’ ‘Talk about career suicide!’ After an hour of this, I turned off the TV and went

On arriving home from the ceremony, Michael Moore found three truckloads of horse manure dumped waist-high in his driveway

In stark contrast to the campaign of near-fatal media vilification of Moore, journalists have responded to the Charlie Hebdo atrocity in Paris by passionately defending the right to offend

online – where there was more of the same, only worse – from all over America.” (pp.9-10)

This is the reality of respect for free speech in the United States. If, on Oscar night, he had held up a cartoon depicting President Bush naked on all fours, buttocks raised to a pornographic filmmaker, would Moore still be alive today?

War – total, merciless, civilised

In stark contrast to the campaign of near-fatal media vilification of Moore, journalists have responded to the *Charlie Hebdo* atrocity in Paris by passionately defending the right to offend. Or so we are to believe. The *Daily Telegraph*'s chief interviewer, Allison Pearson, wrote:

“Those that died yesterday did so on the frontline of a war of civilisations. I salute them, those Martyrs for Freedom of Speech.”

Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy agreed, describing the attacks as “a war declared on civilisation”. Joan Smith wrote in the *Guardian*:

“I am feeling sick and shaky. I have been writing all day with tears running down my face. I don't suppose I'm alone in reacting like this to the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo*, which is an assault on journalists and free speech.”

New York Times columnist Roger Cohen tweeted:

“I am shaking with rage at the attack on . It's an attack on the free world. The entire free world should respond, ruthlessly.”

The Western tendency to act with ruthless, overwhelming violence is, of course, a key reason why Islamic terrorists are targeting the West. Glenn Greenwald asked Cohen:

“At whom should this violence be directed beyond the specific perpetrators, and what form should it take?”

Sylvain Attal, editor of new media at TV station France24, replied:

“response must be both merciless and respectful of our legal system. Period”

End of discussion. American journalist

and regular Fox News talk show host, Geraldo Rivera, raved:

“The French extremists say they are committed to Jihad and are willing to die for their cause. We should make their wish come true. No mercy”

The ‘entire free world’, then, should resort to ruthless, merciless violence to defend ‘civilisation’, a term some naïve souls have associated with compassion, restraint, and even the bizarre exhortation:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Cohen retweeted Anand Giridharadas, who writes for the *New York Times*:

“Not & never a war of civilizations or between them. But a war FOR civilization against groups on the other side of that line. #CharlieHebdo”

Thus, we live in a time when a “war for civilisation” is seen as something more than a grotesque contradiction in terms.

In the *Times*, the perennially apocalyptic David Aaronovitch wrote:

“Yesterday in Paris we in the west crossed a boundary that cannot be recrossed. For the first time since the defeat of fascism a group of citizens were massacred because of what they had drawn, said and published.”

The *Guardian* took a similar view:

“Wednesday's atrocity was the... bloodiest single assault on western journalism in living memory.”

But, in fact, the bloodiest attack on journalism in living memory, at least in Europe, happened on April 23, 1999 when Nato bombed the headquarters of Serbian state radio and television, killing 16 people. The dead included an editor, a programme director, a cameraman, a make-up artist, three security guards and other media support staff. Additional radio and electrical installations throughout the country were also attacked. The *New York Times* witnessed the carnage:

“The Spanish-style entrance was ripped away by the blasts, which seemed to hit the

roof just under the large girder tower that holds numerous satellite dishes. Although the tower and blackened dishes remained, the control rooms and studios underneath had simply disappeared.” (Steven Erlanger, “Survivors of NATO Attack On Serb TV Headquarters: Luck, Pluck and Resolve,” the *New York Times*, April 24, 1999)

Presumably this had been some kind of terrible mistake by the civilised West crossing a boundary that could not be recrossed. No, Nato insisted that the TV station, a “ministry of lies”, was a legitimate target and the bombing “must be seen as an intensification of our attacks”. A Pentagon spokesman added:

“Serb TV is as much a part of Milosevic’s murder machine as his military is. The media is one of the pillars of Milosevic’s power machine. It is right up there with security forces and the military.” (Erlanger, op.cit.)

Amnesty International responded:

“The bombing of the headquarters of Serbian state radio and television was a deliberate attack on a civilian object and as such constitutes a war crime.”

In all the corporate press discussion of the Paris killings, I have found no mention of Nato’s bombing of Serbian TV and radio.

In August 2011, Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, condemned Nato’s bombing of Libyan state broadcasting facilities on July 30, killing three media workers, with 21 people injured:

“I deplore the NATO strike on Al-Jamahiriyah and its installations. Media outlets should not be targeted in military actions. UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) condemns acts of violence against journalists and media personnel in conflict situations.”

Again, Nato confirmed that the bombing had been deliberate:

“Striking specifically these critical satellite dishes will reduce the regime’s ability to oppress civilians while [preserving] television broadcast infrastructure that will be needed after the conflict.”

In November 2001, two American air-

to-surface missiles hit al-Jazeera’s satellite TV station in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing a reporter. Chief editor Ibrahim Hilal said al-Jazeera had communicated the location of its office in Kabul to the American authorities.

In April 2003, an al-Jazeera cameraman was killed when the station’s Baghdad office was bombed during a US air raid. In 2005, the *Guardian* quoted the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ):

““Reports that George Bush and Tony Blair discussed a plan to bomb al-Jazeera reinforce concerns that the US attack in Baghdad on April 8 [2003] was deliberate targeting of the media” said Aidan White, the general secretary of the IFJ.”

According to the *Daily Mirror*, Bush had told Blair of his plan:

“He made clear he wanted to bomb al-Jazeera in Qatar and elsewhere. Blair replied that would cause a big problem. There’s no doubt what Bush wanted to do – and no doubt Blair didn’t want him to do it.”

Similarly, during last summer’s blitz of Gaza, Israel killed 17 journalists. An investigation led by Human Rights Watch concluded that Israeli attacks on journalists were one of many “apparent violations” of international law. In a 2012 letter to the *New York Times*, Lt. Col. Avital Leibovich, head spokeswoman to foreign media for the Israel Defense Force, wrote:

“Such terrorists, who hold cameras and notebooks in their hands, are no different from their colleagues who fire rockets aimed at Israeli cities and cannot enjoy the rights and protection afforded to legitimate journalists.”

Aaronovitch warned that “appalling” as previous attacks on Western free speech had been, “they were generally the work of disorganised loners”, whereas the Paris attacks seemed to have been more organised. What then to say of lethal attacks on journalists conducted, not by a group of religious fanatics, but by democratically elected governments?

Given this context, corporate media com-

In all the corporate press discussion of the Paris killings, I have found no mention of Nato’s bombing of Serbian TV and radio

Like the rest of the media, the *Guardian* protests passionately when “bad guys” commit an atrocity against “us”, but emotive defences of free speech are in short supply when “good guys” bomb Serb and Libyan TV

mentary on the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre all but drowns in irony and hypocrisy. The *Telegraph* commented:

“But the march in Paris reminds us, at the very least, that the men of violence are not just a minority, but a fragment of a fragment. And it may be that it also acts as a turning point. The US is to hold a conference at the White House on countering violent extremism...”

In fact, as LSE student Daniel Wickham clarified, “men of violence” were among the marchers. Certainly the White House is a good place for people to do some serious thinking about violent extremism and how to stop it.

A *Guardian* leader observed:

“When men and women have gone to their deaths for nothing more than what they have said, or drawn, there is only one side to be on.”

True, but if it is to be meaningful, support for the right to offend must not defer to a self-serving view of a world divided into “good guys” and “bad guys”, “us” and “them”. Like the rest of the media, the *Guardian* protests passionately when “bad guys” commit an atrocity against “us”, but emotive defences of free speech are in short supply when “good guys” bomb Serb and Libyan TV, or threaten the life of progressive US filmmakers. Far fewer tears are shed for Serb, Libyan or Palestinian journalists in US-UK corporate media offices.

The *Guardian* added:

“Being shocking is going to involve offending someone. If there is a right to free speech, implicit within it there has to be a right to offend. Any society that’s serious about liberty has to defend the free flow of ugly words, even ugly sentiments.”

The sentiment was quickly put to the test when BBC reporter Tim Willcox commented in a live TV interview:

“Many critics though of Israel’s policy would suggest that the Palestinians suffer hugely at Jewish hands as well.”

This mild statement of obvious fact

brought a predictable flood of calls for Willcox to resign. The journalist instantly backed down:

“Really sorry for any offence caused by a poorly phrased question in a live interview in Paris yesterday – it was entirely unintentional”

A BBC spokesman completed the humiliation: “Tim Willcox has apologised for what he accepts was a poorly phrased question... He had no intention of causing offence.”

Glenn Greenwald describes the prevailing rule:

“As always: it’s free speech if it involves ideas I like or attacks groups I dislike, but it’s something different when I’m the one who is offended.”

Chris Hedges notes:

“In France a Holocaust denier, or someone who denies the Armenian genocide, can be imprisoned for a year and forced to pay a \$60,000 fine. It is a criminal act in France to mock the Holocaust the way *Charlie Hebdo* mocked Islam.”

A point emphasised by the recent arrest of a French comedian on charges of “defending terrorism”.

The irony of the BBC apology, given recent events, appears to have been invisible to most commentators. Radical comedian Frankie Boyle is a welcome exception, having earlier commented:

“I’m reading a defence of free speech in a paper that tried to have me arrested and charged with obscenity for making a joke about the Queen”

The *Guardian* leader concluded:

“Poverty and discrimination at home may create fertile conditions for the spread of extremism, and western misadventures abroad can certainly inflame the risks.”

The term “western misadventures” is a perfect example of how media like the *Guardian* work so hard to avoid offending elite interests with more accurate descriptions like “Western atrocities” and “Western genocidal crimes”.

A leader in the *Times* observed of the

Charlie Hebdo killers:

“Their victims knew the risks they ran by defying the jihadist strategy of censorship through terror. They accepted those risks. They understood that freedom is not free, and so should we all.” (Leader, “Nous Sommes Tous Charlie,” the *Times*, January 8, 2015)

Fine words, but in 2013 *Times* owner Rupert Murdoch apologised for a powerful cartoon by Gerald Scarfe that had appeared in the newspaper. The cartoon depicted the brutal Israeli treatment of Palestinians but was not in any way anti-Semitic. Murdoch, however, tweeted:

“Gerald Scarfe has never reflected the opinions of the *Sunday Times*. Nevertheless, we owe major apology for grotesque, offensive cartoon.”

In its response to the Paris killings, the *Times* perceived “a vital duty for Muslim clerics who must embrace a new role actively deradicalising their followers. It also imposes an urgent responsibility on Muslim political leaders”.

Did the paper have any positive role models in mind?

“One controversial figure who appears to have understood this is Egypt’s president, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. In a remarkable speech to imams last week to mark the birthday of Muhammad, he called for a “religious revolution” to prevent the Islamic world being “lost by our own hands”.”

The *Times* went on: “Mr al-Sisi is not unique. Najib Razak, Malaysia’s prime min-

ister, has championed moderate political Islam at home and abroad.” (Leader, “Freedom Must Prevail,” *Times*, January 9, 2015)

Thus, Sisi, leader of a military coup, someone who oversaw the massacre of 1,000 civilian protestors on a single day in August 2013, is hailed as a “champion” of “moderate political Islam”.

There is so much more that could be said about just how little passion the corporate media have for defending the right to offend. Anyone in doubt should try, as we at Medialens have, to discuss their own record of failing to offend the powerful. To criticise “mainstream” media from this perspective is to render oneself a despised unperson. In response to our polite, decidedly inoffensive challenges on Twitter, the Medialens editors have been banned by champions of free speech like *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger, Jon Snow of Channel 4 News, Jeremy Bowen of the BBC, Peter Beaumont of the *Observer* and *Guardian*, and many others.

Even rare dissident fig leaves on newspapers like the *Guardian* dismiss as asinine and, yes, offensive, the suggestion that they should risk offending their corporate employers and advertisers. Not only is no attempt made to defend such a right, the very idea is dismissed as nonsense unworthy even of discussion.

CT

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David Edwards is co-editor of Medialens, the British media watchdog – <http://medialens.org> – where this essay was first published

In 2013 *Times* owner Rupert Murdoch apologised for a powerful cartoon by Gerald Scarfe that had appeared in the newspaper. The cartoon depicted the brutal Israeli treatment of Palestinians but was not in any way anti-Semitic

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A message from the dispossessed

Chris Hedges says the Paris attacks weren't part of a clash of civilisations but were, rather, a sign of the rage of the poor against the privileged elite

This is not about justice. It is not about the war on terror. It is not about liberty or democracy. It is not about the freedom of expression. It is about the mad scramble by the privileged to survive at the expense of the poor. And the poor know it

The terrorist attack in France that took place at the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* was not about free speech. It was not about radical Islam. It did not illustrate the fictitious clash of civilizations. It was a harbinger of an emerging dystopia where the wretched of the earth, deprived of resources to survive, devoid of hope, brutally controlled, belittled and mocked by the privileged who live in the splendor and indolence of the industrial West, lash out in nihilistic fury.

We have engineered the rage of the dispossessed. The evil of predatory global capitalism and empire has spawned the evil of terrorism. And rather than understand the roots of that rage and attempt to ameliorate it, we have built sophisticated mechanisms of security and surveillance, passed laws that permit the targeted assassinations and torture of the weak, and amassed modern armies and the machines of industrial warfare to dominate the world by force. This is not about justice. It is not about the war on terror. It is not about liberty or democracy. It is not about the freedom of expression. It is about the mad scramble by the privileged to survive at the expense of the poor. And the poor know it.

If you spend time as I have in Gaza, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt and Sudan, as well as the depressing, segregated housing projects known as *banlieues* that ring French

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cities such as Paris and Lyon, warehousing impoverished North African immigrants, you begin to understand the brothers Cherif Kouachi and Said Kouachi, who were killed last month in a gun battle with French police. There is little employment in these pockets of squalor. Racism is overt. Despair is rampant, especially for the men, who feel they have no purpose. Harassment of immigrants, usually done by police during identity checks, is almost constant. Police once pulled a North African immigrant, for no apparent reason, off a Paris Metro subway car I was riding in and mercilessly beat him on the platform. French Muslims make up 60 to 70 percent of the prison population in France. Drugs and alcohol beckon like sirens to blunt the pain of poor Muslim communities.

The five million North Africans in France are not considered French by the French. And when they go back to Algiers, Tangier or Tunis, where perhaps they were born and briefly lived, they are treated as alien outcasts. Caught between two worlds, they drift, as the two brothers did, into aimlessness, petty crime and drugs.

Becoming a holy warrior, a jihadist, a



Paris mourns the victims of its massacres.

Photo: Gwenaél Piaser

champion of an absolute and pure ideal, is an intoxicating conversion, a kind of rebirth that brings a sense of power and importance. It is as familiar to an Islamic jihadist as it was to a member of the Red Brigades or the old fascist and communist parties. Converts to any absolute ideal that promises to usher in a utopia adopt a Manichaeian view of history rife with bizarre conspiracy theories. Opposing and even benign forces are endowed with hidden malevolence. The converts believe they live in a binary universe divided between good and evil, the pure and the impure. As champions of the good and the pure they sanctify their own victimhood and demonize all nonbelievers. They believe they are anointed to change history. And they embrace a hypermasculine violence that is viewed as a cleansing agent for the world's contaminants, including those people who belong to other belief systems, races

and cultures. This is why France's far right, organized around Marine Le Pen, the leader of the anti-immigrant Front National, has so much in common with the jihadists whom Le Pen says she wants to annihilate.

When you sink to despair, when you live trapped in Gaza, Israel's vast open-air prison, sleeping 10 to a floor in a concrete hovel, walking every morning through the muddy streets of your refugee camp to get a bottle of water because the water that flows from your tap is toxic, lining up at a UN office to get a little food because there is no work and your family is hungry, suffering the periodic aerial bombardments by Israel that leaves hundreds of dead, your religion is all you have left. Muslim prayer, held five times a day, gives you your only sense of structure and meaning, and, most importantly, self-worth. And when the privileged of the world ridicule the one thing that provides

Converts to any absolute ideal that promises to usher in a utopia adopt a Manichaeian view of history rife with bizarre conspiracy theories

The message to Muslims is clear: Your traditions, history and suffering do not matter. Your story will not be heard

you with dignity, you react with inchoate fury. This fury is exasperated when you and nearly everyone around you feel powerless to respond.

The cartoons of the Prophet in the Paris-based satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* are offensive and juvenile. None of them are funny. And they expose a grotesque double standard when it comes to Muslims. In France a Holocaust denier, or someone who denies the Armenian genocide, can be imprisoned for a year and forced to pay a \$60,000 fine. It is a criminal act in France to mock the Holocaust the way *Charlie Hebdo* mocked Islam. French high school students must be taught about the Nazi persecution of the Jews, but these same students read almost nothing in their textbooks about the widespread French atrocities, including a death toll among Algerians that some sources set at more than 1 million, in the Algerian war for independence against colonial France. French law bans the public wearing of the burqa, a body covering for women that includes a mesh over the face, as well as the niqab, a full veil that has a small slit for the eyes. Women who wear these in public can be arrested, fined the equivalent of about \$200 and forced to carry out community service. France banned rallies in support of the Palestinians last summer when Israel was carrying out daily airstrikes in Gaza that resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths. The message to Muslims is clear: Your traditions, history and suffering do not matter. Your story will not be heard. Joe Sacco had the courage to make this point in panels he drew for the *Guardian* newspaper. And as Sacco pointed out, if we cannot hear these stories we will endlessly trade state terror for terror.

"It is a sad state of affairs when Liberty means the freedom to insult, demean and mock people's most sacred concepts," the Islamic scholar Hamza Yusuf, an American who lives in California, told me in an email. "In some Latin countries people are acquitted for murders where the defendant's moth-

er was slandered by the one he murdered. I saw this in Spain many years ago. It's no excuse for murder, but it explains things in terms of honor, which no longer means anything in the West. Ireland is a western country that still retains some of that, and it was the Irish dueling laws that were used in Kentucky, the last State in the Union to make dueling outlawed. Dueling was once very prominent in the West when honor meant something deep in the soul of men. Now we are not allowed to feel insulted by anything other than a racial slur, which means less to a deeply religious person than an attack on his or her religion. Muslim countries are still governed, as you well know, by shame and honor codes. Religion is the big one. I was saddened by the 'I'm Charlie' tweets and posters, because while I'm definitely not in sympathy with those misguided fools [the gunmen who invaded the newspaper], I have no feeling of solidarity with mockers."

Charlie Hebdo, despite its insistence that it targets all equally, fired an artist and writer in 2008 for an article it deemed to be anti-Semitic.

Shortly after the attacks of 9/11, while living in Paris and working as a reporter for the *New York Times*, I went to La Cité des 4,000, a gray housing project where North African immigrants lived in apartments with bricked-up windows. Trash littered the stairwells. Spray-painted slogans denounced the French government as fascist. Members of the three major gangs sold cocaine and hashish in the parking lots amid the burned-out hulks of several cars. A few young men threw stones at me. They chanted "Fuck the United States! Fuck the United States! Fuck the United States!" and "Osama bin Laden! Osama bin Laden! Osama bin Laden!" By the door of an elderly Jewish woman's apartment someone had spray-painted "Death to the Jews," which she had whitewashed out.

In the *banlieues* Osama bin Laden was a hero. When news of the 9/11 attacks reached La Cité des 4,000 – so named because it had 4,000 public housing apartments at the

time of its construction – young men poured out of their apartments to cheer and chant in Arabic, “God is great!” France a couple of weeks earlier had held the first soccer match between a French and an Algerian team since Algeria’s war of independence ended in 1962. The North Africans in the stadium hooted and whistled during the French national anthem. They chanted, “Bin Laden! Bin Laden! Bin Laden!” Two French ministers, both women, were pelted with bottles. As the French team neared victory, the Algerian fans, to stop the game, flooded onto the field.

“You want us to weep for the Americans when they bomb and kill Palestinians and Iraqis every day?” Mohaam Abak, a Moroccan immigrant sitting with two friends on a bench told me during my 2001 visit to La Cité des 4,000. “We want more Americans to die so they can begin to see what it feels like.”

“America declared war on Muslims a long

time ago,” said Laala Teula, an Algerian immigrant who worked for many years as a railroad mechanic. “This is just the response.”

It is dangerous to ignore this rage. But it is even more dangerous to refuse to examine and understand its origins. It did not arise from the Quran or Islam. It arose from mass despair, from palpable conditions of poverty, along with the West’s imperial violence, capitalist exploitation and hubris. As the resources of the world diminish, especially with the onslaught of climate change, the message we send to the unfortunate of the earth is stark and unequivocal: *We have everything and if you try to take anything away from us we will kill you.* The message the dispossessed send back is also stark and unequivocal. *It was delivered in Paris.....CT.*

Chris Hedges, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, writes a regular column for Truthdig – <http://truthdig.com> – every Monday.

It is dangerous to ignore this rage. But it is even more dangerous to refuse to examine and understand its origins



A THEORY OF THE DRONE

GRÉGOIRE CHAMAYOU

FROM A LEADING PHILOSOPHER, A NEW THEORY OF HOW DRONE WARFARE IS TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD

“A VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE: A WHOLLY ORIGINAL, WIDE-RANGING, AND PROVOCATIVE CRITIQUE OF TARGETED KILLING FROM REMOTE PLATFORMS.” –DEREK GREGORY, PETER WALL DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

“CHAMAYOU IS BRILLIANT. HE JUMPS BREEZILY FROM FREUD AND CAMUS TO MARX AND MAO, FROM ISRAELI AND ANCIENT ATHENIAN GENERALS TO RUSSIAN RESEARCHERS AND CHINESE STRATEGISTS. IF YOU STICK WITH THE WILD RIDE, YOU’LL FIND HIS ARGUMENTS ARE BREATHTAKINGLY PROFOUND.” –MEDEA BENJAMIN, CO-FOUNDER OF CODEPINK AND AUTHOR OF DRONE WARFARE



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Attack was about satire, not journalism

Nobody wants to die for their work or beliefs, but those at *Charlie Hebdo* surely understood the stakes better than most, writes **Rick Salutin**

Cartoons aren't sententious the way columnists are, cloaked in erudition and pseudo-evidence. It's kind of amazing that they've survived in dailies at all, like refugees from 18th-century coffee houses

I'm uneasy calling the massacre in Paris an attack on journalism. Journalism is a vast flabby entity, practised by many. The slaughter at *Charlie Hebdo* was aimed at satire, birthed along with journalism in the enlightenment era (Swift in England, Moliere and Voltaire in France, many others). More precisely, it was aimed at political cartooning, which the French adore. Daumier was the great precursor to the martyrs – I think that's the right word – last month.

Cartoons are pure commentary, they contain no, or minimal, information. They're unique in newspapers in that sense. Even movie reviews, which are meant to be opinion, convey lots of data: plot, cast, venue, etc. Cartoons aren't sententious the way columnists are, cloaked in erudition and pseudo-evidence. It's kind of amazing that they've survived in dailies at all, like refugees from 18th-century coffee houses. The cartoonist usually has no equivalents at the paper, he (or she) sits in an isolated space, he's really a satirist employed by a newspaper.

I'm also uneasy with describing the work of these people as mockery (Doug Saunders in the *Globe and Mail*) or "the serious work of making fun" of fanaticism and "totalitarian ideologues" (Andrew Coyne in the *National Post*) or blasphemy (Ross Douthat in the *New York Times*). It makes them sound like precocious but limited adolescents venting their rage against authority. Basically a phase.

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Their range is wider and their content more sophisticated. The three-word response of the *Onion* in the US to 9/11 – Holy Fucking Shit laid over a graphic of the devastation, brilliantly foreshadowed all the counterproductive hysteria that followed: invasions, occupations, Abu Ghraib, reactions in the Muslim world, right down to Islamic State and the murders near the Place de la République last month.

Contributors to *Charlie Hebdo* held clear, passionate political views, many were "children of May 68," explicitly left-wing or anarchist. For that reason they loathed the official "socialist" parties and often refused to vote in hollow elections. You can practically hear them weep in their 2013 response to charges of racism.

They didn't just hate fanatics and "despots" but also the respectable mindbenders of the church, "democratically" elected governments and the press itself. *Charlie Hebdo* extended its sympathy not just to Arabs and Muslims but even to Muhammad – he was a guest editor – for having to put up with the adoration of "idiots" (cons) like Islamic State and Al Qaeda.

In a way they and their cognates else-

where carry the ethical burden of journalism (afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted) that mainstream media so often shuck. In the US today the most insightful sources by far are Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert and John Oliver. I know a teen addicted to them who resents the charge (which Stewart at least accepts) that they aren't doing news, they're doing comedy about the news. If there is a mix, it's tending more toward the former, especially with Oliver's brilliant Last Week Tonight.

If I've implied purity and uniformity on their part, *je m'excuse*. They grew up in the same society we all did and are susceptible to taboos and blind spots. In 2008, *Charlie Hebdo* management told the cartoonist Siné to apologize for anti-Semitism, on specious grounds. He said he'd rather cut his own balls off; they fired him and he sued the paper, winning a healthy award. That's the kind of intelligent passions involved. Nothing snotty or adolescent. Nobody wants to die for their

work or beliefs but these guys surely understood the stakes better than most. That's why I think of them as martyrs, not victims.

The Canadian equivalent would be *Frank* magazine. It, too, arouses violent (literally) response. When Brian Mulroney was prime minister, he said he wanted to get a gun or choke "that little guy," presumably editor Michael Bate. For fathomable reasons the police never questioned or charged him. *Frank* went through financial crises and lawsuits (like *Charlie Hebdo*), occasionally ceased publication (ditto) and recently returned. It's as indispensable as ever. Some of it is sublime (much of cartoonist Charles Jaffe's work), some is puerile sewage. That's the nature of journalism, you can't wait till you get it perfect. You have to keep pushing it out and hope at least some of it will be redemptive.

CT

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Rick Salutin is an author and activist based in Toronto. This article was originally published in the *Toronto Star*.

HURWITT'S EYE

Mark Hurwitt



Yes, *Charlie Hebdo's* cover is offensive

Jonathan Cook is not impressed by the first post-massacre issue of the French magazine

Reporting suggested that those western publications that didn't publish the cover mostly refused to do so out of fear of threats to their staff

Those who want to claim we are in the midst of a clash of civilisations have an easy time perpetuating their narrative. Just look at the very different responses to the first *Charlie Hebdo* cover after the attack on its offices in Paris. The cartoon shows the Prophet Mohammed weeping as he holds up a "Je suis Charlie" placard, with the words "All is forgiven" above the image.

Here's what the cartoonist Renald Luzier says about the moment he conceived it:

"I cried. And it was the front page. We had found the front page. We had at last found this damned front page. And it was our front page, not the one the world wanted us to do, but the one that we wanted to do. It wasn't the front page that the terrorists wanted us to do, because there isn't a terrorist in there. There's just a man crying, a character crying. It's Muhammad. I'm sorry, we drew him again, but the Muhammad we drew is a man crying, above all."

Most Western media have celebrated the cartoon in similar terms. A *Guardian* review of the new 1 million print-run edition called it "poignant", "typically cheeky", "ribald", "classic" *Charlie Hebdo*. Reporting suggested that those western publications that didn't publish the cover mostly refused to do so out of fear of threats to their staff.

The response in parts of the Muslim world was, of course, much less enthusias-



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tic. In the Philippines, there were protests at which *Hebdo* posters were burnt, while clerics in leading Muslim countries denounced the cartoon. Turkey is trying to block access to the front cover on the internet.

What does this show? A battle to the death between secularism and religious belief, enlightenment and barbarism? That we have a civilised West that cherishes free speech pitted against a regressive East that enforces religious orthodoxy at the cost of individual liberty?

We certainly have a very polarised debate. But we should remember that we in the West are the ones framing the debate – and in a way that inevitably makes us look good, makes us the victims.

What we have instead, I suggest, is an entrenchment of prejudice and extremism on both sides, exacerbated by the confrontation itself. What appears to be an ideological conflict is more precisely a battle for control of the narrative. There is a context and a history that inflame these passions, one that concerns control of global resources in which the West does not look half as good as it thinks it does.

For me the *Charlie Hebdo* cover precisely

embodies the very problem it thinks it exposes: not a clash of civilisations, but our desperation to control the narrative to our advantage. It is telling in my view that the cartoonist says he cried at the moment he came up with the idea.

The cartoon is not cheeky or subversive, as Western critics would have us believe; it is hugely sentimental while being at the same time presumptuous and racist in the deepest sense of the word. What it does is to strip the Prophet, and by implication all Muslims, of any agency or voice. A white cartoonist gets not only to speak for them, but to impose on them – as Muslims – an apology. To implicate them all – through those three words – in a crime committed by two gunmen.

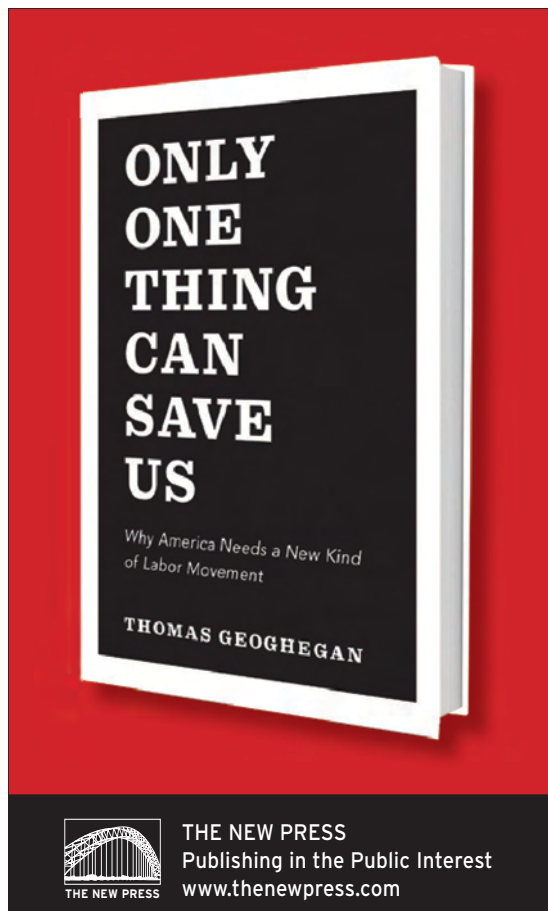
Yes, the cartoon is offensive, but not in the clash of civilisations sense – one that

leaves us in the west feeling vindicated and self-righteous. It is offensive because it offends against history, offends against the self-determination of peoples long colonised by us, offends against the values we claim for ourselves as enlightened beings.

The words above the image on the cover could just as easily have read, “The white man’s burden” – the refrain of every coloniser in modern times. It seems we have not come much further than our ancestors. **CT**

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Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His latest books are “Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East” (Pluto Press) and “Disappearing Palestine: Israel’s Experiments in Human Despair” (Zed Books).
His website is www.jonathan-cook.net

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ONLY ONE THING CAN SAVE US

Why America Needs a New Kind of Labor Movement

Thomas Geoghegan

From the author of the labor classic *Which Side Are You On?*, an argument for revitalizing American unions and saving the middle class

“Tom Geoghegan’s got it right, and let’s hope the word goes viral. We need a labor movement that will restore civil sanity to a slowly sinking democratic spirit and reality.”

–Deborah Meier

“From his first, magnificent book straight through to this one, Tom Geoghegan has written about the labor movement in America with truly unmatched eloquence, self-reflection, and even wit. All that and—he is right.”

– Michael Tomasky

Je suis CIA

Larry Chin believes that if we delve deeper into the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre we will find evidence of a sinister false flag operation

The *Charlie Hebdo* terrorists have ties to Anglo-American intelligence and the Pentagon that the masses do not bother to think about

Since 9/11, the imperial playbook has consisted of a favorite and time-tested tactic: the false flag operation.

Carry out or facilitate a spectacular atrocity. Blame it on the enemy of choice. Issue a lie-infested official narrative, and have the corporate media repeat the lie. Rile up ignorant militant crowds, stoke the hatred, and war-mongering imperial policy planners and their criminal functionaries get what they want: war with the public stamp of approval.

Here we are again. The *Charlie Hebdo* incident is being sold as “the French 9/11”. It certainly is, in all of the most tragic ways: France, like the United States on 9/11, has been used. The masses of the world have been deceived, and march in lockstep to NATO’s drumbeat again.

All signs lead from French intelligence back to Washington – and Langley, Virginia – directly and indirectly. Red herrings and deceptions comprise the official narrative.

The Al-Qaeda narrative, the classic CIA deception, gets fresh facelift. The fact that Al-Qaeda is CIA-created Anglo-American military-intelligence is ignored. The agenda behind the ISIS war – a massive and elaborate regional CIA false flag operation – registers even less. The *Charlie Hebdo* terrorists have ties to Anglo-American intelligence and the Pentagon that the masses do not bother to think about. They are also tied to the (con-



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veniently dead) 9/11-connected Al-Qaeda mastermind/CIA military-intelligence asset Anwar Al-Awlaki. These and other obvious connections to Washington and the CIA do not raise alarm bells among the ardent ones waving Je Suis Charlie signs (which ‘magically’ appeared, and seem to have been mass-produced in advance).

Signs of an inside job and a still unfolding cover-up are significant, from pristine, undamaged passports found on scene to the convenient suicide of Helric Fredou, the Paris police commissioner in charge of the *Hebdo* investigation.

The Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly were not only well known by French authorities, French intelligence and the CIA. The Kouachis were tracked and monitored – guided – over the course of many years, arrested many times, yet were allowed to continue training and plotting with fellow Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, etc. These are telltale signs of a guided military-intelligence operation. A blatantly obvious terror cell, known to authorities, ‘drops out of sight’, and then set loose at an appropriate moment. And then executed.

None of these things, which alarm sea-

soned observers, registers among the emotional masses; the lemmings who wilfully refuse to address its real source: the architects of Anglo-American war policy.

Only the NATO war agenda benefits from any of this. France is suffering from the Washington-imposed sanctions against Russia. Shipyards are impacted from being unable to deliver Russian orders due to France's vassalage status to Washington, and other aspects of the French economy are being adversely impacted by sanctions that Washington forced its NATO puppet states to apply to Russia.

The French president said that the sanctions against Russia should end (so did the German vice-chancellor).

This is too much foreign policy independence on France's part for Washington. Has Washington resurrected 'Operation Gladio,' which consisted of CIA bombing attacks against Europeans during the post-WWII era that Washington blamed on communists and used to destroy communist influence in European elections? Just as the world was led to believe that communists were behind Operation Gladio's terrorist attacks, Muslims are blamed for the attacks on the French satirical magazine.

Now France is militarized, just as the US was in the wake of 9/11. And the French right-wing has newfound cache.

Notice that the last two false flag operations in recent months – the false flagging of North Korea over Sony and the film "The Interview", and the *Charlie Hebdo* deception – both revolve around the ideas of 'free speech' and 'free expression'

This is a phantom battle, choreographed by those who could not care less for 'freedoms'. In fact, the masses are being manipulated towards supporting war and mass murder, and police state agendas that specifically curtail freedoms.

What more creative way to take away freedoms than to make people give them up voluntarily?

The hordes of American citizens who sup-

ported the 'war on terrorism' to 'defend freedom' got the Patriot Act, which gutted what liberties they had; the Constitution and the Bill of Rights will not be restored. This process continues all over the world. Ask the average uninformed French citizen today suffering from post-traumatic stress, and they will gladly give up their rights, anything so that 'terrorists' are stopped.

Note how the powers-that-be have taken to inserting their pro-war messages even more forcefully where the ignorant public spends the majority of its time: in popular entertainment. In Hollywood products, in their cartoons, in their magazines, in their celebrities. Let George Clooney, Seth Rogen and James Franco transmit the messages of war for the CIA and the Pentagon.

Weaponize stupid movies like "The Interview" and crude magazines like *Charlie Hebdo*, and watch people become bloodthirsty, vengeful, unthinking and war-loving.

It is the CIA's ongoing mission to plant its assets and its propaganda into the media and the arts, controlling the perception of culture as well as framing all debate. It is making a huge push at the moment, relishing the speed and effectiveness of technology and social media. Hundreds and thousands of innocent lives have been lost in this endless, brutal and criminal war. Yet its architects and functionaries remain untouched.

Je suis Langley

No Anglo-American war of conquest, no *Charlie Hebdo* massacre.

No CIA, no Militant Islam, no Al-Qaeda, no ISIS, no *Charlie Hebdo* massacre.

No 9/11, no 'war on terrorism', no ISIS deception, no *Charlie Hebdo* massacre.

No war against Russia, no *Charlie Hebdo* massacre.

Je Suis Charlie? No.

To the naïve ones who believe the lies and march on the streets carrying the signs, you are the victims, the gullible, the dupes, the pawns.

Tu es CIA.

Tu es NATO.

Just as the world was led to believe that communists were behind Operation Gladio's terrorist attacks, Muslims are blamed for the attacks on the French satirical magazine

Larry Chin

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CT

'Goodbye Hendon. Hello Netanya'

After the Paris attacks, British Jews feel they have no future in Europe. But, asks **Trevor Grundy**, where will they find safety?

Extra police and volunteer patrols have been called in to protect synagogues following the attacks in Paris

Goodbye Hendon, London – Hello Netanya, Israel. Might we hear that soon? Is such a startling change of location really what tens of thousands of British Jews want following the recent outrages in Paris?

A survey conducted by Campaign against Anti-Semitism (CAA) released soon after the shootings said that 58 percent of all British Jews fear a return to the 1930s and doubt they have a long-term future in Britain – maybe even in Europe.

“Britain is at a tipping point,” said Gideon Falter, chairman of CAA. “Unless anti-Semitism is met with zero tolerance, it will grow and British Jews will increasingly question their place in this country.” Fellow campaigner Jonathan Sacerdotal said that rising anti-Semitism in Britain and Europe has made Jews afraid, fearful of the future.

There are around 280,000 Jews in Britain. The CAA survey spoke to around 2,200 of them. However, its findings do not impress Laura-Janner Klausner, senior rabbi in the Movement for Reform Judaism. “It most certainly doesn’t match day-to-day realities,” she said from her home in North London. “Britain is a fantastic place. It offers all religions and minorities freedom. Britain is one of the best places in the world for Jews.”

But there’s no doubt all of them are on a course of heightened awareness about their place – and reputation – in Britain.

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The CAA commissioned one of Britain’s best-known polling outfits – YouGov – to run the survey which showed that:

- 25 percent of the people they interviewed agreed with the idea that “Jews chase money more than other British people”
- Jewish loyalty to Israel makes them less loyal to Britain than other British people.
- Jews talk too much about the Holocaust in order to get sympathy.

David Rich, a spokesman for Community Security Trust (CST), which looks at Jewish security in the UK, said that extra police and volunteer patrols have been called in to protect synagogues following the murder of cartoonists in Paris and the deaths of four Jews at a kosher supermarket in Paris, after which France announced that 10,000 troops would guard “sensitive sites”, including synagogues, railways stations, airports and tourist attractions. Nearly half the soldiers – around 4,700 – were assigned to protect France’s 717 Jewish schools.

An increasing number of French Jews have already left for the country. The four victims of the supermarket attack were all buried in Israel, even though they were not Israeli citizens. The CST recorded a 36 percent rise in

anti-Semitic attacks in the first six months of 2014, prior to Israel's assault on Gaza which caused more than 1,000 Palestinian civilian deaths.

In July, when Israel's Operation Protective Edge in Gaza was at its height, London saw the highest-ever level of hate crime, 90 per cent against Jews.

Britain has been free of organized anti-Semitism since the 1930s when Sir Oswald Mosley led the British Union of Fascists (BUF). He organized marches through Jewish parts of London, Manchester, Birmingham and other English cities which led to widespread violence. Mosley was imprisoned during World War II, his movement collapsed in the late 1950s and Mosley died at his home outside Paris in December 1980.

An editorial in the liberal *Independent* newspaper (January 14, 2015) said Britain has rejected the hatred purveyed by far right demagogues but that "subtler forms of prejudice remain." These "subtler forms of prejudice" are honeycombed throughout British society, say Jewish writers and historians.

Stephen Pollard, editor of Britain's *Jewish Chronicle* says that Jewish community leaders expect France's Jewish population to fall from 500,000 to 400,000 within a few years.

In Britain, the big question facing Jews is this: Would British and European Jews be safer in Tel Aviv, or Netanya, than they are in Golders Green or Hendon in North London?

Many doubt they would be, and agree with Rabbi Laura when he says: "Despite problems, Britain is still one of the best countries in the world for Jews."

But Jews are not the only minority group that feels threatened. Fiyaz Mughal, director of the London-based Faith Matters, which monitors hate crimes against Muslims, has called on imams and rabbis to work together to ensure that mosques and synagogues are not attacked by hate groups.

There's growing concern among the Muslim community (2.8 million) that far-right groups will use the murders of people in France as excuse to use violence against

moderate Muslims in England's great cities of London, Birmingham and Manchester.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) confirmed that it was "monitoring unfolding developments in Birmingham," after Muslim-owned businesses were shot at and attacked with hammers soon after the French tragedy. Onlookers claim that groups of men damaged shops, restaurants and other premises in parts of the city which has a large Muslim population. The MCB said, "We hope that these remain isolated incidents."

Fortunately, Britain is without a well-organised extreme Rightwing group able to take advantage of a grass roots swell against "Islamists" and, in certain parts of society, Jews. The once threatening British National Party (BNP) is down and out with its leaders fighting one another more than a common enemy – presently Muslims, but in the past Jews. The recently alive and very much kicking (usually in the area of an opponent's groin) English Defence League is drifting into irrelevance with its former leader Tommy Robinson imprisoned last year for mortgage fraud.

The ex-public (in England that means private and expensively educated) schoolboy and former banker Nigel Farage beats an anti-immigration, anti-Europe, drum and attracts the sort of people who used to flow towards the BNP. Political sources say he is the acceptable face of extremism in Britain, a man who knows how to appeal to millions of people who feel disenfranchised, a man determined to rid his fast-growing party of loonies, cranks and neo-Nazi thugs who, as things stand in this self-applauding moderate multicultural nation, have nowhere else to go.

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There's growing concern among the Muslim community (2.8 million) that far-right groups will use the murders of people in France as excuse to use violence against moderate Muslims

Slow train to Tashkent

Nate Robert tells us what *not* to expect on a long-haul journey through the former USSR

I'm trudging though snow in the dark, surrounded by grey concrete, in a post-Soviet world, heading towards the main station in downtown Almaty

Central Asia remains relatively unknown in the world of travel. Increasingly on the radar of ambitious tourists and post-USSR wanderlusts, there are people out there who just might want some information on the 27 hour overnight train journey from Almaty to Tashkent. So, my compromise is this – a tiny kernel of essential facts, wrapped by an unconventional bribe in a vodka-filled traveller's tale from the ancient region of the Great Game. Everyone is catered for. Probably. In any case, the train ride from Almaty to Tashkent is something that everyone should do at least once, but hardly anyone ever will.

If you've seen the movie "Borat", Kazakhstan is pretty much the exact opposite. Almaty, the former capital city, is wealthy, increasingly western, clean, orderly, and expensive. From Almaty to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, this journey was to be my first ex-Soviet long-haul train ride. Much has been written about the trains that pursue the communist-era railway tracks throughout Russia and the former USSR, especially those on the well known trans-Siberian, just north of here. But on this lesser travelled route, little has been said.

The once-weekly departure time is 4.29am, very early Sunday morning. Absurd. In the bitter cold of a Kazakhstan winter, these late-night/early morning shenanigans have



me questioning my entire lifestyle choices. I'm trudging though snow in the dark, surrounded by grey concrete, in a post-Soviet world, heading towards the main station in downtown Almaty. Half asleep and shivering, I'm also wondering how I manage to retain such a loving, loyal, life-partner, when I subject her to such ridiculousness. We arrive, check in, and board the Coupé class carriage bound for Tashkent.

On this train, Coupé is as good as it gets. I considered the cheaper, more gulag-styled, Plaztkart carriages, but only for a fleeting



moment. Up in Coupé, it's four beds to a small cabin. First impressions – small, warm, seemingly survivable, and, oh wow, I didn't see that old Russian lady skulking there in the darkness on the bottom bunk, scarf donned. She eye-balled me. I stared back into her deep-set cold black eyes.

After storing my luggage, I hopped up to my top bunk, pulled a clean-but-torn standard issue sheet around the mattress, took one last look at Phillipa below and, as the train pulled out of Almaty, I settled in for a few hours' shut-eye before sunrise.

When I awoke, our Babushka was sitting with Phillipa. They were unpacking their respective breakfasts and discussing the filthy table in broken English and Russian. As they smiled and scrubbed, they cleaned like a couple of old friends.

On a train like this, it's instantly a sharing economy; we're all in this together. Babushka unpacked her farm-fresh boiled eggs, Piroshki, biscuits, cheese, and pickles. She offered us some food.

Fuck what we'd brought along to eat, I love this old KGB spy-lady and I'll hap-

Babushka unpacked her farm-fresh boiled eggs, Piroshki, biscuits, cheese, and pickles. She offered us some food



It's a scheduled journey of 27 hours from Almaty to Tashkent. Hot water, invaluable.

The train facilities include incomprehensibly putrid toilets, an incredibly useful hot water dispenser and not a single working power point anywhere in the carriage

pily help eat her breakfast. Future punters should know, there's no dining cart on the train from Almaty to Tashkent. But at each regular stop between Almaty and Tashkent, vendors line the platform. Or, more typically, just stand in the snow with old baby prams filled with food and drink for sale. Nobody is going hungry on this train.

Breakfast done, it was time to explore the limits of my new home. I paced the aisle. The train facilities include incomprehensibly putrid toilets, an incredibly useful hot water dispenser and not a single working power point anywhere in the carriage. There's a smoking section between carriages, right next to the "Do Not Smoke Here" sign written in Russian – look for the snow and ice on the floor. And, that's the facilities.

Inside our Coupé, it's communist practicality. Plenty of room for luggage, hooks to

hang jackets, secret compartments ideal for smuggling people and or opium. This is the legacy of Soviet style – efficient, unelaborate, and, despite being new and temporary, it's somehow homey and familiar. And enjoyable.

We were the only tourists in this carriage, and the other passengers were all curiously friendly. Staff were helpful. Food was offered. Hello's echoed through the train carriage whenever I walked down the aisle past the other Coupes. I had hot coffee, delicious home cooked food, and a place to smoke and chat with the other inmates.

Everyone was great, with one exception, a grubby Kazakh police officer. He came to our Coupé. First, he checked our passports, looking at the full-page Kazakhstan visa we had dutifully collected in Bishkek. Dates, all good. Kazakhstan registration card, check.



Another stop, another pram. At this point, we didn't know Umid. You can see him buying Vodka and Fanta.

The other slip of paper I received entering Kazakhstan, present and accounted for. Everything was in order. I know this game. And, I'd already noticed authorities onboard, slithering and hissing down the aisles from one carriage to the next. So it came as no surprise that I was asked to accompany him down to his personal Coupé at the other end of the carriage.

We stepped inside. Him sitting, flicking through my passport. Me standing. He pointed. Blabbered. Hissed. Mentioned "problem". This circular act went on a few minutes. I listened until he stopped talking.

I asked, "So, . . . do you want money?" I rubbed my fingers with my thumb.

"Da. Strafe. Da."

Yes. I had to pay a "fine". Because, I was a foreign tourist. And, because he was a corrupt and underpaid policeman from Kazakh-

stan.

"No. No money. No. Passport. Please." I clicked my fingers, held out my hand, fingers firm and flat.

"Ok".

He passed my passport and documents back with a look of resignation. Well, that was easier than I thought.

I left his Coupé, and never saw him again.

The day passed quickly. In the late afternoon, I met Umid, an Uzbeki, who lived in Kazakhstan. His pretty wife, much younger than he, was his third. I'm not casting veiled insinuations, but Umid was clearly wealthy. Evidence included a recent recapping of the Ritz Carltons they had stayed at, purchasing all four beds in their Coupé so they needn't share, and did I mention his wife was very young and very pretty?

With respect to his marrying expertise,

I'm not casting veiled insinuations, but Umid was clearly wealthy. Did I mention his wife was very young and very pretty?



There is no dining cart on the train from Almaty to Tashkent. But, plenty of ladies with old prams await.

We listened to our wise partners, mentioned something about Hitler, and I went and got the other bottle. We finished that one, too

Phillipa jokingly remarked, “third time’s a charm”, exchanging smiles with his wife, who was pouring vodka and laying out food. He said that with Muslim men, it was traditionally the fourth marriage that would be the lucky one. I asked him how I could convert to Islam. We all laughed, toasted to our health, and I downed my first plastic cup of Russian vodka with an orange Fanta chaser.

Our conversation drifted between politics and basketball. Language barriers aside, we recalled our mutual love of the Chicago Bulls circa early 1990’s, our distaste of most politicians, and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Michael Jordan. Putin. USA. Scottie Pippen. Obama. Yugoslavia. Dennis Rodman. USSR. We emptied the first bottle of vodka. Perhaps, at this point, I made a mistake, by recalling that I had half a litre of Siberian vodka in my Coupé.

At that point, in hindsight, it was clear that his wife and Phillipa were trying to steer us

away from continuing our merriment. They spoke of the upcoming border control procedures that would take place a few hours from now, in the dark of the night, as we crossed into Uzbekistan. There would be documents to complete, militia to negotiate with, maybe more corrupt police. We listened to our wise partners, mentioned something about Hitler, and I went and got the other bottle. We finished that one, too.

I wondered how, as we hurtled through the remote Kazakhstan steppe in the dead of night, a vendor could appear at the entrance to Umid’s Coupé – holding various bottles of vodka for sale. Umid bought one, our third of the evening, and from that point I don’t recall too much. But at some point my survival instinct must have taken hold as I awoke very early the next morning, fully dressed, boots on, in my vinyl-clad bunk bed.

It was just before the border. Phillipa rolled her eyes and asked, “Do you remem-



Horsu Bazaar in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It's well worth the long journey from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

ber those four guys you were talking to in the Coupé down the end last night?" No. "You told me you had lost our passports. I had to look in Umid's Coupé, and the Coupé down the end, talk to the staff, and then it ended up being in your pocket all along..." "No, I didn't remember that either. "You couldn't stand up, you fell over, it's lucky you didn't land on the snoring Babushka...Do you remember the Babushka leaving? We reached her station during the night. She said goodbye to you". No, I don't recall any of that. The Babushka was gone. As was a small piece of my reputation for steadfast reliability. Fucking Umid.

Unexpectedly, the Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan border crossing was straightforward. During the night Phillipa had been assisted by an amazingly helpful train employee, who thoughtfully completed the required customs documentation on our behalf – all in Russian. The border guards were efficient and welcoming. Not long thereafter, we ar-

rived in Tashkent.

When we departed the train, a traditional taxi scrum greeted us. I noticed Umid being led along the platform by his wife. His face had hues of grey and green, and sweat dripped profusely from his forehead despite it being below zero outside. We shook hands for the last time. Phillipa and his wife hugged, and exchanged meaningful and knowing glances, well beyond the interpretation of myself or Umid.

Around thirty hours after it began, from Almaty to Tashkent, Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan, the train journey was complete.

Summary: 10/10, I would certainly ride that train again. **CT**

Nate Robert specialises in travel photography. Since July 2012, he has been travelling the world full time, traveling through 54 countries. His web site is <http://yomadic.com>

I noticed Umid being led along the platform by his wife. His face had hues of grey and green, and sweat dripped profusely from his forehead despite it being below zero outside

Overgrowth

Every child should visit an abattoir. If you disagree, ask yourself why, writes **George Monbiot**

Many of the books written for very young children are about farms; but these jolly places in which animals wander freely, as if they belong to the farmer's family, bear no relationship to the realities of production

What can you say about a society whose food production must be hidden from public view? In which the factory farms and slaughterhouses supplying much of our diet must be guarded like arsenals to prevent us from seeing what happens there?

We conspire in this concealment: we don't want to know. We deceive ourselves so effectively that much of the time we scarcely notice that we are eating animals, even during what were once rare feasts, such as Christmas, which are now barely distinguished from the rest of the year.

It begins with the stories we tell. Many of the books written for very young children are about farms; but these jolly places in which animals wander freely, as if they belong to the farmer's family, bear no relationship to the realities of production. The petting farms to which we take our children are reifications of these fantasies. This is just one instance of the sanitisation of childhood, in which none of the three little pigs gets eaten and Jack makes peace with the giant, but in this case it has consequences.

Labelling reinforces the deception. As Philip Lymbery points out in his book "Far-

mageddon", while the production method must be marked on egg boxes in the European Union, there are no such conditions on meat and milk. Meaningless labels such as "natural" and "farm-fresh" and worthless symbols such as the little red tractor distract us from the realities of broiler units and intensive piggeries. Perhaps the most blatant diversion is "corn-fed". Most chickens and turkeys eat corn, and it's a bad thing, not a good one.

The growth rate of broiler chickens has quadrupled in 50 years: they are now killed at seven weeks. By then they are often crippled by their weight. Animals selected for obesity cause obesity. Bred to bulge, scarcely able to move, overfed, factory farmed chickens now contain almost three times as much fat as chickens did in 1970,

and just two thirds of the protein. Stalled pigs and feedlot cattle have undergone a similar transformation. Meat production? No, this is fat production.

Sustaining unhealthy animals in crowded sheds requires lashings of antibiotics. These drugs also promote growth, a use that remains legal in the United States and widespread in the European Union, under the guise of disease control. In 1953, Lymbery



Petting farms: Reification of fantasy.

Photo: Tony Sutton

notes, MPs warned in the House of Commons that this could cause the emergence of disease-resistant pathogens. They were drowned out by laughter. But they were right.

This system is also devastating to the land and the sea. Farm animals consume one third of global cereal production, 90% of soya meal and 30% of the fish caught. Were the grain now used to fatten animals reserved instead for people, an extra 1.3 billion could be fed. Meat for the rich means hunger for the poor.

What comes out is as bad as what goes in. The manure from factory farms is spread ostensibly as fertiliser, but often in greater volumes than crops can absorb: arable land is used as a dump. It sluices into rivers and the sea, creating dead zones sometimes hundreds of miles wide. Beaches in Brittany, Lymbery reports, where there are 14 million pigs, have been smothered by so much seaweed, whose growth is promoted by manure, that they have had to be closed as a lethal hazard: one worker scraping it off the shore died apparently of hydrogen sulphide poisoning, caused by the weed's decay.

It's madness, and there is no anticipated end to it. The global demand for livestock is expected to rise 70% by 2050.

Four years ago, I softened my position on meat-eating after reading Simon Fairlie's book "Meat: A Benign Extravagance". Fairlie pointed out that around half the current global meat supply causes no loss to human nutrition. In fact it delivers a net gain, as it comes from animals eating grass and crop residues that people can't consume.

Since then, two things have persuaded me that I was wrong to have changed my mind. The first is that my article was used by factory farmers as a vindication of their monstrous practices. The subtle distinctions Fairlie and I were trying to make turn out to be vulnerable to misrepresentation. The second is that while researching my book "Feral", I came to see that our perception of free range meat has also been sanitised. The hills

of Britain have been sheepwrecked: stripped of their vegetation, emptied of wildlife, shorn of their capacity to hold water and carbon; all in the cause of minuscule productivity. It is hard to think of any other industry, except scallop dredging, with a higher ratio of destruction to production. Wasteful and destructive as feeding grain to livestock is, ranching could be even worse. Meat is bad news, in almost all circumstances.

So why don't we stop? Because we don't know, and because we find it difficult, even if we do. A survey by the US Humane Research Council discovered that only 2% of Americans are vegetarians or vegans, and more than half give up within a year. Eventually, 84% lapse. One of the main reasons, the survey found, is that people want to fit in. We might know it's wrong, but we block our ears and carry on.

I believe that one day artificial meat will become commercially viable, and that it will change social norms. When it becomes possible to eat meat without killing, keeping and slaughtering livestock for meat will soon be perceived as unacceptable. But this is a long way off. Until then perhaps the best strategy is to encourage people to eat as our ancestors did. Rather than mindlessly consuming meat at every meal, we should think of it as an extraordinary gift: a privilege, not a right. We could reserve meat for a few special occasions, such as Christmas, and otherwise eat it no more than once a month.

All children should be taken by their schools to visit a factory pig or chicken farm, and to an abattoir, where they should be able to witness every stage of slaughter and butchery. Does this suggestion outrage you? If so, ask yourself what you are objecting to: informed choice or what it reveals? If we cannot bear to see what we eat, it's not the seeing that's wrong, it's the eating. **CT**

George Monbiot's book "Feral" was recently released in paperback format. This article was originally published in the Guardian newspaper

All children should be taken by their schools to visit a factory pig or chicken farm, and to an abattoir, where they should be able to witness every stage of slaughter and butchery

'Lodged within our DNA'

Granville Williams asks, on the 30th anniversary of the end of the UK miners' strike, why the epic struggle still resonates

Coal will still be burned in Britain's power stations and play a key role in keeping the lights on in the remaining months of winter but the coal will be imported

Two hundred and two thousand men worked in Britain's deep-mine collieries in 1984. In February 2015 the final three collieries – Kellingley in North Yorkshire, Hadfield in South Yorkshire and Thoresby in Nottinghamshire – are under imminent threat of closure.

Kellingley Colliery, just to the east of Knottingley, with its thick seams of coal is an incredibly productive mine and close to Ferrybridge, Eggborough and Drax Power Stations. Drax is the largest coal-fired power station in Europe.

Coal will still be burned in Britain's power stations and play a key role in keeping the lights on in the remaining months of winter but the coal will be imported. The UK relies on coal to generate about 40% of its electricity – sometimes as much as 50% in the winter when generators using coal can quickly respond to increased demand – but the coal will come from Colombia, the USA and Russia.

So here's the puzzling thing. As an industry disappears, which at its peak employed one million men, why is it that over the last year there has been an amazing outpouring of films, plays, novels, music, books and a series of events remembering the epic year-long miners' strike of 1984-85 which ended in defeat and a return to work on 5 March 1985?

One clue is in Beth Steel's play "Underground", performed in the summer of 2014 in the plush surrounds of London's Hampstead

Theatre. The daughter of a coal miner, and a baby at the time of the strike, Beth Steel writes about two young miners initiated into the claustrophobic camaraderie of pit life, thrown into the middle of a bitter industrial conflict, and who are at the centre of the machinations of politicians and a Tory businessman, David Hart, who would decide their fate.

Hart, a millionaire hard right-wing Tory who lived in Claridges, and wrote for Rupert Murdoch's *Times*, but most importantly, played a shadowy role in creating the anti-strike union in Nottinghamshire, the Union of Democratic Miners, was a confidant of Mrs Thatcher. The key role he played in the strike only emerged after the strike and we see on stage the way the British state used extra-constitutional means to defeat the men on strike.

Beth Steel admits she struggled to give the first drafts of the play a focus, as she avoided dealing with the miners' strike, until she reflected on 'the empty shops and houses in my village; working in call centres or on zero-hours contracts becoming the norm, the lack of a sense of worth from the jobs people do; the CEOs earning hundreds of times more than the average worker' and asked: where did it all take off and how did we get here?"

There is a direct link between the assault on trades unions, the massive wave of de-industrialisation which swept away steel, shipbuilding, heavy engineering and coal-mining, the privatisation of public utilities which took



Orgreave protesters in November 2014 outside London offices of Independent Police Complaints Commission demanding action against South Yorkshire Police over missing evidence. A week after the demonstration the police handed over the boxes

Photos Bob Archer (above), Wilf Dixon (below)



Without the high-profile, imaginative campaigning work of the OTJC over more than two years the issue of police conduct during the strike, and who authorised their often brutal interventions, would have remained in the margins

SEEKING JUSTICE

There is a sense now that, after 30 years, the strike and the sacrifices which the miners, their families and communities endured, and the principled defence of jobs and communities were part of a bigger battle, one that was right to fight

place when the Conservatives were in power from 1979-1997, and the kind of Britain we have today.

The free market economic policies pursued by Thatcher and successive governments tipped the balance of power decisively in favour of employers and the super-rich. Recession and austerity policies have driven down real wages for working people, jobs are increasingly short-term, low paid and often on zero hours contracts. An economy shaped by full employment, strong trade unions and rising real wages has been replaced by one with a small number of highly paid jobs and millions of badly paid jobs.

There is a sense now that, after 30 years, the strike and the sacrifices which the miners, their families and communities endured, and the principled defence of jobs and communities were part of a bigger battle, one that was right to fight. To modify the words of the French author, Albert Camus, writing about the Spanish Civil War: "... men and women learned that one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can defeat spirit, that there are times when courage is not its own reward."

And that, at a general level, is the reason why we have seen since March 2014 all sorts of events which celebrate the sheer staying-power, courage and solidarity on display during the year-long strike. The miners' struggle stimulated amazing solidarity too, with miners' support groups set up across the country in the big cities and towns, weekly factory collections and donations of food for miners' families. International solidarity also played its role with food and money coming in from around the world. For those active in the strike, their families and the people who supported it, the year remains imprinted in their memories. In the words of the playwright, Bryony Lavery, "The miners' strike is lodged within our DNA".

Bryony Lavery's play "Queen Coal", performed in November 2014 at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, the former steel city in South Yorkshire, was inspired by events in Goldthorpe, a former mining town in South

Yorkshire where, on the day of the Margaret Thatcher's funeral on 17 April 2013, a crude effigy of the former prime minister was paraded through the streets on a horse-drawn carriage and thrown onto a pyre. The song "Ding dong! The Witch is Dead" from *The Wizard of Oz*, was sung by people who loathed Thatcher (the BBC, under pressure from Tory MPs and right-wing newspapers, would only play a five-second clip on the Radio One Chart Show) and people from across the country organised their own celebrations.

The play centres on three people from Yorkshire – two still living there and one who left after the strike to go to London. Maggie demands that her sister-in-law, Justine, keeps a promise she made 30 years ago to burn an effigy of their old arch-enemy when she dies. Justine comes to make peace with her ex-husband Ian and sister-in-law Maggie, who have never forgiven her treacherous decision to abandon her family and start a new life in London. Justine returns to a place she hasn't been for 30 years to confront the choices she made in the years since the miners' strike. Disorientated to find landmarks missing and her accent returning, she barely recognises the place: 'Where's the pithead? What's that Aldi doing there instead?' The resulting dialogue as the three characters express their resentments is incendiary stuff, as is the final moment of the play.

Red Ladder Theatre Company's "We're Not Going Back," also produced for the 30th anniversary of the strike, and Northern Lines' "Orgeave: An English Civil War", took very different themes, one exploring the dynamic between three sisters during the strike as they are determined to set up a branch of Women Against Pit Closures, the other a grim portrayal of the chicanery by police and politicians which led to the bloody confrontation with the miners at Orgreave in South Yorkshire on 18 June 1984.

Add to this mix of creative work two films: a powerful documentary "Still The Enemy Within" is doing the rounds in former mining communities after winning an award at



Orgreave protesters in November 2013 outside the IPCC offices in Wakefield, West Yorkshire demanding South Yorkshire police hand over boxes of evidence. They finally did a year later after consistent pressure from the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign.

Photo: Wilf Dixon

the Sheffield DocFest in June 2014, and the moving film “Pride”, about the links between a London-based Lesbian and Gay group and South Wales miners. Four books: the fourth edition of Seumas Milne’s “The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners”; a collection of Martin Jenkinson’s photographs from the strike with a text by Mark Metcalf, “Images Of The Past: the Miners’ Strike”; Harry Patterson’s “Look Back in Anger: The Miners’ Strike in Nottinghamshire 30 Years On”; and the book I edited, “Settling Scores: The Media, The Police and the Miners’ Strike”. And a memorable series of events starting in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, with “Born in ’84”, through the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign’s picnic at Orgreave on 14 June and the Durham Miners’ Gala on 14 July to what will be a stunning finale in the heart of the former West Riding mining community in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, “With Banners Held High”, on Saturday 7 March.

There are very specific reasons why there is still a fierce anger which fuels people to

keep the strike’s memory alive and to fight for justice. One is the release of the government Cabinet papers in January and December 2014. They reveal the meticulous planning by the Thatcher government and indeed the active involvement of Thatcher in the day-to-day progress of the strike. As striking miners were successful in persuading miners in Nottinghamshire to join the strike she intervened to “stiffen the resolve” of police chiefs. Road blocks were set up, miners arrested and sentenced before special courts for “breach of the peace”, and surveillance and phone tapping used against the miners and their supporters. The Cabinet papers also show how Thatcher and the National Coal Board chairman, Ian McGregor, lied about the extent of the plans for pit closures.

But the burning issue is the role of policing during the strike. The figures speak for themselves: 11,313 miners were arrested, 5,653 put on trial, 200 imprisoned and, as a result of convictions, 960 miners were sacked by the National Coal Board. Sequences of news foot-

There are very specific reasons why there is still a fierce anger which fuels people to keep the strike’s memory alive and to fight for justice

SEEKING JUSTICE

Sequences of news footage show miners being clubbed to the ground, and several miners were so badly beaten that they were unable to work again. Yet no policeman was ever reprimanded, charged or convicted



Above: Gareth Peirce, a solicitor who specialises in miscarriages of justice cases and advises the Orgreave Campaign. Right: Barbara Jackson, Secretary of Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign.

Photos: Wilf Dixon

age show miners being clubbed to the ground, and several miners were so badly beaten that they were unable to work again. Yet no policeman was reprimanded, charged or convicted. In the last two years evidence has emerged of the systematic use of fabricated statements by the South Yorkshire Police force, both before the miners' strike at the Hillsborough disaster in the Sheffield Wednesday football stadium in April 1989 in which 96 supporters lost their lives, and in the charges against 95 miners arrested at Orgreave on 18 June 1984.

The work of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) to highlight the role of policing during the strike has been inspiring. The OTJC was set up in the wake of a BBC television programme in October 2012 revealing the systematic fabrication of police evidence against the miners arrested at Orgreave. Within days the South Yorkshire Police referred themselves to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

When the OTJC was set up in November 2012 it monitored the painfully slow progress of the IPCC "scoping exercise" to decide whether there should be an enquiry. The OTJC also offered to supply evidence to the IPCC. Two lively demonstrations were held outside the IPCC offices in Wakefield, West Yorkshire in November 2013 and March 2014. At the first protest a meeting was held with IPCC officials

who promised to keep the OTJC informed but after two years the South Yorkshire Police still hadn't handed over boxes of evidence. The OTJC had had enough of the procrastination so a lively demonstration was held outside the IPCC London offices whilst a delegation of miners arrested at Orgreave, the solicitor Gareth Pierce, National Union of Mineworker officials and OTJC secretary Barbara Jackson met the chair of the IPCC, Anne Owens and other officials. At the meeting they gave commitments to compel the South Yorkshire Police to hand over the boxes of evidence and report on their decision by early 2015. The boxes were handed over South Yorkshire Police within a week of the demo.

Without the high-profile, imaginative campaigning work of the OTJC over more than two years the issue of police conduct during the strike, and who authorised their often brutal interventions, would have remained in the margins. Now the call for a public inquiry into what happened at Orgreave, and more widely the conduct of the police when they literally occupied and terrorised mining villages during the strike, grows more insistent. The banner of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign sums it up:

30 YEARS OF LIES

NO JUSTICE NO PEACE

NEVER FORGET – NEVER FORGIVE

CT

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Granville Williams
has edited two books on the miners' strike: "Shafted: The Media, the Miners' Strike and the Aftermath" (2009), and "Settling Scores: The Media, the Police and the Miners' Strike" (2014) They are available from <http://cpbf.org.uk>

WITH BANNERS HELD HIGH

Unity Works Wakefield, Saturday 7 March 2015



DIRECTIONS

Unity Works is a 2 minute walk from Wakefield's Westgate train station



BOOKING INFORMATION

Box Office at Unity Works, Westgate Wakefield WF1 1EP or go to:
www.unityworks.co.uk/events/
 Follow us on Facebook
Information: wbhh@talktalk.net

DAY TIME EVENT

Doors open 10.30 Programme runs 11.00am - 5.00pm
 Tickets £6.00 Concs £3.00

Welcome by Nicky Wilson President National Union of Mineworkers

Compere: author and broadcaster Ian Clayton

Guest speaker: Dennis Skinner MP

Women Against Pit Closures: exhibition

Photos from the strike: John Harris and Martin Jenkinson

Drama: Red Shed Players, Red Ladder Theatre

Music: The Sentimentalists, the Kahunas, Wakefield Youth Brass Band, Free Range

Film Première: 'With Banners Held High' produced by One to One Development Trust

Other films: The Battle for Orgreave, The Dirty Thirty

Poetry: Jean Gittins, The Pitman Poet

Debates: The Cabinet Papers and the Strike; The Aftermath of the Strike; Energy Policy; Poverty Britain; The Media and the Strike; Alternative Voices and Images; The Law and the Miners

EVENING EVENT

Runs from 7.30-11.00
 Tickets £4.00 Concs £2.00

An evening of poetry and music from The Pitman Poet, John Young, Full English Breakfast, Flamin' Nerve, Redgrass

FUNDRAISING BENEFIT



LOUISE DISTRAS ROUGHNECK RIOT THE HURRIERS

Proceeds to Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign and Justice for Mineworkers

Main Hall Doors open 7.00pm
 Event ends 11.00pm
 Tickets £20.00

Organised by



ORGREAVE
 TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN



Supporters



The worst of the year

Conn M. Hallinan chronicles the most stupid, short-sighted and ignorant international government decisions of 2014

The Greeks also paid more than \$4 billion to purchase German submarines that are still in dry dock, and, from all accounts, are very noisy. It is not good to be noisy in the silent service

Each year my website, *Dispatches From the Edge*, gives awards to individuals, companies and governments that make following the news a daily adventure. Here are the winners for 2014.

The Pandora's Box Award to Israel and the US for launching the world's first cyber war and creating a monster in the process. In 2010 both countries secretly released the Stuxnet virus to disable Iran's nuclear energy program, in the process crashing thousands of Teheran's centrifuges.

According to a report by the security company Cylance, "Stuxnet was an eye-opening event for the Iranian authorities, exposing them to the world of physical destruction via electronic means. Retaliation for Stuxnet began almost immediately."

The *Financial Times* now reports that "Iranian hackers have penetrated dozens of international organizations, including six top-tier oil and gas companies, six international airports, seven airlines, a blue-chip US defense contractor, 10 prestigious universities, and the government computer systems of several Gulf states."

An Iranian hacker program dubbed "Clever" has, according to Cylance, "extracted highly sensitive materials" from governments and key companies in Canada, China, France, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Britain, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Pakistan, South Ko-

rea, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

What ye sow, so shall ye reap.

The Golden Scold Award to Germany and Chancellor Andrea Merkel for lecturing the Greeks on profligate spending and forcing Athens to swallow crippling austerity measures, while at the same time bribing Greek military officials to spend billions of dollars on useless weapons.

According to the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, arms dealers – mostly German, but also French, Swedish, and Russian – handed out close to \$3 billion in bribes to secure \$68 billion in weapons contracts over the next decade. One arms dealer dropped off a suitcase with over \$800,000 in it at the Greek Arms Ministry.

Athens spent \$2.3 billion to buy 170 German Leopard II tanks, which are largely useless for fighting in Greek terrain. In any case, the tanks were sent without any ammunition (although this past August The Greek Defense Ministry coughed up \$69.9 million to buy ammunition from the German company Rheinmetall)

The Greeks also paid more than \$4 billion to purchase German submarines that are still in dry dock, and, from all accounts, are very noisy. It is not good to be noisy in the silent service. According to *Der Spiegel*, the German company that makes the U-214 shelled out over \$2 million in bribes to land the contract.

In the meantime, the austerity policies forced on Greece by the “troika” of international lenders – the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank, and the European Union – has impoverished millions of people and driven the unemployment rate to over 20 percent (50 percent for those under 25). Since 2008, Greek infant mortality has risen 21 percent and child mortality is up 43 percent. Suicides are up 45 percent.

In exchange for the military spending, the Greeks got submarines that sit on the land, tanks they can’t use, and lectures from Merkel about saving money.

The Misplaced Priorities Award goes the Indian government for spending \$33 million on a nearly 600-foot bronze statue of Indian independence leader Vallabhbhai Patel, while, according to the UN, 213 million Indians are undernourished – the most for any country in the world and constituting one out of every four hungry people on the planet. Some 48 percent of children under five are below weight, and India and Nigeria account for almost one-third of deaths among children under five. Inequality in earnings is worse in India than in any other emerging economy in the world. Life expectancy is actually better in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Independent investigative journalist P. Sainath, who has covered rural India for decades, writes that “A total of 2,960,438 farmers have committed suicide since 1995.” In virtually every case the cause was debt to moneylenders and landlords.

Dispatches suggests Indian government leaders design a program to aid farmers, feed the poor, and take a moment to read Percy Shelley’s poem “Ozymandias.”

The Shoot-In-The-Foot Award to the Obama administration for ending the purchase of Russian-made RD-180 rocket engines as part of US sanctions leveled at Moscow over the crisis in the Ukraine. The RD-180 – a cheap, reliable workhorse engine that has lifted US Atlas III and Atlas V rockets into space since

1997 – will cost \$1.5 billion and six years to replace. A new engine means that launch vehicles will also need to be re-designed and satellite programs delayed. In the end, that could cost \$5 billion.

In retaliation for the RD-180 ban, Russia will no longer lend its Soyuz rockets to supply the international space station. Asked how astronauts will get to the station, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin suggested they “use a trampoline.”

The European Space Agency (ESA) will also take a hit. Besides losing the Soyuz taxi service to the space station, the ESA will lose access to the RD-180 engine as well, and will have to accelerate its troubled Ariane VI rocket program to replace the Agency’s Ariane V. The “VI” has been criticized as too big, too inflexible, and much too expensive – \$4.2 billion.

Russia announced it would shift monies it spends on the International space station to joint space projects with China.

The Dog Ate My Homework Award to the British Foreign Office for “accidentally destroying” documents which would have shown that London was deeply – and illegally – involved in the US CIA’s rendition program. Renditions moved terror suspects to countries that allowed torture, or kept the suspects in secret “black bases” where the CIA carried out its own torture program.

Britain allowed over 1,600 CIA flights in and out of the country and permitted suspects to be held at the British-controlled island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Complicity with the rendition program is a violation of British domestic laws against kidnapping, arbitrary detention, and the right to a fair trial. It also violates international laws against torture.

“It’s looking worse and worse for the UK government on Diego Garcia,” says Cori Crider, director of the human rights organization Reprieve. “They need to come clean about how, when, and where this evidence was lost.”

Foreign Office Minister Mark Simmons

In exchange for the military spending, the Greeks got submarines that sit on the land, tanks they can’t use, and lectures from Merkel about saving money

WRAPPING UP

The US was forced to cancel the F-35's debut at the prestigious Farnborough International Air Show in Britain because a plane caught fire trying to take off from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida

says the records were lost due to “water damage.”

The Mouse That Roared Award to the Marshall Islands for hauling the nuclear armed powers – the US, China, Russia, France, Britain, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea – before the International Court of Justice at Hague for violating Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Article VI calls for the “cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and nuclear disarmament.” India, Israel and Pakistan are not treaty members – North Korea withdrew – but its hard to argue with the Marshallese on the subject of nukes: in 1954 the US vaporized Bikini Atoll with a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb and irradiated thousands of islanders.

Over a period of 12 years, the US detonated some 67 nuclear warheads with an aggregate explosive power of 42.2 megatons in the Marshalls. The Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons. The Marshall Islands Nuclear Claims Tribunal found the US liable for \$2 billion in damages, but so far Washington has only paid out \$150 million.

It wasn't just Marshall Islanders who got zapped either. The Center for Investigative Reporting found that the US Navy decommissioned some of the ships that had taken part in those tests at Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. The Navy then buried the nuclear waste around the island, creating numerous “hot spots.” Some 2,000 low-income or homeless San Francisco residents – who live in subsidized housing on the island – were assured there was nothing to worry about, and then instructed not to let their children dig in front or back yards (“Look, Mom, this rock glows in the dark!”).

Nuclear contamination was also found at several other California bases, including Alameda Naval Air Station, Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, and McClellan Air Force Base near the state's capital, Sacramento.

Radiation, the gift that keeps on giving.

Golden Lemon Award goes to Lockheed

Martin for its \$1.5 trillion F-35 stealth fighter-bomber – the most expensive weapon system in US history – that can't get its software to work, won't fly in the rain, and burns up trying to get off the ground. In fact, foreign buyers are beginning to have second thoughts about buying the plane at all.

Canada just tested the F-35 against the old US F-18 Super Hornet, the Eurofighter Typhoon, and France's Dassault Rafale and found the only difference was that the F-35 was much more expensive: between \$116 million to \$160 million per plane, vs., respectively, \$60 million, \$90 million, and \$64 million apiece.

The US was forced to cancel the F-35's debut at the prestigious Farnborough International Air Show in Britain because a plane caught fire trying to take off from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. The F-35 has since been restricted to lower speeds and three hours flying time, not enough to make the hop across the Atlantic.

Lockheed Martin and Austal USA also scored big in the Lemon category with their Littoral Combat Ships (LCS), the USS Freedom and the USS Independence. The \$37 billion LCS program will build a fleet of shallow draft, high-speed warships that, according to a recent Pentagon study, won't survive combat. The Defense Department's Director of Operational Testing and Evaluation, Michael Gilmore, says Lockheed Martin's USS Freedom and Austal's USS Independence, are “not expected to be survivable in a hostile combat environment and are not intended to be employed in a manner that puts them in harm's way.”

Translation: if they get in a fight, they're toast.

But that might not be a problem because the LCSs high maintenance requirements means the ships can't get to where the action is anyhow. The USS Freedom spent 58 percent of its time in Singapore port – more than twice the average for US Navy ships – and the USS Independence spent most its time tied up in San Diego.

CT

Conn M. Hallinan is a columnist for *Foreign Policy In Focus*, “*A Think Tank Without Walls*,” and an independent journalist. He oversaw the journalism program at the University of California at Santa Cruz for 23 years, and won the UCSC Alumni Association's Distinguished Teaching Award, as well as UCSC's Innovations in Teaching Award, and Excellence in Teaching Award. He is a winner of a Project Censored “Real News Award,” and lives in Berkeley, California

Meet the new war. Same as the old one

The lost war in Afghanistan lasted 13 years at a cost of thousands of lives and over one trillion dollars. But too late to stop now, so the US has just renamed the old war., writes **David Swanson**

The US-led NATO war on Afghanistan has lasted so long they've decided to rename it, declare the old war over, and announce a brand new war they're just sure you're going to love.

The war thus far has lasted as long as US participation in World War II plus US participation in World War I, plus the Korean War, plus the Spanish American War, plus the full length of the US war on the Philippines, combined with the whole duration of the Mexican American War.

Now, some of those other wars accomplished things, I will admit – such as stealing half of Mexico. What has Operation Freedom's Sentinel, formerly known as Operation Enduring Freedom, accomplished, other than enduring and enduring and enduring to the point where we're numb enough to completely overlook a new name as Orwellian as Freedom's Sentinel (what – was "Liberty's Enslaver" already taken)?

Well, according to President Obama, over 13 years of bombing and occupying Afghanistan has made us safer. That seems like a claim someone should request some evidence for.

The US government has spent nearly a trillion dollars on this war, plus roughly 13 trillion dollars in standard military spending over 13 years, a rate of spending radically increased by using this war and related wars as the justification.

Tens of billions of dollars could end starva-

tion on earth, provide the globe with clean water, etc. We could have saved millions of lives, but chose to kill thousands instead. The war has been a leading destroyer of the natural environment. We've tossed our civil liberties out the window in the name of "freedom." We've produced so many weapons they've had to be shuffled off to local police departments, with predictable results. A claim that something good has come and is coming and will continue to come for many future years from this war is worth looking into.

Don't look too closely. The CIA finds that a key component of the war (targeted drone murders – "murders" is their word) is counterproductive. Before the great opponent of war Fred Branfman died this year he collected a long list of statements by members of the US government and military stating the same thing. That murdering people with drones tends to enrage their friends and families, producing more enemies than you eliminate, may become easier to understand after reading a study that recently found that when the US targets a person for murder, it kills 27 additional people along the way.

General Stanley McChrystal said that when you kill an innocent person you create 10 enemies. I'm not a mathematician, but I think that comes to about 270 enemies created each time someone is put on the kill list, or 280 if the person is or is widely believed to be innocent (of what it's not exactly clear).

According to President Obama, over 13 years of bombing and occupying Afghanistan has made us safer. That seems like a claim someone should request some evidence for

The United States and its accomplices have conducted a record-long killing spree that could have been avoided with a trial in 2001 or by never having armed and trained bin Laden and his associates in the 1980s

This war is counterproductive on its own terms. But what are those terms? Usually they are a declaration of vicious revenge and a condemnation of the rule of law – albeit dressed up to sound like something more respectable. It's worth recalling here how this all began.

The United States, for three years prior to September 11, 2001, had been asking the Taliban to turn over Osama bin Laden. The Taliban had asked for evidence of his guilt of any crimes and a commitment to try him in a neutral third country without the death penalty. This continued right into October, 2001. (See, for example “Bush Rejects Taliban Offer to Hand Bin Laden Over” in the *Guardian*, October 14, 2001.)

The Taliban also warned the United States that bin Laden was planning an attack on US soil (this according to the BBC). Former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik told the BBC that senior US officials told him at a UN-sponsored summit in Berlin in July 2001 that the United States would take action against the Taliban in mid-October. He said it was doubtful that surrendering bin Laden would change those plans.

When the United States attacked Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, the Taliban asked again to negotiate handing over bin Laden to a third country to be tried. The United States rejected the offer and continued a war on Afghanistan for many years, not halting it when bin Laden was believed to have left that country, and not even halting it after announcing bin Laden's death.

So, in opposition to the rule of law, the United States and its accomplices have conducted a record-long killing spree that could have been avoided with a trial in 2001 or by never having armed and trained bin Laden and his associates in the 1980s or by never having provoked the Soviet Union into invading or by never having launched the Cold War, etc.

If this war has not accomplished safety – with polling around the globe finding the United States now viewed as the greatest threat to world peace – has it accomplished something else? Maybe. Or maybe it still can – especially if it is ended and prosecuted as a crime. What this

war could still accomplish is the full removal of the distinction between war and what the CIA and the White House call what they're doing in their own reports and legal memos: murder.

A German newspaper has just published a NATO kill list – a list similar to President Obama's – of people targeted for murder. On the list are low-level fighters, and even non-fighting drug dealers. We really have replaced incarceration and the accompanying torture and law suits and moral crises and editorial hand-wringing with murder.

Why should murder be more acceptable than imprisonment and torture? Largely I think we're leaning on the vestiges of a long-dead tradition still alive as mythology. War – which we absurdly imagine has always been and will always be – didn't used to look like it does today.

It did not use to be the case that 90 percent of the dead were non-combatants. We still talk about “battlefields,” but there used to be such things. Wars were arranged and planned for like sports matches. Ancient Greek armies could camp next to an enemy without fear of a surprise attack. Spaniards and Moors negotiated the dates for battles. Californian Indians used accurate arrows for hunting but arrows without feathers for ritual war.

War's history is one of ritual and of respect for the “worthy opponent.” George Washington could sneak up on the British, or Hessians, and kill them on Christmas night not because nobody had ever thought of crossing the Delaware before, but because that just wasn't what one did. Well, now it is. Wars are fought in people's towns and villages and cities. Wars are murder on a massive scale. And the particular approach developed in Afghanistan and Pakistan by the US military and CIA has the potential advantage of looking like murder to most people.

May that motivate us to end it. May we resolve not to let this go on another decade or another year or another month. May we not engage in the pretense of talking about a mass murder as having ended just because the mass murderer has given the crime a new name. Thus far it is only the dead who have seen an end to the war on Afghanistan.

CT

David Swanson's latest book of essays is “Killing Is Not A Way Of Life.” He blogs at <http://davidswanson.org> and <http://warisacrime.org>

From neighborhood cops to robocops

John W. Whitehead on the changing face of American policing

“Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.” – Aldous Huxley, “Ends and Means”

If 2014 was the year of militarized police, armored tanks, and stop-and-frisk searches, 2015 may well be the year of technologized police, surveillance blimps and scan-and-frisk searches.

Just as we witnessed neighborhood cops being transformed into soldier cops, we’re about to see them shapeshift once again, this time into robocops, complete with robotic exoskeletons, super-vision contact lenses, computer-linked visors, and mind-reading helmets.

Similarly, just as military equipment created for the battlefield has been deployed on American soil against American citizens, we’re about to see military technology employed here at home in a manner sure to annihilate what’s left of our privacy and Fourth Amendment rights.

For instance, with the flick of a switch (and often without your even being aware of the interference), police can now shut down your cell phone, scan your body for “suspicious” items as you walk down the street, test the air in your car for alcohol vapors as you drive down the street, identify you at a glance and run a background check on you for outstanding warrants, piggyback

on your surveillance devices to listen in on your conversations and “see” what you see on your private cameras, and track your car’s movements via a GPS-enabled dart.

That doesn’t even begin to scrape the surface of what’s coming down the pike, with law enforcement and military agencies boasting technologies so advanced as to render everything up until now mere child’s play.

Once these technologies, which used to belong exclusively to the realm of futuristic sci-fi films, have been unleashed on an unsuspecting American public, it will completely change the face of American policing and, in the process, transform the landscape of what we used to call our freedoms.

It doesn’t even matter that these technologies can be put to beneficial uses. As we’ve learned the hard way, once the government gets involved, it’s only a matter of time before the harm outweighs the benefits.

‘Smart’ bullets

Imagine, if you will, self-guided “smart” bullets that can track their target as it moves, solar-powered airships that provide persistent wide-area surveillance and tracking of ground “targets,” a grenade launcher that can deliver 14 flash-bang grenade rounds, invisible tanks that can blend into their surroundings and masquerade as a snow bank or a soccer mom’s station wagon, and

With the flick of a switch, police can now shut down your cell phone, scan your body for “suspicious” items as you walk down the street

END GAME

The Army has just launched two massive, billion dollar surveillance airships into the skies over Baltimore, each airship three times the size of a Goodyear blimp, ostensibly to defend against cruise missile attacks

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John W. Whitehead is a constitutional attorney and author. He is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute and editor of GadflyOnline.com. His latest book "A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State" (SelectBooks) is available at amazon.com

a guided mortar weapon that can target someone up to 12 miles away.

Or what about "less lethal weapons" such as the speech jammer gun, which can render a target tongue-tied; sticky foam guns, which shoot foam that hardens on contact, immobilizing the victim; and shock wave generators, which use the shockwaves from a controlled explosion to knock people over.

Now imagine trying to defend yourself against such devices, which are incapable of distinguishing between an enemy combatant and a civilian. For that matter, imagine attempting to defend yourself or your loved ones against police officers made super-human thanks to technology that renders them bullet-proof, shatter-proof, all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful.

While robocops are problematic enough, the problem we're facing is so much greater than technology-enhanced domestic soldiers.

Surveillance society

As I make clear in my book, "A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State", we're on the cusp of a major paradigm shift from fascism disguised as a democracy into a technocratic surveillance society in which there are no citizens, only targets. We're all targets now, to be scanned, surveilled, tracked and treated like blips on a screen.

What's taking place in Maryland right now is a perfect example of this shift. With Congress' approval, the Army has just launched two massive, billion dollar surveillance airships into the skies over Baltimore, each airship three times the size of a Goodyear blimp, ostensibly to defend against cruise missile attacks.

In New York, police will soon start employing mobile scanners that allow them to scan people on the street in order to detect any "suspicious" objects under their clothes. The scanners will also let them carry out enhanced data collection in the field – fin-

gerprints, iris scans, facial mapping – which will build the government's biometric database that much faster.

Google Glass, being considered for use by officers, would allow police to access computer databases, as well as run background checks on and record anyone in their line of sight.

Stand-off lasers can detect alcohol vapors in a moving car. Meanwhile, Ekin Patrol cameras, described as "the first truly intelligent patrol unit in the world," can not only detect the speed of passing cars but can generate tickets instantaneously, recognize and store the license plates of stopped, moving or parked vehicles, measure traffic density and violation data and engage in facial recognition of drivers and passengers.

Collectively, all of these gizmos, gadgets and surveillance devices render us not just suspects in a surveillance state but also inmates in an electronic concentration camp.

Unfortunately, eager as we are for progress and ill-suited to consider the moral and spiritual ramifications of our planned obsolescence, we have yet to truly fathom what it means to live in an environment in which we are always on red alert, always under observation, and always having our actions measured, judged and found wanting under some law or other intrusive government regulation.

There are those who are not at all worried about this impending future, certain that they have nothing to hide. Rest assured, soon we will all have nowhere to hide from the prying eyes of a government bound and determined to not only know everything about us – where we go, what we do, what we say, what we read, what we keep in our pockets, how much money we have on us, how we spend that money, who we know, what we eat and drink, and where we are at any given moment – but prepared to use that information against us, whenever it becomes convenient and profitable to do so. **CT**

American History 101 – Conspiracy Nation

An excerpt from the new satirical novel by **Mike Palecek**

The Commies are Coming. The Commies are Coming! The Criminals Are Coming! The Terrorists Are Coming! Big Bees!

It's that time of year again. Time for the release of the new sophomore textbook, American History 101, complete with brand new sub-title. But something is different this year. Sales are down and a major publishing industry magazine has shouted "Print Is Dead!" How can that be?

Nickostatos Greenberg is the latest in the long line of family members to head the publishing house of Beantree Barkham Bagnor ... Krusznianys, the big employer in the small town of New Town. Nickostatos has to figure out a way to jazz up the new book and sell some history in order to pass down a successful legacy to his children. He's ready to try anything, even something drastic.

The naming of the sophomore American History 101 textbook sub-title is one of the big events of book season in New Town.

What can he do? What would make history interesting?

Tell the truth?

CHAPTER ONE

"Never look back unless you are planning to go that way." – Henry David Thoreau

The sharp-eyed, white-headed eagle circled, silently, stealthily, around and around, wings outstretched, small circle to big circle, securing the perimeter, concentric coils of security.

Metallic blue eyes clanked and whirred and locked for a moment on the painted image of the griffin at the fifty-yard line of the high school football field, the hybrid mascot for the consolidated high schools of the adjoining little bergs along the winding Greenberg River: New Cumbria, New Angus, New Broom, New Fife, New Greenham.

Locals just called it New Town.

The eagle saw everything, so it must know everything, right?

It zoomed in, out, as a camera recording, writing into its brain all that it saw.

In a downtown neighborhood a man ran from a house, leaping the steps while his pistol blazed at those on the sidewalk, in the bushes.

The reports barked like fireworks, leaving the tall man stretched on his side, still in running pose, red mixing with the green, Christmas colors.

The driver of the ambulance in the street turned on his lights, hit the siren, flipped it off. He climbed down, waited with one foot

Metallic blue eyes clanked and whirred and locked for a moment on the painted image of the griffin at the fifty-yard line of the high school football field

BOOK EXCERPT

Some stupid schmucking legend said the head showed up one day on the front sidewalk and the receptionist of that era held the door open with her foot and dragged it inside

on the asphalt for the camera-men to get their last shots.

“Okay.”

He nodded to his helper and they wheeled the gurney across the on that comment just as it was delivered as he had hoped.

Around him sat the department heads on metal folding chairs they had brought themselves: Michelle Jones, Editing; Lori Groome, Art; Walt Anderson, Printing; Kolya Zuyev, Wood Products; Amos Chadwick, Research & Writing; Buddy Fowler, Maintenance & Landscaping; Cade Ewart, Crowd Control/Security; Kathryn (Bambi) Cartwright, HR/PR.

In Nick Green’s rickety rolling wooden chair behind the desk sat Austin Bellincioni, lead accountant for Beantree Barkham Bagnor ...

Kruszynianys, hunched over a yellow legal pad, occasionally punching with two fingers at an adding machine he had brought from his office specifically for this meeting.

Each of the department heads held in their laps the latest issue of Book Publishing Right Now.

“Rrrring!” sprang the black phone in the outer office.

Executive assistant Joan McCarthy picked it up, gave the answer she had been told to give, put down the receiver, picked it right up again.

“What’s the buzz?” Nick Green asked HR/PR.

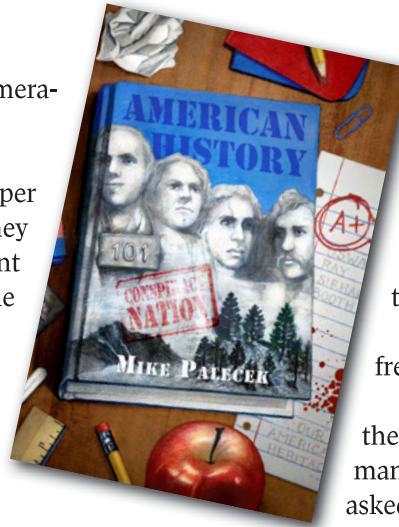
Bambi Cartwright checked Twitter and Facebook on her phone, shook her head.

“Not much.”

“Not much?”

“Nothing.”

The shooting was just something they tried every year to gain publicity, interest for the release of the latest Sophomore History textbook.



AMERICAN HISTORY 101
Conspiracy Nation
Mike Palecek
CWG Press
\$ 15.95

It had worked at first, but was now perfunctory. Nobody goes for it.

This one was supposed to depict like John Wilkes Booth or some shit, Nick thought he recalled.

“Who knows! Does it freaking matter?”

Was the way Nick explained the idea to the department managers years ago when they asked who the dead person was supposed to be.

“Everybody leads with blood. Watch the news. Read the books, the papers. It’s blood or it’s a dud. Dude.”

The magazine and the latest in-house numbers said that publishing is dead.

“How come nobody told me!

Did anyone think to let me know this fairly interesting news?”

He ripped off his cap and flipped it, expertly, as if planned, onto one of the giant antlers on Big Gus.

He did not shoot it, he told anyone new to the office. Either his father or grandfather, or it was there when they moved in, or it was given to them. Some stupid schmucking legend said the head showed up one day on the front sidewalk and the receptionist of that era held the door open with her foot and dragged it inside.

It could be true.

It did not matter now.

Could they even put out this new edition, which was supposed to be ready yesterday? Should they? Or should they just shut it down, go home, o fishing. Shoot themselves.

Nikostatos Greenberg was the latest of the Greenbergs to run

“Beantree Barkham Bangor ... Kruszynianys Publishing, Inc.”

And he wasn’t going to be the last, not going to be the one who let it run into the

ground. He had nine children and perhaps one, two of them qualified, still on the hook, within reach at home, if not fully committed, yet, to taking over the family business.

The New Fife publishing house was the only real remaining business in New Town. If it went down, so did the town, the people.

Nick Green had lived here all his life. He was not moving. If he ruined the business and the town, he would have no fun the rest of his life.

His neighbors would stare at him, at the gas station, at church, at the ballgame.

Just stare. They would never say anything, but they would stare.

There would be no ballgames, the school would close.

He wanted to have some fun.

He deserved to have some fun.

He wanted to quit. He wanted to go fishing. But he did not want to fail, to have to think about this for the rest of his life.

He wanted to think about fish and smell like fish.

Ahh, that would be perfect.

CHAPTER TWO

"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." — Mark Twain

The ambulance yanked and rolled and banged into the hospital emergency bay.

The driver rammed it into park while his partner was already climbing into the box.

The bag rolled back and forth on the floor, hitting the metal locker one side and then the other.

The driver threw open the back doors.

Now both emergency workers wrestled with the body bag, trying to pin it down like a bowl of black Jello.

They pressed with one hand while both searched for the zipper with the other.

The body made noises, huffing and

grumbling.

They got the head out.

The man stood straight up, his balding skull rubbing the top of the metal box.

He shed the plastic garbage bag while making sure the driver and helper saw his red, sweaty angry face.

"What the hell!" he said.

"Sorry, there were some bumps," said the driver as the helper leaned to pick up and tidy.

"Hey, wait a minute, can I get a photo?"

"Just a sec," said one of the EMTs.

"Wait!"

"Okay, shoot," said the driver guy EMT.

A flash fired. For a split-moment the ambulance lit up, freezing the surprised faces forever.

Their eyes cleared and they saw the man with the camera and the pen between fingers.

First they lunged with their arms and then began to move their feet while keeping their heads down, leaping out onto the concrete as the door to the street banged closed.

They stopped.

"We done?" said one of the three men.

"Yep, that should do it," said another.

"Good," said the third.

As the department heads filed silently out of the office, Nikostatos Greenberg stood underneath the bull moose head at his window looking over the Beantree Barkham Bangor ... Kruszyńnianys campus.

He saw years, months, a day.

He saw himself holding the hand of his father looking out at the river, fishing poles in their hands and a coffee can of worms. Behind them someone came running and his father excused himself again to Niko to return to the office, leaving Niko to drag back the dry poles and worms.

He saw an ancient maroon brick building standing square and strong and around it popping up a gym from the ground, and many all-glass buildings, a daycare with playground. He saw a pasture turn into a

He saw himself holding the hand of his father looking out at the river, fishing poles in their hands and a coffee can of worms

BOOK EXCERPT

Nick threw up his hands and turned from the window, reached up as high as he could, jumped, climbed up on the rolling chair, then to the desk, grabbed the Yankees cap from the antler

parking lot, a sawmill, smokestacks, rolling lawns and a nine-hole Par 3 course.

In his mind's eye he saw the statue on the front lawn, the old guy in the suit who looked like nobody Nick had ever seen or heard of, right by, too close actually, to the electrical "3B 1K" sign and marquee with the current sub-title.

In the glass buildings Niko saw the town's reflection, the convenience store that had been the neighborhood grocery, the furniture store that had been going out of business for ten years, and the all you can eat "if you care to" Chinese restaurant.

All based on the Sophomore American History textbook. That's what his great-grandfather had concentrated on, done everything in his power to grab.

"This is it, the big one," he said.

"Whoever controls the past controls the present ... and the future ... and stuff like that."

That was actually carved in the side of a big tree in Nick's backyard, way up, the second or third branch.

That slogan was also in cursive on the marquee at the big cloverleaf entrance and on the paychecks and the employee parking permits.

"This Is it."

Now, according to not only this recent study in Book Publishing Right Now, but other studies that he knew of, yet to be released, the interest in sophomore history was perhaps not what it used to be.

For years students had thought it irrelevant, and now teachers, administrators and school boards were beginning to catch the drift.

"But History does not stop! What the hell!"

Nick threw up his hands and turned from the window, reached up as high as he could, jumped, climbed up on the rolling chair, then to the desk, grabbed the Yankees cap from the antler.

It was time to meet with his generals.

Nick Green walked fast, quickly, many steps quickly, it took so many steps for him

to get anywhere.

He didn't care.

He didn't have a care in the world, is how he liked to play it, and so he swung his arms wide and smiled and stuck his chin up, exposing to the world his sweaty neck stubble.

He walked along the winding sidewalk, the intimate landscaping of trees, bushes, little ponds.

He marched through each of the buildings, front door to back, saying hello to the receptionists and everyone he saw, at times going a step and a half out of his way, shaking hands.

He stopped in The Hall of History, where every textbook the company had ever published was displayed in dusty trophy cases on both sides.

He wanted his son or daughter or somebody to be able to keep walking through these buildings and stopping to look and not being able to see to the end, just like his father had before him and way back.

Nick ground his teeth, narrowed his eyes, shook his head, pivoted and kept going, pushing it even a little faster.

He came to The Big Warehouse, pulled hard on the thick wooden doors, stepped inside and hopped back just as a forklift zipped past.

"Beep-beep!"

Nick raised his chin to nod to Eddie talking to some guy over at the counter and kept walking.

Eddie followed.

They walked together through the warehouse with the hundred feet ceilings and rows of boxes and pallets and sawdust.

Together Nick and Eddie marched together in silence out the thick grey double doors out onto the rolling green campus, inside other buildings, some humming like a modern day glass beehive, others dark, damp as a dungeon, like the Piper, picking up others along the way.

Nick and Eddie led the group finally down a moist, winding iron staircase to a

wet, oily brick floor and stood together, at the bottom of the publishing ocean, amid a pod of fifty-foot-high boilers.

They talked to each other, a bit, but could not hear, and gave up.

They smelled creosote, heard rumbling and roaring, dripping, a tropical rainforest after dark.

They looked for lions leaping.

They waited.

Way down on the other end came a sloshing sound, louder, louder.

A tall, skinny man, his hands stuck inside the pockets of stained grey coveralls, appeared through the steam and humidity, not bothering to pick up his feet, running his overshoes through the puddles that were everywhere.

He nodded briskly to Nick, Eddie, hustled through the group, and led them to the break room.

They crowded inside the grey brick room, finding space on the oilstained ragged sofa, metal chairs.

Eddie grabbed the one big comfortable chair, oil-stained, springs showing.

Just as always somebody tried a penny in an ancient gumball machine.

The tall, skinny man, Artie, flicked off the radio, shut the door and made coffee.

Nick hoisted himself to a metal barstool, drew a deep breath and began to explain the situation.

He made eye-contact, looked around seriously at the group: Artie, Eddie, Jose, Willie, Roy, Juanita, Fred, Clarence, Earl, Manuel, Rita, Ray, Marvin, Floyd.

They came from maintenance, typesetting, margins & spacing, fonts, cover art, sales, glue, trimming, sawmill, paper, off-set.

Everyone smoked cigarettes but Nick and Clarence.

Nick smoked a cigar.

Clarence spit Skoal Wintergreen into a Styrofoam cup stamped with oil fingerprints.

They took the white half-full Styrofoam

cups from Artie, threw them back, held them up for more.

Artie found butterscotch cookies and flung them around the room, caught like frogs with flies.

Nick told them how this was the season for the release of the new sophomore history textbook to the high schools of the nation.

They had been working on it since this time last year after the release of the last textbook.

Not every high school got a new textbook every year. The teachers and administrators argued that history does not change. They don't need to purchase new books every year, or even every other year. Nick's sales team argued back that there is always new history, new things being discovered, new things to add, worksheets, study guides, and you don't want your students, who could also go to the high school next door if they wanted, to think they are getting screwed out of any history, do you?

But times were tight.

Sometimes The Big Pitch did not work.

And sometimes, maybe every twenty years or so, someone gets the idea that history is not important. We can live with these books for another five or ten years and besides, it's boring. Our parents don't care about it. The kids sure don't. And even the history teachers are starting to think maybe something more relevant to the lives of the students, bird calls or face painting, would be Benjamins better spent.

"You just need to promo it a bit, more," said Juanita, crossing her legs and biting a cookie.

"Advertising and hype works for movies and pop. You just need some ideas, Niko," said Floyd.

"What can you do?" said Roy.

"Cancel the new season?"

"We have orders," said Nick. "Not many, a few. And we have a book. Everyone's worked the whole year on this. We're on schedule. We're ready, but for some reason,

Sometimes, maybe every twenty years or so, someone gets the idea that history is not important. We can live with these books for another five or ten years and besides, it's boring

BOOK EXCERPT

"There's a lot in there that ain't the, ya know, totally on the whole up and up"

the whole history zeitgeist just exploded in our goddamn faces.

"How was the shoot?" said Jose.

"Any luck?" said Willie.

"Nah," said Nick.

"They done figured it out."

"How about we put out a leak there's a big mistake, a gaffe in the book?" said Rita.

"That'll get people's attention. Something big and then go ahead and say we're going to fix it, but the main thing is, it gets people talking about sophomore history again in the coffee shops and board rooms."

Nick pointed at Rita with a cigar.

"That's good. I like it.

"What else, guys? C'mon, c'mon."

"Make it more interesting," said Marvin, crunching his cup and firing it way short of a full trash can.

"Like how?" said Nick.

"Like how?" said Marvin.

"How do I know like how? History is some boring shit."

"Make it more meaningful, to the kids," said Clarence from the far end of the sofa, pushing a spring down into the arm.

"Narrative, the story," said Artie, looking back over his shoulder from the coffee creamers.

"Wolfe, Breslin, new journalism," mumbled Juanita. Artie snapped his fingers at her and winked.

"Make it truthful," said Earl.

"Truthful?" said Nick.

"It's schmuckin' truthful already, what-dya mean truthful? Like how?"

"Not rea ...," both Manuel and Ray started at the same time.

Ray nodded to Manuel to go ahead.

"Not really," he said.

"There's a lot in there that ain't the, ya know, totally on the whole up and up."

"Ha!"

Nick puffed and squinted and spoke through the smoke.

"Tell that to Max Karp.

"Of course, it's the truth. It's history. History's history. Boom-dedeboppa-deboom!"

He bit the cigar and swiveled to pound the counter.

Everyone shook their heads and looked at the floor or the cookie in their hand or the cigarette in their hand or their empty coffee cup.

"Make up some shit," said Eddie.

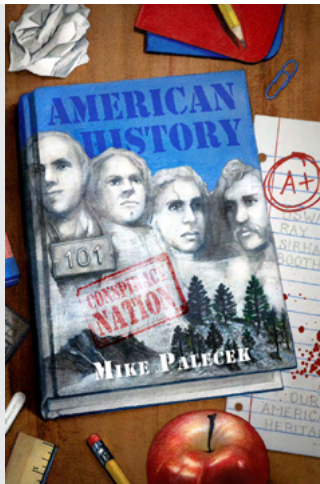
Nick saw Eddie was doodling and walked over to see. Eddie covered it with his arm as he looked up at Nick.

Eddie put up both hands.

"Just sayin'.

"War-a da Worlds. You know what ah'm talkin' about. They love that shit.

"Aaannd, if it's in a hist'ry book, you know ... it's hist'ry. What can I say?" **CT**



AMERICAN HISTORY 101

CONSPIRACY NATION

A Satirical Novel by Mike Palecek

Published by CWG Press

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E-book available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple, Scribd and other outlets

The Year of the Racist

If this is the state of political satire in America, we're in big, big trouble, writes **Michael I. Niman**

When I write “the year of the racist,” I’m not quite sure if I’m talking about 2014 or 2015. That’s up to us.

The cellphone-video-to-YouTube upload pipeline has given image to a systemic institutional racist violence that legacy American media has chosen to ignore since its inception. Thanks to these images the nation is finally talking about what previously was primarily discussed only in sociology courses and amongst communities of victims – the racist reality of policing in America. These images also provided for a clear and simple primer to help understand another formerly taboo concept – the role of the criminal justice system in legitimizing and protecting racist police violence. On one hand, 2014 went down in history as the year we as a society finally began to acknowledge and address our deep-seated racism. This discussion, however, has also brought the racists out of the closet, giving us a really ugly start to 2015.

Just as social media revolutionized journalism by allowing the public to bypass the gatekeepers, it also created new platforms for racist trolls – people who less than a generation ago were relegated to venting their xenophobic bile on the walls of public bathrooms. Comedian Chris Rock summed it up after the Ferguson decision, tweeting, “Just found a new app that that tells you which one of your friends is racist. It’s called Facebook.” Of course Face-

book was always a platform for ignorant racists to share their ignorance and hate, but it really caught on fire just as meaningful anti-racism finally started to break through the mainstream media filter.

Consider this post:

“Just some political satire to help you get over the beautiful drive this morning. I-65 will be closed tomorrow across Tennessee and Kentucky. They are hauling a 200 ton lump of coal to Mount Rushmore in South Dakota so they can add Barack Hussein Obama to Mount Rushmore... They had to settle for coal, because they couldn’t find a 200 ton piece of shit.”

The post appeared on the Buffalo Republicans Facebook page, which is moderated by Tracey McNerney, the chair of the City of Buffalo Republican Committee. This is not political satire, as the poster claims. It doesn’t mention politics. It’s elementary school racism. Traditionally such unabashed drivel is expected from N-bombing cretins in piss-stenched bars or avowed racists adorned with white warning cones on their heads – with no backpedaling pretenses of “satire.” The new racism tries to package itself as anything but racism.

Today’s racism is once again ascendant in more mainstream venues – in this case a social media site run by a local affiliate of the political party that just won control of the US Senate and New York State Senate, while solidifying its control of the US House of Representatives. Unlike your dweeb cousin’s Myspace or Tumblr

Today’s racism is once again ascendant in more mainstream venues – in this case a social media site run by a local affiliate of the political party that just won control of the US Senate and New York State Senate

UGLY WORDS

New York's progressive mayor, Bill de Blasio, discussed how he and his wife gave their bi-racial son Dante the same obligatory talk that unfortunately is part of the rearing of almost every non-white child in the US

page, this is not an obscure racist outpost. It's mainstream. The same page hosts posts from Rick Donovan, a recently defeated Republican candidate for the New York State Senate, who writes that Obama "brought in Illegal Immigrant children into America and placed them all over America causing a flu epidemic to OUR American children" [sic]. Donovan, who got almost 12,000 votes, also posts that American cities are "being taken over by Sharia law." Such run-of-the-mill xenophobia has always been present in American society, but 2014 seems to have brought it to the surface after a few years of being out of fashion. Now it's back in mainstream political discourse – and at the Thanksgiving dinner table.

A month ago, Donovan posted a link on the Buffalo Republicans site to a story about a 19-year-old white Mississippi woman who was set afire and burned to death. Above the link he wrote, "WHERE'S THE LOCAL MEDIA ON THIS STORY???? Where's the WHITE 'OUT CRY' Black on White 'HATE CRIME' Three Black teens beat this young woman with a hammer" [sic]. He went on to write, "I WANT JUSTICE for this young woman and her family!"

This sort of anger is sadly familiar. Unlike systemic racist police brutality against black people, which medical professionals have termed a "public health crisis," the horrific murder of this Mississippi woman is not part of a persistent historic national pattern of hate crimes against white people. The poster's response is reminiscent of a historic pattern of rhetoric, the meme of out-of-control black men preying upon innocent white women, that fueled generations of lynching murders of innocent black men – the "white outcry" against "black on white hate crime." And as was usually the case with lynchings, there are no "three black teens" who "beat this young woman with a hammer." There have been no arrests to date. There are no suspects. We just know that this white woman dated black men, which was always a taboo in lynching-era Mississippi, and now apparently in New York Republican politics.

The problem here is not so much that a few

idiots soiled the GOP Facebook page, but that the moderator, who is the leader of the local party, didn't perceive these posts as problematic.

In New York City, the YouTube broadcast police killing of Eric Garner and the grand jury failure to indict his police-officer killer has ignited a long-overdue dialog about patterns of police assaults against innocent black men in that city. As part of that dialog, New York's progressive mayor, Bill de Blasio, discussed how he and his wife gave their bi-racial son Dante the same obligatory talk that unfortunately is part of the rearing of almost every non-white child in the US. According to the mayor, "We said, 'Look, if a police officer stops you, do everything he tells you to do, don't move suddenly, don't reach for your cell phone...Because we knew, sadly, there's a greater chance it might be misinterpreted if it was a young man of color.'"

This should be one of those comments that flies by without controversy – just sadness. Unfortunately this is necessary parental advice that is certainly backed up by data. The outrage should be that a parent has to say this to his son, rather than that he said it. But in the rising racism of 2014, it drew condemnation from the unfortunately named president of the New York City Police Benevolent Association, Patrick Lynch. The opening for Lynch's attack on the mayor came after a mentally disturbed man with a semi-automatic handgun murdered his wife in Maryland and then returned to his hometown of Brooklyn and murdered two police officers, whom he apparently chose at random, ambushing them as they innocently sat in their car, then killed himself. The spin on this horrible murder/suicide wasn't about the lack of available treatment for people suffering mental illness, or the easy availability of military-grade weapons, but instead, according to Lynch, "That blood on the hands, starts on the steps of City Hall, in the office of the mayor." The New York City Sergeants Benevolent Association tweeted, "blood of 2 executed police officers is on the hands of @BilldeBlasio."

Rather than embrace the investigations into patterns of racist violence that undermine the

professionalism of the NYPD and threaten the lives of innocent New Yorkers, which the police are sworn to protect, Lynch and other PBA officials instead blame these deaths on demonstrators, community leaders, and politicians, including the mayor, who demanded accountability from police officials. It's too much of a leap to blame the murder of two innocent police officers by a disturbed man, on unrelated people who are exercising their constitutionally protected right to publicly demand that other murderers also be brought to justice.

Lynch's uprising is pivotal in the Year of the Racist because, absent racism, it really doesn't make any sense. The majority of rank-and-file NYPD officers patrolling the streets, including the two who were murdered, are non-white. Many of these officers have gone public with concerns about the dangers they perceive from their fellow officers when they are off-duty walking around in New York City. Lynch's uprising against those calling for racial justice does not represent this majority – instead splitting the police department along racial lines. Many of the white officers were recruited from segregated areas of the city, such as Bensonhurst in Brooklyn and Howard Beach and Breezy Point in Queens. When Lynch speaks in public, he's usually flanked by white officers, presenting a statistical anomaly that could be perceived as a last hurrah for a centuries-old tradition of racist policing.

This uprising has presented a smokescreen for enlightened racists – those who look, smell, walk, and talk like racists, all while denouncing racism and anyone who would call them racist. We now see angry white men holding signs reading “I can breathe,” mocking Eric Garner's dying words, “I can't breathe,” which have become a rallying cry for the racial justice movement. What do you call a political action that exists only to oppose a movement for racial justice? This movement is now growing, with “pro-police” demonstrations popping up in places where there are no racial justice demonstrators to counter. The new movement has memes such as “Blue Lives Matter.” The reality is, police lives do matter. They have always mat-

tered. But that's not what mocking the “Black Lives Matter” meme is about. Ironically, many of the same demonstrators who are coming out in support of “blue lives” were coming out last April to support Nevada Rancher Cliven Bundy's private war against the federal government, celebrating the vigilantes and mercenaries who came from around the country and set up sniper positions, taking aim upon officers who tried to evict Bundy's cattle from public land after he refused to pay grazing fees, instead declaring public land to be his sovereign land. That movement included old-school white supremacists traveling hundreds of miles to take up arms against “Obama's” cops.

It's easy enough to research the new ascendant racism without leaving the discomfort of your own computer. Just follow Kid Rock's advice and go on Facebook. Or read the comments posted after most mainstream media articles. Or surf through the muck at Fox News and listen to Rudy Giuliani, the former New York City mayor and “tough prosecutor” under whose watch police racism flourished. He'll explain that the real problem is “black on black crime,” which he says accounts for 83 percent of black murders and requires white cops to protect black people.

The racism in this comment is illuminated by the lack of any logic in this argument. First off, what does this factoid have to do with white cops killing innocent black men like Eric Garner, which is the point of the “Black Lives Matter” protests? Deconstruct the term “black on black crime.” Technically, we can simply call this “crime.” Roughly the same percent of white people are killed by white people. This is a segregated society. But your average Fox viewer will never learn of the mirror statistic for white murders. Instead, Fox will assault you with a parade of similar commentators, all referencing the same “black on black” crime meme, asking why no one is protesting against these killings, as if we're not supposed to expect any sort of difference between law enforcement officers and murderers. When these arguments get so thin, there's really nothing left but racism.

When Lynch speaks in public, he's usually flanked by white officers, presenting a statistical anomaly that could be perceived as a last hurrah for a centuries-old tradition of racist policing

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CT

The fall and rise of our man in Lesotho

Tim Knight has a life-changing experience in the Mountain Kingdom

I decide against flying to Zimbabwe and instead take the overnight bus from Cape Town to Ladybrand, on the Lesotho border. Just as easy to get a new visa when I return to South Africa from reporting on Lesotho as from hanging out in Zimbabwe

A military coup beckons like distant thunder from the other side of South Africa's border with Lesotho.

Soldiers shoot police ... police shoot soldiers ... the general commanding Lesotho's army defies the King's command to lay down his sword ... rebel soldiers train in the mountains ... Lesotho prime minister and allies flee across the border to South Africa ... South African police go the other way to guard Lesotho VIPs ... corrupt politicians blame each other ...

Sylvia Vollenhoven, editor of the new website, the Journalist, writes me a letter of accreditation. I'm to go to Lesotho, find out what's happening, be the publication's first-ever war correspondent.

Once I covered South Africa's fight against apartheid. And independence struggles in Zimbabwe and Zambia. And three years and two wars in the Congo. And America's civil rights battle against racism.

Now it's an attempted coup in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

How could your intrepid war correspondent resist?

Just like the old days.

Actually, there's a second reason for me to go to Lesotho. Friday, September 26, 2014, is the last day of my 90-day South African Visitor's Visa. Time to renew. So a good day to fly out of Cape Town where I'm a guest in

my sister Jane's house, spend a few days in another country – likely Zimbabwe – then fly back to Cape Town with a renewed 90-day visa safely stamped on my Canadian passport.

And while I'm away, it's quite possible my application for South African citizenship will be approved, so I won't need any more Visitor's Visas to live and work here.

But, at the last moment, I change my travel plans. I'm a writer and journalist. I know all about airline people and airports. Now I need to be with real people, touch real land. Be part of the proletariat.

So I decide against flying to Zimbabwe and instead take the overnight bus from Cape Town to Ladybrand, on the Lesotho border. Just as easy to get a new visa when I return to South Africa from reporting on Lesotho as from hanging out in Zimbabwe.

My plan is to stay in Lesotho for four days and interview the mutinous general (think Castro in the Sierra Maestra mountains), the King, the Prime Minister and South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa (who's there trying to solve Lesotho's problems). Then I'll head back to the South African border, pick up a renewed 90-day visa, and take the bus back to Cape Town.

There I'll write a roundup on Lesotho and its attempted-coup, sit in the sun, and wait for my South African citizenship papers to emerge from the national mail strike.



Trapped in Lesotho: Tim Knight awaits the letter that will take him to freedom.

Photo: Kaizer Matsumunyane

The fat man doesn't seem to do any work, so I guess he has to be BOSS, or Special Branch, or whatever organization replaces those fine public servants sworn to serve and protect the rest of us

As it turns out, there's a tiny flaw in my perfect plan.

Day 1

Four South African Home Affairs officials sit in a row behind thick glass windows at the international border with Lesotho. Three of them wear neat khaki or blue uniforms decorated with Home Affairs badges. They treat people who want to cross their border into a foreign country with brisk, bored, bureaucratic courtesy.

The fourth official wears cheap, rumpled civilian clothes and is so fat he overflows his stool. He sits there like some gross Buddha, waves away travellers who push anxious papers through the slot under his thick glass window, makes jokes about foolish people who want to leave South Africa.

The fat man doesn't seem to do any work, so I guess he has to be BOSS, or Special Branch, or whatever organization replaces those fine public servants sworn to serve and protect the rest of us. Of course, it's also possible he could just be a deputy

minister's cousin Thabo who's being kept as far away from Pretoria as possible until some fuss dies down.

Anyway, when I present my Canadian passport at one of the thick glass windows this fine September 27 morning, a polite uniformed official tells me I've overstayed my 90-day South African Visitor's Visa.

By ten hours.

Being a writer, not an accountant, I haven't figured out that my visa expires at midnight Friday, September 26 while I'm fast asleep on the overnight bus rumbling through the Karoo toward the Lesotho border. The official sympathizes, tries to help me find a way around my unexpected and very unwelcome undesirability.

The fat man thinks it's all very funny. He chortles. I don't think I've ever heard anyone actually chortle before. "The big, important Canadian journalist is in great trouble. He broke the law. He must pay the price."

This hugely delights him. Because, as he keeps reminding everyone in the office, I'm now an "undesirable alien".

AFRICAN ODYSSEY

I'm trapped here. Lesotho is landlocked, entirely surrounded by South Africa. I can't walk or drive out of Lesotho without stepping on South African soil. I can't fly out because all planes from Lesotho must land in Johannesburg. And the nearest Canadian High Commission is also on South African soil

Eventually, a new stamp on my Canadian passport (Sec 30 (1) H ... Regulation 27 (B) 9.) legally prohibits me from stepping foot in South Africa for the next year. I have a strong feeling that had the fat man not intervened, justice and mercy might have triumphed in this clash between entirely unequal forces.

Once past the South African border, Lesotho gives me a 30-day Visitor's Visa. No problem.

Kaizer Matsumunyane who meets my bus in Ladybrand, drives me to my hotel, the Maseru Sun, in Lesotho's capital. Kaizer is a dreadlocked Basotho filmmaker I met back in Toronto. He looks like a Rastafarian high priest, knows everyone in Maseru, teaches filmmaking at the local Limkokwing University, and is trying to start his own brewery.

With Kaizer's gentle help, slowly, slowly, the shock of it all hits me. I'm trapped here. That's because Lesotho is landlocked, entirely surrounded by South Africa. I can't walk or drive out of Lesotho without stepping on South African soil. I can't fly out because all planes from Lesotho must land in Johannesburg. And the nearest Canadian High Commission is also on South African soil. In faraway Pretoria, where I'm now an undesirable alien.

A ridiculously draconian law has trapped me in a Kafkaesque limbo. I literally can't get to any other country from here. And Lesotho is unlikely to let me stay longer than the 30 days stamped on my passport.

To make life even more unpleasant, I have no health insurance. In fact, no insurance of any kind. And I've only brought four days supply of the pills my doctor claims cure – or at least alleviate – the ailments I accumulate over a long lifetime.

Then there's the problem that I have no Canada to return to. I gave away my books and most of my furniture before I left for South Africa. My children and friends took their pick of the rest and the leftovers I donate to Habitat For Humanity and got a

\$680 tax receipt in return.

I open a couple of beers, fire up my iPad, and start the long, laborious process of appealing the South African ban.

Day 3

No need to bore you with the details, but Lesotho's communications system has a few problems during civil unrest. Added to which, the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria isn't into receiving multiple attachments or even PDFs. (Eventually I have to e-mail all twelve pages of my appeal separately to overstayappeals@dha.gov.za. And get twelve separate acknowledgments back.)

I spend my days trying to find people in Lesotho, South Africa and Canada who might help rescue me. It's delicate stuff, so probably not wise to mention names.

Day 5

According to my original plan, this is the day I'm supposed to head back to the South African border, get another 90-day Visitor's Visa stamped on my passport, and catch the overnight bus back to Cape Town. Instead, I spend the day writing a chronological account of my exile so I don't sound like a complete idiot when trying to explain it.

Even when I write it as simply as I can, it still sounds ridiculous when I try to explain to people at the other end of the phone.

That evening, Kaizer and I have supper at the Ying Tao restaurant in the Lesotho Sun hotel. My theory is that because there are thousands of Chinese working in the country, it follows that Ying Tao must be fairly authentic. It is. Expensive, but good hot and sour soup. Excellent mapo tofu.

Even so, I'd much rather be on the bus heading back to Cape Town.

Day 6

Maseru is full of rumours of political skullduggery. Here are some things I've learned already:

The attempted coup happened when Members of Parliament tried to call a vote

of no confidence in the government. The Prime Minister's undemocratic response was to arbitrarily close down parliament.

The King, on instructions from the Prime Minister, fired the general commanding the Lesotho army. The general refused to hand over his sword and heads for the hills outside Maseru with some of his elite soldiers, anti-aircraft guns and mortars.

It all had something to do with the fact that the police traditionally support the Prime Minister and the military traditionally support the Deputy Prime Minister. So, naturally, when all this happens, cops and soldiers become irritable and shoot at each other.

The traditional unreliable sources are certain one, two or three police/soldiers are killed in clashes between cops and soldiers.

The Prime Minister and some of his supporters fear the soldiers plan to kill them so, in a most undignified exodus, flee across the border into South Africa, where they ask for protection. After a few days they return, guarded by South African police with sub-machine guns. Eventually, other cops from neighbouring countries join them. Lesotho is, in effect, now occupied by foreign guns.

In Maseru's taxis, bars and restaurants everybody knows everything and nobody knows anything.

Evelyn Waugh (Scoop, Black Mischief) – thou should'st be living at this hour.

Day 7

I write my first Our Man In Lesotho report for the *Journalist*: "The Americans have issued a travel alert warning their nationals to stay away from the dangers of Lesotho. Even so, you can drive around Maseru and no men with guns ... will stop and search you at roadblocks."

Then I get to the matter of the hundred or so police sent by neighbouring countries under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) flag. Their job is to protect important Lesotho politicians from their own almost-coup.

"My hotel is full of very large men with shaved heads who refuse to chat in the lift. Not even 'good morning'. Many carry assault rifles and wear badges that say 'Police' but don't disclose where in Southern Africa they come from.

"The man in the room next to me wears a small South African flag on his shoulder and the word "EXPLOSIVES" very large on the back of his military jacket.

"And the hotel has just put notices on all the elevators:

"... SOME GUESTS ARE NOT AWARE THAT THEY HAVE TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THEIR OVER NIGHT GUESTS AT THE RECEPTION, KINDLY BE ADVISED THAT ONLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE REGISTRATION CARDS WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED ACCESS INTO THE HOTEL ESPECIALLY (ROOMS FROM 6PM ONWARDS)."

The SADC had previously and optimistically trusted presidents Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Zuma of South Africa to sort out Lesotho's problems. My *Journalist* column rather rudely questions the choice of the two presidents on the grounds that they're "the two most untrustworthy politicians in our part of the world."

Predictably, Mugabe and Zuma fail. So the SADC sends South African Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa, instead.

I mention Marikana and Ramaphosa's billions and describe him as: "... the politician who has gone from the likely most trusted presidential candidate in the next South African election, all the way to the winner of the 'Just Like All The Rest Of Them' award."

A wise reader suggests it might be a very good idea for me to refrain from being nasty about South Africa's high command until I sort out my citizenship papers. Good advice. I refrain. First time in my professional life I've ever held back a story because writing it could be dangerous to my health.

Day 8

I visit the South African High Commission

The general refused to hand over his sword and heads for the hills outside Maseru with some of his elite soldiers, anti-aircraft guns and mortars

It's possible he occasionally wakes screaming in the dark hours before dawn because of his prison's reputation for violence, corruption, rape and general human rights nastiness

in Maseru looking for help, get turned away within fifteen seconds.

"Nothing we can do" says the clerk behind the thick glass window. "Next please."

Your intrepid war correspondent isn't deterred. I e-mail the South African High Commissioner in Maseru, Rev. Harris Majeke, describe my problem, ask for an audience.

Day 10

I don't get to see His Excellency, of course. Instead, I'm passed on to his First Secretary Immigration, Madiba Mahlatholle, who interrogates me from behind his own thick glass window. I show Mahlatholle my letter to the Department of Home Affairs appealing my undesirability, asking for another 90-day Visitor's Visa. It lists my six appeals against the department's ruling:

1. My transgression was entirely accidental, unpremeditated and innocent. Yes, I sinned, but only by 10 hours after three months.

2. I'm currently being considered for South African citizenship. (South African grandparents, parents, schooling, reporter for the *Natal Mercury*, *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Express*, Johannesburg etc.). Already, Home Affairs has applied for an identification number on my behalf. If I get that number I become South African.

3. Lesotho is currently in the midst of civil unrest, becoming more dangerous every day.

4. I'm 76 years old and prone to the normal (listed) disabilities of men my age.

5. Lesotho is entirely surrounded by South Africa so I'm trapped. I have no way out.

6. My Lesotho Visitor's Permit is valid for only for 30 days.

First Secretary Mahlatholle ignores five of my six points of appeal. And doesn't even refer to my request for another 90-day Visitor's Visa. To him it's a matter of getting me off his hands and out of the country. So he promptly turns my problem over to

one George Masanabo at the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria.

From: "Madiba, MJ Mr: Maseru, First Secretary, DHA"

Date: October 6, 2014 at 5:14:33 PM GMT+2

Subject: FW: TIM KNIGHT APPEAL.pdf

Dear Mr Masanabo

Please receive self explanatory attachment for your assistance and guidance on behalf of Mr Tim Knight, a Canadian journalist who came to Lesotho to cover the current situation, he visited South Africa but then he overstayed and declared undesirable. His Lesotho permit is about to expire, at the same time he has to leave to Canada via ORT airport, now that he is undesirable in the country, which is the only transit country, how do we assist in that regard.

Regard

Madiba Mahlatholle

One of the professional habits I've developed as a journalist over the years is to research every name that turns up in a story. Every one. Just in case. So, now I have the George Masanabo name I check him on the Internet. Turns out the man who will decide my fate isn't any ordinary official at the Department of Home Affairs.

No sir. George Masanabo is Deputy Director at the notorious Lindela Holding Facility, in Krugersdorp West. Now, George Masanabo may well be a fine and splendid fellow, a bureaucrat dedicated to serving his people with every ounce of his energy.

He could, for all I know, be trying to reform Lindela and deplores the institution's gross violations of human rights as much as the rest of us. It's possible he occasionally wakes screaming in the dark hours before dawn because of his prison's reputation for violence, corruption, rape and general human rights nastiness. I know I do.

But I'm not at all sure I want the Deputy Director of one of South Africa's most notorious prisons judging my case. For one thing, he may well be tempted to take revenge

against all those other journalists who've investigated Lindela in the past, called it a corrupt and vicious hell-hole.

So locking up this white, international, Canadian journalist will be a real coup. Wonderful revenge. An example to the world. I can see Masanabo explaining to my colleagues as he locks me away for four months (theoretically the maximum allowed by law) in Lindela: "This shows no one is above the law. See how we treat everyone – powerful and powerless, white as well as black – just the same." I'm scared.

Day 15

To save money, I move from the swanky, slightly battered Maseru Sun hotel (biggest hotel pool I've ever seen) to the half-price Mohokare Guest House (no pool, but excellent spicy chicken wings).

No more Ying Tao restaurant.

The days drift by. I write and watch a lot of TV. You think South Africa has it bad with all the out-of-date, third-rate, bland programming that television broadcasters buy cheap from the Americans and British? Then repeat and repeat until you know them by heart? At least South Africa has something like 150 channels. But as far as I can tell from my hotel, Lesotho has only five channels.

One for SABC. Another for CNN International. A third shows European football games which all look and sound exactly the same. A fourth channel sometimes shows Al Jazeera and sometimes doesn't.

Lesotho TV itself repeats Basotho singing and dancing in an apparently endless loop until occasionally replaced by equally endless quasi-interviews with very serious and important people who never smile.

Then there's Lesotho TV news. My speciality is storytelling – how to structure stories, write, perform and interview. I've trained thousands of working broadcast journalists in hundreds of workshops in a dozen countries. But it's a long time since I've seen such an unabashed, unashamed,

unadulterated mess of a news service as Lesotho TV offers its viewers.

A never-ending river of pompous politicians shake hands, cut ribbons and make interminable speeches about their own magnificence and the malevolence of the other guys. When the politicians aren't around, interchangeable groups of very respectable, formally-dressed, middle-aged to elderly people sit in serried ranks behind tables topped with white tablecloths and make speeches at each other about, no doubt, exceedingly worthy matters.

I suspect that attending meetings, particularly when they're televised, substitutes for any real action in Lesotho politics (excluding the current unpleasantness, of course).

I don't think I ever see a single ordinary Basotho on LTV – except in the interminable singing and dancing programs – during all my time in the country. Then there's the fact that, uniquely in all Africa – probably the world – the Prime Minister never gets on his own country's state television. Seems Communications is run by one of his political enemies. Go figure.

Day 17

I'm a guest at a meeting of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. I'm impressed with the oratory. The speakers talk easily and confidently without notes, without stumbling. The audience listens respectfully. My only problem is that all the speeches are in Sesotho. However, the beer is suitably cold and the sausages splendidly spicy. And it beats lying on my hotel bed watching TV.

Just in case you're wondering: no, I never get to find and interview the renegade general up there in the mountains with his mutinous soldiers. I don't even ask the King or the Prime Minister or Cyril Ramaphosa for an interview.

That's because – intrepid war correspondent though I was when I left South Africa – I have absolutely no intention of drawing attention to myself during Lesotho's almost-coup by roaring around trying to interview

I never get to find and interview the renegade general up there in the mountains with his mutinous soldiers. I don't even ask the King or the Prime Minister or Cyril Ramaphosa for an interview

AFRICAN ODYSSEY

It's a huge relief to get out of Maseru politics and my hotel and into the valleys, hills and endless magnificent mountains surrounding the capital

powerful people when I have no diplomatic representation to fall back on if and when I get into trouble.

Already while I'm here, two journalists have been arrested for trying to do their jobs. I have enough problems without Lesotho turning against me too. Also, there's something about being a nowhere person, trapped in this ridiculous bureaucratic limbo (you can't get there from here), that seriously interferes with my urge to report on almost-coups.

Anyway, I decide I'm getting too old for this shit.

Day 18

I accept Kaizer Matsumunyane's invitation to lecture to students and faculty at the Limkokwing University's Communication, Media and Broadcasting school.

My focus is storytelling and journalistic integrity. Great to be doing something more positive than writing endless notes to people protesting that I'm actually an innocent good guy and not an international terrorist.

That afternoon Kaizer drives me to the traditional Thaba-Bosiu village outside Maseru. This is where the great Bosocho chief Mosheshshoe unites his people, defies the might of both Shaka Zulu and the Boers, negotiates protection as an equal with the Great White Queen Across the Water, and lies buried on the hill top.

It's a huge relief to get out of Maseru politics and my hotel and into the valleys, hills and endless magnificent mountains surrounding the capital. The air is clean here. People still live in thatched, mud-and-stone-walled rondavels and wear the traditional blankets and conical grass hats of their ancestors. And some still ride the famously hardy Basuto ponies.

Day 19

I watch the Oscar Pistorious sentence hearing on TV. Witnesses describe corruption, violence, gangs and rape in South Africa's jails. I picture myself in George Masanobo's

Lindela. I try not to picture myself in George Masanobo's Lindela.

Until now, I've worked on the theory that since I'm applying for South African citizenship, the Canadian High Commission in Pretoria isn't likely to be particularly sympathetic or helpful. I swallow my pride and doubts and e-mail the High Commissioner in Pretoria. What the hell! I have nothing to lose. I'll take help wherever I can find it.

I wait for rescue. And wait. And wait.

Day 20

I watch the boss of South Africa's prisons give evidence at the Pistorious sentencing. He admits that gangs rule some of his prisons and yes, gangs are violent. Even so, he tries hard to make his prisons sound like Club Meds for unruly teenagers.

I've covered prison stories in three countries. He doesn't fool me for a moment. I turn off the TV. The phone rings. It's Cathie Bruno, Consular Program Officer at the Canadian High Commission in Pretoria. She says she'll try to contact George Masanobo. Maybe it can all be sorted out. At worst, she promises to try to get me a 10-day transit pass so I can go back to Cape Town and pick up my belongings before being deported back to Canada. It's the first positive response I've had from anybody in authority in a long, long time. I think I love her.

Day 21

A colleague back in Canada asks me for what she calls "some telling details about Lesotho." I don't have much else to do, so I write back.

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy. King Letsie III (universities of Cambridge, Bristol and London) is one of the richest monarchs in the world, a constitutional symbol reigning – but not ruling – over one of the poorest nations in the world. He has absolutely nothing to tell his subjects when an attempted coup threatens Lesotho's democracy. I'm told, though, that he does play an excellent game of tennis.

The Lesotho army which may or may not have started the fighting costs around U\$60,000,000 a year. Its sole reason for existence seems to be to look smart when on parade for the King's birthday. Certainly, it could neither repel attacks from neighbors, nor successfully invade any other country (with the possible exceptions of Orania and Swaziland).

Two out of every five Basotho live below the international poverty line of U\$1.25 a day. The country has one of the highest literacy rates in all Africa. But it also has one of the highest percentages of citizens with HIV/AIDS. Lesotho politicians and bureaucrats are even more corrupt and venal than South African politicians and bureaucrats. In fact, according to all reports, they take corruption and venality to a whole new level of international splendour. It's as if war-ringing Mafias own the place.

The Basotho people I meet here are dignified, courteous, hospitable, kind and generous.

Day 22

My iPad signals. E-mail from the South African Department of Home Affairs, Sub-Directorate: Deportations.

"The request of the waiving of your undesirable status has been considered and was successful.

"The Department has therefore decided to remove the restrictions placed upon your name, with immediate effect.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. Dlamini

"pp Director-General"

I'm free. I'm desirable again. I don't know who or what persuades Home Affairs to let me go. I suspect, though, that it's a critical mass of people extolling my manifold and manifest virtues in many, many places, all at the same time.

Of course, it's also possible that some smart person warned Home Affairs that unless it relented it could expect such bruising

headlines as:

HOME AFFAIRS TO EMMY-WINNING JOURNALIST WHO WORKED TO REFORM THE SABC AND E.TV: GET LOST! INTERNATIONAL JOURNALIST LEAVES SA 10 HOURS LATE, BANNED FOR 365 DAYS

I suspect Home Affairs decides it has enough bad publicity without the Lesotho Limbo making headlines.

My advice for any colleague trapped in a similar problem is get hold of as many people as you think can help and ask them to intervene on your behalf. From as many angles as possible. That's because no politician or official ever wants it known that a single intervener was responsible for an overturned decision. Much safer for the official to be able to shrug helplessly and explain " ... all those people pressuring us ... maybe we should rethink our decision ..."

It should never look as if one powerful player – particularly a politician – saves your ass. I reply to the e-mail from Department of Home Affairs, Sub-Directorate: Deportations, thank H. Dlamini and ask for details about my new status. Can I now go back to the South African border and get a new 90-day Visitor's Visa? If not, should I get a letter from the High Commission in Maseru?

What's my legal status in South Africa?

What do I do next? No reply.

Day 23

Kaizer and Tiisetso Moremoholo (faculty manager at Limkokwing University) drive me to the South African border at Maseru Bridge. I really, really hope the fat man will be on duty so I can push my redemption letter through the slot under his thick glass window and watch his face as he reads it.

No fat man. So no revenge. Pity.

Considerable excitement though when officials see the undesirable alien stamp on page six of my passport:

Sec 30 (1) H ... Regulation 27 (B) 9.

I'm about to be refused entry to South Africa – possibly for life – when I produce the letter. "I have this letter ... it says my

Lesotho politicians and bureaucrats are even more corrupt and venal than South African politicians and bureaucrats. In fact, according to all reports, they take corruption and venality to a whole new level of international splendour

AFRICAN ODYSSEY

There's no way I can get another 90-day Visitor's Visa during those five days. Anyway, the law says I have to apply from outside South Africa. Also, I'm broke

appeal was successful and there are no restrictions on me ... with immediate effect. So I'm just asking for a 90-day visitor's visa please."

Much confusion. Seems nobody has seen a successful undesirable alien appeal before. Officials huddle, make phone calls to Pretoria. More calls. I wait. Almost an hour later, an official comes out from behind the thick glass windows. "We can only give you seven days. No longer. Sorry, Mr. Knight." She shrugs, smiles sympathetically. "Try for another 90-day visa when you get to Cape Town."

Tiisetso kindly arranges for her uncle to drive me the two hours from the Lesotho border to Bloemfontein Airport. By evening, I'm safely back in Cape Town.

Day 24

I have a massive dilemma. I've only got five working days until I'm an undesirable alien again. And have to leave the country again. Saturday, October 25, is my last day.

There's no way I can get another 90-day Visitor's Visa during those five days. Anyway, the law says I have to apply from outside South Africa. Also, I'm broke. My original flight from Toronto to Cape Town, added to the twenty-three days in Maseru hotels and flight from Bloemfontein, cost serious money. I have three options. I can give up. I'll find the money to fly back to Canada, start again there, and forget about living in Africa. It's already eight months since I first apply for citizenship and surrender my fingerprints back in Toronto. How long can it possibly take some bureaucrat at Home Affairs to figure out that I'm my South African father's son?

My second option is to go underground. I'll hide out in Cape Town until that bureaucrat decides my status. Or the postal strike ends and my citizenship papers miraculously appear. Or don't. I could become a legend as the White Pimpernel (with apologies to Madiba). Entirely illegal, of course.

My third option is to start the whole vi-

cious circus again. Leave the country before the deadline, fly to some country where there's no fat man behind the thick glass window, and try for another 90-day Visitor's Visa on my way back. Of course there's no guarantee this will solve any of my problems. Sure, I hold the letter from the Department of Home Affairs, Sub-Directorate: Deportations, saying all is forgiven.

But I hold that same letter when I crossed the border from Lesotho last Saturday. And all the South African border officials there will give me is a seven-day Visitor's Visa.

In fact, even with the letter, I have no idea whether I'll be allowed back into South Africa at all. And if I am, will they give me a visa that lasts any longer than seven days?

Day 28

It's exactly 26 hours before I have to leave South Africa or become an undesirable alien again. I've charged a South African Airways return ticket to Namibia to my Visa card. That's more money I don't have. Later today I'll pack my bags and tomorrow Jane will drive me to Cape Town airport. From there I'll fly to Namibia.

It's a glorious Cape Town day. I'm having breakfast in the sun room. My phone rings.

"Mr. Knight? This is Nelson Ngoepe at the Department of Home Affairs. Your South African Identification Number is approved. Please write it down."

"Ready ..."

"3801255310085."

"Does this mean I don't have to leave the country tomorrow?"

"Yes sir. Congratulations, Mr. Knight."

"And I'm South African?"

"Yes, Mr. Knight."

"I thank you, sir."

CT

Tim Knight is an Emmy award winning journalist. For ten years he was executive producer and lead trainer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's TV Journalism Training Department

After 86 years, Palestine's national soccer is here

Shireen Ahmed and **Dave Zirin** report on one of the most historic moments in a troubled nation's sporting history

At a moment when world leaders and cable television blowhards are braying for collective punishment of Arabs and Muslims, the Gaza Strip this week is a scene of collective joy. This is because the Palestinian national soccer team took to historic Newcastle Field in Australia to play in the Asian Cup, the first major international tournament for which they have qualified in their eighty-six-year existence.

As soccer writer James Montague put it, "For Palestine – a team recognized by FIFA, soccer's global governing body, since 1998 but not yet as a fully fledged country by the United Nations – their appearance meant more than any progress on the pitch.... Palestinians, for once, will begin as equals to those around it."

To call this a Cinderella story would only make sense if we choose to make the story of Cinderella profoundly more harrowing than even the most fevered visions of the Brothers Grimm or Steven Sondheim. And no one in this tale would confuse Sepp Blatter with any kind of fairy godmother.

Palestinian Football has fought an indescribable battle in order to even compete on an international stage. They live under occupation, have had their training facilities destroyed, have coped with the detention of players, the deaths of teammates and the inability to move freely through Israeli mili-

tarized checkpoints in order to train and compete in matches.

This has led to an international campaign featuring prominent footballers calling for FIFA to expel Israel from its fold or at least prevent them from hosting FIFA-sanctioned tournaments.

They have also had to shoulder the burden of having coaches, mentors and potential players killed amidst the ongoing Gaza war and blockade. This is why the Palestinian football team is lovingly known as "Al-Fedayi" which means "one who sacrifices life for the sake of the homeland" and "the Strivers" in English. Striving and sacrifice have both been necessary components toward making this appearance in the Asian Cup a reality.

We spoke with Sanaa Qureshi from Football Beyond Borders, an organization that took a team from London to play in Palestine in 2011. They were able to experience the conditions for themselves.

"Palestine's qualification for the Asia cup marks a huge achievement for a country under brutal occupation, with a diaspora unable to return home." Qureshi said. "Remarkably, the team is a perfect microcosm of the Palestinian struggle, made up of players from the West Bank, Gaza and of Palestinian heritage from all over the world. Overcoming obstacles that have included being denied visas and routine detention at

Palestinian Football has fought an indescribable battle in order to even compete on an international stage

There were questions about whether the bombardment of Gaza and the travel blockade that followed would prevent Palestine from making the trip to Australia to even field a team for the Asian Cup

borders, this is a team not only playing for their country but for recognition of their existence and the continued resistance of the Palestinian people.”

All the joys from sports are short lived in Gaza. Even the joy, and mass celebrations that erupted following their shocking May 2014 1-0 victory over the Philippines, which secured them entry into the Asian Cup. In June, just months after this remarkable moment, Israeli Defense Forces began a series of attacks on Gaza, killing according to the United Nations, more than 2,000 people, with 1,500 of them classified by the UN as civilians and 500 of them children. (66 Israeli soldiers and five Israeli civilians were killed in the conflict.)

On July 16, 2014, four young boys, from the Bakr family in Gaza, were killed as they played football in the sand. Ahed Atef Bakr, Zakaria Ahed Bakr, Mohamed Ramez Bakr and Ismael Mohamed Bakr were on the beach and killed by shells from an Israeli Naval gunboat. For months, the most prominent aspect of football in Palestine in the eyes of the world was the harrowing image created by artist Amir Schiby in honor of the four Bakr boys.

There were questions about whether the bombardment of Gaza and the travel blockade that followed would prevent Palestine from making the trip to Australia to even field a team for the Asian Cup.

The Strivers eventually did secure their travel permits, but had to hold their trainings far from home, in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. Then, a few months before the tournament, their coach, Jamal Mahmoud, quit due to what were described as ‘personal reasons.’

Assistant coach Saeb Jendeya immediately stepped in until the current coach, Ahmad Al Hassan, was appointed. The preamble to the Asian Cup wasn’t so much an exercise in training as a Job-like demonstration of spiritual and emotional endurance.

It was all worth it on Monday, when the

squad walked onto the pitch in Newcastle, and heard the eruption of the crowd. There were the rhythmic beatings of drums, flag-waving, chanting and singing; activities that were echoed miles away in Gaza City. The result of the match was dismal, albeit expected, as Japan (Samurai Blue), the defending Asian Champions trounced Palestine 4-0. But this is one of those rare moments in sports when the score doesn’t necessarily tell us who won and who lost.

As the website Football Palestine said, “Palestine fans should be proud. They created a party-like atmosphere in Newcastle and in a tournament bereft of the vociferous support you might see at other major international finals. Down 1-0 they didn’t stop nor at 2-0, 3-0, 4-0. All the way to the final whistle, this may be the start of something truly special.”

Palestine deserves to relish this moment. The objective is not only victory but to shine a spotlight on the abilities and resilience of Palestinian athletes.

As star player Ashraf Nu’man Al-Fawaghra explained during an interview with FIFA.com: “Our goal is to let the world know that the Palestinian national team are moving forward despite the difficulties facing us. We want to convey the message that the Palestinian players have the right to play and develop. Furthermore, we want to bring a smile back to the faces of our people and make our fans happy.”

On Friday, January 16, Palestine faced Jordan in Melbourne. The game, in which Palestine were defeated 5-1, culminated one of the great underdog stories in the history of international soccer. B

ut this is no Cinderella story. This is a tale of hard work and resilience in the face of overwhelming odds. It might not be a fairy tale, but it has created its own kind of magic. **CT**

Dave Zirin is the author of “Brazil’s Dance with the Devil”. This article was originally published at <http://thenation.com>

If this is justice . . . ?

Edward S. Herman reviews a new book that exposes the failings of the international courts

This enlightening book on international criminal justice is a collection of papers by 15 authors, many involved in the defense of individuals tried by international courts. While the papers differ in tone and detail they are all highly critical of the current international criminal justice system (ICJS). In fact, they make a compelling case that this system is not only flawed but produces serious and systematic injustice. One major theme pressed in a number of chapters is that the ICJS that has emerged in the age of tribunals and “humanitarian intervention” has overturned and replaced a real, if imperfect, system of international justice with one that misuses the forms of justice to allow dominant powers to attack lesser countries without legal impediment.

The older real justice system, developed in the wake of the fascist aggressions that culminated in World War II, was expressed in the UN Charter. Its fundamental ideas were the “sovereign equality of all of its members” and the primacy of aggression as criminal international behavior. This

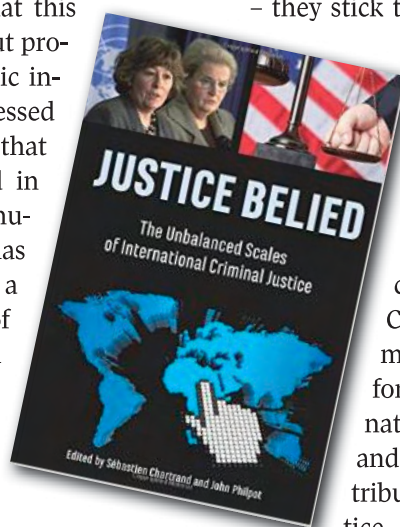
was inconvenient to the United States and its close allies, who wanted the freedom to attack other countries without any UN Charter encumbrance, so they restacked the legal deck. All of the ad hoc tribunals set up in recent decades, allegedly to deal with international miscreants, carefully exclude aggression as a punishable crime – they stick to war crimes, human rights

violations and that vague entity “genocide,” all of which are easily managed and manipulable with pliable courts and judges (discussed below).

This is a key feature of the charters of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the assorted other ad hoc tribunals touched upon in “Justice Belied”. This allowed the United States to attack Yugoslavia and devastate Serbia while using the ICTY to pursue officials and military personnel of the target (Serbia) via this manipulated system of international justice.

The 1999 US NATO attack on Yugoslavia violated the UN Charter, but that fundamental legal

The older real justice system, developed in the wake of the fascist aggressions that culminated in World War II, was expressed in the UN Charter



JUSTICE BELIED
The Unbalanced Scales of International Justice

Edited by Sebastian Chartrand and John Philpot

Baraka Books
\$ 26.95

The international justice tribunals are organized to deal with targets of the United States and its close allies

document was not enforceable given US power and its veto capability in the Security Council. Even in a gross case such as the 2003 Iraq invasion, the idea of bringing the US and UK to judgment for aggression was unthinkable. The Western powers may well have been tempted to use it for Russia with its fearsome aggression in the Crimea, but they haven't yet dared, so far confining themselves to verbal condemnations, punitive boycotts, and military threats and deployments.

Another major theme of many authors in "Justice Belied" is the overwhelming selectivity of the new international justice system, which in itself "deprives it of legitimacy" (John Philpot). The tribunals are organized to deal with targets of the United States and its close allies. Yugoslavia got a tribunal when the United States and Germany wanted to dismantle it, which they did with the help of the ICTY. Rwanda got one because the US and UK wanted to help their client ruler Kagame consolidate his rule with a system of "victor's justice" in Rwanda. No tribunals have been established for Israel's actions in Palestine or Kagame's mass killings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Numerous authors in "Justice Belied" stress the remarkable fact of the ICC's exclusive focus on Africans, with not a single case of charges brought against non-Africans. And within Africa itself the selectivity is notorious – US clients Kagame and Museveni are exempt; US targets Kenyatta, Taylor, and Gadaffi are charged. (See the chapter 1 segment on "Backdoor Attempts to Eternalize Victors Justice," by Chief Charles A. Taku.)

The selectivity points to another important hostile-to-justice feature of the new system of international criminal justice – namely, that, by the intent of its sponsors, it helps the United States and its allies and clients start, continue and enlarge wars, which follows also from its exclusion of aggression from its crime list. John Philpot quotes a US official's published explanation of the resort

to the (faux) judicial route in the 1999 attack on Yugoslavia as giving a legal gloss to Western power projection; i.e., it serves "like a battering ram in the execution of US and NATO policy." In the case of the 2011 attack on Libya, the ICC prosecutor's early indictment of Gadaffi and his associates, based on unverified claims of Viagra distribution (!) and anti-civilian violence, provided excellent cover for the NATO bombing war that resulted in very substantial civilian killings and a racist assault on black Africans. In the case of Yugoslavia, the ICTY prosecutor brought charges against Milosevic in May 1999, timed well to distract attention from the fact that NATO had begun serious targeting of civilian facilities in Serbia. In "Justice Belied" there is no hesitation to argue that with the new ICJS we witness "war by other means" (Ramsey Clark).

Another false claim by establishment defenders of the new ICJS is that it will end impunity. But it is clear from the purposeful exclusion of aggression from the crime list and the spectacularly politicized selectivity in the targeting within the new legal structure, that impunity is flourishing. Some of the means by which impunity is assured are pretty crude. Of course the exclusion of aggression, Nuremberg's "supreme international crime" from the crime list is itself pretty crude. Also crude is the US- encouraged inclusion in the Rome statute establishing the ICC of a section 98 paragraph 2, which allows bilateral agreements that promise to refuse any transfer of US and its partner's citizens to the ICC. The United States has entered dozens of such agreements, but still has failed to sign the Rome agreement, because it holds forth the theoretical, even if exceedingly remote, possibility that an American might be subject to ICC prosecution! This possibility exists because the ICC is founded on an international agreement, not a tribunal set up by the Security Council where the United States has veto power. The US still arranged for Security Council rights to request action by the ICC, so that

in practice its non-membership has not interfered with its dominant influence over the ICC's work. The hope and expectation of many African states that the ICC would break the pattern of Western and selective impunity has not been met in any way. But despite these biases and limits to universality, Kofi Annan proclaimed that with the ICC we enter a new era of no further impunity: "Now at last....we shall have a permanent court to judge the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole." In the real world, not "as a whole" but in accordance with Annan's bosses in Washington.

There was a slight interruption in the pattern of impunity for the United States and its clients with the brief surge in actions by Spanish courts under their laws that permitted Spanish and even non-Spanish victims to bring suits in Spain against non-Spanish criminals who remained free of prosecution in their own countries. Working within this legal system, an International Forum for Truth and Justice in the African Great Lakes Region, comprised of private individual victims and activists, several NGOs, and some public institutions, initiated a study of international crimes perpetrated in Rwanda and the DRC between October 1990 and July 2002, and followed this up by filing a law suit in Spain in 2005 based on the massive crimes found there. After several years of investigation, the Spanish court issued warrants in 2008 for the arrest of 40 top officials of the RPF. This caused chaos in the prevailing system of injustice, where no RPF official had been prosecuted anywhere, only Hutu. Some of the details of the Spanish court's findings, with compelling evidence of the RPF's responsibility for many thousands of civilian deaths in both Rwanda and the DRC, caused the ICTR prosecutor to respond – very briefly – to RPF crimes; although tellingly, only one week after opening his groundbreaking case the prosecutor reached an agreement with the Kagame government allowing the

four RPF men to be tried in Rwanda courts, which soon found them not guilty!.

Another consequence of the Spanish action was the mobilization of pressure by the "international community" (i.e., the US and its allies) to get the Spanish government to remove this threat to impunity. The Spanish leadership soon obliged by giving the government authority to bring cases rather than relatively independent courts and victimized parties. The same happened where Belgian law had allowed a case to be brought there against Ariel Sharon. US threats to remove UN facilities from Belgium led to a quick revision of Belgian law and the termination of that threat to the impunity of war criminals under US and allied protection. The only successful cases brought under Belgian law were ones against two Hutu nuns, given lengthy prison terms for crimes against Tutsi in Rwanda. (Details on these issues are provided in "Justice Belied" in chapter 13, on Universal Jurisdiction, by Jordi Palou-Loverdos.)

Much of "Justice Belied" is devoted to showing that in their regular operations international tribunals have fallen seriously short of recognized judicial standards. This follows from the extreme politicization of these courts, which brings with it compromised choices of prosecutors and judges, and makes for "results-oriented" processes in which the finding of guilt is a foregone conclusion. Many of the prosecutors are vetted by US officials and quite a few of them come from the US, UK and Canada. Notable was the selection of Louise Arbour, a Canadian lawyer, vetted by Madeleine Albright, as ICTY prosecutor, and later appointed by Kofi Annan to head the UN Commission on Human Rights, replacing Mary Robinson, who had fallen out of US favor. Arbour was the prosecutor who brought the case against Milosevic in May 1999 just as NATO was intensifying its bombing of civilian facilities in Serbia. She was also the ICTR prosecutor who closed down the Hourigan investigation of the shutdown of Rwanda president

The only successful cases brought under Belgian law were ones against two Hutu nuns, given lengthy prison terms for crimes against Tutsi in Rwanda

BOOK REVIEW

Only the United States has "Ambassadors At Large For War Crimes," who rove the world and intervene often and with telling effect, making for politically correct "results-based" if not real justice

Habyiramana's plane on April 6, 1994, when it turned out that the findings pointed to US client Kagame as the killer. (For details see Herman and Peterson, *Enduring Lies: The Rwanda Genocide in the Propaganda System, 20 Years Later*, pp. 26-31).

US influence in the workings of these international tribunals has been overwhelming, and John Philpot is not alone in "Justice Belied" in finding the ICJS "an instrument of United States foreign policy." Only the United States has "Ambassadors At Large For War Crimes," who rove the world and intervene often and with telling effect, making for politically correct "results-based" if not real justice. It is critically important in the case of Rwanda that the United States protects the Kagame dictatorship in its activities at home and abroad (mainly in the DRC). This has resulted in the subordination of the ICTR to Kagame's demands and interests, so that only Hutus can be prosecuted, and with judicial abuses almost without limit. Paid witnesses, bullied witnesses, witnesses who revise their testimony according to prosecution needs, very frequent recantations of testimony, notably when the witnesses escape from Kagame jurisdiction, steady violations by prosecutors of their obligations to disclose exculpatory evidence, and the frequent refusal of the courts to reopen trials even in the face of major recantations or disclosures of falsified evidence. (See chapter 9, Beth Lyons, "Prosecutorial Failure to Disclose Exculpatory Material: A Death Knell to Fairness.")

In a notable instance of Kagame justice, the leader of the chief Rwanda opposition party, Victoire Ingabire, returning to Rwanda after a 16 year stay in the Netherlands, was soon arrested by Kagame, imprisoned, attacked for genocide denial and threatening national security, and was eventually saddled with a 15 year prison term. Her lawyer Peter Erlinder was also briefly detained on similar charges. But Kagame also resorts to murder of oppositional figures: Philpot lists six victims, but there are more. One

of the most enlightening cases is that of Juvenal Uwilingiyimana, a former Rwanda minister living in Belgium. Prosecutor Stephen Rapp, an American, tried to get him to confess to involvement in a genocidal Hutu leader plan, threatening him with a sealed genocide indictment at the ICTR. Mr. Uwilingiyimana eventually backed away from agreeing to the desired confession, preferring to go to Arusha and testify before the ICTR, where he would disclose the Rapp lies and threats. Rapp's associates warned him that non-cooperation would lead to his nasty death. And lo and behold, Mr. Uwilingiyimana disappeared on November 28, 2005, his mangled body found in a Belgian canal several weeks later. Believing he was in danger, however, he had sent a letter to the Tribunal and various associates outlining the events, lies and threats. This is in a Kagame tradition, but the US's cooperation and involvement has been vital.

Philpot points out that although the various Hutu conspiracies such as that which Rapp wanted Uwilingiyimana to admit to were rejected regularly by the ICTR, despite its pro-Kagame and pro-US bias, the ICTR's web site continues to propagandize with cartoons and claims of Hutu unwillingness to share power (presumably Kagame was prepared to share power!) and a pre-April 6, 1994 conspiracy to massacre Tutsi. As Philpot says, "The ICTR serves as an organ of propaganda in contempt of its own judgments."

In another revelation of its bias and contempt for law, in recent years the ICTR has transferred prisoners that they have taken into custody to Rwanda for trial there. This outrageous policy has been put in place despite the clear evidence of a completely corrupt and politicized judicial system and in the face of the treatment of Victoire Ingabire. But the US government and mainstream media haven't noticed or complained. In fact, when ICTR prosecutor Carla Del Ponte tried to advance the prosecution of some RPF personnel in 2003,

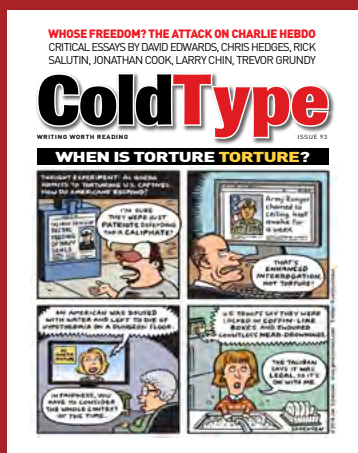
former ICTR prosecutor and then Ambassador-at-large for the US, Pierre Prosper, tried to get her to transfer the RPF cases to Rwanda, she refused and was soon fired.

Many chapters in "Justice Belied" stress the extent to which the heavy hand of the US has shaped the character and work of the new international justice system. The system has worked poorly in service to justice, as the authors point out, but US policy has had larger geopolitical and economic aims, and underwriting Kagame's terror in Rwanda and the DRC and directing the ICC toward selected African targets while ignoring others has served those aims. Many of the statutes and much political rhetoric accompanying the new ICJS proclaimed the aim of bringing peace and reconciliation. But this was blatant hypocrisy as the exclu-

sion of aggression as a crime, the selectivity of application, the frequency of applied victor's justice, and the manifold abuses of judicial processes have made for war, hatred and exacerbated conflict. The authors of "Justice Belied" do a remarkable job of spelling out these sorry conditions and calling for a dismantling of the new ICJS and return to the UN Charter and nation-based attention to dealing with injustice. **CT**

Edward S. Herman is a Professor Emeritus of Finance at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Among his books are "The Political Economy of Human Rights" (2 vols, with Noam Chomsky), "Corporate Control, Corporate Power", "The Myth of the Liberal Media," and "Manufacturing Consent" (with Noam Chomsky)

The selectivity of application, the frequency of applied victor's justice, and the manifold abuses of judicial processes have made for war, hatred and exacerbated conflict



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Murdering journalists – them and us

While we're mourning journalists killed by Muslim extremists, writes **William Blum**, we should also remember those killed by the West

We have 70 years of American foreign policy, without which – as Russian/American writer Andre Vltchek has observed – “almost all Muslim countries, including Iran, Egypt and Indonesia, would now most likely be socialist, under a group of very moderate and mostly secular leaders”

After Paris, condemnation of religious fanaticism is at its height. I'd guess that even many progressives fantasize about wringing the necks of jihadists, bashing into their heads some thoughts about the intellect, about satire, humor, freedom of speech. We're talking here, after all, about young men raised in France, not Saudi Arabia.

Where has all this Islamic fundamentalism come from in this modern age? Most of it comes – trained, armed, financed, indoctrinated – from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. During various periods from the 1970s to the present, these four countries had been the most secular, modern, educated, welfare states in the Middle East region. And what had happened to these secular, modern, educated, welfare states?

In the 1980s, the United States overthrew the Afghan government that was progressive, with full rights for women, believe it or not, leading to the creation of the Taliban and their taking power.

In the 2000s, the United States overthrew the Iraqi government, destroying not only the secular state, but the civilized state as well, leaving a failed state.

In 2011, the United States and its NATO military machine overthrew the secular Libyan government of Muammar Gaddafi, leaving behind a lawless state and unleashing many hundreds of jihadists and tons of weaponry

across the Middle East.

And for the past few years the United States has been engaged in overthrowing the secular Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad. This, along with the US occupation of Iraq having triggered widespread Sunni-Shia warfare, led to the creation of The Islamic State with all its beheadings and other charming practices.

However, despite it all, the world was made safe for capitalism, imperialism, anti-communism, oil, Israel, and jihadists. God is Great!

Starting with the Cold War, and with the above interventions building upon that, we have 70 years of American foreign policy, without which – as Russian/American writer Andre Vltchek has observed – “almost all Muslim countries, including Iran, Egypt and Indonesia, would now most likely be socialist, under a group of very moderate and mostly secular leaders”. Even the ultra-oppressive Saudi Arabia – without Washington's protection – would probably be a very different place.

On January 11, Paris was the site of a March of National Unity in honor of the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, whose journalists had been assassinated by terrorists. The march was rather touching, but it was also an orgy of Western hypocrisy, with the French TV broadcasters and the assembled crowd extolling without end the NATO world's reverence for journalists and freedom of speech; an ocean of signs declaring *Je suis Charlie ... Nous Sommes*

Tous Charlie; and flaunting giant pencils, as if pencils – not bombs, invasions, overthrows, torture, and drone attacks – have been the West’s weapons of choice in the Middle East during the past century.

No reference was made to the fact that the American military, in the course of its wars in recent decades in the Middle East and elsewhere, had been responsible for the deliberate deaths of dozens of journalists. In Iraq, among other incidents, see Wikileaks’ 2007 video of the cold-blooded murder of two Reuters journalists; the 2003 US air-to-surface missile attack on the offices of Al Jazeera in Baghdad that left three journalists dead and four wounded; and the American firing on Baghdad’s Hotel Palestine the same year that killed two foreign cameramen.

Moreover, on October 8, 2001, the second day of the US bombing of Afghanistan, the transmitters for the Taliban government’s Radio Shari were bombed and shortly after this the US bombed some 20 regional radio sites. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld defended the targeting of these facilities, saying: “Naturally, they cannot be considered to be free media outlets. They are mouthpieces of the Taliban and those harboring terrorists.”

And in Yugoslavia, in 1999, during the infamous 78-day bombing of a country which posed no threat at all to the United States or any other country, state-owned Radio Television Serbia (RTS) was targeted because it was broadcasting things which the United States and NATO did not like (like how much horror the bombing was causing). The bombs took the lives of many of the station’s staff, and both legs of one of the survivors, which had to be amputated to free him from the wreckage.

I present here some views on *Charlie Hebdo* sent to me by a friend in Paris who has long had a close familiarity with the publication and its staff:

“On international politics Charlie Hebdo was neoconservative. It supported every single NATO intervention from Yugoslavia to the present. They were anti-Muslim, anti-Hamas (or any Palestinian organization), anti-Rus-

sian, anti-Cuban (with the exception of one cartoonist), anti-Hugo Chávez, anti-Iran, anti-Syria, pro-Pussy Riot, pro-Kiev ... Do I need to continue?

“Strangely enough, the magazine was considered to be ‘leftist’. It’s difficult for me to criticize them now because they weren’t ‘bad people’, just a bunch of funny cartoonists, yes, but intellectual freewheelers without any particular agenda and who actually didn’t give a fuck about any form of ‘correctness’ – political, religious, or whatever; just having fun and trying to sell a ‘subversive’ magazine (with the notable exception of the former editor, Philippe Val, who is, I think, a true-blooded neocon).”

Dumb and dumber

Remember Arseniy Yatsenuk? The Ukrainian whom US State Department officials adopted as one of their own in early 2014 and guided into the position of Prime Minister so he could lead the Ukrainian Forces of Good against Russia in the new Cold War?

In an interview on German television on January 7, 2015 Yatsenuk allowed the following words to cross his lips: “We all remember well the Soviet invasion of Ukraine and Germany. We will not allow that, and nobody has the right to rewrite the results of World War Two”. The Ukrainian Forces of Good, it should be kept in mind, also include several neo-Nazis in high government positions and many more partaking in the fight against Ukrainian pro-Russians in the south-east of the country. Last June, Yatsenuk referred to these pro-Russians as “sub-humans”, directly equivalent to the Nazi term “*untermenschen*”.

So the next time you shake your head at some stupid remark made by a member of the US government, try to find some consolation in the thought that high American officials are not necessarily the dumbest, except of course in their choice of who is worthy of being one of the empire’s partners.

The type of rally held in Paris this month to condemn an act of terror by jihadists could as well have been held for the victims of Odessa

Find some consolation in the thought that high American officials are not necessarily the dumbest, except of course in their choice of who is worthy of being one of the empire’s partners

William Blum
is the author of
“Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II”, “Rogue State: a guide to the World’s Only Super Power,” “West-Bloc Dissident: a Cold War Political Memoir,” and “America’s Deadliest Export – Democracy: The Truth About US Foreign Policy and Everything Else”

ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

If the American people were forced to watch, listen, and read all the stories of neo-Nazi behavior in Ukraine the past few years, I think they would start to wonder why their government was so closely allied with such people

in Ukraine last May. The same neo-Nazi types referred to above took time off from parading around with their swastika-like symbols and calling for the death of Russians, Communists and Jews, and burned down a trade-union building in Odessa, killing scores of people and sending hundreds to hospital; many of the victims were beaten or shot when they tried to flee the flames and smoke; ambulances were blocked from reaching the wounded. Try and find an American mainstream media entity that has made even a slightly serious attempt to capture the horror. You would have to go to the Russian station in Washington, DC, RT.com, search “Odessa fire” for stories, images and videos. Also see the Wikipedia entry on the 2 May 2014 Odessa clashes.

If the American people were forced to watch, listen, and read all the stories of neo-Nazi behavior in Ukraine the past few years, I think they would start to wonder why their government was so closely allied with such people. The United States may even go to war with Russia on the side of such people.

Some thoughts about ideology

Norman Finkelstein, the fiery American critic of Israel, was interviewed recently by Paul Jay on The Real News Network. Finkelstein related how he had been a Maoist in his youth and had been devastated by the exposure and downfall of the Gang of Four in 1976 in China. “It came out there was just an awful lot of corruption. The people who we thought were absolutely selfless were very self-absorbed. And it was clear. The overthrow of the Gang of Four had huge popular support.”

Many other Maoists were torn apart by the event. “Everything was overthrown overnight, the whole Maoist system, which we thought [were] new socialist men, they all believed in putting self second, fighting self. And then overnight the whole thing was reversed.”

“You know, many people think it was McCarthy that destroyed the Communist Party,” Finkelstein continued. “That’s absolutely not true. You know, when you were a communist back then, you had the inner strength to with-

stand McCarthyism, because it was the cause. What destroyed the Communist Party was Khrushchev’s speech,” a reference to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev’s 1956 exposure of the crimes of Joseph Stalin.

Although I was old enough, and interested enough, to be influenced by the Chinese and Russian revolutions, I was not. I remained an admirer of capitalism and a good loyal anti-communist. It was the war in Vietnam that was my Gang of Four and my Nikita Khrushchev. Day after day during 1964 and early 1965 I followed the news carefully, catching up on the day’s statistics of American firepower, bombing sorties, and body counts. I was filled with patriotic pride at our massive power to shape history. Words like those of Winston Churchill, upon America’s entry into the Second World War, came easily to mind again – “England would live; Britain would live; the Commonwealth of Nations would live.” Then, one day, it suddenly and inexplicably hit me. In those villages with the strange names there were people under those falling bombs, people running in total desperation from that god-awful machine-gun strafing.

This pattern took hold. The news reports would stir in me a self-righteous satisfaction that we were teaching those damn commies that they couldn’t get away with whatever it was they were trying to get away with. The very next moment I would be struck by a wave of repulsion at the horror of it all. Eventually, the repulsion won out over the patriotic pride, never to go back to where I had been; but dooming me to experience the despair of American foreign policy again and again, decade after decade.

The human brain is an amazing organ. It keeps working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 52 weeks a year, from before you leave the womb, right up until the day you find nationalism. And that day can come very early. Here’s a recent headline from the Washington Post: “In the United States the brainwashing starts in kindergarten.”

Oh, my mistake. It actually said “In N. Korea the brainwashing starts in kindergarten.”

Let Cuba Live! The Devil's List of what the United States has done to Cuba

On May 31, 1999, a lawsuit for \$181 billion in wrongful death, personal injury, and economic damages was filed in a Havana court against the government of the United States. It was subsequently filed with the United Nations. Since that time its fate is a mystery.

The lawsuit covered the 40 years since the country's 1959 revolution and described, in considerable detail, US acts of aggression against Cuba; specifying, often by name, date, and particular circumstances, each person known to have been killed or seriously wounded. In all, 3,478 people were killed and an additional 2,099 seriously injured. (These figures do not include the many indirect victims of Washington's economic pressures and blockade.)

The case was, in legal terms, very narrowly drawn. It was for the wrongful death of individuals, on behalf of their survivors, and for personal injuries to those who survived serious wounds. No unsuccessful American attacks were deemed relevant, and consequently there was no testimony regarding the many hundreds of unsuccessful assassination attempts against Cuban President Fidel Castro and other high officials, or even of bombings in which no one was killed or injured. Damages to crops, livestock, or the Cuban economy in general were also excluded, so there was no testimony about the introduction into the island of swine fever or tobacco mold.

However, those aspects of Washington's chemical and biological warfare waged against Cuba that involved human victims were described in detail, most significantly the creation of an epidemic of hemorrhagic dengue fever in 1981, during which some 340,000 people were infected and 116,000 hospitalized; this in a country which had never before experienced a single case of the disease. In the end, 158 people, including 101 children, died. That only 158 people died, out of some 116,000 who were hospitalized, was testimony to the remarkable Cuban public health sector.

The complaint describes the campaign of air and naval attacks against Cuba that commenced in October 1959, when US president Dwight Eisenhower approved a program that included bombings of sugar mills, the burning of sugar fields, machine-gun attacks on Havana, even on passenger trains.

Another section of the complaint described the armed terrorist groups, *los banditos*, who ravaged the island for five years, from 1960 to 1965, when the last group was located and defeated. These bands terrorized small farmers, torturing and killing those considered (often erroneously) active supporters of the Revolution; men, women, and children. Several young volunteer literacy-campaign teachers were among the victims of the bandits.

There was also of course the notorious Bay of Pigs invasion, in April 1961. Although the entire incident lasted less than 72 hours, 176 Cubans were killed and 300 more wounded, 50 of them permanently disabled.

The complaint also described the unending campaign of sabotage and terrorism that included the bombing of ships and planes as well as stores and offices. The most horrific example of sabotage was of course the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner off Barbados in which all 73 people on board were killed. There were as well the murder of Cuban diplomats and officials around the world, including one such murder on the streets of New York City in 1980. This campaign into the 1990s, with the murders of Cuban policemen, soldiers, and sailors in 1992 and 1994, and the 1997 hotel bombing campaign, which took the life of a foreigner, a campaign aimed at discouraging tourism and led to the sending of Cuban intelligence officers to the US in an attempt to put an end to the bombings; from their ranks rose the Cuban Five.

To the above can be added the many acts of financial extortion, violence and sabotage carried out by the United States and its agents in the 16 years since the lawsuit was filed. In sum total, the deep-seated injury and trauma inflicted upon on the Cuban people can be regarded as the island's own 9-11.

CT

The most horrific example of sabotage was of course the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner off Barbados in which all 73 people on board were killed

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WHOSE FREEDOM? THE ATTACK ON CHARLIE HEBDO

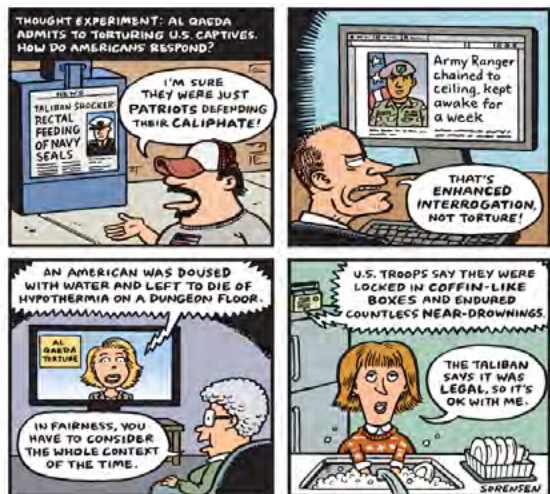
CRITICAL ESSAYS BY DAVID EDWARDS, CHRIS HEDGES, RICK SALUTIN, JONATHAN COOK, LARRY CHIN, TREVOR GRUNDY

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