

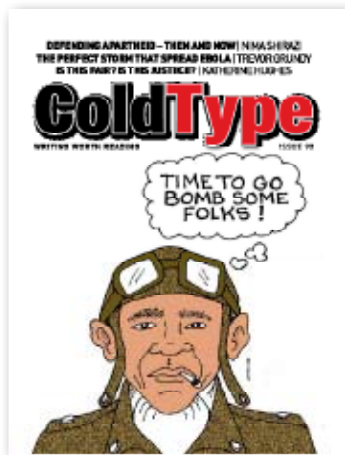
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IS THIS FAIR? IS THIS JUSTICE? | KATHERINE HUGHES

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From Pol Pot to ISIS

A look at recent history will show that ISIS, like the Khmer Rouge of the Nixon era, is a product of Western barbarism, writes **John Pilger**

In transmitting President Richard Nixon's orders for a "massive" bombing of Cambodia in 1969, Henry Kissinger said, "Anything that flies on everything that moves". As Barack Obama ignites his seventh war against the Muslim world since he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the orchestrated hysteria and lies make one almost nostalgic for Kissinger's murderous honesty.

As a witness to the human consequences of aerial savagery – including the beheading of victims, their parts festooning trees and fields – I am not surprised by the disregard of memory and history, yet again. A telling example is the rise to power of Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge, who had much in common with today's Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). They, too, were ruthless medievalists who began as a small sect. They, too, were the product of an American-made apocalypse, this time in Asia.

According to Pol Pot, his movement had consisted of "fewer than 5,000 poorly armed guerrillas uncertain about their strategy, tactics, loyalty and leaders". Once Nixon's and Kissinger's B52 bombers had gone to work as part of "Operation Menu", the west's ultimate demon could not believe his luck.

The Americans dropped the equivalent of five Hiroshimas on rural Cambodia during 1969-73. They levelled village after village, returning to bomb the rubble and corpses. The craters left monstrous necklaces of carnage, still visible from the air. The terror was unimaginable. A former Khmer Rouge official described how the survivors "froze up and they would wander around mute for three or four days. Terrified and half-crazy, the people were ready to believe what they were told ... That was what made it so easy for the Khmer Rouge to win the people over."



A Finnish Government Commission of Enquiry estimated that 600,000 Cambodians died in the ensuing civil war and described the bombing as the "first stage in a decade of genocide". What Nixon and Kissinger began, Pol Pot, their beneficiary, completed. Under their bombs, the Khmer Rouge grew to a formidable army of 200,000.

ISIS has a similar past and present. By most scholarly measure, Bush and Blair's invasion of Iraq in 2003 led to the deaths of some 700,000 people – in a country that had no history of jihadism. The Kurds had done territorial and political deals; Sunni and Shia had class and sectarian differences, but they were at peace; intermar-

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The sanctions on Iraq were like a medieval siege. Almost everything that sustained a modern state was, in the jargon, “blocked”

riage was common. Three years before the invasion, I drove the length of Iraq without fear. On the way I met people proud, above all, to be Iraqis, the heirs of a civilization that seemed, for them, a presence.

Bush and Blair blew all this to bits. Iraq is now a nest of jihadism. Al-Qaeda – like Pol Pot’s “jihadists” – seized the opportunity provided by the onslaught of Shock and Awe and the civil war that followed. “Rebel” Syria offered even greater rewards, with CIA and Gulf state ratlines of weapons, logistics and money running through Turkey. The arrival of foreign recruits was inevitable. A former British ambassador, Oliver Miles, wrote recently, “The [Cameron] government seems to be following the example of Tony Blair, who ignored consistent advice from the Foreign Office, MI5 and MI6 that our Middle East policy – and in particular our Middle East wars – had been a principal driver in the recruitment of Muslims in Britain for terrorism here.”

ISIS is the progeny of those in Washington and London who, in destroying Iraq as both a state and a society, conspired to commit an epic crime against humanity. Like Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, ISIS are the mutations of a western state terror dispensed by a venal imperial elite undeterred by the consequences of actions taken at great remove in distance and culture. Their culpability is unmentionable in “our” societies.

It is 23 years since this holocaust enveloped Iraq, immediately after the first Gulf War, when the US and Britain hijacked the United Nations Security Council and imposed punitive “sanctions” on the Iraqi population – ironically, reinforcing the domestic authority of Saddam Hussein. It was like a medieval siege. Almost everything that sustained a modern state was, in the jargon, “blocked” – from chlorine for making the water supply safe to school pencils, parts for X-ray machines, common painkillers and drugs to combat previously unknown cancers carried in the dust from

the southern battlefields contaminated with Depleted Uranium.

Just before Christmas 1999, the Department of Trade and Industry in London restricted the export of vaccines meant to protect Iraqi children against diphtheria and yellow fever. Kim Howells, a medical doctor and parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Blair government, explained why. “The children’s vaccines”, he said, “were capable of being used in weapons of mass destruction”. The British Government could get away with such an outrage because media reporting of Iraq – much of it manipulated by the Foreign Office – blamed Saddam Hussein for everything.

Under a bogus “humanitarian” Oil for Food Programme, \$100 was allotted for each Iraqi to live on for a year. This figure had to pay for the entire society’s infrastructure and essential services, such as power and water. “Imagine,” the UN Assistant Secretary General, Hans Von Sponeck, told me, “setting that pittance against the lack of clean water, and the fact that the majority of sick people cannot afford treatment, and the sheer trauma of getting from day to day, and you have a glimpse of the nightmare. And make no mistake, this is deliberate. I have not in the past wanted to use the word genocide, but now it is unavoidable.”

Disgusted, Von Sponeck resigned as UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Iraq. His predecessor, Denis Halliday, an equally distinguished senior UN official, had also resigned. “I was instructed,” Halliday said, “to implement a policy that satisfies the definition of genocide: a deliberate policy that has effectively killed well over a million individuals, children and adults.”

A study by the United Nations Children’s Fund, Unicef, found that between 1991 and 1998, the height of the blockade, there were 500,000 “excess” deaths of Iraqi infants under the age of five. An American TV reporter put this to Madeleine Albright, US Ambassador to the United Nations, ask-

ing her, “Is the price worth it?” Albright replied, “We think the price is worth it.”

In 2007, the senior British official responsible for the sanctions, Carne Ross, known as “Mr. Iraq”, told a parliamentary selection committee, “[The US and UK governments] effectively denied the entire population a means to live.” When I interviewed Carne Ross three years later, he was consumed by regret and contrition. “I feel ashamed,” he said. He is today a rare truth-teller of how governments deceive and how a compliant media plays a critical role in disseminating and maintaining the deception. “We would feed [journalists] factoids of sanitised intelligence,” he said, “or we’d freeze them out.”

On 25 September, a headline in the *Guardian* read: “Faced with the horror of Isis we must act.” The “we must act” is a ghost risen, a warning of the suppression of informed memory, facts, lessons learned and regrets or shame. The author of the article was Peter Hain, the former Foreign Office minister responsible for Iraq under Blair. In 1998, when Denis Halliday revealed the extent of the suffering in Iraq for which the Blair Government shared primary responsibility, Hain abused him on the BBC’s *Newsnight* as an “apologist for Saddam”. In 2003, Hain backed Blair’s invasion of stricken Iraq on the basis of transparent lies. At a subsequent Labour Party conference, he dismissed the invasion as a “fringe issue”.

Now Hain is demanding “air strikes, drones, military equipment and other support” for those “facing genocide” in Iraq and Syria. This will further “the imperative of a political solution”. Obama has the same in mind as he lifts what he calls the “restrictions” on US bombing and drone attacks. This means that missiles and 500-pound bombs can smash the homes of peasant people, as they are doing without restriction in Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia – as they did in Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. On 23 September,

a Tomahawk cruise missile hit a village in Idlib Province in Syria, killing as many as a dozen civilians, including women and children. None waved a black flag.

The day Hain’s article appeared, Denis Halliday and Hans Von Sponeck happened to be in London and came to visit me. They were not shocked by the lethal hypocrisy of a politician, but lamented the enduring, almost inexplicable absence of intelligent diplomacy in negotiating a semblance of truce. Across the world, from Northern Ireland to Nepal, those regarding each other as terrorists and heretics have faced each other across a table. Why not now in Iraq and Syria.

Like Ebola from West Africa, a bacteria called “perpetual war” has crossed the Atlantic. Lord Richards, until recently head of the British military, wants “boots on the ground” now. There is a vapid, almost sociopathic verbosity from Cameron, Obama and their “coalition of the willing” – notably Australia’s aggressively weird Tony Abbott – as they prescribe more violence delivered from 30,000 feet on places where the blood of previous adventures never dried. They have never seen bombing and they apparently love it so much they want it to overthrow their one potentially valuable ally, Syria. This is nothing new, as the following leaked UK-US intelligence file illustrates:

“In order to facilitate the action of liberative [sic] forces ... a special effort should be made to eliminate certain key individuals [and] to proceed with internal disturbances in Syria. CIA is prepared, and SIS (MI6) will attempt to mount minor sabotage and coup de main [sic] incidents within Syria, working through contacts with individuals... a necessary degree of fear... frontier and [staged] border clashes [will] provide a pretext for intervention... the CIA and SIS should use... capabilities in both psychological and action fields to augment tension.”

That was written in 1957, though it could

In 1998, when Denis Halliday revealed the extent of the suffering in Iraq for which the Blair Government shared primary responsibility, Peter Hain abused him on the BBC’s *Newsnight* as an “apologist for Saddam”

For skeptics who saw little difference between East and West, John Kennedy famously advised, "Let them come to Berlin"

have been written yesterday. In the imperial world, nothing essentially changes. Last year, the former French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas revealed that "two years before the Arab spring", he was told in London that a war on Syria was planned. "I am going to tell you something," he said in an interview with the French TV channel LPC, "I was in England two years before the violence in Syria on other business. I met top British officials, who confessed to me that they were preparing something in Syria ... Britain was organising an invasion of rebels into Syria. They even asked me, although I was no longer Minister for Foreign Affairs, if I would like to participate ... This operation goes way back. It was prepared, preconceived and planned."

The only effective opponents of ISIS are accredited demons of the west – Syria, Iran, Hezbollah. The obstacle is Turkey, an "ally" and a member of Nato, which has conspired with the CIA, MI6 and the Gulf medievalists to channel support to the Syrian "rebels", including those now calling themselves ISIS. Supporting Turkey in its long-held ambition for regional dominance by overthrowing the Assad government beckons a major conventional war and the horrific dismemberment of the most ethnically diverse state in the Middle East.

A truce – however difficult to achieve – is the only way out of this imperial maze; otherwise, the beheadings will continue. That genuine negotiations with Syria

should be seen as "morally questionable" (the Guardian) suggests that the assumptions of moral superiority among those who supported the war criminal Blair remain not only absurd, but dangerous.

Together with a truce, there should be an immediate cessation of all shipments of war materials to Israel and recognition of the State of Palestine. The issue of Palestine is the region's most festering open wound, and the oft-stated justification for the rise of Islamic extremism. Osama bin Laden made that clear. Palestine also offers hope. Give justice to the Palestinians and you begin to change the world around them.

More than 40 years ago, the Nixon-Kissinger bombing of Cambodia unleashed a torrent of suffering from which that country has never recovered. The same is true of the Blair-Bush crime in Iraq. With impeccable timing, Henry Kissinger's latest self-serving tome has just been released with its satirical title, "World Order". In one fawning review, Kissinger is described as a "key shaper of a world order that remained stable for a quarter of a century". Tell that to the people of Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Chile, East Timor and all the other victims of his "statecraft". Only when "we" recognise the war criminals in our midst will the blood begin to dry. **CT**

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John Pilger's new film, "Utopia", has received glowing reviews in the UK and Australia

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Obama's never-ending, ever-expanding war

Obama says air strikes in Syria will help curb the violence and repression of ISIS – but there's nothing humanitarian about this war, writes **Alan Maass**

The US has expanded its air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), adding another element to the deadly mix of conflicts that is inflicting a terrible toll across the region.

US officials announced that their warplanes and drones – in a joint operation with five authoritarian Arab regimes – struck targets in eastern and northern Syria. This expands the war on the Sunni fundamentalists of ISIS beyond Iraq, where the US has carried out nearly 200 attacks since launching air strikes].

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, claimed the US targeted ISIS “safe havens” in Syria. But the missiles were aimed at cities like Raqqa, with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants – where ISIS, like any insurgency, has established itself. Civilian casualties – including people who abhor ISIS and oppose its occupations of Syrian cities – are inevitable. According to a human rights monitoring group, eight civilians died in the first round of air strikes, along with “scores of ISIS fighters.”

So the US is now dropping bombs on another Middle Eastern country, to go along with a half-dozen others where American drones and aircraft rain death from the skies. Obama's latest war is against a force that arose as a direct consequence of the

disastrous occupation of Iraq – and that was initially encouraged in various ways by some of the same Arab “coalition partners” that are also bombing it now. Just as US air strikes against ISIS in Iraq bolstered the repressive Shia-dominated government in Baghdad, the murderous Syrian regime of dictator Bashar al-Assad will use the opportunity of Washington attacking a common enemy to tighten its grip.

US imperialism has created a seething mess of violence and oppression across the Middle East – and the latest escalation in the “war on terror” will only make things worse.

People around the world are rightly horrified by ISIS's reactionary ideology and its barbaric violence against religious and ethnic minorities, as well as any

Sunni who defies its rule. Obama and the other advocates for military intervention are depending on that popular outrage as they attempt to rehabilitate US imperialism and reassert American power to control the flow of Middle East oil.

But there is nothing humanitarian or moral or just about this new stage of the “war on terror” – any more than when the Taliban of Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein in Iraq was the main demonized enemy of the American war machine. US military intervention will only cause more oppression

So the US is now dropping bombs on another Middle Eastern country, to go along with a half-dozen others where American drones and aircraft rain death from the skies



COVER STORY

“Friends and partners”? These regimes are better known, to those with the misfortune of suffering under them, as ruthless tyrannies that – very much like ISIS – tolerate no dissent whatsoever

– and make the world more violent.

The hypocrisies of this latest US war are multiplying and mutating so fast that it’s hard to keep track.

For one thing, there’s the ugly collection of dictators and feudal monarchies that enlisted in Washington’s latest military adventure. In a statement announcing the Syria air strikes [4], Barack Obama proudly declared: “We were joined in this action by our friends and partners – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain and Qatar. America is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with these nations on behalf of our common security.”

“Friends and partners”? These regimes are better known, to those with the misfortune of suffering under them, as ruthless tyrannies that – very much like ISIS – tolerate no dissent whatsoever.

As Britain’s muckraking magazine *Private Eye* pointed out [5], the sickening beheadings of reporters committed by ISIS are dwarfed in number by the executions carried out in a public plaza known as “Chop-Chop Square” in the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh. The “crimes” punished by beheading in Saudi Arabia include blasphemy, adultery, drug smuggling, sedition, sorcery and witchcraft.

As Eamonn McCann wrote in the *Belfast Telegraph* before the air strikes:

“There’s no chance, however, of the US bombing Riyadh to end this evil. The Saudi dictatorship is top of the list of regional allies the US needs onside for blitzing ISIS. Recently, the Obama administration distributed pictures of Secretary of State John Kerry in comfortable conversation with the leader of the Saudi beheaders, King Abdullah. The caption said that the pair were discussing what role Saudi Arabia might play in supporting US attacks on the ISIS beheaders. “

What’s more, the “friends and partners” of the US government today were yesterday “friends and partners” – or, more accurately, patrons and sponsors – of some of the

reactionary Jihadist groupings in Iraq and Syria that set the stage for ISIS.

This takes us back to the sectarian conflicts set in motion during the US occupation of Iraq, when the Bush administration – faced with the threat of a growing resistance that might unite Sunnis and Shias and overwhelm US forces – turned to a divide-and-rule strategy.

US authorities lured Shia political leaders away from supporting armed resistance with the promise of elections that would give them control over the Iraqi government. Shia militias essentially took over the rebuilt Iraqi Army and police, making them sectarian institutions. Parts of the Sunni resistance started to focus their attacks on Shia, rather than US forces – which prompted an armed response from Shia leaders, and the situation deteriorated from there.

The ensuing civil war was one of the bloodiest chapters of the occupation of Iraq, adding massively to the death toll caused by the US military. Sunnis were ethnically cleansed in large numbers from the capital of Baghdad and other cities. Millions of people fled the violence, many of them crossing Iraq’s western border into Syria – all so the US could maintain its grip over the country.

With this outflow of refugees from Iraq, the sectarian conflict began to regionalize – and the US and its chief allies encouraged this development, despite the threat of a bloodbath spilling across multiple borders.

Shia dominance over the new Iraq government gave Iran – the main regional power opposed to Saudi Arabia, ruled by a Shia religious elite – another ally to go with Bashar al-Assad in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Faced with the strengthening so-called “Shia Crescent,” Saudis financed and supplied militant Sunni fundamentalists, often called “Jihadists,” as a paramilitary challenge.

This strategy continued to play out when civil war engulfed Syria after the Assad regime turned to savage repression to put down the pro-democracy uprising that began in 2011. Saudi Arabia and Qatar backed

armed Islamist groups – not just in defiance of Assad, but now as a counterweight to prevent the democratic opposition from becoming powerful enough to overthrow the dictatorship, and pose a popular alternative in a Middle East ruled for decades by US-backed authoritarian regimes.

All this took place with the quiet approval of the US government. In 2007, journalist Seymour Hersh quoted Vali Nasr, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, explaining the cynical logic for enabling reactionary Islamists with oftentimes open connections to al-Qaeda, Washington's supposed enemy in the "war on terror."

"It's not that we don't want the Salafis to throw bombs," Nasr told Hersh. "It's who they throw them at – Hezbollah, Moqtada al-Sadr, Iran, and at the Syrians, if they continue to work with Hezbollah and Iran."

The situation in Syria, where the US is now aiming its missiles, has yet another grotesque twist.

ISIS controls a large part of eastern Syria not only as a consequence of the sectarian conflict unleashed by the US occupation of Iraq, and thanks to the Arab regimes encouraging Sunni Jihadist groupings – but also because of the Assad regime's careful calculations in engineering a counterrevolution against the Arab Spring uprising in Syria.

Faced with a popular revolt inspired by ones in Egypt and Tunisia that successfully toppled fellow dictators, Assad turned to his own form of divide and rule. He sought to hold onto a base of support among Alawites (an offshoot of Shia Islam) and other ethnic and religious groups by portraying the uprising as the work of Sunni radicals who would carry out their own ethnic cleansing if the regime fell.

At the same time, he released more than 1,000 Jihadist prisoners from Syrian jails. This was a bald attempt to shift the balance of forces inside the opposition – away from radical, secular proponents of democracy and toward the reactionary Islamists.

For much of the last year or so, as ISIS established control over cities like Raqqa and the surrounding regions, there was unspoken truce between ISIS and the regime. Both sides instead trained their weapons – with all the savagery they could muster – against other forces in the anti-Assad resistance.

That began to change after ISIS launched its summer offensive in Iraq, capturing huge areas in the west and north of the country. But most of the Syrian government's firepower is still trained on other rebel forces. Last month, with the US government building toward air strikes against ISIS in Syria, the *New York Times* reported:

"Insurgents of all stripes, except for the Islamic State group, say the Syrian government appears to be stepping up its attacks on them ahead of the threatened American air campaign. Pro-government and anti-government analysts say Mr. Assad has an interest in eliminating the more moderate rebels, to make sure his forces are the only ones left to benefit on the ground from any weakening of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS..."

"Islamic State activists in Homs said [on September 17] that there had been no recent government air strikes against the group, adding to opposition suspicions that Mr. Assad prefers to focus on attacking his other opponents while letting the Islamic State's unchecked brutality argue the case to Syria and the world that his rule is the best alternative."

The Obama administration has been careful to insist that it isn't allying with the Assad government in making war on ISIS. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power reported that the US had notified the Syrian government about the impending air strikes, but hadn't coordinated with it.

This led to complaints and criticism from Syria – and from Iran and Russia, the regime's main international backers – that the US was violating international law with its attack in Syria. For good measure, while the air strikes were taking place in eastern Syria,

For much of the last year or so, as ISIS established control over cities like Raqqa and the surrounding regions, there was unspoken truce between ISIS and the regime

ISIS AND THE WEST / 2

As opponents of US imperialism try to understand these tangled contradictions and conflicts, we must be clear that this latest stage of the “war on terror” is not being pursued for humanitarian purposes

Israel shot down a Syrian jet, claiming it had violated Israeli airspace – in reality, the Syrian warplane had been dropping bombs on rebel fighters.

So on paper, the Syrian regime opposes the US air strikes. But there is the stated and the real.

If US attacks do succeed in damaging ISIS militarily or loosening its grip in areas it controls, the Assad government is in the best position of any military force to capitalize. Obama claims that part of his strategy for attacking ISIS in Syria is to train rebel fighters from the so-called “moderate” opposition – but it will take the better part of a year for the first units to be ready. In the meanwhile, the Syrian regime can shore up its position in the east without a fight – while continuing its murderous assaults against rebel fighters elsewhere.

The Assad regime and its backers in Iran and Russia may have hoped to maneuver the US into openly cooperating with them. But they will be happy nevertheless to exploit any opportunities that present themselves as a result of the US attacks.

Obama and the US, meanwhile, know full well that the Syrian regime will likely be the main beneficiary of their war on ISIS. It shows how little they care about ordinary Syrians – whether under the boot of Assad or ISIS currently – that they have launched the air campaign anyway.

In a statement opposing the air strikes and calling for support for popular movements in Syria and Iraq, Syrian Revolution Support Bases, an international collective in solidarity with the uprising against the regime, focused on these unstated motives of Assad and the US:

Assad has been responsible both directly and indirectly to contributing to the growth of ISIS, and until recently has not attacked ISIS positions, focusing instead on attacking the [Free Syrian Army] and civilians. Assad is now begging to be a partner in the US coalition, seizing the chance to gain interna-

tional legitimacy.

Any action seen as allying with Bashar al-Assad will lead to a backlash and exacerbate sectarian tensions. This fits well with America’s “divide-and-rule” policy. We see in Iraq that the US is allying with the criminal government which is dropping barrel bombs on civilian neighborhoods (recently committing a massacre at a school in Falluja) and using sectarian militias which are carrying out atrocities.

There are other factors that will play out in the coming weeks, with potentially inflammatory results. Pressures are growing on US ally and NATO member Turkey as huge numbers of refugees – some fleeing the regime’s onslaught, others attacks by ISIS – flow over its borders with Syria and Iraq. Then there is the Kurdish population, spread through Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran – the Kurds suffer national oppression, but in Iraq are close collaborators with US imperialism.

As opponents of US imperialism try to understand these tangled contradictions and conflicts, we must be clear that this latest stage of the “war on terror” is not being pursued for humanitarian purposes. As Syrian Revolution Support Bases states:

“[I]mperialist intervention will only lead to propping up the sectarian occupation regime in Iraq and the genocidal Assad regime in Syria. It will further pave the way for expanding US economic and strategic interests in the region (namely exploiting resources and supporting the Zionist State).”

As Barack Obama’s new Middle East war escalates, we need to expose the rhetoric and lies of the US government – and stand in solidarity with those challenging imperialism, oppression and tyranny, wherever they are in the Middle East. **CT**

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Alan Maas is the editor of Socialist Worker.

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The purpose and the pretense

David Edwards on the bombing of ISIS

Tom Bradby, ITV News political editor, nutshellled the media zeitgeist in a single tweet:

‘I am not at all religious, but I can’t help feeling there may be a seventh circle of hell reserved somewhere for Jihadi John [the killer of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and David Haines].’

For ‘Jihadi John’ and the West’s close allies in Saudi Arabia, perhaps, where ‘scheduled beheading reflects authorities’ callous disregard to human rights’, according to Amnesty International.

Bradby’s comment indicates just how rapidly ISIS has come to represent nothing less than Pure Evil for the state-corporate media. Or as Mehdi Hasan, political director of *Huffington Post*, commented (without irony):

‘ISIS, in other words, is evil. Scum. The worst of the worst. Unique, to borrow Obama’s phrase, in its brutality.’

Traditionally, claims that an Official Enemy is uniquely Evil rise to a deafening crescendo just prior to an attack on that enemy. In late 2002, a former intelligence officer told John Pilger that the flood of government terror warnings at the time were ‘a softening up process’ ahead of an attack on Iraq and ‘a lying game on a huge scale’. (Pilger, ‘Lies, damned lies, and government

terror warnings,’ *Daily Mirror*, December 3, 2002)

Sure enough, the US and various unsavoury allies began a bombing campaign ostensibly against ISIS in Syria. As Jonathan Cook noted, the attack took place without a UN Security Council resolution or any serious argument that the US was acting in self-defence:

‘That makes it a crime of aggression, defined at Nuremberg as “the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole”’

Compared to Obama – now embarking on his seventh war – George W. Bush appears a paragon of virtue, having at least troubled with UN resolutions. Bush commented in March 2003:

‘The world needs [Saddam Hussein] to answer a single question: Has the Iraqi regime fully and unconditionally disarmed as required by Resolution 1441? Or has it not?’

Early reports estimated that eight Syrian civilians had been killed in the latest bombing raids by US militants. The BBC buried a reference to the killings in a ten-word sentence in the middle of a news report:

‘Eight civilians, including three children, were reported to have died.’

The BBC buried a reference to the killings in a ten-word sentence in the middle of a news report



To be consistent, the West should be arguing that much of the Middle East and all members of the 'coalition of the willing' should be degraded and destroyed for committing atrocities

Bad enough that civilians 'died', but how much worse if they had been killed by Britain's leading ally.

A September 4 search of the Nexis media database for mentions of 'ISIS' (Islamic State) and its alternative title, 'Isil', found the following mentions:

January 1 – May 31, 2014, CNN mentioned 'ISIS/ISIL' 110 times.

June 1 – August 31, 2014, CNN mentioned 'ISIS/ISIL' 1,465 times.

Between these same dates, the **New York Times** mentioned 'ISIS/ISIL' 89 times and 389 times, respectively. (David Peterson, email to Media Lens, September 4, 2014)

Much of this coverage has of course focused on ISIS beheadings, massacres and other crimes – self-declared and alleged – in Iraq and Syria.

Absent from most media coverage is the recognition that these conflicts have been characterised by appalling violence on all sides. A curious omission, given that the same media have focused intensively on gruesome atrocities committed, for example, by the pro-Assad 'shabiha' militia in Syria, alleged to have been responsible for the May 2012 Houla massacre.

In the last three years, Lexis media database finds 933 UK national newspaper articles mentioning 'shabiha'. In the last twelve months, there have been just 28 mentions, with 19 this year (Media Lens search, September 15, 2014). Yet another Damascene conversion, it would seem, just as the Western state-corporate media crosshairs moved from Assad to ISIS.

Similarly, while it is true that Sunni forces, including ISIS, have committed horrific crimes in Iraq, Sunnis have also suffered terribly. A recent *New York Times* headline made the point: 'Sunnis in Iraq Often See Their Government as the Bigger Threat.' The report explained:

'Iraq's Sunnis vividly recall how militias linked to the governing Shiite parties staged attacks against Sunnis during the worst years of the sectarian conflict last decade,

often in cooperation with Iraq's military and police forces, or while wearing their uniforms.

'Mr. Maliki [former Iraqi president] was criticized for his inability or unwillingness to dismantle the groups, hardening Sunni mistrust of the government.'

Investigative journalist Scott Peterson added some background:

'From the indiscriminate bombing of Sunni areas... to large numbers of languishing detainees, many Sunnis say the roots of discontent are obvious, and have resulted in support for groups as radical as IS.'

While the tit-for-tat nature of Sunni-Shia tortures, disappearances and massacres was extensively covered during the US-UK occupation, it is rarely mentioned now in media condemnations of ISIS.

In fact, arguing that the West should 'degrade and ultimately destroy' ISIS on the basis of its human rights record, without mentioning the context, is like arguing that Britain and America should have been wiped out for their conventional and atomic bombing of cities packed with civilians in the Second World War without mentioning German and Japanese crimes. Indeed, to be consistent, the West should be arguing that much of the Middle East and all members of the 'coalition of the willing' should be degraded and destroyed for committing atrocities.

In reality, of course, the attack on ISIS is not about preventing atrocities. As Glenn Greenwald notes, 'the US does not bomb countries for humanitarian objectives. Humanitarianism is the pretense, not the purpose'.

We wonder if state-corporate propagandists are able to reflect on the irony that even before two US journalists were murdered, the US had sent bombers half-way around the world to kill ISIS fighters. And yet, over the last three years, the West has tirelessly condemned the actions of the Syrian government in a literal war for survival against ISIS and other foreign-backed

'rebel' groups, on Syrian soil – a war that is alleged to have cost 190,000 lives, including 50,000 Syrian government forces. Certainly Assad's troops have committed appalling war crimes. But one can barely imagine the scale of the US reaction if ISIS had wreaked even a tiny fraction of this death and destruction on its homeland and forces, much less threatened its very survival.

'Before We All Get Killed' – Pressing The Panic Button

To his credit, CNN's Brian Stelter asked recently whether journalists are 'letting their fears get the best of them, or their ideological agendas', commenting:

'I myself am very concerned about the press provoking panic about ISIS... Bottom line, we journalists cannot let fear-mongering get in the way of facts.'

Peter Bergen and David Sterman, also of CNN, wrote an article titled, 'ISIS threat to US mostly hype.'

A report in the *New York Times* commented (September 10) of ISIS:

'American intelligence agencies have concluded that it poses no immediate threat to the United States. Some officials and terrorism experts believe that the actual danger posed by ISIS has been distorted in hours of television punditry and alarmist statements by politicians, and that there has been little substantive public debate about the unintended consequences of expanding American military action in the Middle East.'

And:

'Daniel Benjamin, who served as the State Department's top counterterrorism adviser during Mr. Obama's first term, said the public discussion about the ISIS threat has been a "farce," with "members of the cabinet and top military officers all over the place describing the threat in lurid terms that are not justified."

"It's pretty clear that upping our involvement in Iraq and Syria makes it more likely that we will be targeted by the people we are attacking," said Andrew Liepman, a former

deputy director at the National Counterterrorism Center who is now a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation.'

Glenn Greenwald adds:

'[T]he US has known for years that what fuels and strengthens anti-American sentiment (and thus anti-American extremism) is exactly what they keep doing: aggression in the region. If you know that, then they know that... Continuously creating and strengthening enemies is a feature, not a bug. It is what justifies the ongoing greasing of the profitable and power-vesting machine of Endless War.'

The US media watch site FAIR also offered a rare dose of sanity putting the ISIS 'threat' in perspective:

'They have executed people they have taken hostage in violent, war-torn countries. This is criminal behavior, to be sure, but the idea that they constitute a danger to "national security" doesn't add up.'

By contrast, in an interview conducted by CBS's Face the Nation host Bob Schieffer, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham commented of Obama:

'This president needs to rise to the occasion before we all get killed back here at home.'

In the same programme, Schieffer asked another guest:

'Seeing this video yesterday [of the beheading of British aid worker David Haines] leads me to believe that if we ever had any doubt about these people posing a threat to the United States, these videos would remove that. Are they a threat to our national security?'

Schieffer concluded:

'Yes, America is wary of war, but when fires break out, we fight them before they spread, not when it is convenient. We have no choice now.'

'Whatever it takes and, as the president said, however long it takes, this evil must be eradicated. These forces must be destroyed.'

FAIR commented with its usual self-re-

"Some officials and terrorism experts believe that the actual danger posed by ISIS has been distorted in hours of television punditry and alarmist statements by politicians"

ISIS AND THE WEST / 3

The lesson seems blindingly clear – the corporate media ‘watchdog’ works seamlessly with the state power it is supposed to hold to account to wage one war after another

straint:

‘When the host of a discussion show says, “We have no choice now,” that doesn’t bode well for the show having a discussion that presents a full range of choices.’

Unsurprisingly, a September 8 poll by CNN found that 75% of Americans support additional bombing raids on ISIS (with 23% opposed). Remarkably, on the eve of the 13th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the perceived threat of ISIS actually rivalled that of al Qaeda in 2003. The CNN/ORC Polls showed that 45% of Americans saw ISIS as a ‘very serious threat to the US,’ while 49% thought the same of al Qaeda 11 years ago.

Jon Soper, the BBC’s North America editor, interpreted this ‘mainstream’ media-inspired hysteria thus:

‘The American people demanded action. Two weeks ago [Obama] said he had no strategy. The American people told him to go and get one... All the American people care about is that the threat is dealt with. And – maybe reluctantly – that is the task the president is now undertaking.’

Media activist John Leach offered an alternative formulation on Twitter:

‘We poured sewage into this hole and Yougov [pollsters] have confirmed that it is indeed mostly full of sewage.’

A glimmer of hope for anyone opposed to Perpetual War is found in the fact that a majority of Americans, 61%-38%, oppose the use of US state militant ground forces in Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS.

In the UK, over half the public (52%) would approve the bombing of ISIS fighters by RAF militants – a dramatic 15-point shift from three weeks prior, when 37% backed the move.

Why should we view public fears and support for war with extreme scepticism? Because we have very recent experiences of state-corporate propaganda successfully deceiving the public in Iraq, Libya and elsewhere. In September 2003, a Time/CNN survey found: ‘Nearly seven in 10 Americans believe it is likely that ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the Sept. 11 attacks.’

The claim was entirely bogus, counter-intuitive and in fact fabricated. The US population had simply been deceived by state-corporate lies.

What these latest events reveal is the truly stunning ability of modern high-tech communications to very quickly influence the public mind. The lesson seems blindingly clear – the corporate media ‘watchdog’ works seamlessly with the state power it is supposed to hold to account to wage one war after another. Exposure of previous lie-based campaigns has little impact – the state-corporate propaganda machine is simply activated to demonise yet another target, to generate more benevolent rationalisations for yet more killing. **CT**

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

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How the brutalised become brutal

We're rightly horrified by the war crimes of our enemies, writes **Chris Hedges**, but are *our* war crimes really any different?

The horrific pictures of the beheading of American reporter James Foley, the images of executions of alleged collaborators in Gaza and the bullet-ridden bodies left behind in Iraq by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are the end of a story, not the beginning. They are the result of years, at times decades, of the random violence, brutal repression and collective humiliation the United States has inflicted on others.

Our terror is delivered to the wretched of the earth with industrial weapons. It is, to us, invisible. We do not stand over the decapitated and eviscerated bodies left behind on city and village streets by our missiles, drones and fighter jets. We do not listen to the wails and shrieks of parents embracing the shattered bodies of their children. We do not see the survivors of air attacks bury their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. We are not conscious of the long night of collective humiliation, repression and powerlessness that characterizes existence in Israel's occupied territories, Iraq and Afghanistan. We do not see the boiling anger that war and injustice turn into a caldron of hate over time. We are not aware of the very natural lust for revenge against those who carry out or symbolize this oppression. We see only the final pyrotechnics of terror, the shocking moment

when the rage erupts into an inchoate fury and the murder of innocents. And, willfully ignorant, we do not understand our own complicity. We self-righteously condemn the killers as subhuman savages who deserve more of the violence that created them. This is a recipe for endless terror.

Chaim Engel, who took part in the uprising at the Nazis' Sobibor death camp in Poland, described what happened when he obtained a knife and confronted a German in an office. The act he carried out was no less brutal than the beheading of Foley or the executions in Gaza. Isolated from the reality he and the other inmates endured at the camp, his act was savage. Set against the backdrop of the extermination camp it was understandable.

"It's not a decision," Engel said. "You just react, instinctively you react to that, and I figured, 'Let us to do, and go and do it.' And I went. I went with the man in the office, and we killed this German. With every jab, I said, 'That is for my father, for my mother, for all these people, all the Jews you killed.'"

Any good cop, like any good reporter, knows that every criminal has a story. No one, except for perhaps a few psychopaths, wakes up wanting to cut off another person's head. Murder and other violent crimes almost always grow out of years of abuse of some kind

We do not listen to the wails and shrieks of parents embracing the shattered bodies of their children. We do not see the survivors of air attacks bury their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters



Browning, like Milgram, illustrates how easily we become killers. This is a painful truth. It is difficult to accept. It forces us to look into the eyes of Foley's executioners and see not monsters but ourselves

suffered by the perpetrator. Even the most “civilized” among us are not immune to dehumanization.

The enemies on the modern battlefield seem elusive because death is usually delivered by industrial weapons such as aerial drones or fighter jets that are impersonal, or by insurgent forces that leave behind roadside bombs or booby traps or carry out hit-and-run ambushes. This elusiveness is the curse of modern warfare. The inability of Sunni fighters in Iraq to strike back at jets and drones has resulted in their striking a captured journalist and Shiite and Kurdish civilians.

US soldiers and Marines in the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Israeli soldiers in assaults on Gaza, have been among those who committed senseless acts of murder. They routinely have gunned down unarmed civilians to revenge killings of members of their units. This is a reaction I saw in several wars. It is not rational. Those murdered were not responsible, even indirectly, for the deaths of their killers' comrades, just as Foley and the Shiites and Kurds executed in Iraq were not responsible for the deaths of Sunni militants hit by the US Air Force.

J. Glenn Gray, who fought in World War II, wrote about the peculiar nature of vengeance in “The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle”:

“When the soldier has lost a comrade to this enemy or possibly had his family destroyed by them through bombings or through political atrocities, so frequently the case in World War II, his anger and resentment deepen into hatred. Then the war for him takes on the character of a vendetta. Until he has himself destroyed as many of the enemy as possible, his lust for vengeance can hardly be appeased. I have known soldiers who were avid to exterminate every last one of the enemy, so fierce was their hatred. Such soldiers took great delight in hearing or reading of mass destruction through bombings. Anyone who has known or been a soldier of this kind is aware of how hatred penetrates

every fiber of his being. His reason for living is to seek revenge; not an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but a tenfold retaliation.”

Those killed are not, to the killers, human beings but representations of what they fear and hate. The veneer of the victim's humanity, they believe, is only a mask for an evil force. The drive for vengeance, for “tenfold retaliation,” among those who are deformed by violence cannot be satiated without rivers of blood – even innocent blood. And Americans do as much of this type of revenge killing as those we fight. Our instruments of war allow us to kill from a distance. We therefore often lack any real consciousness of killing. But this does not make us any less depraved.

Christopher Browning in his book “Ordinary Men” tells of a German reserve police battalion that was recruited to carry out mass executions of Jews in World War II. Browning's book echoed the findings of the psychologist Stanley Milgram, who concluded that “men are led to kill with little difficulty.” Browning, like Milgram, illustrates how easily we become killers. This is a painful truth. It is difficult to accept. It forces us to look into the eyes of Foley's executioners and see not monsters but ourselves.

“Few of us ever know how far fear and violence can transform us into creatures at bay, ready with tooth and claw,” Gray wrote. “If the war taught me anything at all, it convinced me that people are not what they seem or even think themselves to be.”

I am teaching inmates at a supermax prison this summer. We are reading William Shakespeare's “King Lear.” Every student in my classroom was charged with murder, and, though the American judicial system imprisons its share of innocents, it is a safe bet that many if not most in my class have killed. At the same time, once you hear the stories of their lives, the terrifying domestic abuse, the crushing poverty, the cruelty of the streets, including police use of deadly force against unarmed people, the societal and parental abandonment, the frustration at not being

able to live a life of dignity or find a job, the humiliation of being poorly educated – some went into prison illiterate – you begin to understand the power of the institutional racism and oppression that made them angry and finally dangerous.

Marguerite Duras in her book “The War” describes how she and other members of the French Resistance kidnapped and tortured a 50-year-old Frenchman they suspected of collaborating with the Germans. The group allows two of its members who were beaten in Montluc prison at Lyon to strip the alleged informer and repeatedly beat him as onlookers shout: “Bastard. Traitor. Scum.” Blood and mucus soon run from his nose. His eye is damaged. He moans, “Ow, ow, oh, oh. ...” He crumples in a heap on the floor. Duras wrote that he had “become someone without anything in common with other men. And with every minute the difference grows bigger and more established.” She goes on: “Every blow

rings out in the silent room. They’re hitting at all the traitors, at the women who left, at all those who didn’t like what they saw from behind the shutters.” She departs before finding out if he is executed. She and her small resistance band had become Nazis. They acted no differently than Hamas did when it recently executed more than 15 suspected collaborators in Gaza.

Our failure to understand the psychological mechanisms involved means that the brutality we inflict, and that is inflicted upon us, will continue in a deadly and self-defeating cycle in the Middle East as well as within poor urban areas of the United States. To break this cycle we have to examine ourselves and halt the indiscriminate violence that sustains our occupations. But examining ourselves instead of choosing the easy route of nationalist self-exaltation is hard and painful. These killings will stop only when we accept that the killers who should terrify us most are ourselves. **CT**

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Chris Hedges,
a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, writes a regular column for Truthdig every Monday. Hedges’ most recent book, written with Joe Sacco, is “Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt”

HURWITT’S EYE

Mark Hurwitt



Bring back the Fuehrer

Danny Schechter on the cynical way we portray our enemies

Let's recycle a name that is more evil than bin Laden, more memorable than ISIS and one that everyone in England of a certain age, certainly, and the US hates

The ISIS gang makes great enemies. They dress in black, wear Halloween masks, wave flags, and cut off the heads of journalists. Never mind that the Saudis beheaded ten dissidents on the night that Jack Foley became their first victim. We didn't know the Saudi victims and didn't want to embarrass our ally, but chop people we do know, and you are asking for a drone up your keister.

Nothing like a grotesque atrocity to pump up Joe Biden to vow to "chase ISIS to the gates of hell," a war cry designed to get the Christian right behind him since the IS detests Jesus too. Barack Obama's vow to destroy and "degrade" ISIS did not have the same populist appeal. Never mind the role we may have played in training and funding this latest face of Islamic terror; they have managed to do what few maniacs have – unite Iran and the US on the field of battle. Their scary presence has also buried all discussion of the failures of US policy that destroyed Iraq and assisted their emergence.

When you don't understand the culture of countries you invade, it's easy to demonize. And, just in time, since al Qaeda had lost its fear appeal. We needed a new enemy to detest, and, poof, here they are, just in time!

It is a bit trickier giving Putin the same treatment – not just because "the facts" and factions in the Ukraine – including oligarchs, real Nazis, Democrats and demagogues – are harder to de-

fine. And, also because Americans are not that familiar with the country's latest savior, the billionaire "Chocolate king," Petro Poroshenko. Ukraine is a harder conflict to sell. It's complex: you have got the East and the West, a blizzard of languages and minorities, and the fact that it seems clear that Putin has not been calling all the shots even though we want to portray the situation as if he has.

So what to call him? Let's recycle a name that is more evil than bin Laden, more memorable than ISIS and one that everyone in England of a certain age, certainly, and the US hates. How about Hitler? Can we get that monster to goosestep across the world stage one more time? When you say Hitler, you don't have to say much more.



Who can we get to make Vlad seem really bad? How about David Cameron, the British Prime Minister. He will do anything to sound like Churchill and get his puss in the papers. Cameron reached into his little book of historical clichés to compare the mistakes made by the West in Munich in '38 with those being made now. Even the debaters at the Oxford Union would see this parallel as a stretch. Here's how it went down – at first in secret, then as a leak. Reported the *Guardian*: "David Cameron has told European leaders that the west risks making similar mistakes in appeasing Vladimir Putin over Ukraine as Britain and France did

with Adolf Hitler in the run-up to the second world war.

“In a heated debate about the crisis behind closed doors in Brussels on Saturday, the prime minister told an EU summit that Putin had to be stopped from seizing all of Ukraine, according to *La Repubblica*, the Italian newspaper, which obtained details of the confidential discussion.”

Wow, a British politician reviving the despised memory of a dead German leader in an Italian newspaper. “We run the risk of repeating the mistakes made in Munich in ’38. We cannot know what will happen next,” Cameron was reported as warning.

No, he did not make any mention of the US corporations that funded the Nazis, or the fact that it was the Russians, not the Brits, who stopped their blitzkrieg, or, for that matter, all the war criminals who escaped prosecution.

Owen Jones of the *Guardian* was disgusted by what he read in his own paper.

“Here we go again,” he wrote, adding, “The west comparing its latest enemy number to the German Fuhrer has been a standard tactic for decades. When Egypt’s General Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, Britain’s prime minister, Anthony Eden, compared him to Hitler, while Labour’s Hugh Gaitskell opted for a comparison with Benito Mussolini. Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic was the Hitler of the late 1990s, and the US dabbled with describing former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in these terms, too.

“On the eve of the Iraq war, Saddam Hussein was repeatedly compared to Hitler, with Donald Rumsfeld even casting George W Bush in the role of Winston Churchill. The media abounded with such parallels in the build-up to the Iraq disaster, with one *Telegraph* article headlined “Appeasement won’t stop Saddam any more than Hitler” and even suggesting Iraq could bomb Southampton. On either sides of his rapprochement with the west, Libya’s Colonel Gaddafi faced the Hitler treatment, too. In and of themselves, these comparisons are self-evidently ludicrous.”

But, why let historical facts get in the way in a conflict that seems to have real Hitler lovers in

the ranks of Ukraine’s hard-right bully boys, the very people Putin has been denouncing. Talk about twisting reality inside out.

JP Sottle writes that this tactic has spread across the ocean: “when it’s time to fire up the Great American Fear Factory for another “lobbying blitz” and bellicose “product launch”, America’s policymakers conjure up the darkest star of human history. They say “Hitler”. And now, as if on cue, Secretary of State John Kerry said “Hitler“...Evoking Hitler is the foreign policy equivalent of yelling “fire” in a crowded theater.”

How did this all start? Listen to someone who has been paying attention to the details. Former AP reporter, Robert Parry, of *Consortium News* reports facts, not contrived historical comparisons. “The original lie behind Official Washington’s latest ‘group think’ was that Russian President Vladimir Putin instigated the crisis in Ukraine as part of some diabolical scheme to reclaim the territory of the defunct Soviet Union, including Estonia and other Baltic states, writes Parry. “Though not a shred of US intelligence supported this scenario, all the ‘smart people’ of Washington just ‘knew’ it to be true.”

“This is called ‘fixing the facts to buttress your opinion,’ ...the once-acknowledged – though soon forgotten – reality was that the crisis was provoked last year by the European Union proposing an association agreement with Ukraine while US neocons and other hawkish politicians and pundits envisioned using the Ukraine gambit as a way to undermine Putin inside Russia... In other words, from the start, Putin was the target of the Ukraine initiative, not the instigator.”

Jones appealed to the public that’s heard it all before: “Let’s resist the Hitler comparisons, which intend simply to shut down any reasoned discussion, to demonize all those who are not hawks, and to ratchet up tension, “he asks. “Soon enough, though, western leaders will settle on a new enemy number one, and the Hitler comparisons will begin all over again.”

Sure, it’s pathetic, and cynical, but, wink, wink, what’s a little Seig Heiling! among friends?
CT

“The original lie behind Official Washington’s latest ‘group think’ was that Russian President Vladimir Putin instigated the crisis in Ukraine as part of some diabolical scheme to reclaim the territory of the defunct Soviet Union, including Estonia and other Baltic states”

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Danny Schechter blogs at *newsdissector.net* and works on *Mediachannel.org*

Inside the empire of perpetual fear

If we want a society of peace, prosperity and harmony, there's only one solution. And **Jacob G. Hornberger** has it

Older Americans will attest to the great fear that was inculcated into their generations – the fear that the communists, especially the Soviet Union but also Red China, were coming to get them or, even worse, that they were going to unleash a nuclear war against the United States

Lots of Americans are extremely upset about ISIS. They're not sleeping well, and they're pacing the floors. They are convinced that ISIS is coming to get them, drag them from their homes, cart them away to some Arabian desert, and behead them.

There is something important to keep in mind about all this: This is the way of life under an empire, especially one whose foreign policy is based on hundreds of military bases in foreign countries, meddling in the political and economic affairs of other countries, support of and partnerships with foreign dictatorships, foreign aid, invasions, wars of aggression, occupations, kidnappings, torture, and other such things.

Once you realize that chaos, crises, conflicts, tensions, and wars are an inherent part of imperial life, you don't tend to get so upset over the latest crisis. You instead say to yourself: Well, here we go again – another official enemy who is the gravest threat to “national security” in the history of the national-security state apparatus that was grafted onto our governmental system after World War II.

Think about all the official enemies that have scared the dickens out of the American people since the advent of the national-security state.

Older Americans will attest to the great fear that was inculcated into their generations – the fear that the communists, especially the Soviet Union but also Red China, were coming to get them or, even worse, that they were going to unleash a nuclear war against the United States.

Throughout the Cold War, American life was geared to fearing the communists and ferreting them out. The FBI and the CIA in particular did everything they could to discover “subversives” within American society – that is, people who were suspected of being communist moles, infiltrating America with the aim of turning the country Red. That's what the secret FBI campaign against Martin Luther King was all about. It was also what the CIA's secret campaign



against the US Communist Party, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and opponents of the Vietnam War was all about.

It was all driven by fear, which is always the coin of the realm for an empire. If they don't make the people afraid, then people are less likely to go along with the schemes.

When the Cold War finally ended, ironically it was the national-security establishment that became fearful. They feared that Americans might say that since the national-security apparatus, including the enormous military establishment and the CIA,

had come into existence to wage the Cold War, then why not now abolish this apparatus now that the Cold War was over?

After all, most everyone understood that the national-security state apparatus was alien to America's heritage of anti-militarism, anti-imperialism, and nonintervention. That's certainly what President Eisenhower said in his Farewell Address in 1960.

US national-security state officials didn't have to fear long. Almost immediately, Saddam Hussein was made the new official boogeyman. He was the new Hitler. He was going to conquer the world. Even worse, he was going to unleash mushroom clouds over American cities with WMDs.

Ironically, before he was converted into a new official enemy, Saddam had been a partner of the US national-security establishment. In fact, I'll bet that lots of Americans don't know that Saddam got those scary WMDs from the United States and other Western nations, when he was their friend and partner.

But throughout the 1990s, no one thought about the partnership between Saddam and the US government. That was kaput. All that mattered now was that people now had a deep fear of a new official enemy – Saddam Hussein, a fear that gripped their minds for more than decade.

Then came the 9/11 attacks, which were motivated in part by the deaths of Iraqi children from the sanctions. Those attacks were used to garner support for an invasion of Iraq, in large part because people were so fearful of the WMD attacks that US officials told them were coming next.

After Iraq was conquered, the fear of Saddam was replaced by the fear of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, who now supposedly posed a greater threat to the United States than even the communists and Saddam. The 9/11 attacks confirmed that the terrorists were definitely coming to get us and even take control of the federal govern-

ment, including the IRS, DEA, Federal Reserve, and other federal agencies.

Today, people tend to forget the deep fear that they had of al-Qaeda. But it was as great as their fear of ISIS and, for that matter, of the communists and Saddam Hussein.

Today, it's ISIS, a group that is waging a brutal civil war in Syria and Iraq to gain the reins of power in those two countries. Never mind that this group is a direct result of US interventionism in both Iraq and Syria. And never mind that the group has never attacked the United States. What matters is that it is a new official enemy that everyone is supposed to fear. After all, who knows – ISIS might have Saddam's WMDs secretly hidden in some desert or cave in Iraq or Syria.

This is what empire is all about – constant, perpetual fear.

And who is the big winner in all this perpetual chaos, crisis, conflict, war, and fear? You guessed it: the vast military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned us was a grave threat to our nation. With President Obama announcing that his war against ISIS would last three years, the "defense" contractors are assured a continuous, ever-growing flow of US taxpayer dollars into their coffers. And don't think that it's only going to last three years because you can rest assured that a new official enemy will pop up somewhere to justify a perpetual flow of money into the military industrial complex.

Oh, by the way, have you noticed that this same phenomenon of perpetual crisis, chaos, and fear also pervades the war on drugs and the war on immigrants?

You can be fearful and you can pace the floors. But if you want a society of peace, prosperity, and harmony, there is but one solution: Dismantle, don't reform, the vast military empire and national-security state apparatus and end America's foreign policy of intervention. Otherwise, just prepare yourself for a life of perpetual crisis, chaos, war, conflict, and fear.

Who is the big winner in all this perpetual chaos, crisis, conflict, war, and fear? You guessed it: the vast military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned us was a grave threat to our nation

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Jacob G. Hornberger
is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation. He was a trial attorney for twelve years in Texas. In 1987, Mr. Hornberger left the practice of law to become director of programs at the Foundation for Economic Education at <http://fff.org>

CT

If ISIS didn't exist

Despite what our leaders tell us, there's a direct link between George Bush's 'Shock and Awe' to the rise of terror group, writes **Ramzy Baroud**

We are told that ISIS is mostly made of foreign jihadists. This could have much truth to it, but the notion cannot be accepted without much contention

What if the so-called Islamic State (IS) didn't exist? In order to answer this question, one has to liberate the argument from its geopolitical and ideological confines.

Many in the media use the reference "Islamist" to brand any movement at all, whether it is political, militant or even charity-focused. If it is dominated by men with beards or women with headscarves that make references to the Holy Quran and Islam as the motivator behind their ideas, violent tactics, or even good deeds, then the word "Islamist" is the language of choice.

According to this overbearing logic, a Malaysia-based charity can be as "Islamist" as the militant group Boko Haram in Nigeria. When the term "Islamist" was first introduced to the debate on Islam and politics, it carried mostly intellectual connotations. Even some "Islamists" used it in reference to their political thought. Now, it can be moulded to mean many things.

This is not the only convenient term that is being tossed around so deliberately in the discourse pertaining to Islam and politics. Many are already familiar with how the term "terrorism" manifested itself in the myriad of ways that fit any country's national or foreign policy agenda – from the US's George

W Bush to Russia's Vladimir Putin. In fact, some of these leaders accused one another of practising, encouraging or engendering terrorism while positioning themselves as crusaders against terror. The American version of the "war on terror" gained much attention and bad repute because it was highly destructive. But many other governments launched their own wars to various degrees of violent outcomes.

The flexibility of the usage of language very much stands at the heart of this story, including that of ISIS. We are told the group is mostly made of foreign jihadists. This could have much truth to it, but the notion cannot be accepted without much contention.



Why does the government of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad insist on the "foreign jihadists" claim and did so even when the civil war plaguing his country was still at the stage of infancy, teetering between a popular uprising and an armed insurgency? It is for the same reason that Israel insists on infusing the Iranian threat – its supposedly "genocidal" intent towards Israel – in every discussion about the Hamas-led resistance in Palestine, and Hizbullah in Lebanon.

There are ample examples of governments of the Middle East ingraining the "foreign menace" factor when dealing with

solely internal phenomena – violence or otherwise. The logic behind it is simple: if the Syrian civil war is fuelled by foreign fanatics, then Al-Assad can exact his violence against rebelling Syrians in the name of fighting foreigners/jihadists/terrorists.

Netanyahu remains the master of political diversion. He vacillates between peace talks and Iran-backed Palestinian “terror” groups in whatever way he finds suitable. The desired outcome is placing Israel as the victim of – and crusader against – foreign-inspired terrorism. Just days after Israel carried out what was described by many as “genocide” in Gaza (killing over 2,200 and wounding over 11,000), Netanyahu once more tried to shift global attention by claiming that the so-called Islamic State was at the Israeli border.

For the US and its Western allies, the logic behind the war is hardly removed from the war discourse engendered by previous US administrations, most notably that of George W Bush and his father. It is another chapter of the unfinished wars that the US unleashed in Iraq over the last 25 years. In some way, ISIS, with its brutal tactics, is the worst possible manifestation of American interventionism.

In the first Iraq war (1990-91), the US-led coalition seemed determined to achieve the clear goal of driving the Iraqi army out of Kuwait and to use that as a starting point to achieve complete US dominance over the Middle East. Back then, George Bush Sr had feared that pushing beyond that goal could lead to the kind of consequences that would alter the entire region and empower Iran at the expense of America’s Arab allies. Instead of carrying out regime change in Iraq itself, the US opted to subject Iraq to a decade of economic torment – a suffocating blockade that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians. That was the golden age of America’s “containment” policy in the region.

However, US policy in the Middle East, under Bush’s son, George W Bush, was rein-

vigorated by new elements that somewhat altered the political landscape leading to the second Iraq war in 2003. Firstly, the attacks of 11 September 2001 were dubiously used to mislead the public into another war by linking Iraqi president Saddam Hussein to Al-Qaeda; and secondly, there was the rise of the neoconservative political ideology that dominated Washington at the time. The neo-cons strongly believed in the regime change doctrine that has since proven to be a complete failure.

It was not just a failure, but also a calamity. Today’s rise of ISIS, in fact, is a mere bullet point in a tragic Iraq timeline which started the moment George W Bush began his “shock and awe” campaign. This was followed by the fall of Baghdad, the dismantling of the country’s institutions (the de-Baathification of Iraq), and the “missions accomplished” speech. Since then, it has been one adversity after another. US strategy in Iraq was predicated on destroying Iraqi nationalism and replacing it with a dangerous form of sectarianism that used the proverbial “divide and conquer” stratagem.

The US has indeed succeeded in dividing Iraq, may be not territorially but certainly in every other way. Moreover, the war brought Al-Qaeda to Iraq. The group used the atrocities inflicted by the US war and invasion to recruit fighters from Iraq and throughout the Middle East. And like a bull in a china shop, the US wrecked more havoc on Iraq, playing around with sectarian and tribal cards to lower the intensity of the resistance and to busy Iraqis with fighting each other.

When US combat troops allegedly departed Iraq, Al-Qaeda was supposedly weakened. In actuality, on the eve of the US withdrawal, Al-Qaeda had branched off into other militant manifestations. They were able to move with greater agility in the region, and when the Syrian uprising was intentionally-armed by regional and international powers, Al-Qaeda resurfaced with incredible power, fighting with prowess and unparalleled influence. Despite misinfor-

Instead of carrying out regime change in Iraq itself, the US opted to subject Iraq to a decade of economic torment

mation about the roots of ISIS, Al-Qaeda in Iraq and ISIS are the same. Their differences are an internal matter, but their objectives are ultimately identical.

US-Western and Arab motives in the war against ISIS might differ. But both sides have keen interest in partaking in the war and an even keener interest in refusing to accept that such violence is not created in a vacuum. The US and its Western allies refuse to see the obvious link between ISIS, Al-Qaeda and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Arab leaders insist that their countries are also victims of “Islamist” terror, produced not by their own anti-democratic and oppressive policies, but by Chechen and other foreign fighters who are bringing Dark Age violence to otherwise perfectly peaceable and stable political landscapes.

For the US-led coalition, ISIS must exist, although every member of the coalition has their own self-serving reasoning to explain their involvement. And since Islamic State

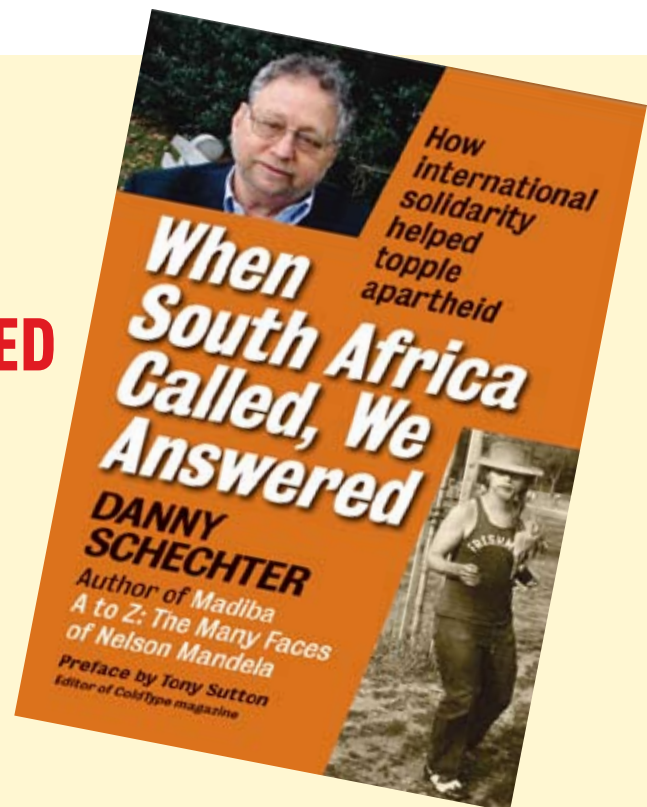
is mostly made of “foreign jihadists” from faraway lands, speaking languages that few Arabs and Westerners understand, then, somehow, no one is guilty, and the current upheaval in the Middle East is someone else’s fault. Thus, there is no need to speak of Syrian massacres or of Iraq wars and its massacres, for the problem is obviously foreign.

If the so-called Islamic State didn’t exist, many in the region would be keen on creating it. **CT**

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Ramzy Baroud is the Managing Editor of *Middle East Eye*. He is an internationally-syndicated columnist, a media consultant, an author and the founder of *PalestineChronicle.com*. His latest book is *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza’s Untold Story* (Pluto Press, London). He is a Ph.D. scholar at the University of Exeter’s European Centre for Palestine Studies (ECPS).
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Israel and the G-word

We need a better word than occupation for Israel's actions in Gaza..
How about genocide? suggests **Jonathan Cook**

Israeli officials were caught in a revealing lie late last month as the country celebrated the Jewish New Year. Shortly after declaring the most popular boy's name in Israel to be "Yosef", the interior ministry was forced to concede that the top slot was actually filled by "Mohammed".

That small deceit coincided with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas' speech at the United Nations. He outraged Israelis by referring to Israel's slaughter of more than 2,100 Palestinians – most of them civilians – in Gaza over the summer as "genocide".

Both incidents served as a reminder of the tremendous power of a single word.

Most Israelis are barely able to contemplate the possibility that their Jewish state could be producing more Mohammeds than Moshes. At the same time, and paradoxically, Israel can point to the sheer number of "Mohammeds" to demonstrate that at worst it is eradicating the visibility of a Muslim name, certainly not its bearers.

As distressing as it is, hundreds of dead in Gaza is far from the industrial-scale murder of the Nazi Holocaust.

But the idea that Israel is committing genocide may not be quite as hyperbolic as is assumed. Last month a "jury" featuring international law experts at a people's court, known as the Russell Tribunal, into Israel's recent attack on Gaza concluded

that Israel was guilty of "incitement to genocide".

The panel argued that Israel's long-term collective punishment of Palestinians seemed to be designed to "inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about the incremental destruction of the Palestinians as a group".

The tribunal's language intentionally echoed that of Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jew and lawyer who after fleeing Nazi Europe succeeded in introducing the term "genocide" into international law.

Lemkin and the UN convention's drafters understood that genocide did not require death camps; it could also be achieved gradually through intentional and systematic abuse and neglect. Their definition raises troubling questions about Israel's treatment of Gaza, aside from military attacks. Does, for example, forcing the enclave's two million inhabitants to depend on aquifers polluted with sea water constitute genocide?

The real problem with Abbas' use of the term – given that it conflicts with popular notions of genocide – is that it made him an easy target for critics. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, accused the Palestinian leader of "incitement". The Israeli left, meanwhile, decried his wild and unhelpful exaggeration.

But the critics themselves have contrib-

Most Israelis are barely able to contemplate the possibility that their Jewish state could be producing more Mohammeds than Moshes

WORD PLAY

The word 'occupation' implies a temporary state of affairs, a transition before normality is restored – precisely the opposite of what is happening in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza

uted more heat than light.

Not only do experts like Richard Falk and John Dugard view Israel's actions in genocide-like terms, but notable Israeli scholars have done so too. The late Baruch Kimmerling invented a word, "politicide", to convey more safely the idea of an Israeli genocide against Palestinians.

Israel has nonetheless successfully ring-fenced itself from the critical lexicon applied to comparable situations around the globe.

In conflicts where a mass expulsion of an ethnic or national group occurs, it is rightly identified as ethnic cleansing. In Israel's case, however, respectable historians still equivocate over the events of 1948, even though more than 80 per cent of Palestinians were forced out by Israel as it established a Jewish state on their homeland.

Similarly with "apartheid". For decades anyone who used the word about Israel was dismissed as an extremist or anti-Semite. Only in the last few years – and chiefly because of former US president Jimmy Carter – has the word gained a tentative foothold.

Even then, its main use is as a warning rather than a description of Israel's behaviour: die-hard adherents of two states aver that Israel is in danger of becoming an apartheid state at some indefinable moment if it does not separate from the Palestinians.

Instead, we are told to suffice with the label "occupation". But that implies a temporary state of affairs, a transition before normality is restored – precisely the opposite of what is happening in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, where the occupation is entrenching, morphing and metastasizing.

Those guarding the critical lexicon strip us of a terminology to convey the appalling reality faced by Palestinians, not just as individuals but as a national group. In truth, Israel's strategy incorporates variants of ethnic cleansing, apartheid and genocide.

Observers, including the European Union, concede that Israel continues with incremental ethnic cleansing – though they prefer the more obscure "forcible transfer" – of Palestinians from so-called Area C, nearly two-thirds of the West Bank, the bulk of any future Palestinian state.

Israel has mastered too a sophisticated apartheid – partly veiled by its avoidance of the more visual aspects of segregation associated with South Africa – that grabs resources, just like its famous cousin, for one ethnic-national group, Jews, at the expense of another, Palestinians.

But unlike South African apartheid, whose fixed legal and institutional systems of separation gradually became torpid and unwieldy, Israel's remains dynamic and responsive. Few observers know, for example, that almost all residential land in Israel is off-limits to Palestinian citizens, enforced through vetting committees recently given sanction by the Israeli courts.

Ad what to make of a plan just disclosed by the Israeli media indicating that Netanyahu and his allies have been secretly plotting to force many Palestinians into Sinai, with the US arm-twisting the Egyptians into agreement? If true, the bombing campaigns of the past six years may be better understood as softening-up operations before a mass expulsion from Gaza.

Such a policy would certainly satisfy Lemkin's definition of genocide.

One day doubtless, a historian will coin a word to describe Israel's unique strategy of incrementally destroying the Palestinian people. Sadly, by then it may be too late to help the Palestinians. **CT**

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.

Israel's war on Gaza is no game

Supporters of Israel hurled slurs at pro-Palestine activists who protested a fundraiser for the Israel Defence Forces at an NBA pre-season game in Brooklyn, writes **Dave Zirin**

When activists arrived at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn to protest a Friends of the Israel Defence Forces (FIDF) fundraiser that was coupled with an exhibition game between the Nets and Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv, the police were waiting with a message of their own. As the night unfolded, this message spoke volumes. Protesters would not be allowed on the expansive plaza that unfolds from the front of the Barclays Center all the way to the Atlantic Yards subway entrance. Instead, they would have to be in a fenced-off pen on the narrow strip of sidewalk to the side of the arena. Yes, an outdoor space built with public funds was deemed a privatized, no-free-speech zone, enforced by armed public employees, otherwise known as the police.

Brooklyn journalist Norman Oder, who's written – and continues to write – a blog about the Atlantic Yards project for almost a decade, explained to me the way it works:

“To the extent there are restrictions on activity at the plaza – the Daily News Plaza, to be precise, given the newspaper's sponsorship – we must remember it's not quite a public space, despite the significant public support – direct subsidies, tax breaks, eminent domain, override of zoning and giveaway of naming rights – for the Barclays Center.”

(In an attendant irony, I was told at one

point by arena security that reporters couldn't talk to people in the “Daily News Plaza”.)

I asked one police officer to distinguish between “open space” and “private space” for freedom of assembly. He said: “This plaza is private land owned by Barclays. If a demonstration happens here, it's because Barclays says a demonstration can happen here.”

That's what made what then unfolded all the more bizarre. While 200 people marched around the tightly constricted pen with signs that read, “Don't play with apartheid” and “This Jew says no to Gaza slaughter,” counterdemonstrators gathered on the private, open-space plaza. All male, mostly young and carrying Israeli flags, they showered the demonstrators with profanity. Many not holding a flag held phones up with one hand, videotaping the protesters, and raised a middle finger with the other. When I attempted to interview one young man, he said, “Fuck them, fuck your questions and fuck you. Get the fuck away from me before I bury you.” I asked how he wanted to be identified. He said, “My name is ‘fuck you.’”

NOT SEEING much opportunity for discussion on this side of the barricades, I asked several police why this counterdemonstration was permitted on what I thought was private land. Did Barclays clear this? Most wouldn't answer, although one more loquacious officer said to me: “That's above my

I asked one police officer to distinguish between “open space” and “private space” for freedom of assembly

BAD SPORTS

“There is a fundraiser going on right now in an NBA arena for an army that is being investigated for war crimes. How can the NBA be okay with this?”

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Dave Zirin is the coauthor, with John Carlos, of “The John Carlos Story”, and author of “Brazil’s Dance with the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics and the Fight for Democracy”, “Bad Sports: How Owners Are Ruining the Games We Love” and “A People’s History of Sports in the United States, as well as the collection of essays “Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics and Promise of Sports”. This article first appeared at <http://thenation.com>

pay grade. Maybe if you raise taxes here and increase my salary, I’ll have an answer.” (I am waiting for comment from the Barclays Center about whether this counterdemonstration received any kind of official approval.)

As for the protesters, their presence was animated by the summer’s ongoing war on Gaza. I asked Pam Sporn from Jewish Voice for Peace what she would say to those who would deem a sporting event an inappropriate place for a protest. She said:

“One of the most horrifying images from Israel’s Gaza onslaught was the death of the four boys playing soccer on the beach. Their names are Mohamed Ramez Bakr, 11 years old, Ahed Atef Bakr and Zakaria Ahed Bakr, both 10, and Ismael Mohamed Bakr, 9. I say their names because Palestinians are so dehumanized that their deaths don’t even register to much of this country. I’m here tonight because you cannot use a basketball game to honor an army that killed those boys. It is morally bankrupt. Jews and non-Jews have an obligation to speak out.”

Mindy Gershon of the organization Adalah-NY then commented, “If you believe that we need a boycott, divestment and sanctions movement to hold Israel accountable, then we need to be here when basketball teams come to play.” Gershon then looked over at the counterdemonstrators and said, “We have to hold a mirror to the faces of people who don’t believe Palestinians are human beings.”

I also spoke to Nets season-ticket holder Ahmed Eltouny, who showed up wearing a custom-made Brooklyn Nets jersey with the number 48, the year of the creation of the Israeli state, and the word Palestine along the back. Eltouny said:

“When I first found out this game was happening weeks ago, it left a bad taste in my mouth, and I planned on being out here. When you stage a game like this, it normalizes relations with a country that habitually ignores the United Nations and any external authority on their actions. There is a fundraiser going on right now in an NBA arena for an army that is being investigated for

war crimes. How can the NBA be okay with this?”

NOT ALL the protesting took place outside the arena. People from the organizations NYC Solidarity with Palestine and Direct Action Front for Palestine unfurled a banner in the stands during the second quarter that read, “We Are Brooklyn. Don’t Play with Apartheid #BDS.” One of the participants, Amin Husain, said to me afterward, “Fans were aggressive. They snatched the banner. Security tried to escort us out, but we evaded them. Others in our group then took out a Palestinian flag and were assaulted by fans. We escaped the assaults but made it outside. We told police what happened, but they did not do anything. “While this was happening inside, I was also able to speak with local resident and Nets fan Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, who stopped by with his two small children and surveyed the scene. “This should be a community space,” he said to me. “Brooklyn is a close-knit community. I’m upset that the divisive vibe carried by FIDF would be brought into the place we call home.”

One Israeli counterdemonstrator named Eli, who was pointedly not using profanity or slurs, criticized the Palestinian protesters and said to me, “Why don’t they protest the deaths in Syria or the human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia or ISIS? But they have every right to be here. In the U.S. as well as Israel, you can protest and be heard, not so much in these other places.” He then looked over at the cursing young men on his side of the barricades and said, “That look doesn’t go so well with my message to you.”

Also surveying the counterdemonstrators from inside the barricades was Arya Shirazi of Queens. Shirazi said to me, “When I see all that anger and that kind of behavior from those supporting FIDF, Maccabi Tel Aviv and Israel’s actions, and then I look at us, it’s heartening. Look at us. We are racially and ethnically diverse. We are young and old. We are the people, and that’s why we are going to see a free Palestine.” **CT**

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THE REVOLUTION IS BEING TELEVISED

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LOST IN AMERICA: ESSAYS BY LINH DINH & PETER VAN BUREN

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Striking a light for workers' rights

Mark Metcalf reviews *The Bryant and May Matchwomen And Their Place In History*, by Louise Raw

Within a few years it was well known that phosphorus poisoning affected workers in match manufacturing

This book demonstrates that the 1888 strike by 1,400 matchwomen and girls at Bryant and May should rank with the similarly successful strikes by gasworkers and dockers the following year in changing forever the face of British trade unionism, which until then had tended to be craft unions only. Now, unskilled and poorly paid workers had the confidence to organise themselves and engage in collective action. Trade union membership doubled to over 1.5 million by 1892 and rose to over two million in 1899.

The women, who were employed at a factory on Fairfield Road in East London, were poorly paid. Average pay was around 8 shillings (40p) a week with some earning less than 5 shillings. This was for a seven-day working week that started at 6.30am in the summer and 8am in the winter and which ran till 6pm with half an hour off for breakfast and an hour for lunch. Half a day's pay was lost if they were late for work and there were also a series of illegal fines and deductions for materials such as glue and brushes. Many workers were confused about how their

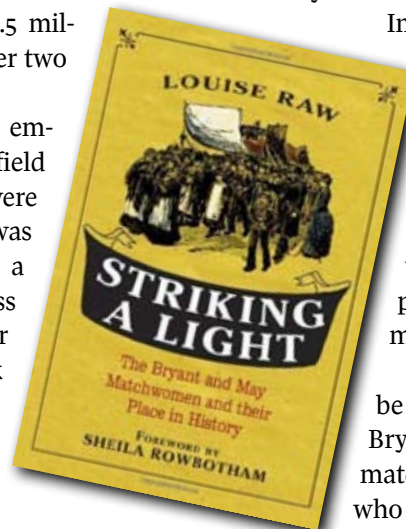
wages were calculated. They were also badly bullied by domineering foremen some of whom were not averse to handing out physical punishment.

Matches were essential in Victorian homes for lighting candles or gaslights and where coal fires provided heat and hot water. Although portable devices to produce a flame had existed for centuries it was the discovery of phosphorus in 1669 that paved the way for mass production of matches.

In 1831, the introduction of white phosphorus by French chemist Charles Sauria made matches much easier to strike by increasing their toxicity. Within a few years it was well known that phosphorus poisoning affected workers in match manufacturing.

Safer alternatives were to be ignored for decades with Bryant and May, the largest match manufacturer in the UK, who persuaded the government to veto the proposed banning of white phosphorus internationally.

Workers at Bryant and May were forced to take their meal breaks at their workstations, thus increasing the risk of contracting



STRIKING A LIGHT
The Bryant and May
Matchwomen and
Their Place in History
Louise Raw
Bloomsbury.
£11.89

‘phossy jaw’ in which the jawbone rotted, producing evil-smelling pus that made it almost impossible for anyone to remain in the sufferer’s presence. Death, often very painful, was not uncommon. Bryant and May failed to report illnesses and fatalities and sacked any worker exhibiting any symptoms.

Bryant and May became a limited company in 1884 and they expanded overseas and bought out the smaller matchmaking companies in Britain, with their dominant position allowing the company to force down wages in the industry.

Workers at the factory took strike action to try and raise wages and improve factory safety with walkouts in 1881, 1885 and 1886. With no union organisation or funds these failed but demonstrated workers were aware of the need to collectively fight for their rights. This was also demonstrated by matchwomen throwing red paint over a statue of Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone that had been erected by Theodore Bryant who illegally deducted a shilling from their wage packets to help pay for it.

Bryant and May’s shares had more than tripled in value since they were issued in 1884, leaping from £5 to over £18. Twenty per cent dividends were standard and amongst those to benefit were a number of prominent clergymen and Liberal politicians.

On 15 June 1888, after Henry Champion had drawn attention to low wages at the company, members of the Fabian Society resolved not to use any matches made by Bryant and May and called on others to boycott the firm. Annie Besant was keen to investigate further and swiftly visited Fairfield Road where she – and possibly other Fabians who accompanied her – approached a small number of women as they left work to get accounts of their working conditions. They confirmed what Champion had said and she wrote an article for the *Link* that was published on 23 June.

By heading her work ‘White Slavery in London’ Besant made the point that it

would cost Bryant and May much more to look after a slave than it paid in wages to its workers. The article did not, however, call for strike action, which, in general, Besant disapproved of during her life.

For well over a hundred years it has been assumed that Besant was the leader of the strike – with few historians questioning whether well over one thousand very poorly paid workers really would go without pay under the leadership of a middle class woman they hardly knew – Louise Raw very capably demonstrates this was not the case. The key to this was a re-examination of Besant’s own writings and the newspapers of the day along with Raw’s finding and interviewing grandchildren of some of the strike leaders. Besant’s role in the strike was important but she was not its leader and to suggest so has meant the inspiring story of the matchwomen’s courage has remain hidden whilst the ability of working class people to successfully organise collectively in defence of their needs has been underplayed

Besant’s article did though push the company on to the defensive and after denying all the charges Bryant and May sought to discover who had spoken with Besant. To ensure there were no such further attempts to exercise free speech workers were asked to sign forms stating they would remain silent about their working conditions.

Exactly how many refused to sign is not known but on 2 or 3 July, 1888, at least one woman and possibly two more were dismissed. The company denied this had anything to do with any failure by a worker to sign the distributed forms and they cited a lack of trade and some disciplinary problems for the sackings. None of the remaining female workers believed this and, suspecting foul play, they downed tools and marched out of the factory. The small number of male workers who mostly worked as dippers joined them.

Ignoring company reinstatement offers, the women widened their demands to include other conditions, including the end-

Bryant and May failed to report illnesses and fatalities and sacked any worker exhibiting any symptoms.

BOOK REVIEW

Newspaper coverage of the strike was intensified and for the first time it was reported that embarrassed shareholders were pressuring management to come to a compromise with those refusing to work

ing of illegal deductions. The women immediately organised an effective, noisy picket line and felt confident enough to send a deputation of six matchwomen to meet company directors. When the discussions were not to their satisfaction they resumed their strike.

On 6 July, 100 strikers marched to the offices of Besant near Fleet Street and where three of them informed her of developments and asked for her assistance. The following day, Besant wrote a further article for the *Link* in which she expressed her dismay at the action the women had taken but continued to call for a boycott of Bryant and May's products.

On 11 July, a friend of Besant's, Charles Bradlaugh MP raised questions in Parliament and a deputation of 56 women who marched there to meet him brought parts of central London to a standstill as onlookers stared at the appearance of so many poor people. Newspaper coverage of the strike was intensified and for the first time it was reported that embarrassed shareholders were pressuring management at Bryant and May to come to a compromise with those refusing to work. The *Star* and *Pall Mall Gazette* began collecting donations from its readers and on 14 July the first strike pay was distributed. It was also reported that the women themselves had been collecting funds across East London.

On 16 July, 1888, the company's directors met with a deputation of matchwomen and two days later the company ceded to all the strikers' demands. These included abolition of all fines, ending deductions for paints and brushes, all grievances to be taken straight to the managing director without the intervention of the foremen, the provision of a breakfast room to allow for meals to be eaten away from work stations and the formation of a union so that any future disputes could be officially laid before the company. The Union of Women Matchworkers, which was then the largest union of women and girls in the country, was formed, with Be-

sant taking the role of secretary for the next few years. One of her first engagements was to speak to 5,000 Tilbury Dockers who in October 1888 unsuccessfully took strike action over a pay increase.

The *Star* newspaper had no doubt about the importance of the outcome: "The victory of the girls.....is complete. It was won without preparation – without organization – without funds.....a turning point in the history of our industrial development"

Even in 1923 every person at the Fairfield Works was believed to be a trade unionist.

The victory by the matchwomen would undoubtedly have raised morale amongst working people in East London. The factory on Fairfield Road was less than two miles from where the 1889 Dock Strike began. Strikers and dockworkers lived cheek by jowl; many were related to each other, including plenty with Irish backgrounds, whilst there are also strong indications that amongst both sets of workers there were some with a strong interest in radical politics.

Leaders of the 1889 Great Dock Strike, including Tom Mann, Ben Tillett and John Burns, regularly made reference to the matchwomen as they recognised that what had been achieved demonstrated that the previously unorganised could combine and win improvements in pay and working conditions. The dockers were to prove this was now a fact of life with a famous victory that further threw open trade unionism to all workers whatever their skills.

Louise Raw must be congratulated for her persistence over many years to try and discover what really happened at Bryant and May in 1888 as she has produced a book of vital importance. **CT**

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Mark Metcalf is the co-author with Martin Jenkinson and Mark Harvey of "Images Of The Past: The Miners' Strike" –

<http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Images-of-the-Past-The-Miners-Strike-Paperback/>
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Waging war versus keeping the police

Michael I. Niman explains why the militarization of the US police force is not a good thing for the country or its people

One hot muggy summer day a few years back I was walking with a friend across a public university campus when the friend took note of a pair of police officers sporting bullet-proof vests and “high and tight” military style hairdos while patrolling the empty campus.

The friend wanted to know what was up? “That’s just how they dress,” I responded. There were no precipitating incidents. No tactical threat. The friend’s concern, however, reminded me that this really was sort of inappropriate dress for a community police force patrolling what has historically been a peaceful tranquil community.

So I asked a veteran of the force, what was up? “It’s the young guys,” he responded. “They’ve got a whole different style.” He went on to describe new aggro police culture among young recruits, many of whom are recently back from overseas combat.

This police agency, like most, allowed a bit of leeway in their uniform regulations. Officers had a choice to gear up with Kevlar vests, even in the absence of any threat, despite the implied threat, on many levels, that such dress visually communicates to the public.

“Why are the police here so scared?” “Who’s gonna be shooting who?” Or simply, as my friend put it, “What’s up with the combat costume?”

These officers, I learned, regularly wear such attire to meetings with dormitory residents and student leaders, as if they were expecting incoming fire from random students. The military haircuts were just an extension of the look. And they were also allowed, though beards were and are banned as somehow projecting the wrong message, as was male hair that strays over the ear line.

Creeping militarization

Many of us, especially in the alternative press, having been talking about the creeping militarization of our police forces, at least since the Reagan administration. I remember back in the late 1980s when the Broadway Area Business Association in Buffalo asked the local police to stop parking their new to them full track armored personnel carrier in front of one of their precincts as it, like the aforementioned vests and hairdos, projected the wrong message to the community.

The tank-like vehicle in question, which tore apart the street the one and only time the police unnecessarily deployed it in a drug bust, was a gift from the Reagan administration, on the cusp of the same program that eventually gave us the obscene military equipment display we’ve seen this year in Ferguson, Missouri, and last year at about a dozen Occupy camps, for example.

Police officers had a choice to gear up with Kevlar vests, even in the absence of any threat, despite the implied threat, on many levels, that such dress visually communicates to the public

MILITARY POLICE

What we saw in Ferguson wasn't just the deployment of inappropriate technology – it was also the deployment of an inappropriate attitude and strategy

What made Ferguson a historical punctuation mark was the fact that the Ferguson Police Department's deployment of military force and aggression was so remarkably stupid and grotesque, while being so similar to visuals we were seeing on the news from warzones in places like the Ukraine, Gaza, Iraq and Syria, that the mainstream press actually began to cover domestic police militarization. Now, maybe 30 years later than it should have been, the nation is finally discussing the brutal police tactics that communities of color and nonviolent political activists have been falling victim to for decades.

So far, the reporting has been focusing on the military equipment rather than the military culture. This is to be expected from a techno-fetishistic media culture that has for decades covered American wars in much the same way, marveling at the so-called smart weapons while mostly ignoring the casualties and hatred they create. But what we saw in Ferguson wasn't just the deployment of inappropriate technology – it was also the deployment of an inappropriate attitude and strategy, one more becoming to an occupation army than a community police force.

And that's the problem with this myopic focus on military equipment. It ignores the military mentality that issues orders to deploy it. The military weapons actually serve a purpose here, creating the visuals that illuminate the militarization that would be going on with or without the military equipment. At the risk of sounding like the National Rifle Association, that's the bigger problem. The human factor that actually called the shots to roll out a military occupation. The toys could have stayed in the garage and rotted.

Looking at the human factor, however, is politically much more dangerous – because it means we have to question the way police officers are recruited and hired. A police officer is essentially a social worker with a gun.

Beyond accident and medical response calls, most calls are of a social nature, often defusing a social crisis, be it in the way of a robbery, a gang turf war or a marital dispute.

Some police departments require college training in areas such as psychology, criminal justice or public administration. Criminal justice courses are usually administered by sociology departments since policing is a social function of society. A social work degree and experience would be ideal. The arms and martial arts training usually comes once a candidate is recruited. To hit the streets the successful officer needs both. Seasoned police officers often point out that a good mediator could avoid using force in all but extreme cases.

Put simply, you can't successfully address social problems with brute military force. Historically such strategies, while maintaining despots in power for the short term, ultimately have seeded revolutions, for better or worse. Syria is the latest horrific example.

Recruiting warriors

Much of our current police recruiting, however, is now geared to recruiting warriors over social workers. Let's look at the Philadelphia Police Department. I start with them since they executed the most grotesque use of military power in modern history – and they did it without the modern military toys we saw in Ferguson. In an attempt to end a 1985 SWAT standoff with armed suspects, they dropped a crude incendiary bomb from a helicopter onto a row house in a black middle-class neighborhood, destroying approximately 60 neighboring homes. So, almost 30 years later, how have they changed?

It's a pretty safe bet that they won't be bombing any neighborhoods soon, seeing the inefficacy of their tactic. But a military culture still dominates the department. In their recruiting material, they state, "The Police Department is structured as a para-

military organization,” going on to explain, “This means that we employ a culture and protocols that closely approximate those of the armed forces.”

This language is certainly not unique to the Philadelphia Police department. In various forms it’s echoed across the country. On the left coast, the San Jose Police department describes itself as “having a paramilitary structure.”

Departments in between and south to Mexico post variants on the same language. San Jose is correct. The organization of any police department is correctly described as paramilitary as it has rank and officers, a ridged chain of command and uniforms reflecting rank. This is not where the problem lies.

The problem lies when the Philadelphia and San Jose Police Departments, and to various degrees, hundreds of others, go on to explain that because they are paramilitaries, they have found that veterans can transition easily from active military duty into their departments, with many, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, actively sending recruiters to military bases around the world recruiting active duty soldiers from warzones to the streets of L.A.

Military preference

Many, if not most, police departments offer some sort of military preference in hiring, either by adding points to civil service scores, or in fewer cases, waiving educational requirements, or some combination of the two.

I need to be clear that veterans have a lot to offer. Understanding a military command structure does help with understanding a police bureaucracy, and more importantly, the discipline and restraint that a successful professional soldier learns and practices are essential to success as a police officer.

But it is also important to understand that the skillset and experience needed for successful policing is extremely different than that which combat veterans ac-

quire deployed as an occupation force in a military theater of operation surrounded by well trained and equipped enemies sworn to their destruction.

It is essential to remember that community policing is a radically different job, and while it requires a military level of discipline, it also requires a radically different skillset, which prospective police officers must possess if they are to be successful in not acting like an occupation army. Waging war and keeping the peace are different jobs and require different skills.

The blogosphere has become alive with many veterans articulating their disgust with the paramilitary tactics we’ve seen in Ferguson. Writing for *Business Insider*, former Marine and Afghanistan combat veteran Paul Szoldra, points out that his unit wore less military equipment when it rolled in Afghanistan than what he was seeing in Ferguson.

In his article he cites various combat veterans voicing their disgust at the militarization of a community police force while pointing out how militarization is “counter-productive to domestic policing and has to stop.” Szoldra ends his piece, writing, “If there’s one thing I learned in Afghanistan, it’s this: You can’t win a person’s heart and mind when you are pointing a rifle at his or her chest.”

Veterans tend to be excellent students, and veterans benefits often offer veterans the opportunity to go to school and acquire community policing skills. Fast tracking warriors from battlefield to police service, as many departments are doing, however, can be a deadly mistake. Hiring yahoos with military aspirations and no training is an even bigger mistake. **CT**

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Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism and media studies at SUNY Buffalo State. His previous columns are at artvoice.com, archived at www.mediastudy.com, and available globally through syndication.

Fast tracking warriors from battlefield to police service, as many departments are doing, however, can be a deadly mistake

The perfect storm that spread Ebola

Trevor Grundy tells how corruption, civil war and superstition created a perfect storm that led to the spread of Ebola, now acknowledged as perhaps the greatest threat to Africa and the rest of the world

The Standard Bank said that 60 million African householders enjoyed annual incomes greater than \$3,000 and that by 2015 that number would reach 100 million

It has shown its deadly face across West Africa. It has appeared from behind normally safe medical curtains in America and Spain. It now threatens the world – Ebola. As the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva warns that as many as 1.4 million people could carry the virus in three months' time, top scientists say it's not beyond the bounds of possibility that Ebola could mutate and go airborne. What then for Africa's failed states less than a year after we were encouraged by the mega-rich to see the largely impoverished continent as the next great field for quick profit while showing next to no concern about the health and welfare of those who provide the wealth?

On May 13, 2000, a celebrated cover of the *Economist* magazine showed a map of Africa framing a young man carrying an assault rifle. The headline read 'The Hopeless Continent.' Thirteen years later, in February 2013, the same magazine attracted 180 delegates to a London hotel to boost investment in what was billed as the world's most promising continent – Mineral Rich Africa.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia spoke of her belief that Africa was on target to reach the 2015 UN Millennium Development goals, thanks to unfaltering growth following the continent's divorce from socialism and its leaders' new love affair with Wall Street-style capitalism.

We were bombarded with 'vital statistics' about a continent that had so recently been called 'dark' and 'the world's hungriest.'

The Standard Bank said that 60 million African householders enjoyed annual incomes greater than \$3,000 and that by 2015 that number would reach 100 million, thereby equating to a middle class consumer market close to that of India.

Steven Jenkins, CEO of Renaissance Capital, said in an interview with the London-based *Global* magazine: "Remove Africa from the global equation today and look upon a landscape of broken and ruined economies."

He predicted that by 2050, Africa's GDP would equal that of America and the European Union combined.

Anver Versi, editor of *African Business* and *African Banker* joined in the chorus of praise about Africa's potential, saying, "Growth follows youth, both in terms of productivity and consumption and Africa's population, unencumbered by the need to provide for an ageing, unproductive population, will have greater surplus income and energy, to push growth charts further."

The message was even beamed to football fans.

Sunderland players in run-down north east England trotted onto the pitch at the Stadium of Light. to the sound of the club's theme tune - Richard Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries. Their red and white striped shirts



The BBC's Humphrey Hawksley, wrote about the appalling contradictions of having eastern Congo generating billions of dollars of wealth every year while the region remains one of the poorest and most unstable places on earth

Behind closed doors in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Women and children are told to shut their doors and stay indoors a disease that could be carried by 1.4 million people by January 2015 sweeps parts of West Africa and now threatens the whole world.

PHOTO: TREVOR GRUNDY

had “Invest in Africa” printed on them.

With a population of one billion and average age of 20 years (compared to 40 in the developing world) Africa was the place to invest, so we were told by those in the financial know.

The continent has 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land and 30 percent of its minerals. In recent years, multinationals have found significant deposits of oil and gas. Between 2001 and 2010, six of the fastest growing economies in the world were in Africa.

Mark Moibus, an emerging markets specialist at Templeton Africa Fund, said Africa was growing at a rate of six percent a year.

Versi told us how the continent will change: “Urbanisation is a vital component in wealth creation as it tends to flatten out ethnic and regional differences, generates productive ideas and new skills, vastly increases demand (and supply) of goods and

services and produces greater efficiencies of scale and productivity. UN Habitat estimates that eleven African cities will see population growth rates of 50 percent from 2010-2025, a rate similar to that prevailing in China today.”

Not everyone was quite as dreamy-eyed.

The BBC's Humphrey Hawksley, wrote about the appalling contradictions of having eastern Congo generating billions of dollars of wealth every year while the region remains one of the poorest and most unstable places on earth.

In *Global* he wrote: “If we also take into account the use of child labour, poor safety conditions and low incomes, the emerging picture verifies the long-standing allegations of Western economies exploiting poor communities in the developing world. The price of gold has gone up five times over the past ten years, whereas the miners' wages have gone down.”

AFRICA'S NIGHTMARE

"It's a perfect storm because what you see is a combination of a virus that is hiding somewhere in the forests – probably it's bats but we don't know that for sure – and where there is a growing population and more and more people are exposed"

Hawksley stood at a noticeable angle to the rest of the continent's observers.

Weary of war, corruption, mismanagement on a gigantic scale and broken health and other social promises, was this not the right time to blow the trumpet of optimism?

Kenya-based journalist Aiden Hartley thought so.

He made his name covering the Rwandan genocide twenty years ago. It was a 100-day massacre that saw the slaughter of a million men, women and children. It attracted little attention at the time because Nelson Mandela was coming to power in South Africa and the world's media high-flyers were in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town writing poetry about the ANC.

After a return trip to the heart of darkness in 1994, Hartley wrote in the *Spectator*: "I finally returned to Rwanda to do business, not to cover a war. For decades I've worked as a hack and lived off the whiff of an oily rag. Along the way, I've picked up disease, an alcohol problem, debts, but I've also found myself in the trenches with interesting people. They fought to overturn dictatorships and to introduce a degree of democracy in Africa and become the leaders of their countries. I never thought of using my contacts. For far too long I wandered about getting hit by IEDs, shot at, infected with dysentery, and forced to doorstep officials or listen to foreign NGO idiots in their 20s talking nonsense about Africa. No more. Forget it. It's over. It's time to join the gravy train."

Sadly, the gravy train has just fallen over the cliff.

Millions of words have been written over the last few weeks about the outbreak of Ebola in three West African countries – Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea giving electric meaning to British prime minister David Cameron's economic mantra, We're all in this together.

It is the 25th year since the virus was co-discovered in Zaire in 1976 by Professor Peter Piot, the Director of the London School of

Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

"It's the 25th but the most deadly so far," he said in an interview in which he targeted poverty, the neglect of basic medical services, a lack of respect for authority and the behavior of African cultural and religious traditionalists as providing the "perfect storm" for the spread of the virus.

"It's a perfect storm because what you see is a combination of a virus that is hiding somewhere in the forests – probably it's bats but we don't know that for sure – and where there is a growing population and more and more people are exposed to what's going on in forests, decades of civil war, corrupt regimes which all mean that there's no trust in the authorities plus a completely dysfunctional health service."

Adds a World Health Organisation spokesman in Geneva: "This is the most severe, most acute health emergency in modern times."

At the time of writing, Ebola has claimed over 4,000 lives in West Africa and there have been cases of it appearing in the US, Spain, Nigeria and Zaire.

In an interview with the BBC on October 9, Dr Chris Dye, Director of Strategy for the WHO, told an astonished interviewer that his organisation knew about the outbreak of Ebola in Guinea nine months ago. "We've known about this outbreak for nine months but until round about June or July it was a very small outbreak – relatively few cases – and not dissimilar from previous outbreaks we've seen in central and equatorial Africa."

Asked if he was confident that the international community is doing what's needed to bring the epidemic under control, Dye said, "Yes, I'm confident."

He detailed what's needed most urgently - \$1 bn of which (in the middle of October) \$300m had been raised with another \$150m pledged. Plus 4,000 beds, a quarter of which had been supplied. He said that in mid-October, 10,000 Ebola cases had been reported. Dye predicted another 10,000 during the course of this outbreak.

“It will spread across the world, won’t it?” he was asked.

He replied: “To some extent it will spread with so much travel. There is bound to be the escape of infection to other points of the world and we’ve seen that clearly in the last few days.”

Many countries, including the US and UK have begun a screening process at airports and other terminals.

Towards the end of the interview, the BBC raised a question that is of world concern – the possibility of the Ebola virus mutating and becoming airborne.

Said Dye: “That is purely speculative at the moment and there is no scientific basis for thinking that will happen but we’re ready for surprises because we don’t quite know what’s going to happen, nobody knows that. We have to be extremely vigilant.”

Belgian-born Dr Peter Piot was 27 years old when he co-discovered the virus. While at medical school in Ghent, his professors told him that there was no future specialising in infectious diseases because of the widespread availability of antibiotics and vaccines.

“One day,” he said, “we got a thermol with some vials with blood from a dead nun in a country then called Zaire and it was from someone who had died from what was thought to be yellow fever”. From that vial, he and his colleagues isolated the Ebola virus.

Like so many other world-class scientists and researchers, Piot was taken by surprise by the large scale of the current outbreak. The American, British, Cuban and Canadian governments are also shocked at the appalling neglect of basic health services throughout West Africa.

Dr Piot says that part of what is fuelling the latest and most lethal Ebola tsunami is the behavior of mourners at funerals.

Relatives and mourners travel sometimes hundreds of miles to attend funerals believing that the point of a person’s life is to be-



come an ancestor and those traditional rites are needed to ensure the spirit of the dead pass into another world without undue delay or disturbance.

“There are,” explained Piot, “strong beliefs and traditional funeral rites which require that the whole family touches the dead body and often relatives and friends have a meal in the presence of the dead body.”

Christian churches are responding well. Some have closed to stop people meeting at the same time and place, and the normal communion service has been changed so that a cup containing wine is not handed around – from mouth to mouth.

But African leaders appear powerless to do anything other than talk to Westerners and plead for help. Hospitals and clinics in West Africa –and in most other parts of Africa – are mockeries of their former selves, run to ruin by leaders more interested in filling their Swiss bank accounts than filling medi-

Peter Piot (second from left) on 20 October 1976 the day of his arrival in Yambuku to investigate the first Ebola outbreak, together with fellow scientists And local health workers.

PHOTO: JOEL BREMAN

AFRICA'S NIGHTMARE

Ebola did not figure in the list of 17 neglected tropical diseases drawn up by the WHO two years ago that afflict more than one billion people

cal centres with trained doctors and nurses.

President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone said at an Ebola forum in Atlanta that his people are dying. He said they desperately need the rest of the world to send millions of dollars, hundreds of doctors and thousands of nurses to West Africa as a region confronts a tragedy “unforeseen in modern times.”

World Bank president Jim Yong Kim said that the entire African continent could be decimated if the international community did not respond more aggressively. “Unless we quickly contain and stop the Ebola epidemic nothing less than the future of not only West Africa but perhaps even Africa is at stake.”

The World Bank head estimates that the crisis could result in \$32.6 bn of lost economic growth by the end of 2015, an impact he called “potentially catastrophic.”

There is no known cure for the disease that first appeared almost 40 years ago in Africa. But three vaccine trials are underway and some experimental drugs have been used.

A report in the *Independent* on October 10, headlined ‘What price a miracle cure?’, quoted the head of GlaxoSmith Kline’s Ebola vaccine programme as saying that he has “no concerns so far” as the British drugs giant tested the experimental treatment on its first African volunteer.

Dr Ripley Ballou is overseeing the accelerated phase 1 trials that started a month ago in the US and UK for a drug that could deal with the Ebola outbreak.

He said: “Everything we have seen so far is not concerning.”

His upbeat message came as news reports told us that the authorities in West Africa had ordered everyone to stay indoors for three days to help isolate the virus, and a Norwegian woman infected with the virus in Sierra Leone was reported given the last remaining dose of the experimental drug ZMapp.

The first Britain to contract Ebola, Will Pooley, recovered after receiving ZMapp, but the drug’s American manufacturer warned

that it would take months to replenish supplies.

The same report in the *Independent* said that if GSK’s tests go according to plan, the firm and its partners could produce more than 10,000 vaccines by early next year.

Commented Mohga Kamal-Yanni, Ox-fam’s senior health-policy adviser, “But it is neither ethical nor sustainable to leave decisions and financing for research and development to be dictated by the commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies. They will continue producing the medicines that can make the highest profits rather than the therapies that are desperately needed for public health.”

The paper’s report continued, “Drug firms don’t shy from the fact that they must aim to make a commercial return on their expensive research. They might be guilty of spending more money on finding cures for first-world ailments such as cancer and heart disease, or on lifestyle drugs such as Viagra but the truth is that even the experts did not put Ebola high on their list of priorities until this latest outbreak . . .”

Dr Ballou said, “Until this outbreak, Ebola was a rare disease occurring in small instances and burning itself out. In retrospect we should have jumped on this a little bit quicker. We are definitely behind the eight ball right now.”

Ebola did not figure in the list of 17 neglected tropical diseases drawn up by the WHO two years ago that afflict more than one billion people.

In 1976 when Piot co-discovered the virus in Zaire there were fewer than 500 deaths and no deaths recorded in 22 of the past 38 years. In Africa, tuberculosis and the complications of HIV claim many more lives than those claimed by Ebola . . . until now.

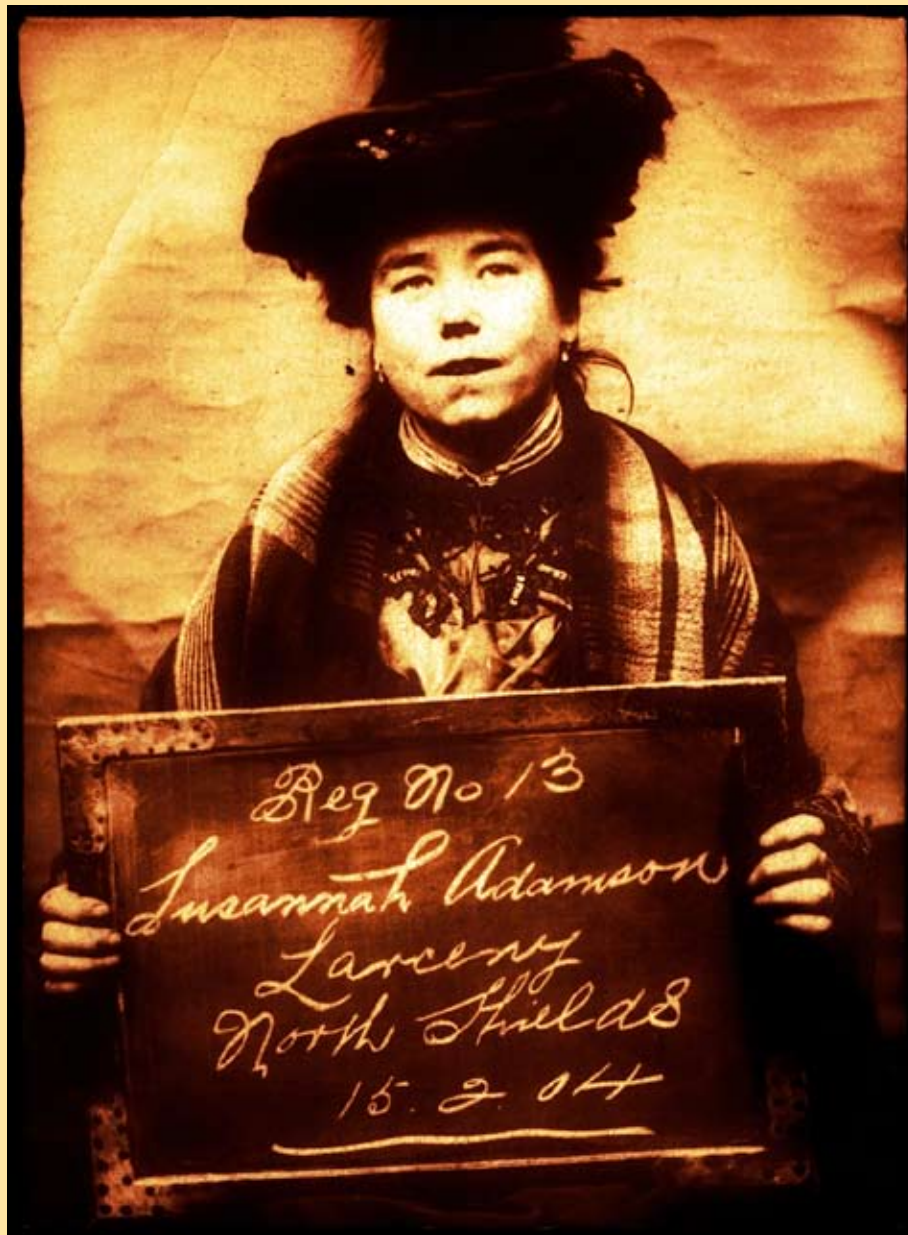
Obviously, time to re-think one’s investment portfolio. **CT**

Trevor Grundy is a British journalist who lived and worked in central, eastern and southern Africa from 1966-1996

The Accused

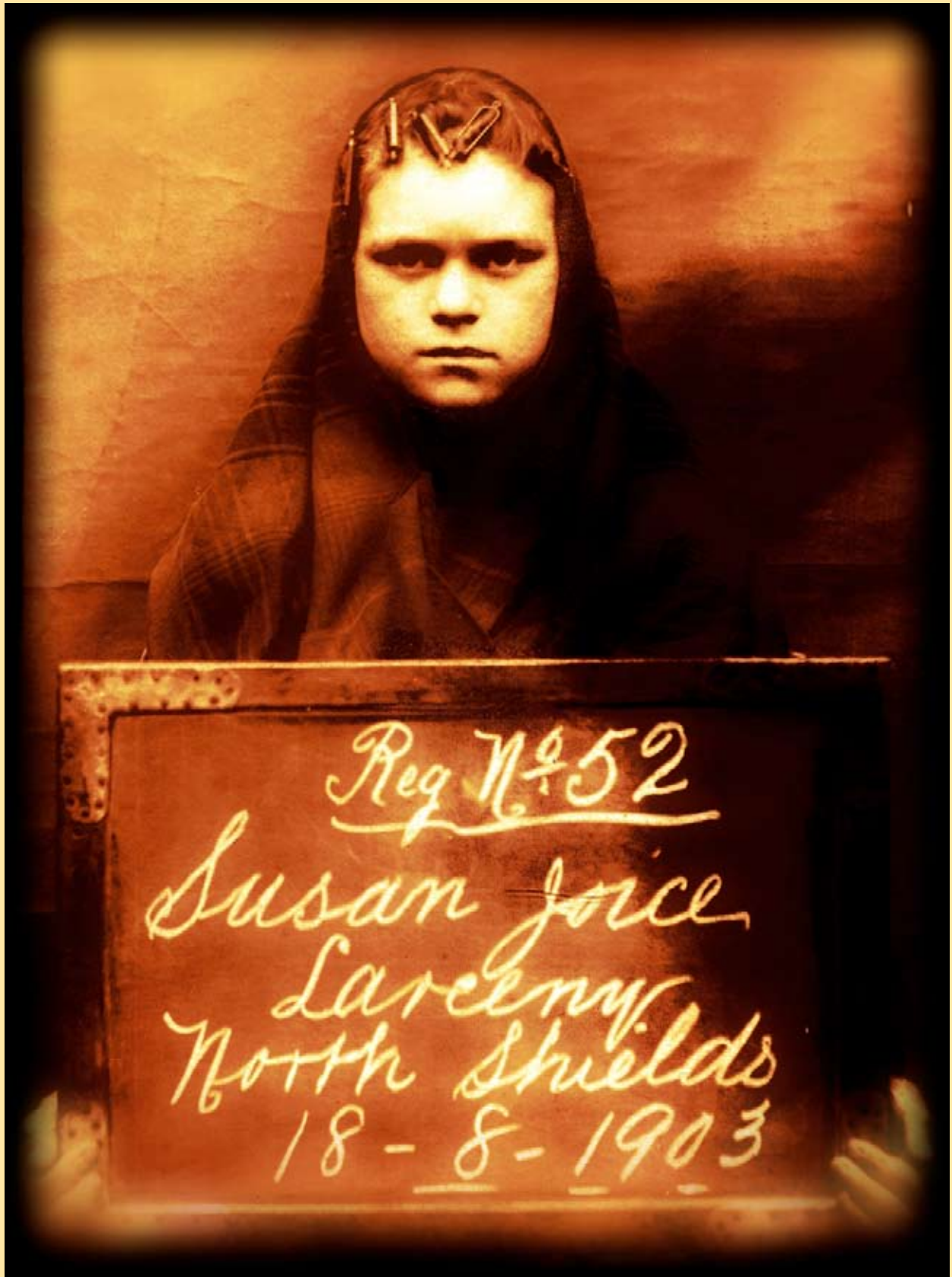
Sign of harsher times. The following portraits, from the collection of the Tyne & Wear Archives at Newcastle upon Tyne, England, show women prisoners who were brought before the police court at North Shields, County Durham, between 1902 and 1916. Couldn't happen in these more enlightened days, you might think. If so, you'd be wrong.

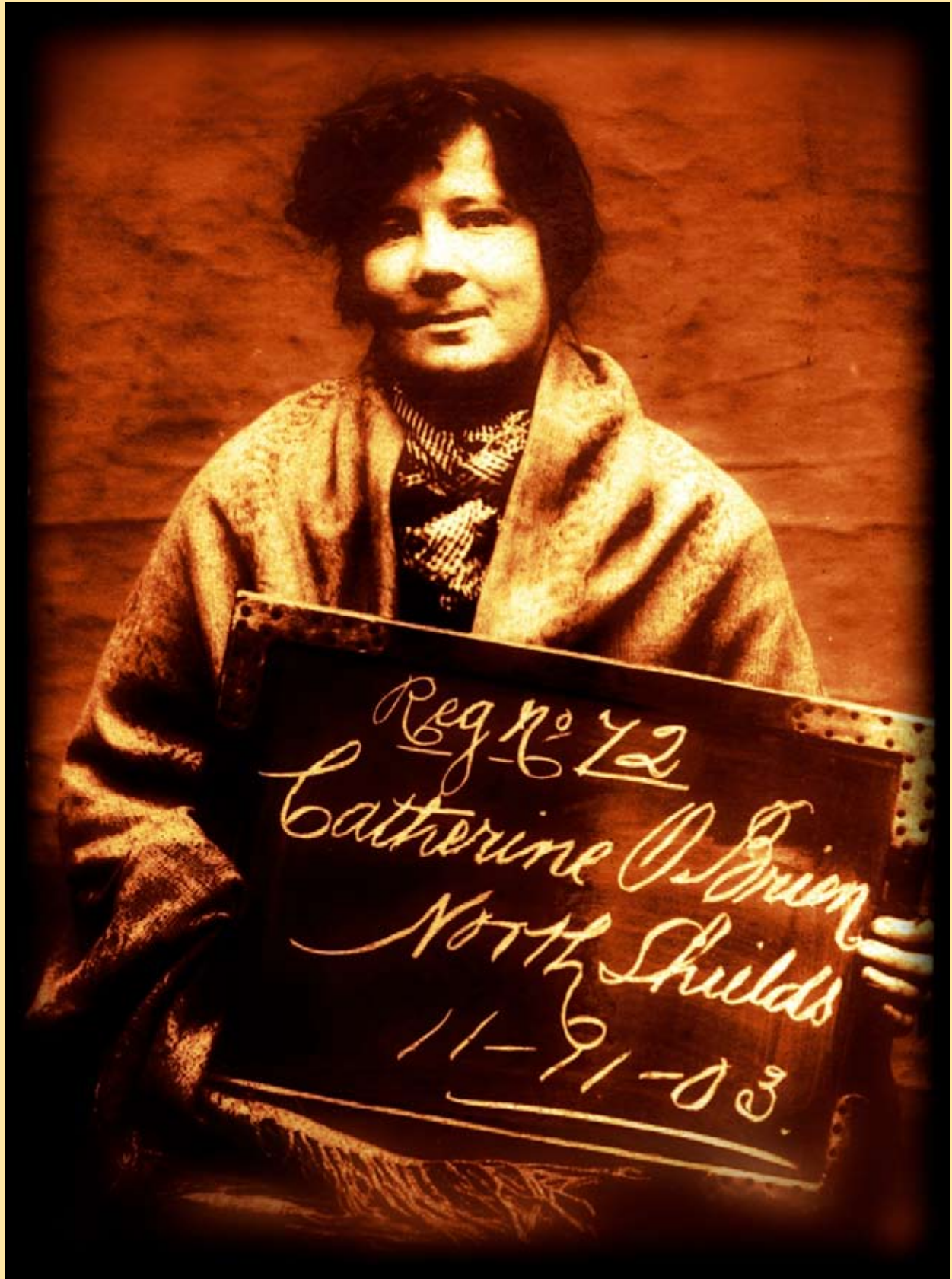
Turn to Page 49 and see what's happening in England right now

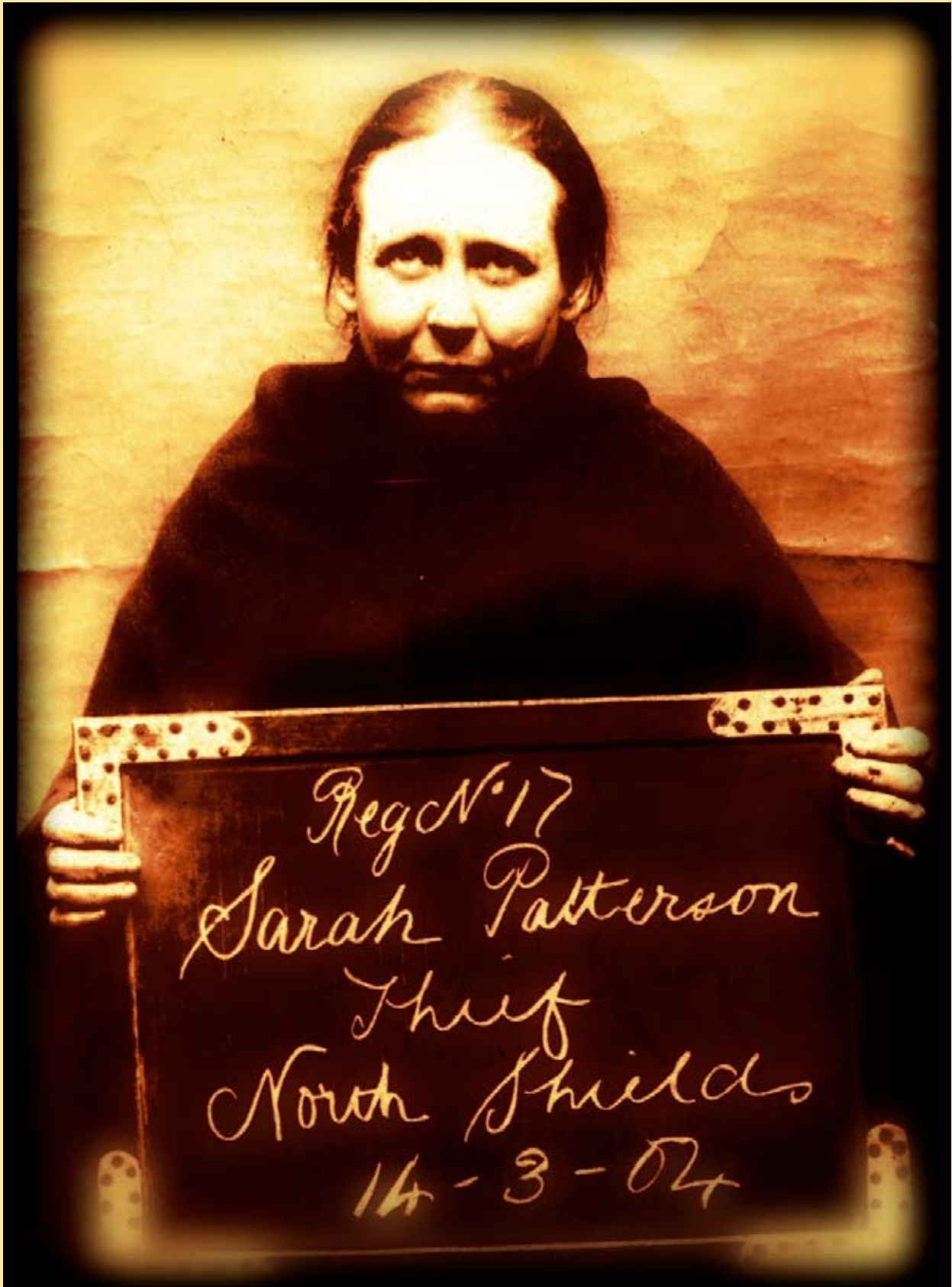


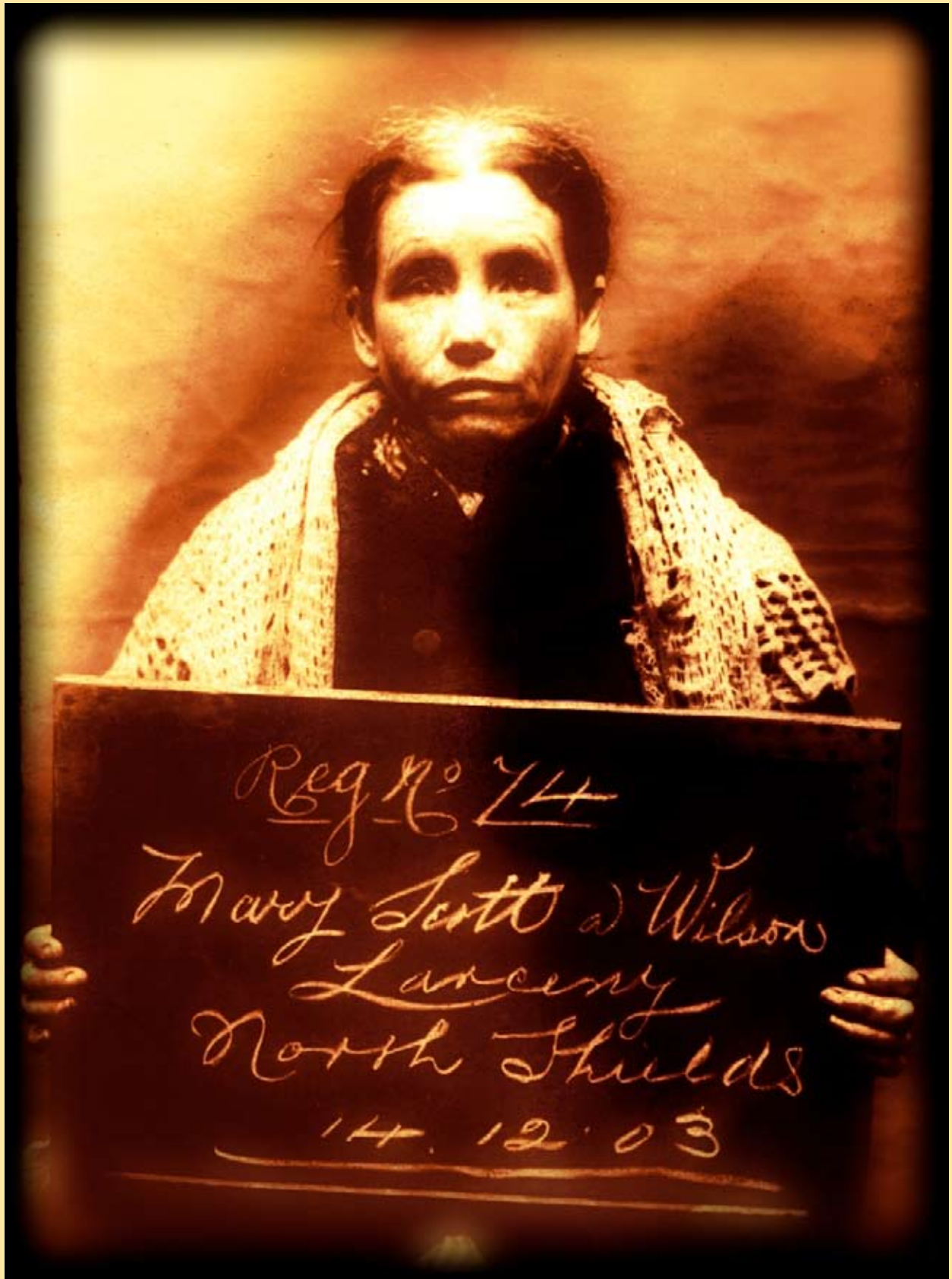


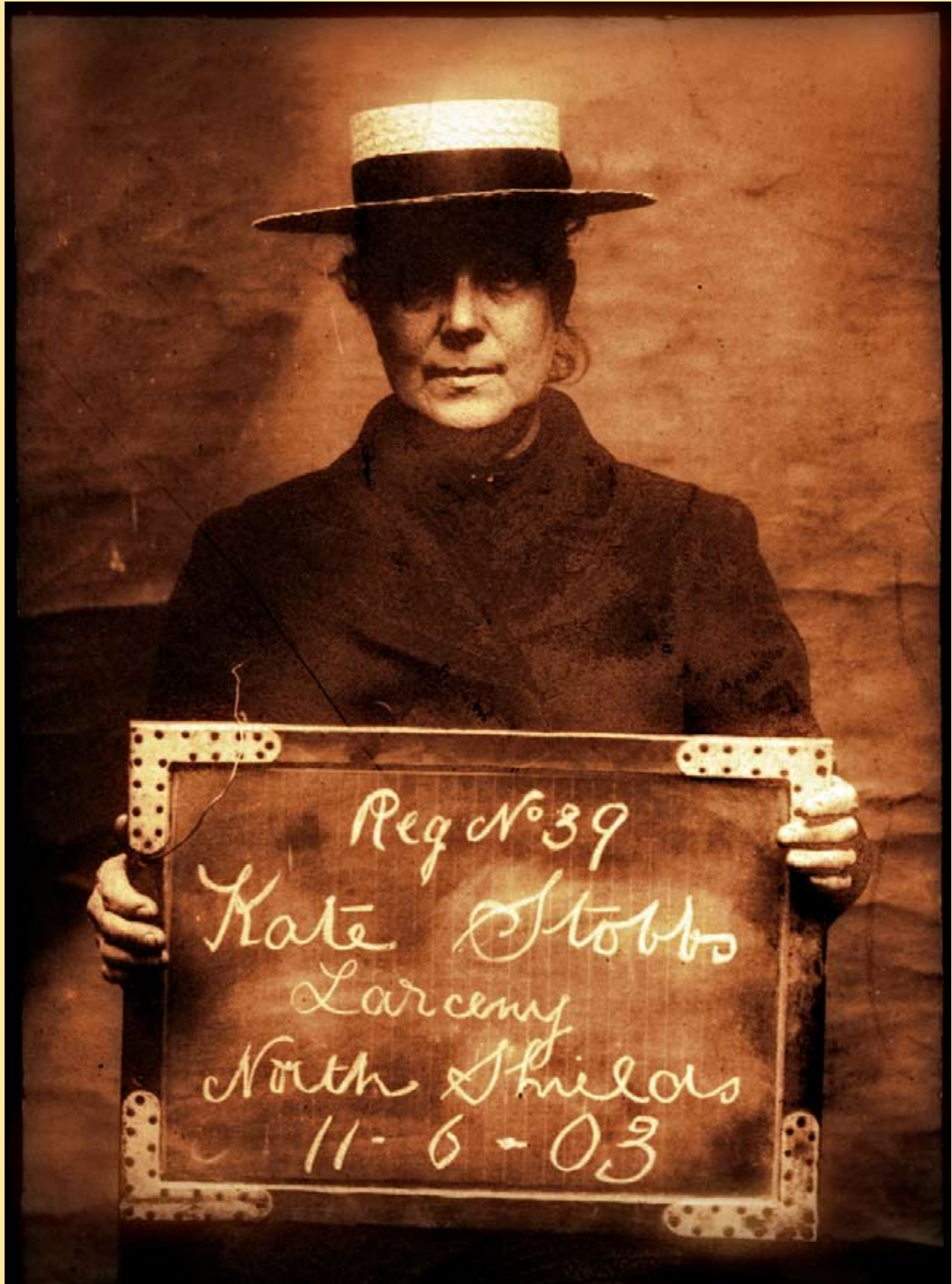














Couldn't happen now? Think again!

The front page of the *Boston Standard* newspaper, published in Lincolnshire, England, on Sept 17, 2014, features mugshots of people caught on CCTV cameras dropping litter – cigarette ends, soft drink cans, and sweet wrappers – on the town's streets. Call the council if you recognise anyone so they can dole out fines to the 'guilty', says the paper, whose editorial pre-emptively criticises civil libertarians by claiming, "Some may think it's all a bit 'big brother' to be using cameras to catch out offenders. The simple fact is that if you do nothing wrong you've got nothing to worry about." George Orwell is now spinning in his grave. – **Tony Sutton**

The national silence

We can ignore evidence of collusion in the events of September 11, 2001, but the 9-11 Truth Movement isn't going away, writes **Philip Kraske**

Thirteen years after 9-11, scarcely a soul across the length and breadth of the American media – print, electronic, or Internet – dares add or subtract a syllable to the official story

Thirteen years later, the singular history-dividing event in American politics lies in silence, like the marble sepulchre of an ancient French king. The American media tiptoe past it like monks, faces turned away. Politicians come to kneel at its feet and pay homage. Military men polish its surfaces and go away refreshed and eager for battle. Security-industry moguls in sleek suits lay flowers and, like betting junkies, pray for more luck.

As to Americans, they look on it mute, awed – and dimly doubtful. For years polls have recorded that roughly half believe that the government is holding back information, that the full story has not emerged, that guilt has not been properly established. The difference is that nowadays, a poll respondent hangs up uneasy. Has the call – his answers, his voiceprint, his speech patterns – been squirreled away to one of those monstrous, faceless brains whose minders talk casually of yottabytes and zettabytes? How times have changed – and how much 9-11 changed them.

What has not changed is the silence. Thirteen years after 9-11, scarcely a soul across the length and breadth of the American media – print, electronic, or Internet – dares add or subtract a syllable to the official story: Muslim fanatics, hijackings, box cutters, collapsing buildings, cell-phone heroes, America pushed into war with its classic aw-

shucks reluctance. Never mind that several of the famous nineteen hijackers turned up alive and well, not to mention indignant, within months of the event. Never mind that Osama bin Laden, in contravention of the very objective of terrorism, publicly denied involvement and condemned the attacks twice before the month of September was out. Never mind that many of the top figures in the George W. Bush Administration – now in President Barack Obama's – had itched for just such an event to catapult the nation into action to make a New American Century.

Never mind the people warned off flights on 9-11, or the sudden rise in stock trades on United and American Airlines and the insurers of the towers, or the smooth walls beside the hole in the Pentagon, their windows intact, on which two six-ton jet engines could leave no scar. Never mind the enormous initial confusion about the terrorists' identity when a quick check of the flight lists and airport security tapes would have – should have – sufficed. To this day, they have not been released.

Never mind any of that. As Chris Hedges reminds us in his excellent book, "Empire of Illusions", Americans get skittish when reality stares them in the face and are happy to have it channelled and simplified. And on 9-11, those groomed people on the mainstream media jumped right in to interpret it for us: the buildings collapsed. This was the

key word planted from the first moment: collapse. Just as with poor President Kennedy, who was not slammed backward by a bullet, but “slumped” – the word still used in history textbooks – against Mrs. Kennedy, on 9-11, the public believed what it was told what to see: “collapses.” And so it has remained.

It is hardly worth going through here the mountain of evidence that sustains that the North and South Towers did not collapse at all but were blown up from the top down in a series of minutely-timed explosions; the reader has every resource available with a few clicks of the mouse. The evidence assembled by the various branches of the 9-11 Truth Movement is physical, chemical, geological, eye-witness, video, audio, and forensic. There is so much of it that the Truthers’ nemesis, the 9-11 Debunkers, sound ridiculous trying to explain away one item of proof after another, and end up giving the impression of a Bugs Bunny cartoon, with Elmer Fudd twisting every which way trying to stick fingers and toes in a leaking dam.

Take, from many possible examples, the Debunkers’ explanation for the black jets of dust seen spurting out vertically from the building dozens of floors below the wave of “collapse.” The Truthers say these are evidence of explosive detonations and cite the opinions of demolition experts, who call them “squibs.” The Debunkers call these the logical result of air pressure building up as the floors collapsed one upon the next, like the plunger of a syringe, and making a window here and there burst.

As usual with the Debunkers, it’s an answer that at first seems plausible, and plays on people’s natural inclination to denial regarding an alternative theory. But it doesn’t survive even the first empirical review, for the simple reason that there was no solid plunger-like mass pushing downwards; everything above the squib was disintegrating into dust. Dust: not fragments, not pieces, not bits, as you would expect to find after a building collapse from, say, an earthquake. Burning-hot dust that could have resulted only from ex-

plosions: everything from the urinals to cell phones to espresso makers was pulverized. And dust makes a rather porous syringe.

Besides, thirty floors below the wave, nothing had yet happened. Nothing had exploded – at least in the Debunkers’ theory. Hence no dust.

Still, let’s give two cheers in passing for the Debunkers crowd. It was the Debunkers who, sneering and jeering, hooting and hollering over the least mistake that the Truthers made, obligated them to bear down and grind out every last detail of their theories. The Debunkers pounded out the hollow spots in the Truthers’ arguments, went over their research with a comb fine enough to separate the dots from their I’s, and ultimately strengthened the Truthers’ case. Indeed, the sheer flimsiness of the Debunkers’ own counter-arguments has made the Truthers’ theories shine by comparison. Thirteen years after the attacks, the Debunkers have ridiculed and hooted and razed their way into irrelevancy. But history will thank them.

For what’s left is solid research and a well-fertilized ground of doubt. If the case of the Truthers is not conclusive, it is only for lack of documents, still ensconced, one hopes, in government vaults. Probably as few as a half-dozen documents, if released, would clear up all the basic questions: the airport-security videos, those near the Pentagon, the two recovered black boxes (unless some of the other six have turned up), and the full version of communications between firefighters who answered the 9-11 call.

Still, it’s not so clear that Americans will want to face the truth, especially when they learn how wide the net of collaboration actually was. It extends far beyond people in on the planning, which was surely very few, to those who went to bed on 9-11 thinking bitterly of how they had been played.

Think of the fighter pilots ordered to stay on the ground or fly the wrong way, the bewildered air-traffic controllers trying to sort out real attacks from war-games attacks, the folks around the Pentagon who thought they

If the case of the Truthers is not conclusive, it is only for lack of documents, still ensconced, one hopes, in government vaults

ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER

God help the wiseguy seventh-grader who raises his hand and asks the museum guide why thousands of building professionals agree with the controlled-demolition theory

were helping out the FBI when they turned over security videos, maybe even the security people around the World Trade Center buildings ordered to look the other way when certain individuals showed up at night and on weekends for “elevator shaft renovation” or “rewiring” on the weekend before 9-11.

Pity the reporters – dozens, surely – whose observations of oddities on 9-11 were quietly edited out of their stories. And even more reporters at top news outlets who in the months and years after 9-11 were discreetly contacted by duty-bound military personnel, frightened secretaries, and indignant airline employees; and who set out to write Pulitzer Prize-winning exposés, only to be told by grim-faced editors that the 9-11 story was not to be tampered with.

And as long as we’re near the issue, let’s repel one more time that tiresome assertion by opponents of 9-11 alternative theories: This is America, we love fame, secrets are things of the past, we even talk about our sex lives on the radio, someone would have talked.

There two answers to that. The first is that someone did talk; lots of someones talked, though their stories reach no further than 9-11 websites. For her trouble, Susan Lindauer earned the distinction of being the second person arrested under the PATRIOT Act. Sibel Edmond got a gag order. Barry Jennings’s experience in Building 7 proved that explosions had already gone off in the building hours before the collapse. J. Michael Springmann at the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, irritated his bosses by pointing out all those visas granted to guys who turned up on the list of 9-11 hijackers. William Rodriguez, initially a 9-11 media hero, later fell from grace for insisting that an explosion came from the sub-level of the North Tower some ten seconds before the first airplane hit that building. And dozens of eye-witnesses from all three crash sites have lent their testimonies, these confined largely to 9-11 documentaries.

The second is that, in real life, it is only the rarest Snowden or Ellsberg or Manning,

alone among their multitudinous co-workers who witnessed the same government misdeeds, who comes forward. Or is even in a position to: none of those three was worrying about retirement when they exposed government documents. The ever-higher hurdles of financial life in America – college, mortgage, and retirement – must be a great comfort to the real villains of 9-11.

Yes, 9-11 Truth research is truly stupendous: the computer models, the chemical investigations, FOIA requests (mostly refused) by the busload, the frame-by-frame review of video and audio recordings. Pilots for 9-11 Truth have even sedulously examined radar and transponder recordings and concluded that Flight 93, which was supposed to have crashed in Pennsylvania, was still in the air and sending signals. Others combed through FAA records and found that this airplane was still on the active list years later.

Good for historical purposes, but at present all of this research is little more than a tree that falls in the woods, heard by nobody. Once the proper narratives – collapses, al Qaeda, feisty passengers and stoic flight attendants – had been set down, they were decorated with detail, made into films, and left to harden with the years. Silence is the norm, broken only by the occasional bubbling blurb to reinforce the official story: the 9-11 Commission’s “Final” Report (i.e., no others needed), the 9-11 Memorial and now the 9-11 Museum, which will be visited by and upon generations of school children. And God help the wiseguy seventh-grader who raises his hand and asks the museum guide why thousands of building professionals agree with the controlled-demolition theory. He is likely to be met with a withering rebuke – much as any thinking adult is today – and told that only cranks and fools bother with conspiracy theories.

Silence. Much as concerned folks in New York might try, there will be no second 9-11 commission, as in the case of the Kennedy assassination. At most, in fifty years, grandchildren will come forth with what someone said

on his deathbed, a memoir will turn up, and a history professor will piece together a few stories from the archives, just as nowadays such tidbits regarding Franklin Roosevelt's attempt to provoke the Japanese into attacking Pearl Harbor have come to light.

No doubt the hard-eyed planners of 9-11 found solace in the Pearl Harbor precedent. But Roosevelt's deception had a clear justification: if Germany had won the war, or if the Soviet Union had won and gone on to dominate all Europe, the future would have been very dark indeed.

The purpose of 9-11, however, went far beyond a simple war or two in Asia. It was the expression of a passion as old as Alexander: the desire to take over the world. Of course, the current terms are "full-spectrum dominance," "globalization," and "free markets." With the fall of the Soviet Union, the American elite imbibed single-superpowerdom. They were inebriated. America had a unique chance to expand their economic and military – hence political – grasp, and they were not going to pass it up.

The problem was their peaceful compatriots, who neither standing so tall nor seeing so far, could not be counted on to support conquest of the planet. Like dumb cattle, they had to be stampeded. Nor could they be trusted to remain acquiescent as they were squeezed economically while The One Percent fattened and the military splurged. So police forces would be turned into paramilitary squads and, as we have learned over the past year with the Snowden-Greenwald revelations, every phone call, mouse click, and text message would be recorded. The villains of 9-11 had seen the Vietnam War protests at first hand, and knew they needed to cut such nonsense off at the knees. Look at Ferguson. Look at Zuccotti Park. It's clear that no new 1968s will be tolerated.

The elite's campaigns at home and abroad might be reversed if the facts of 9-11 were allowed a true airing that riled up the public. But that won't happen. Liberals and conservatives have joined forces to stigmatise any-

one who questions the official theory. Even Justin Raimundo at Antiwar.com, recently wrote a long essay about 9-11 secrets, but it dealt with the minor question of whether Israel or other countries knew about the attacks ahead of time. But question the 9-11 gospel of box cutters and pancaking building floors? That did not interest him.

Which is typical. With any topic touching 9-11, nobody questions the government version of events. To do so is in bad taste. Take the raid on Osama bin Laden. Nobody but a few pundits like Dr. Paul Craig Roberts and myself wondered out loud how the CIA could have had bin Laden's house under surveillance for the six months prior to the raid, and never once seen or heard him. Remember that? The obvious conclusion, that bin Laden just wasn't there, got no traction in the media. But the dashing story that followed silenced any doubt: *Despite the CIA's inability to prove bin Laden's presence in the house, President Obama, that daring risk-taker, sent in the strong-arm boys. And they got him.*

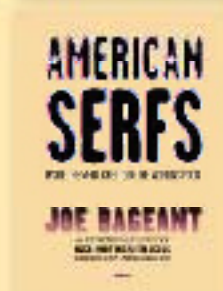
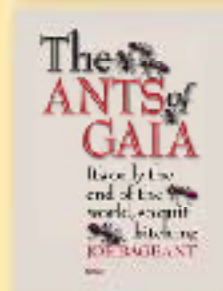
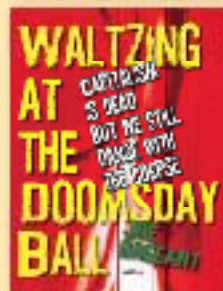
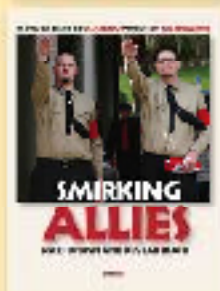
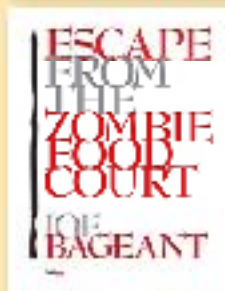
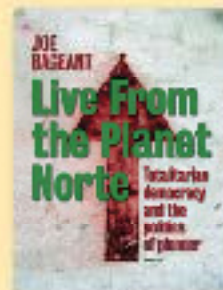
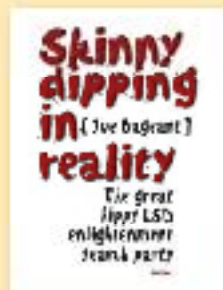
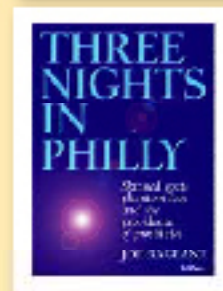
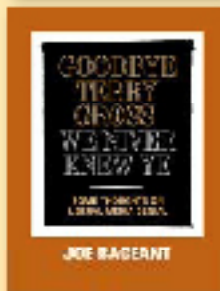
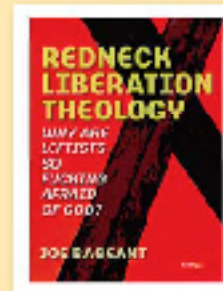
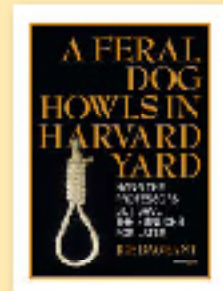
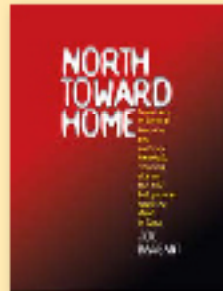
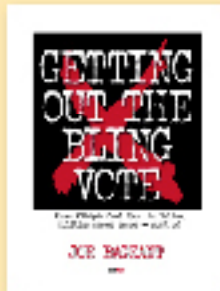
In retrospect it sounds very much as if the CIA, still angry over being pressured into the WMD scam in Iraq, and probably knowing that bin Laden had died years earlier, had refused to get sucked into the game and washed their hands of it with a simple disclaimer. What a pity that Edward Snowden didn't get a bit of that one down on his hard drives.

So that legend has been closed as well, like the unreal waves closing over bin Laden's unreal body while America notched a real new bit of history on its belt.

History: what the victors – that riotous One Percent – write. And the left, the right, progressives and conservatives as one do nothing but deepen the grooves of the letters in the rock. Hurray for the free press! As I wrote three years ago, 9-11 was a national job. And so is the silence. **CT**

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Philip Kraske's latest novel is "City On The Ledge." His web site is <http://philipkraske.com>

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<http://coldtype.net/joe.html>

Defending apartheid – then and now

No matter what its leaders claim, the link between Israel and South African apartheid is solid, says **Nima Shirazi**

*Just like another Israel,
by enemies surrounded, lost in the veld,
but for another Canaan elected,
led forward by God's plan.*

*- Reverend J.D. du Toit,
Potgieter's Trek (1909)*

This past May, in a relatively banal column touting the necessity of an impossible “two-state solution” in the context of what he deemed to be US Secretary of State John Kerry’s “specious comparison” of a potential Israeli future to South African apartheid, former *Ha’aretz* editor-in-chief David Landau wrote:

“This resort to apartheid infuriates the majority of Israelis and Israel-lovers, including those in the peace camp, and one can readily understand why. Apartheid was based on racism; Israeli Jews are not racist. They may occupy, persecute and discriminate Palestinians, but they act out of misguided patriotism and a hundred years of bloody conflict. Not out of racism.”

It would be a gross understatement to say that Landau’s formulation was fundamentally flawed.

First and foremost, there is a vast amount of evidence proving that Jewish Israeli society – built wholly upon the 19th century premise (and promise) of ethnic and religious superiority, exclusivity, and privilege enforced through ethnic cleansing, forced

expulsion, displacement and dispossession, segregation, colonization and occupation – is somehow becoming even more openly racist. Poll after poll reveals increasingly bigoted trends.

The work of reporters like David Sheen and Max Blumenthal, for instance, routinely demonstrates a viciously militarized and unjust society masquerading as an embattled liberal democracy, acting with aggression and impunity. More recently, pogroms targeting migrants and refugees from Africa, incitement against Palestinians inside Israel, and explicit anti-miscegenation campaigns are becoming more frequent and more dangerous.

A country for “the white man”

In a mid-2012 interview, Israel’s Interior Minister Eli Yishai said that Africans, “along with the Palestinians, will bring a quick end to the Zionist dream,” since “[m]ost of those people arriving here are Muslims who think the country doesn’t belong to us, the white man.” Referring to refugees from Sudan and Eritrea as an “infiltrator threat,” he told the press he was eager to deport all African immigrants for, in his words, “the benefit of the Zionist dream.”

A chapter in a forthcoming book, detailing a three-year, anthropological study of the attitudes of typical, secular Israeli high school students conducted by Dr. Idan

There is a vast amount of evidence proving that Jewish Israeli society is somehow becoming even more openly racist

IN BLACK AND WHITE

When you are staring down the end of a police rifle, there can be no free speech. When you're being held at bay by a militarized, weaponized mine-resistant tank, there can be no freedom of assembly

Yaron, is stark in its assessment of the cultural racism and hatred present in Israeli society. Reporter Ori Kashti notes that, based upon Yaron's observations, "such hatred is a basic everyday element among youth, and a key component of their identity. Yaron portrays the hatred without rose-colored glasses or any attempt to present it as a sign of social 'unity.' What he observed is unfiltered hatred."

Landau's desperate defense against the apartheid label perfectly demonstrates the Liberal Zionist need to insist that Israel and its founding ideology are not inherently racist, a position less and less palatable to people who are actually paying attention.

His claim that because "Israeli Jews are not racist," and therefore Israel can't possibly be deemed a "apartheid" state, not only misunderstands the actual definition of apartheid, which isn't merely race-based discrimination and oppression. It also mirrors precisely the arguments made by defenders of South African apartheid in opposition to calls for equal human and civil rights.

Zionism's defenders mirror apartheid's apologists

Beyond the shared "promised land" and "chosen people" rhetoric that has inspired both the Afrikaner and Zionist ideologies of racial, religious, and ethnic supremacy, so has that of land redemption through settler-colonialism and transplanting indigenous populations. The connective tissue between apartheid and Zionism is thick, and not only in that both European colonial ideologies were officially institutionalized and implemented against native peoples as government policy in 1948.

Historian Donald Akenson has written, "The very spine of Afrikaner history (no less than the historical sense of the Hebrew scriptures upon which it is based) involves the winning of 'the Land' from alien, and indeed, evil forces."

One can easily see a corollary in the words of David Ben-Gurion, written in a 1937 let-

ter to his son, Amos. Palestine, he wrote, "contains vast colonization potential" for Jewish settlement to exploit. Moreover, he declared, "What we really want is not that the land remain whole and unified. What we want is that the whole and unified land be Jewish. A unified Eretz Israel would be no source of satisfaction for me – if it were Arab." (emphasis in original)

This past June, settler leader Dani Dayan argued in the *New York Times* that, as summarized by David Samel, "Israel retain control of 'Judea and Samaria,' that it continue to exercise military rule over millions of stateless Palestinians, but that it loosen its stranglehold by making concerted efforts to make Palestinians happier despite the permanent loss of freedom, equality in the land of their birth, and justice under international law."

Dayan's essay calls for what is essentially, in Samel's words, "window dressing of reduced restrictions on Palestinians" in order to "keep the natives happy." Just like his more "liberal" counterparts like David Landau on the west side of the Green Line, Dayan insists, "we settlers were never driven – except for fringe elements – by bigotry, hate or racism."

This argument effectively relies on the disingenuous presumption that the actual victims of an exclusivist, 19th century European ideology – the colonized indigenous population – are merely incidental to the ideology itself. That is, as Landau wrote, "misguided patriotism and a hundred years of bloody conflict" are really to blame for the oppression, discrimination and violence against Palestinians, not the racist obligations of Zionism.

In October 1964, *Foreign Affairs* magazine published the lengthy essay, "In Defense of Apartheid," by Charles A. W. Manning. Not only did Manning accuse outside meddlers and finger-waggers of refusing to acknowledge South Africa's right to exist as an apartheid state, he also justified its racist policies as "a heritage from a complicated past."

Quoting approvingly from the 1954 Tomlinson Commission, Manning wrote that while “a continuation of the policy of integration would intensify racial friction and animosity... the only alternative is to promote the establishment of separate communities in their own separate territories where each will have the fullest opportunity for self-expression and development.”

Two states for two peoples, indeed.

In the face of international opprobrium, apartheid is “the philosophy of patriots,” Manning explained, “a remedial treatment for a state of things deriving from the past.” He added that apartheid is a matter of “nationalism, rather than racialism.”

“It is easy for the foreigner to deride a nationalism which he does not share; but nowhere in human history has nationalism ever been destroyed by foreign scorn. Admittedly, Afrikaner nationalism is a form of collective selfishness; but to say this is simply to say that it is an authentic case of nationalism. For what is nationalism anywhere if not collective self-love? What underlies apartheid is at bottom an attitude not toward the black man, but toward the forefathers-and the future-of the Afrikaner people.”

Manning continued:

“Deplore the white man’s collective self-concern, and you may equally well damn every other example of nationalism, white or black. It is absurd to assume that nationalism is nice, or nasty, according to its color.”

Manning bemoaned that, as a result of misunderstanding the necessity and, yes, benevolence of apartheid, even South Africa’s best friends were beginning to abandon it. “Israel finds it necessary to ignore the analogy between South Africa’s predicament and her own,” he lamented.

Still, Israel maintained diplomatic relations with South Africa into 1987 and was one of the last countries to join the international boycott campaign.

In 2012, Israel’s High Court upheld the state’s explicitly discriminatory “Citizenship and Entry” law, which, as Ben White has explained, “places severe restrictions on the ability of Palestinian citizens of Israel to live with spouses from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as from so-called ‘enemy states’ (defined as Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Iraq).” The ruling stated that “Palestinians who gain Israeli citizenship through marriage pose a security threat.”

Writing in Al Jazeera, following the decision, White elaborated:

“In the majority opinion, Justice Asher Grunis wrote that ‘human rights are not a prescription for national suicide’, a term often invoked by those worrying about what realising Palestinian rights would mean for Israel’s Jewish majority. This same phrase was invoked by the Interior Minister Eli Yishai, while coalition chair and Likud MK Ze’ev Elkin applauded the High Court judges for understanding, as he put it, that ‘human rights cannot jeopardize the State’ ”.

A particularly instructive reaction came from Kadima MK Otniel Schneller, who said that the decision “articulates the rationale of separation between the (two) peoples and the need to maintain a Jewish majority and the (Jewish) character of the state”.

The notion that advocating and legislating in favor of “human rights” and equality would be the death knell of the Israeli state – “national suicide” – perfectly articulates that inherent injustice of Zionism; indeed, it is a self-indicting statement.

And, as has already been noted, is yet one more example of how Israel’s apologists employ precisely the same logic, arguments and excuses – often literally the same words, verbatim – as the staunch defenders of the apartheid system in South Africa.

In April 1953, on the eve of assembly elections in South Africa, Prime Minister D.F. Malan warned that outside forces – including “the United Nations, Communist Russia... as well as a hostile press” – were “trying to force upon us equality, which

Israel maintained diplomatic relations with South Africa into 1987 and was one of the last countries to join the international boycott campaign

IN BLACK AND WHITE

These claims echo common hasbara tropes: that Palestinians are an “invented people” and that the Arab majority in Palestine was due to immigration into Palestine rather than an ancient indigenous population

must inevitably mean to white South Africa nothing less than national suicide.”

Malan added, “I consider the approaching election South Africa’s last chance to remain a white man’s country.”

Just months after Malan and his National Party won the election and consolidated power, South Africa’s London-based High Commissioner A.L. Geyer delivered a speech on August 19, 1953 entitled, “The Case for Apartheid,” before the city’s Rotary Club. He argued against the indigenous claims of the native black population (“South Africa is no more the original home of its black Africans, the Bantu, than it is of its white Africans”); that the apartheid state is the only “homeland” known to white South Africans (“the only independent white nation in all Africa... a nation which has created a highly developed modern state”); and that “South Africa is the only independent country in the world in which white people are outnumbered by black people.”

These claims echo common hasbara tropes: that Palestinians are an “invented people” and that the Arab majority in Palestine was due to immigration into Palestine rather than an ancient indigenous population with roots in that land for centuries, if not millennia; that Israel is the “only democracy in the Middle East,” a bright bastion of technology and Western modernism amidst a sea of darker-skinned barbarians.

In his speech, Geyer – who was national chairman of the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs, known, ironically, by the acronym “SABRA” – turns to the question of what the future South Africa will look like and sees “two possible lines of development: Apartheid or Partnership.” He explains:

“Partnership means Cooperation of the individual citizens within a single community, irrespective of race... [It] demands that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever in trade and industry, in the professions and the Public Service. Therefore, whether a man is black or a white African, must according to this policy be as irrelevant as whether in

London a man is a Scotsman or an Englishman. I take it: that Partnership must also aim at the eventual disappearance of all social segregation based on race.”

Geyer, speaking on behalf of those intent on maintaining a stratified and discriminatory society, was obviously not a fan of this prospective outcome. Just as those who still push for an illusory “two-state solution” insist that a Jewish majority must be artificially engineered to exclude as many non-Jews as possible within the area controlled by Israel for a “Jewish and democratic” state to continue existing, Geyer too bristled at the idea of true self-determination wherein the result wasn’t already predetermined through gerrymandered demographics.

If the black population were to be given full voting rights, for instance, whites would no longer hold a monopoly on political power in the country. The inevitable result, Geyer warned, would be “black domination, in the sense that power must pass to the immense African majority.”

This sentiment was similarly articulated by Ehud Olmert, then the Israeli Prime Minister, in a 2007 interview with Ha’aretz. “If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses, and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights (also for the Palestinians in the territories),” he said “then, as soon as that happens, the State of Israel is finished.”

Here’s how Geyer, in 1953, articulated his argument against such a horrifying future of democracy, equality, and justice:

“Need I say more to show that this policy of Partnership could, in South Africa, only mean the eventual disappearance of the white South African nation? And will you be greatly surprised if I tell you that this white nation is not prepared to commit national suicide, not even by slow poisoning? The only alternative is a policy of apartheid, the policy of separate development.”

Indeed, as Israeli Justice Grunis reminded us, “human rights are not a prescription for national suicide.” Geyer couldn’t have

agreed more. Denying basic and fundamental rights, while promoting and implementing a policy of demographic segregation and geographic separation, was a matter of survival, Geyer argued – just like his Zionist successors do now.

“Apartheid is a policy of self-preservation,” Geyer said. “We make no apology for possessing that very natural urge. But it is more than that. It is an attempt at self-preservation in a manner that will enable the Bantu to develop fully as a separate people.” As the native black Africa population in South Africa was, Geyer noted, “still very immature,” efforts must be made “to develop the Bantu areas both agriculturally and industrially, with the object of making these areas in every sense the national home of the Bantu.”

Thirty years later, very little had actually changed.

In his infamous “Rubicon” speech, delivered in Durban on August 15, 1985, South African president P.W. Botha declared that “most leaders in their own right in South Africa and reasonable South Africans will not accept the principle of one-man-one-vote in a unitary system. That would lead to domination of one over the other and it would lead to chaos. Consequently, I reject it as a solution.”

Botha added, “I am not prepared to lead White South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide. Destroy White South Africa and our influence, and this country will drift into faction strife, chaos and poverty.”

In response, ANC president Oliver Tambo condemned Botha’s disingenuous statements about his apartheid regime’s commitment to “the protection of minorities” and “the just and equal treatment of all parts of South Africa.” Botha, he said, had instead committed to the continued “oppression of the overwhelming majority of our people” and “promised our people more brutal repression.”

Calling for increased resistance, through

both armed struggle and the imposition of international sanctions, Tambo declared that all victims of apartheid were “ready to make any and all sacrifices to achieve justice and democracy based on the principle of one man, one vote in a unitary South Africa.”

That very same year, Raphael Israeli, a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and future client of the neoconservative PR firm Benador Associates, published an essay promoting increased Zionist colonization of the West Bank and Gaza and then subsequent partition of what he called “Greater Palestine” (which includes Jordan) as part of a potential solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israeli argued that “the seemingly reasonable claim that the ‘state belongs to all its inhabitants’” anticipates the “nightmare of a bi-national state” in which “Israel is no longer a state of the Jews or a Jewish state.”

The essay, entitled “One Palestinian People and One Palestine,” was eventually included in a collection edited by Israeli himself entitled, “Dangers of a Palestinian State.”

In laying out his vision for a bizarre tripartite entity within “Greater Palestine,” with redefined parameters of sovereignty and self-determination in which a “Palestinian government” is established in Amman, Jordan, alongside the Hashemite monarchy, and Israeli military control over the West Bank continues until a final settlement on borders is agreed upon.

Israeli stresses that Jewish citizens of the Zionist state reject the implementation of a “one person, one vote” system throughout Israel and the territories it occupies because they would be “faced with an intractable dilemma: either a democratic and egalitarian Israel with rights for all, with the corollaries of a bi-national state immediately and an Arab-majority state in the future; or Jewish Israel where the Jews would maintain rights and rule and the Arabs would be devoid of both.”

Israeli stresses that Jewish citizens of the Zionist state reject the implementation of a “one person, one vote” system throughout Israel and the territories it occupies

IN BLACK AND WHITE

The market was meant to emancipate us, offering autonomy and freedom. Instead it has delivered atomisation and loneliness

“No Israeli government,” the renowned academic wrote, “could face that dilemma and resolve it in any acceptable way.”

For Zionism, as it was for apartheid, equality and human rights are non-starters. The fear that a “one person, one vote” system and of a “state for all its citizens” instills in Zionists is no different from that expressed by defenders of South African apartheid.

Defended by de Klerk

Following John Kerry’s “apartheid” comment earlier this year, F.W. de Klerk, the former South Africa prime minister who presided over the dismantling of the apartheid regime, came to Israel’s defense. “I think it’s unfair to call Israel an apartheid state,” he said.

This is the same de Klerk, however, who two years earlier reflected that, while “[i]n as much as it trampled human rights, [apartheid] was and remains morally indefensible,” he still defended what he said was the system’s “original concept of seeking to bring justice to all South Africans through the concept of nation states.”

De Klerk explained that the Bantustanization of South Africa was conceived as a way to “bring justice for black South Africans in a way which would not – that’s what I believed then – destroy the justice to

which my people were entitled.” He added that it was “not repugnant” to believe that “ethnic entities with one culture, with one language, can be happy and can fulfill their democratic aspirations in [their] own state,” separate from one another.

After his comments sparked negative reactions, de Klerk’s spokesman walked back his comments. When “an artificial creation” like apartheid fell, the spokesman said, “you can go two ways – either by going your separate ways like in the Soviet Union or in what is being suggested for Israel and Palestine, or by trying to build a multicultural society.”

When “the first option” failed in South Africa, apartheid leaders “changed course,” he said, continuing, “It is not immoral for the Afrikaners to want to rule themselves any more than it is for the Israelis or the Scots to wish for the same things.”

Israel and its defenders go to great lengths to insist the “Jewish state” is not an apartheid one. Curious, then, that the only arguments they can muster in their favor are precisely those that were used to apologize for South Africa’s decades of indefensible discrimination and violence. **CT**

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Nima Shirazi is a political commentator and writes the website Wide Asleep In America at <http://wideasleepinamerica.com>

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Greg Palast finds 'enough smoking guns to roast a sizable pig' in the judge's findings on the Deepwater Horizon case

Forget Stephen King. If you want scary, read US District Judge Carl Barbier's 150-page Findings of Fact recently released in the Deepwater Horizon case.

Although the judge found BP liable for "gross negligence," some US media failed to mention that Barbier let BP off the hook on punitive damages. And that stuns me, given that the record seems to identify enough smoking guns to roast a sizable pig.

Here's a standout example:

Every rig operator knows that, before a rig can unhook from a drill pipe, the operator has to run a "negative pressure test" to make sure the cement has properly sealed the drill pipe. If the pipe is safely plugged, the pressure gauge will read zero. The amount of pressure BP measured at 5 pm on April 20, 2010, the day of the explosion? 1400 psi (see the findings, pages 62-65).

1400 psi is not zero. Stick a balloon in your mouth with zero pressure and nothing happens except that you look silly. Replace the balloon with a hose delivering a 1400 psi blast and it'll blow your skull apart.

So, how could the company record zero? Answer: BP's crew re-ran the test measuring the pressure in something called the "kill line," which is definitely not the drill pipe.

By reporting that the pipe had no pressure and all was safe, BP could begin to unhook the Deepwater Horizon from the pipe

– and sail away. Why would BP do that? In my view, there were three motives: money, money and money. It costs BP a good half million dollars each extra day the rig stays on top of the drill hole. It seems that BP wanted the rig gone and quickly.

So, instead of halting the disconnection process, BP appears to have lied and recorded the pressure reading as "zero." The rig's owner, Transocean of Switzerland, went along with BP's actions.

So how did BP get away with mere "gross negligence" as opposed to the more serious claim of fraud? Because the court found that the blowout, explosion, fire and oil spill were caused by "misinterpretation of the negative pressure test."

Misinterpretation? If a woman says "thanks" when you say she's dressed nicely and you think she wants a kiss, that's "misinterpretation." But on the Deepwater Horizon, the drill pipe gauge read 1400 psi and BP picked a different pipe that gave the company the magic zero. That's not, I contend, "misinterpretation."

Maybe the judge thought he was pretty tough by calling out BP for "gross" negligence (rather than plain-vanilla negligence, the finding against Transocean and contractor Halliburton). But, in fact, it seems Barbier fell for the Three Stooges defense.

Throughout the 150-page decision, the judge cites one instance after another of

Stick a balloon in your mouth with zero pressure and nothing happens except that you look silly. Replace the balloon with a hose delivering a 1400 psi blast and it'll blow your skull apart

OFF THE HOOK?

BP used leftover cement (Findings, paragraphs 209-211) that contained chemicals that destroyed the integrity of the new cement, because using the old stuff saved some serious cash

bone-headed, buffoonish, slapstick decisions, and plenty of pratfalls and banana-peel slips by BP, Transocean and Halliburton. You have to wonder how these schmucks even found their drill hole. It was a corporate Larry-Moe-and-Curly-Joe routine that would provide a lot of belly laughs if 11 men hadn't died as a result.

I've seen the Three Stooges defense before in federal court. In 1988, the corporate owner and the builder of the Shoreham nuclear plant were on trial on accusations they bilked their New York customers out of \$1.8 billion. In court, they pleaded stupidity and incompetence as a defense against deliberate deception. As the government's investigator, I didn't buy it – billion-dollar corporations can't be that stupid – and neither did the jury. (The racketeering charges were settled after trial for \$400 million.)

And here is a new set of Stooges: BP plays Larry, Transocean puts on Moe's wig and Halliburton makes "Nyuk! Nyuk! Nyuk!" sounds like Curly Joe. Halliburton, the judge found, failed to test the final cement mix and BP bitched about it – "[Halliburton engineer Jesse Gagliano] isn't cutting it any more," reads an email between two BP managers on the rig – but BP went ahead and used the bad cement anyway (Findings, paragraphs 227-228).

When the pressure in the drill pipe read 1400 psi, BP and Transocean managers should have stopped the rig departure immediately. They didn't. Nevertheless, other systems should have prevented a blowout. According to Barbier, other safety systems were jacked with to save a penny here, a penny there (or, a million here, a million there). Example: BP used leftover cement (Findings, paragraphs 209-211) that contained chemicals that destroyed the integrity of the new cement, because using the old stuff saved some serious cash.

And this leads to the question of punitive damages.

Barbier had the power to levy a fine big enough to make BP plc, BP America's Lon-

don-based parent corporation – a company with revenue of a quarter of a trillion dollars a year – go "ouch." But to slam BP with a fine that would hurt, the judge needed to hear from the Justice Department about corporate-wide perfidy. He pointed out that the case would have to be made against BP plc, the international parent, if he were to level a fine that would punish the corporation.

Against BP there is evidence aplenty. For years BP plc has played fast and loose with safety – from Asia to Alaska.

Chasing BP across five continents, I've found that "gross negligence" could be BP's corporate motto. In 2010, I was arrested in Azerbaijan hunting down evidence of another BP/Transocean offshore blowout that occurred 17 months before the Deepwater Horizon explosion.

The cause of the Caspian blowout was the same as in the Gulf disaster: mishandling of "foamed" cement. Had BP not covered up the prior blowout off the coast of Azerbaijan, the deaths in the Gulf, I'm certain, would have been avoided.

Yet on this and other examples of BP's transcontinental penny-pinching negligence, the Justice Department was silent.

The ugly truth is that the US State Department knew of the Caspian disaster and kept its lips sealed. Our own government wasn't going to admit that in the Deepwater Horizon trial.

Furthermore, the US government can't tag BP as an endemically rogue, dangerous operator without casting doubt on the administration's recent grant to the corporation of new deep tracts to drill in the Gulf of Mexico.

So maybe it was not the judge but the public that was blinded by the government and media crowing about a possible \$18 billion fine for gross negligence. Eighteen billion dollars may sound like a lot to us mere mortals, but to a trillion-dollar behemoth like BP, it is not a punishment, but a reasonably priced permit for plunder. **CT**

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Greg Palast is an investigator of corporate fraud and racketeering turned journalist. He is the author of New York Times bestseller "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy" and "Armead Madhouse." His previous book was *Vultures' Picnic: In Pursuit of Petroleum Pigs, Power Pirates and High-Finance Carnivores* (2012)

Obama and the N-word

Dell Franklin grapples with racism at his local bar

"I hate Obama. I can't stomach that goddamn nigger as our president."

These words are jolting, coming from beside me as I sit on a stool in a restaurant bar talking to a man in his late 20s, whom I've seen grow up in Cayucos, Calif., a little beach town with less than one percent African American. He's a good kid, a little rough around the edges, used to surf and brawl but got married and buckled down and has a good gig on a construction crew in San Luis Obispo County that is always busy. His reputation now is of a hard worker and family man with a job dog in the back of his pickup, a grown up – at last.

"You don't mean that," I say. "And you shouldn't use the 'N' word."

"I can use it any time I want. I live out in Paso Robles now and they got gangs, and those niggers fuck with my family, I'll blow the motherfuckers away."

What's this got to do with Obama? I ask myself. I don't know how we got on this subject on such a pleasant summer evening with the sun going down just over the pier and turning cloud cover into brilliant shards of copper/gold and crimson.

"How many black folks do you know?" I ask him.

"What's that got to do with it? I know how I feel."

I thought about telling him how when I was about eight or nine and growing up in Compton, Calif., I used the word nigger unwittingly around my mother, and for the first and only time this gentle, educated, highly sensitive woman, described by my dad as a "bleeding-heart Eleanor Roosevelt liberal," slapped my face so hard my ears rang. She dragged me into the bathroom and began washing my mouth out with soap. She was crying hysterically and then I began crying and when she was finished she sat me down and explained how the word nigger was the ugliest word in the English language, how it was about meanness and cruelty and ignorance and the oppression of a people, and how hearing that word from her son broke her heart and made her feel a pain so awful she could not bear it.

I thought about telling him how as a sophomore at Compton High, a huge school, I made varsity shortstop in baseball and my best friend on the team was a black second baseman named Loman Young, a junior mature beyond his years and who calmed me down and humbled me when I lost my temper and kicked at things and swore maniacally, and who counseled me when I felt close to cracking up from the pressure of being an ex-major leaguer's son. He seemed to always put other people's concerns before his own – rare in a teenager.

My mother, described by my dad as a "bleeding-heart Eleanor Roosevelt liberal," slapped my face so hard my ears rang

GETTING ON

After spending my last dime, I managed to luck into a gig as storekeeper on the Delta Queen riverboat, last steamship to carry passengers up and down the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers

I thought about telling how when I was a medic in the Army, I spent a year on the graveyard shift in an emergency room out in the boondocks with Alvin Callock, an 18-year-old from Hough, in Cleveland, one of the toughest ghettos in the country, who had to join the army at 17 to stay out of jail. In that year, we learned everything about each other, good and bad. I got caught up in the middle of a racial brawl started by some rednecks in the Enlisted Man's Club and it was Alvin who stepped into the melee as I was getting pummeled by three men and dragged me down to the dispensary for medical care, grinning the whole time, complimenting me on my boxing skills. Uneducated, raw, he lay on his bunk laughing out loud at Joseph Heller's humor, mesmerized by his narratives, reading a copy of "Catch-22" that I'd given him. Some of our graveyard conversations went on for hours, and from Alvin I learned the street, while from me he discovered knowledge via literature.

After my discharge, and a few menial jobs, I hitchhiked across the country for New Orleans and Mardi Gras in 1969, searching for what I did not know, during a time of great social upheaval and racial tension in the US. After spending my last dime, I managed to luck into a gig as storekeeper on the Delta Queen riverboat, last steamship to carry passengers up and down the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. And, besides the captain and his officers, engineers and pilots, I was the only white employee among deckhands, porters, waiters, the entire kitchen crew, bartenders and maids.

I worked under the ship's chef, a 69-year-old named Henry Joyner, who'd grown up the oldest in a family of eighteen sharecroppers outside Tupelo, Mississippi, and came to Memphis at 29 in his first pair of real shoes, dead broke, facing the Depression. He ended up working two jobs – head chef at the Jewish country club and at the veterans hospital – for forty years and raising eleven kids who eventually became splendid citizens, and moving his entire family to

Memphis. During the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., he was one of the powerful figures who took the podium and kept the riots out of Memphis. He was a deeply religious man who had no problem with my being agnostic. His fierce work ethic and disdain for slackers was tempered by a shrewd and easy going sense of humor. He became my best friend and mentor and to this day the most extraordinary and beloved person I've ever had the privilege to know, a person I hark back to whenever I become disheartened or negative and begin to lose my sense of humor.

Another friend was Mr. Davis, a waiter, an ex-professional baseball player in the Negro Leagues, a renaissance man who could cook, build and repair just about anything, a ladies' man who moved with an unmatched elegance and fluidity and could carry on a conversation with the aplomb and erudition of a college professor. He was hard on me, always testing me, expecting much. I had to ASK him for advice. He had lived in Paris for years to escape the racism in America and hitchhiked throughout Western Europe in a sport coat and slacks. He made sure to give me an excellent haircut and beard trim and loaned me his shirt, slacks and sport coat before taking me to blues joints and chicken-shacks in Memphis and along the Delta where I became educated in a music of which I had previously been ignorant. One of the black maids came along, and when I danced with her, and asked how all these black people dancing around us could be so joyous in the face of such tragic, heart-breaking music, she told me, "Chile, that's how us black folk forget our sorrow."

It wasn't all easy sailing on the Queen. My real trouble was with the porters and deckhands my age, who were bitterly resentful of my presence, and as a carefree white boy who automatically latched onto one of the best gigs aboard ship on a lark and seemed to be "the chef's pet." It was a time of militant black power and combustible anger among young people and the burning

down of our black ghettos in nearly every big city in America. Willie Hobdy, the top deckhand, a tireless, nonstop worker, a man around my size and built like a light heavy-weight boxer, who wore a stocking cap and scowled continuously, stole blatantly from my pallets of stock on the bow while fellow deckhands looked on and snickered. He made comments demeaning my manhood. He snarled at me, goaded me. Davis told me I'd have to fight him eventually and warned me that Willie would try and get in the first punch, because I, too, was built like a light heavyweight boxer and posed a threat.

Sure enough, while having heated words when I confronted him on the bow, he hit me so hard I saw green and yellow flashes, my left eye immediately gushing blood as I retaliated with a right hand that crushed his nose and busted his lip. If the captain hadn't come along we might have killed each other. Sad and shaken, I retreated to the bar at the King Cotton Hotel on the main drag in Memphis in my work shirt, eye swollen shut and bruised, a violent headache pulsing. A row of post-graduates from down the road at the U of Mississippi in Oxford, whom I'd run into before, lectured me on my stupidity in making friends with and trusting "nigras." They lectured me very sternly about my "Yankee naivety," explaining that nigras were an inferior species given to thievery, filthiness, laziness, a total lack of morals, all of whom not only belonged where they'd been for centuries, but that they WANTED it that way, because they had no initiative. While listening to this garbage, it dawned on me very slowly and with a bludgeon that because of my white skin, and only my white skin, I represented to Willie and his fellow deckhands everything they hated in this world.

I left. Back on the Queen, despondent, I ran into Willie, lurking in an alcove along the engine room, sitting alone. He was almost always noisy and with fellow deckhands. His face was pulpy and swollen. He wouldn't look at me as I halted before him.

I asked him if he still wanted to fight. He shook his head and told me, "It's all outta me."

"It's all outta me, too," I said, though there was nothing in me compared to what was in Willie. I'd merely defended myself against something I was beginning to understand.

I was starving, hadn't eaten a thing. I had access to the galley through the chef. I asked Willie if he was hungry. He nodded. I invited him to join me in the galley. It was late, and dark, and I turned on the lights and the grill and slapped down two huge filet mignons that were reserved for our 100 percent white wealthy passengers and heated up a pot of black-eyed peas. We still hadn't talked. Willie sat at the card table where cooks and the chef and our dishwasher and I liked to drink coffee and munch pastries and eat, and I plopped down a pitcher of ice cold milk. We ate silently, ravenously, two brutalized young men, and when we finished Willie said thank you in an almost inaudible voice, and the next day instead of stealing from my pallets he helped me stock, and he became my friend, telling me his life story of growing up in some tiny town on a river a few miles north of Mobile, Alabama, and explained why he never left the ship – all of his pay (\$65 a week) went to his mother and his wife and kid, whom he only saw when the Delta Queen dry-docked in winter and he returned to Alabama for two weeks.

Almost immediately the resentment among my former enemies evaporated. Willie shouted, "The Beard!" as a greeting. Other deckhands referred to me as "Moses," and "Mistah Sto-keepah." I became immersed in black culture to such an extent that the chef paused one day and accused me of being black in a former life and coming back the same way only with a white skin. I have never been happier. It was a joy to be among people who'd started life with nothing, or in some cases less than nothing, continued to get the short end of the stick, faced police harassment, served time,

We ate silently, ravenously, two brutalized young men, and when we finished Willie said thank you in an almost inaudible voice

GETTING ON

I'd like to tell him how ugly it sounds to use the word nigger, and especially in reference to a man in the White House who is not corrupt, not a liar, not a born-rich economic boob or a draft-dodging war-mongering neo-con blowhard

missed meals, and never even conceived of achieving dreams (I wanted to be a writer), yet seemed to celebrate what little was left of their lot and complained far less about the state of things than the old men I see hanging around Cayucos listening to Rush Limbaugh and grousing with perennial scowls about that goddamn black bastard, or the men and women I overhear at the gym who, although far better off financially than they were in 2008, growl about Obama being “that black socialist giving those lazy welfare niggers their precious money.”

I'd like to explain a few things to this lad beside me, who was never, to me, a mean-spirited person, and who seems happy with HIS lot and his young family; I'd like to tell him how ugly it sounds to use the word nigger, and especially in reference to a man in the White House who is not corrupt, not a liar,

not a born-rich economic boob or a draft-dodging war-mongering neo-con blowhard, is a good family man who seems to have a little compassion like all liberals for the underclasses. I'd like to ask him to try and step into a black person's shoes and have to listen to the cruelty and ignorance spewing from his mouth.

Finally I say, “Kid, you expose yourself to be an ugly, mean-spirited person when you talk that way about black folks. You embarrass yourself.”

“I don't give a shit,” he says.

CT

Dell Franklin writes from his home in Cayucos, Calif., where he lives with his mate, Wilbur, a very needy chocolate lab he rescued from the animal shelter. He is the founding publisher of The Rogue Voice and is currently working on a book about his dad, “The Ball Player's Son.”



WORDS and PICTURES

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The toll-booth economy

Corporate power is the real enemy within, but none of the major parties will confront it, writes **George Monbiot**

The more power you possess, the more insecure you feel. The paranoia of power drives people towards absolutism. But far from curing them of the conviction that they are threatened and beleaguered, it becomes only stronger.

Early in October, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, claimed that business is under political attack on a scale it has not faced since the fall of the Berlin wall. He was speaking at the Institute of Directors, where he was introduced with the claim that "we are in a generational struggle to defend the principles of the free market against people who want to undermine it or strip it away." A few days before, while introducing Osborne at the Conservative party conference, Digby Jones, formerly the head of the Confederation of British Industry, warned that companies are at risk of being killed by "regulation from Big Government" and of drowning "in the mire of anti-business mood music encouraged by vote-seekers." Where is that government and who are these vote-seekers? They are a figment of his imagination.

Where, with the exception of the Greens and Plaid Cymru, who have four MPs between them, are the political parties calling for greater restraints on corporate power? When David Cameron boasts that he is "rolling out the red carpet" for multinational corporations, "cutting their red tape,

cutting their taxes", promising always to set "the most competitive corporate taxes in the G20: lower than Germany, lower than Japan, lower than the United States", all Labour can say is "us too".

Its shadow business secretary, Chuka Umanna, once a fierce campaigner against tax avoidance, is now sponsored by a company which delivers "tailored tax solutions to individuals and organisations internationally". The shadow chancellor, Ed Balls, cannot open his lips without clamping them around the big business boot. There's no better illustration of the cross-party corporate consensus than the platform the Conservatives gave to Digby Jones to voice his paranoia. Jones was ennobled by Tony Blair and appointed as a minister in the Labour government. Now he rolls up at the Conservative conference to applaud George Osborne as the man who "did what was right for our Country. A personal pat on the back for that." A pat on the head would have been more appropriate – you can see which way power flows.

The corporate consensus is enforced not only by the lack of political choice, but by an assault on democracy itself. Steered by business lobbyists, the European Union and the United States are negotiating a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If it goes ahead it will suppress the ability of governments to put the public interest

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TWISTING REALITY

When David Cameron told the Conservative party conference “there’s no reward without effort; no wealth without work; no success without sacrifice”, he was talking cobblers

ahead of profit. It could expose Britain to cases like El Salvador’s, where an Australian company is now suing the government before a closed tribunal of corporate lawyers for \$300m (nearly half the country’s annual budget) in potential profits foregone. Why? Because El Salvador has refused permission for a gold mine that would poison people’s drinking water.

Last month the Commons public accounts committee found that the British government has inserted a remarkable clause into contracts with the companies to whom it is handing the probation service (one of the maddest privatisations of all). If a future government seeks to cancel these contracts (Labour has said it will) it would have to pay the companies the money they would otherwise have made over the next ten years. Yes, ten years. The penalty would amount to between £300m and £400m.

Windfalls like this are everywhere: think of the billion pounds the government threw into the air when it sold Royal Mail, or the massive state subsidies quietly being channelled to the private train companies. When Cameron told the Conservative party conference “there’s no reward without effort; no wealth without work; no success without sacrifice”, he was talking cobblers. Thanks to his policies, shareholders and corporate executives become stupendously rich by sitting in the current with their mouths open.

Ours is a toll-booth economy, unchallenged by any major party, in which companies which have captured essential public services – water, energy, trains – charge extraordinary fees we have no choice but to pay. If there is a “generational struggle to defend the principles of the free market”, it’s a struggle against the corporations, which have replaced the market with a state-endorsed oligarchy.

It’s because of the power of corporations that the minimum wage remains so low, while executives cream off millions. It’s because of this power that most people

in poverty are in work, and the state must pay billions to supplement their appalling wages. It’s because of this power that, in the midst of a crisis so severe that the world has lost over 50% of its vertebrate wildlife in just 40 years, the government is organising a bonfire of environmental protection. It’s because of this power that instead of innovative taxation (such as a financial transactions tax and land value taxation) we have permanent austerity for the poor. It’s because of this power that billions are still pumped into tax havens. It’s because of this power that Britain is becoming a tax haven in its own right.

And still they want more. Through a lobbying industry and a political funding system successive governments have failed to reform, corporations select and buy and bully the political class to prevent effective challenge to their hegemony. Any politician brave enough to stand up to them is relentlessly hounded by the corporate media. Corporations are the enemy within.

So it’s depressing to see charities falling over themselves to assure George Osborne that they are not, as he alleged, putting the “counter view” to the “business argument”. “We don’t recognise the divide he draws between the concerns of businesses and charities,” says Oxfam. People “should be celebrating not denigrating the relationship between business and charities”, says the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. These are good groups, doing good work. But if, in the face of a full-spectrum assault by corporate power on everything they exist to defend, they cannot stand up and name the problem, you have to wonder what they are for.

There’s a generational struggle taking place all right: a struggle over what remains of our democracy. It’s time we joined it. **CT**

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George Monbiot’s book “Feral” was recently released in paperback format. This article was originally published in the Guardian newspaper

Let a thousand poles bloom

Conn M. Hallinan on a new economic order that may soon pose a serious challenge to US domination of the world

At the very moment that the Americans and their allies are trying to squeeze Russia and Iran with a combination of economic sanctions and political isolation, alternative poles of power are emerging that soon may present a serious challenge to the US dominated world that emerged from the end of the Cold War.

This past summer, the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – created an alternative to the largely US controlled World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) added 1.6 billion people to its rolls.

The BRICS construction of a Contingent Reserve Arrangement will give its members emergency access to foreign currency, which might eventually dethrone the dollar as the world's reserve currency. The creation of a development bank will make it possible to by-pass the IMF for loans, thus avoiding the organization's onerous austerity requirements.

Less than a month after the BRICS' declaration of independence from the current strictures of world finance, the SCO – China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – approved India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia for membership in the organization. It was the single largest expansion of the economic cooperation and

security-minded group in its history, and it could end up diluting the impact of sanctions currently plaguing Moscow over the Ukraine crisis and Teheran over its nuclear program.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization began as the Shanghai Five in 1996, and five years later became the SCO. Even before the recent additions, SCO represented three-fifths of Eurasia and 25 percent of the world's population.

A major focus of the SCO is security, although the countries involved have different agendas about what that exactly means.

Russia and China are determined to reduce US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence in Central Asia to what it was before the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. The SCO has consistently rebuffed US requests for observer status, and has pressured countries in the region to end US basing rights. The US was forced out of Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan in 2006, and from Manas in Kyrgyzstan in 2014.

“At present, the SCO has started to counterbalance NATO's role in Asia,” says Alexei Maslov, chair of the Department of Oriental Studies of the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, and the new members, he says, want in to safeguard their interests.

The BRICS construction of a Contingent Reserve Arrangement will give its members emergency access to foreign currency, which might eventually dethrone the dollar as the world's reserve currency

ALL CHANGE

When the 2,500-mile "Power of Siberia" pipeline is completed in 2018, it will supply China with about 15 percent of its natural gas

Given the current confrontation between NATO and Russia over the Ukraine, and tensions in the East China Sea between the US, Japan, and China, Moscow and Beijing may not agree on a number of issues – in 1969 they came to blows over a border dispute – but they are on the same page when it comes to limiting Washington's influence in their respective backyards.

Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Chang Wanquan said last year "China is ready to work with Russia to...expand the scope of bilateral defense cooperation." Last month Russia's Chief of Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov declared that, "Russia is ready to make joint efforts with China to lift the relationship to a new high." China has been supportive of Russia in the Ukraine crisis.

For Iran, SCO membership may serve as a way to bypass sanctions currently pounding the Iranian economy. Russia and Iran signed a memorandum in August to exchange Russian energy technology and food for Iranian oil, a move that would violate US sanctions. But Moscow – already weathering sanctions that have weakened its economy – may be figuring that there is little more the US can do and still keep its European allies on board. Russian countersanctions on the European Union (EU) have shoved a number of European countries back into recession, and the EU is worried that Russia will turn east and Europe will lose much of its Russian market share.

To a certain extent, that is already happening. When the 2,500-mile "Power of Siberia" pipeline is completed in 2018, it will supply China with about 15 percent of its natural gas, Russia's Rosneft and China's National Petroleum Corporation are jointly exploring oil and gas reserves in the arctic, and the Russians have also offered China a stake in the huge Vankor oil field in East Siberia. Since January 2014, some 30 percent of Russian oil exports have gone to Asia.

Teheran is reaching out to Beijing as well. Iran and China have negotiated a deal

to trade Iran's oil for China's manufactured goods. Beijing is currently Iran's number one customer for oil. In late September, two Chinese warships paid a first ever visit to Iran, and the two countries navies carried out joint anti-piracy and rescue maneuvers.

For India and Pakistan, energy is a major concern, and membership in the oil and gas rich SCO is a major plus. Whether that will lead to a reduction of tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad over Kashmir is less certain, but at least the two traditional enemies will be sitting down to talk about economic cooperation and regional security on a regular basis.

There are similar tensions between SCO members Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan over borders, and both countries, plus Tajikistan, have squabbled over water rights.

Most SCO members are concerned about security, particularly given the imminent departure of the US and NATO from Afghanistan. That country might well descend into civil war, one that could have a destabilizing effect on its neighbors. Added to that is the US-NATO-Gulf monarchy jihad against the Assad regime in Syria, a conflict that is raising yet another generation of mujahedeen that will some day reappear in their home countries – some of them SCO members – trained and primed for war.

From Aug. 24-29, SCO members China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan took part in "Peace Mission 2014," an anti-terrorist exercise to "subdue" a hypothetical Central Asia city that had become a center for terrorist activity. The drill involved aircraft, 7,000 troops, armored vehicles, and drones, and according to China's Chief of Staff, Fang Fenghui, was aimed at the "three evil forces of terrorism, separatism, and extremism."

The problem with General Fang's definition of "terrorism" is that it can easily be applied to minorities or local groups with legitimate complaints about their treat-

ment by SCO member governments.

China has come down hard on Turkic speaking Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province, who have been resisting marginalization by China's dominant ethnic group, the Han. Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti was recently sentenced to life imprisonment for "separatist activity."

Beijing has also suppressed demands for independence or more autonomy by Tibetans – who it also labels "separatists" – even though China has no more a claim over Tibet than Britain did to India or Ireland. All of them were swept up by empires at the point of a sword.

The BRICS and the SCO are the two largest independent international organizations to develop over the past decade, but there are others as well. In Latin America, Mercosur – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela – is the third largest trade grouping in the world. Associate members include Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Mexico and New Zealand have observer status. The newly minted Union of South American Nations (USAN) includes every country in South America, including Cuba, and has largely replaced the Cold War relic, the Organization of American States (OAS) that excluded Havana. While the US and Canada are part of the OAS, they were not invited to join USAN.

What role these new organizations will play internationally is not clear. Certainly sanction regimens will be harder to maintain because the SCO and the BRICS create alternatives. South Africa, for instance, announced that it would begin buying Iran oil in the next few months, an important breach in the sanctions against Iran. But being in the same organization does not automatically translate into having the same politics on international questions.

The BRICS and the recent Israeli invasion of Gaza are a case in point. China called for negotiations. Russia was generally neutral (but friendly toward the Netanyahu gov-

ernment, in part because there are lots of Russians in Israel). India was silent – Israel is New Delhi's number one source of arms. South Africa was critical of Israel, and Brazil withdrew its ambassador

In comparison, NATO was generally supportive of the Israeli actions, Turkey being the odd man out. There is more political uniformity among NATO countries than there is among SCO and BRICS nations, although there is growing opposition in the ranks of the European Union (EU) over Washington's hard line approach on the Ukraine. The US does \$26 billion in trade with Russia, the EU \$370 billion. Russia also supplies Europe with 30 percent of its natural gas, although that reaches 100 percent for countries like Finland. Most EU countries – the Baltic nations and Poland being the exceptions – see little percentage in a long, drawn out confrontation with Russia.

These independent poles are only starting to develop and it is hardly clear what their ultimate impact on international politics will be. But the days when the IMF, World Bank, and US Treasury could essentially dictate international finances and intimidate or crush opponents with an avalanche of sanctions are drawing to a close.

The BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are two nails in that coffin. **CT**

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South Africa, for instance, announced that it would begin buying Iran oil in the next few months, an important breach in the sanctions against Iran

NATO: An idea whose time has gone

It's not a defensive alliance, its attempts at global arbitration have been a dismal failure, and it's a threat to world peace, writes **Craig Murray**

The notion that NATO member states could bomb the world into good was only ever believed by crazed and fanatical people like Tony Blair and Jim Murphy of the Henry Jackson Society

In the past dozen years, the armed forces of NATO countries, whether operating under the NATO banner or in related ad-hoc coalitions, have killed many hundreds of thousands of people. Of those hundreds of thousands of people, only a few hundred at most ever had any connection to any attack on a NATO country.

Whatever modern NATO has become, a defensive alliance it is not; that fact is beyond rational dispute.

It is also the case that the situation in countries where NATO has been most active in killing people, including Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and Pakistan, has deteriorated. It has deteriorated politically, economically, militarily and socially. The notion that NATO member states could bomb the world into good was only ever believed by crazed and fanatical people like Tony Blair and Jim Murphy of the Henry Jackson Society. It really should not have needed empirical investigation to prove it was wrong, but it has been tried, and has been proved wrong.

The NATO states as a group have also embarked on remarkably similar reductions in the civil liberties of their own populations during this period. NATO to me is symbolised by the fact that its Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, as Danish Prime Minister blatantly lied to the Danish parliament about Iraqi Weapons

of Mass Destruction. When Major Frank Grevil released material that proved Rasmussen was lying, it was Grevil who was jailed for three years. In the United States, no CIA operative has been prosecuted for their widespread campaign of torture, but John Kiriakou is in jail for revealing it.

NATO's attempt to be global arbiter and enforcer has been disastrous at all levels. Its plan to redeem itself by bombing the Caliphate in Iraq and Syria is a further sign of madness.

Except of course that it will guarantee some blowback against Western targets, and that will "justify" further bombings, and yet more profit for the arms manufacturers. On that level, it is very clever and cynical. NATO provides power to the elite and money to the wealthy.

But what of Putin's Russia, I hear you say? I am no fan of Putin – I think he is a nasty, dangerous little dictator. But little is the operative word.

Russia is not a great power. Its GDP is 10% of the GDP of the EU. Its economy is the same size as Italy's. The capabilities of Russia's armed forces are massively exaggerated by the security industry, including the security services, and by arms manufacturers. The entire area of Eastern Ukraine which Russia is disputing has a GDP smaller than the Scottish city of Dundee.

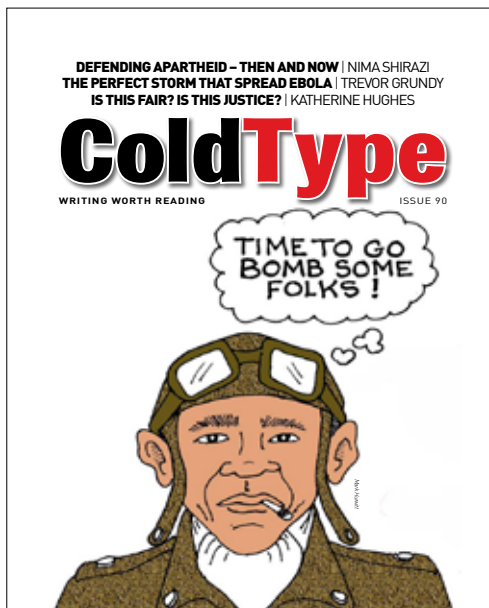
Russia is only any kind of “military threat” because of its nuclear arsenal. The way forward to peace is active international nuclear disarmament – and the existence of NATO is the greatest obstacle to that. The idea that almost the entire developed world needs to encircle and contain Russia with massive military threat, is as sensible as the idea that it needs to encircle the UK or France – both of which have substantially larger and more diversified economies than Russia and much

larger and more technologically advanced arms industries.

NATO is by far the largest danger to world peace. It should be dissolved as a matter of urgency. **CT**

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Craig Murray is an author, broadcaster and human rights activist. He was British Ambassador to Uzbekistan from August 2002 to October 2004 and Rector of the University of Dundee from 2007 to 2010. – <http://www.craigmurray.org.uk>

The way forward to peace is active international nuclear disarmament – and the existence of NATO is the greatest obstacle to that



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Is this fair? Is this justice?

Katherine Hughes writes about the years-long harassment of an American doctor who was jailed for collecting money for needy children

I have always known that if anything like this happened in my lifetime, not only did I not want any part of it but I did not want to be a bystander

My passion for the protection of civil liberties was sparked at the age of 14 when I saw a documentary on the Allies' liberation of Bergen-Belsen. For the past 40 years, in an effort to understand how something like that could happen, I've been reading first-hand accounts of 1930s and 1940s Europe and the former Soviet Union. Over the last 25 years I began noticing similar circumstances in both Europe and the United States: wars creating millions of refugees, financial crises, erosions of workers' rights and sharpening income inequality, along with national and individual poverty and debt, a xenophobic and racist climate, and attacks on civil liberties, including freedom of speech.

My alarm grew as I witnessed the post-9/11 demonization of Muslims. I have always known that if anything like this happened in my lifetime, not only did I not want any part of it but I did not want to be a bystander. It was for this reason that I decided to attend the trial of Rafil Dhafir, a respected oncologist from upstate New York. I knew virtually nothing about Dhafir before attending almost all of the 17-week trial in 2004. I took copious notes during the proceedings. Because of the injustice I witnessed, I've spent the last 10 years trying to let others know about the case: I started a website and have published articles and

given interviews. I'm currently working on a documentary.

After publishing my last article, "Anatomy of a 'Terrorism' Prosecution: Dr. Rafil Dhafir and the Help the Needy Muslim Charity Case," (see Page 82 of this issue to download a copy from *ColdType's* archives} in January 2012, I thought I had finally written everything I needed to about this case. A recent incident, however, has made stunningly clear the pattern of US government tactics that have made it impossible, for 12 long years, for Dhafir to mount an effective defense.

The latest incident occurred on June 18, 2014, when, for no given reason, Dhafir was taken out of the general population in the prison where he is serving his sentence and placed in the special housing unit (SHU). This happened in the midst of his last chance at a legal remedy, a 2255 habeas corpus motion. Since Dhafir has no money for an attorney, he has been working on the motion by himself, and conditions within the SHU (at one point he was denied writing material) have made such efforts extremely difficult. The deadline for the 2255 is November 4, 2014. It cannot be extended.

Preparing the 2255 includes reviewing six of the requested 37 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) discs that he finally received after a two-year delay. (He recently

received an additional two discs, but has had no chance to review them.) The six discs that he has reviewed have a total of 2,056 pages delivered (95 percent redacted) and 4,029 deleted pages. Even with so many pages missing and so much redacted, these pages clearly show the government's aim in this case: to connect Dhafir – no matter how tenuously – with Islamic terror and use his conviction as an example of the government's zeal in protecting the public.

Seven government agencies investigated Dhafir and his charity, Help the Needy (HTN), for many years. They intercepted his mail, email, faxes and telephone calls, bugged his office and hotel rooms, went through his trash and conducted physical surveillance. The FOIA request has revealed that there were many full-time agents working on the case, often doing overtime and working holidays. Many agencies across the country and around the world, in places as widespread as Detroit, St. Louis, Tampa, San Francisco, Chicago, Tel Aviv, Sydney, Canberra, Amman, Cairo and London, were involved. Though government failed to come up with anything that would stand up as such in a court of law, it clearly viewed his case as a terrorism trial.

From the day of the arrest, the government insinuated that Dhafir was a money launderer for terrorists. Long before he went on trial, he was pilloried in the court of public opinion.

A motion granted by Judge Mordue before the trial began meant that the defense could address the government's actual charges only and could not challenge its insinuations of support of terrorism. Although prosecutors could hint at more serious charges throughout the trial, the defense team couldn't respond to these inflammatory innuendos head-on. This strategy had devastating consequences not only for Dhafir's defense at trial, but also for his appeals, which were limited to the

district court record.

One of the most exciting things about the 2255 is that, unlike appeals, it gives the defendant a chance to present new evidence to the court, for example, evidence gleaned from the FOIA request, which clearly shows the government's true intent in this case and that, as late as 2010, it was still fishing for a connection to terrorism.

A letter writing campaign and call-in day was organized to find out the reason Dhafir had been placed in the SHU and to request that he be released back into the general population. The offices of Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York) also contacted the prison for information about why Dhafir was placed in the SHU. Dhafir, a deeply religious Muslim, spent the whole of Ramadan in the SHU, including Eid al-Fitr (comparable to a combined Easter and Christmas in the Christian tradition). After 73 days in the SHU, he was released without charge on August 29. We are still none the wiser as to why he was put there in the first place.

Background to the Case

Born in Iraq in 1948, Dhafir completed medical school before immigrating to the United States in 1972; he has been a US citizen for almost 40 years. He was a founding member of the Islamic Society of Central New York (ISCNY) and served as its spiritual leader for about seven years. He was an oncologist in an underserved area of Rome, New York, until his arrest, well-known for both his medical skill and his way of giving hope and courage to his patients. Both he and his African-American wife, Priscilla, were very active in Syracuse civic affairs. At trial, Priscilla Dhafir testified that she sat on the board of the YWCA, was a charter member of the Women's Fund, past director of the CNY Business and Professional Women's Club, and current treasurer of Syracuse Links, a group of professional women who reached out to youth in the area. Dhafir of-

Government agencies intercepted Dhafir's mail, email, faxes and telephone calls, bugged his office and hotel rooms, went through his trash and conducted physical surveillance

ATTACKING FREEDOM

Between 1990 and 2003, Dhafir worked tirelessly to shed light on the plight of the Iraqi people and raise funds to help them

ten spoke at events and on local TV and radio about health and cancer care.

On August 1, 1990, Saddam Hussein, then president of Iraq, invaded Kuwait and on August 2, US and UK-sponsored UN sanctions (also known as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA here in the United States) against Iraq were put in place. On January 17, 1991, the first bombs of the Gulf War were dropped on Baghdad. Before this war, Iraq, a wealthy country, had a First World standard of living. Although organized as a brutal dictatorship, the government provided universal health care and education – including college – for all its citizens. There was virtually no illiteracy and the education system and health system were the best in the region. Women enjoyed equal rights and religious minorities were respected.

The result of the war was total devastation: More bombs were dropped on Iraq in a six-week period than were dropped by all parties together in the whole of World War II. Many types of bombs were used including ones containing depleted uranium (DU), the waste matter from nuclear plants. DU dust has entered the food chain through the soil and the water, and as a result many formerly unknown diseases became prevalent in Iraq. Cancer and birth defects increased dramatically.

According to the United Nations' own statistics, every month throughout the 1990s, 6,000 children under the age of five in Iraq were dying from malnutrition and lack of access to simple medicines. Three senior UN officials resigned in protest, including Denis Halliday, the UN assistant secretary general. At the time, Halliday was serving as the humanitarian coordinator in Baghdad. In his words, he “had been instructed to implement a policy that satisfies the definition of genocide: a deliberate policy that has effectively killed well over a million individuals, children and adults.”

As a direct response to this catastrophe, Dhafir founded his charity, HTN, and open-

ly sent humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians during the long embargo. As an oncologist, Dhafir was particularly concerned about the effects of depleted uranium. Between 1990 and 2003, he worked tirelessly to shed light on the plight of the Iraqi people and raise funds to help them. According to the government, Dhafir donated \$1.4 million of his own money. Throughout these years, Dhafir asked US officials if this humanitarian aid was legal and was assured it was – that is, until the morning of his arrest.

At trial, Susan Hutner of the Department of the Treasury in the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) testified that she was involved in the drafting and implementation of the sanctions, and worked on them for 12 years. She said that OFAC did seek to notify targeted populations, but this did not include Iraqis living in this country, mosques or Muslim charities. The target populations were mainly banks, oil companies and other big businesses: Hutner gave presentations to some of these groups.

On February 26, 2003, just weeks before the US invasion of Iraq, Dhafir and other HTN associates were subjected to high-profile arrests. Then-Attorney General John Ashcroft called them “funders of terrorism.” No charges of funding terrorism, nor charges of any other aspect of terrorism, were ever brought against Dhafir.

Since the events of 9/11, Muslim charities have been among the biggest targets of the US government in its “war on terror,” and the government has implemented some powerful new tools for prosecution of these cases. Among the list of statutes being used is the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), also known as “United States economic sanctions.” IEEPA provides the president of the United States with authority to deal with any “unusual and extraordinary threat” that has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States; this includes a threat to “national security, foreign policy, and the economy.”

Prosecutors armed with the statutes are further empowered by using them in conjunction with the “material support of terrorism” laws, Executive Order 13224, and civil asset forfeiture laws, particularly those under IEEPA, which were amended by the Patriot Act. Under the IEEPA civil asset forfeiture provisions, the government can close down an organization and seize its assets while an investigation is ongoing, without probable cause of criminal activity and without any charges ever being brought against anyone.

EO 13224 was issued on September 23, 2001, and introduced a blacklist of organizations and individuals suspected of terrorism, materially aiding terrorism or associating with terrorists. IEEPA and international law permit humanitarian assistance for these suspects, including food, clothing and medicine, but this humanitarian aid is outlawed under the EO 13224. The penalty, for an IEEPA violation, for organizations that knowingly engage in terrorist financing already carries a sentence of 20 years to life in prison. What this new provision does is “drastically increase the penalties for knowing violations of non-terrorism-related IEEPA offenses.” People with a concern for civil liberties are troubled by the fact that the government provides no legal definition of what they consider a “specially designated terrorist” and by the broad manner in which the government is interpreting the new rules.

Muslim charities and individuals connected with these charities are bearing the brunt of the effects of this new law. Since September 11, 2001, six major US Muslim charities and many smaller Muslim charities have been shut down. Sadly, the government’s zeal for prosecuting Muslim charities has not abated with time. Just last year, Iranian-American doctor Hossein Lahiji and his wife, Najmeh Vahid, were prosecuted using many of the same legal tools used in Dhafir’s case, including threat of Medicare fraud prosecution.

Before attending this trial, I felt secure that my civil liberties would always be respected; I no longer believe that to be true. I still believe in fairness and justice despite my experience at the trial, and each new injustice that Dhafir suffers only strengthens my commitment to them. It is for this reason that I wish to share some unfair tactics that I witnessed throughout this case. Those who would like more detailed documentation of the government’s role in this case can read my most recent article.

Pretrial: Innocent Until Proven Guilty?

Dhafir was subject to a high-profile arrest February 26, 2003: News agencies with helicopters hovered over his house as 85 agents spent the day going through the house and carrying out boxes of evidence, while Ashcroft announced the arrest of “funders of terrorism.” But Dhafir was never allowed to defend himself of this charge in a court of law. This duplicitous government approach continually hampered the defense, not only at trial, but also on appeals.

Dhafir was never released after his arrest and was denied bail six times before his case came to trial 19 months later. This placed many impediments in the way of preparing his defense. (Barry Gewanter of the CNYCLU addressed some of the difficulties Dhafir faced on a WCNY Channel 24 program that aired on the eve of his sentencing.)

On March 11, 2003, less than two weeks after Dhafir’s arrest, Steve Emerson of “The Investigative Project On Terrorism” (IPT) testified before the House Committee on Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation. Listed on p. 25, HTN is just one of many Muslim charities included in the testimony. None of these charities’ principals had been anywhere near a court of law, and many had not even been indicted.

In July 2003, Jeffrey Breinholt, then-coordinator of the Department of Justice Terrorist Financing Task Force published

Dhafir was never released after his arrest and was denied bail six times before his case came to trial 19 months later

ATTACKING FREEDOM

While state and national government officials tarred Dhafir with the “terrorism” brush, District Attorney Glenn Suddaby and the three local prosecutors insisted Dhafir was nothing more than a common white-collar criminal

a “Terrorist Financing” paper. His paper lists the same cases covered in Emerson’s testimony and sets out the game plan for prosecutions of these cases. In the introduction, he says: “Persons cannot be convicted of the federal crime of terrorism because there is no such crime. Instead, terrorism crimes have developed in the same manner as other crimes, policymakers determine what evil (or ‘mischief’) should be prevented and then craft criminal laws that take into account how such mischief is generally achieved. On occasion, acts that are criminalized are not ones that should necessarily be discouraged, if committed by persons not otherwise involved in the targeted conduct. In such cases, laws are crafted to criminalize such conduct only in particular circumstances” (p. 3). Breinholt, a team member at the International Assessment and Strategy Center (IASC), published a 2008 article on its site, “Islam in American Courts: 2007 Year in Review.” In it he says, “Next time someone claims that American prosecutors never win terrorism cases, or that Muslims are not more likely to be terrorists than other ethnic enclaves, recommend that they visit a law library, where they will find several published 2007 opinions in the case books where Muslims were successfully prosecuted for conduct related to religiously-inspired violence.” He appears as one of the experts in Emerson’s most recent film, “Jihad in America: The Grand Deception”.

Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Michael Olmsted, head of the prosecution team, told Dhafir’s three trial lawyers (a black Baptist and two secular Jews) that Dhafir was anti-Semitic. It was patently false, so why did he tell them that?

Dhafir was initially held at the Justice Center in downtown Syracuse where he could meet with his trial lawyers face-to-face, but after some demonstrations in support of him, he was moved to the Onondaga County Jamesville Correctional Facility. At Jamesville, prisoners were strip

searched before they could meet with anyone from the outside and, as a devout Muslim, Dhafir refused to do this. (One of his lawyers, Joel Cohen, offered to be strip searched so that he could meet face to face with Dhafir, but this request was denied.) As a consequence, he now had to meet with his three lawyers through glass; only two could be in the visiting cubicle at any one time, and only one lawyer at a time could talk with him on the phone that connected them with Dhafir. The lawyers had to hold up bits of evidence to the window and ask Dhafir questions.

Because Dhafir couldn’t leave Jamesville prison without a strip search, he had a friend go to the federal building to look through the hundreds of boxes of evidence that had been taken from his house. Mohamed Khater spent 12 days going through the boxes looking for things that Dhafir needed for his defense.

While state and national government officials tarred Dhafir with the “terrorism” brush, District Attorney Glenn Suddaby and the three local prosecutors insisted Dhafir was nothing more than a common white-collar criminal. Yet just before Dhafir’s trial began in October 2004, then-New York Governor Pataki described the case as a “money laundering case to help terrorist organizations ... conduct horrible acts,” and described Dhafir and HTN supporters as “terrorists living here in New York State among us ... who are supporting and aiding and abetting those who would destroy our way of life and kill our friends and neighbors.” It was an announcement perfectly timed to reach potential jurors.

Trial

The first indictment against Dhafir contained 14 charges related only to the Iraq sanctions. When he refused to accept a plea agreement, the government piled on more charges and he finally faced a 60-count indictment. This made for a very complicated and expensive 17-week trial. The amount of

information was overwhelming.

The motion that Judge Mordue had granted to the government to keep the government's true motive for pursuing Dhafir out of the courtroom turned into a brick wall for the defense and made the trial surreal at times: Throughout the trial the government could hint at more serious charges pending, but the defense was never allowed to follow this line of questioning. An example of this dynamic can be seen in the testimony of Colleen Williams, a tax preparer Dhafir had hired to help HTN sort out its tax returns and give advice on a 501(c)(3) application for the charity. The government wanted Williams to inform on HTN and she described how FBI Agent Jim Kolbe, IRS Agent Mark Sweeney and US Attorney Brenda Sannes had spent three days, first individually and then together, asking her to wear a recorder in her meetings with HTN defendant Ayman Jarwan. She described them as "waving the flag" and telling her that, "9/11 may not have happened if people were involved." She felt the HTN people "were being pursued" and got rid of them as a client after only three meetings. She never agreed to wear a wire and refused to refer the case to a government attorney. For white-collar crime?

Although the government had taken all Dhafir's money (including HTN money and personal money in Amman, Jordan), the court still granted the prosecution's request to deny Dhafir transcripts at the expense of the court (50 cents a page). This meant that one of Dhafir's lawyers typed the proceedings on his laptop, and the defense purchased only those transcripts that it felt it couldn't do without.

Because Dhafir would not submit to a strip search, five federal marshals ferried him to and from the prison. Two were always in the courtroom: one sat behind Dhafir and another sat adjacent to the jury. They traded off approximately every 40 minutes in full view of the jury. This

changing of the guard was on top of federal building and courtroom security and took place at least 250 times during the proceedings. It was a powerful nonverbal message to the jury.

At trial, Osama bin Laden was mentioned with no relevance, and the jury was made aware that Dhafir followed the same Islamic religious tradition, Salafi, as Bin Laden. (Salafi merely means a Muslim who is a strict adherent of the Koran and looks to the ancestors for guidance. It is comparable to someone in the Christian faith who looks to the Scriptures, church fathers and traditions of the early church for guidance.)

Three government agents sat directly behind the three prosecutors, and adjacent to the jury, throughout the trial: FBI Agent Jim Kolbe testified for 16 days, eight of them as the sole witness and eight of them as one of only two witnesses; it was his testimony that, essentially, convicted Dhafir; Social Security agent Michael McCole testified for about 20 minutes; the Defense Department agent, a young blonde woman, did not testify. Why were all three of these agents paid to sit there for the whole of a 17-week white-collar criminal trial?

The government called more than 50 witnesses to testify, but neglected to call two key people: Kelly Tubbs, Dhafir's office manager of 10 years who was proud of the fact that Dhafir's office had never failed an audit, and Maher Zagha, a co-defendant who was the HTN representative in Jordan. Zagha organized the land and sea delivery of food, clothing and medicine to Iraq. The defense called witness for 15 minutes. Why didn't the government call Tubbs and Zagha? (Sadly the defense didn't call them either, and I imagine that was at least partly due to finance. Also, two of Dhafir's lawyers were solo practitioner lawyers from New York City, and had taken the job believing it would be a six-week trial. In fact, because the final indictment had 60 counts including 25 of Medicare fraud, it

FBI Agent Jim Kolbe testified for 16 days, eight of them as the sole witness and eight of them as one of only two witnesses; it was his testimony that, essentially, convicted Dhafir

ATTACKING FREEDOM

In December 2006, Dhafir was moved to a new communication management unit (CMU), in Terre Haute, Indiana. Its almost exclusively, Arab and/or Muslim prisoners are video monitored 24/7

ran for 17 weeks.)

Pre-Sentencing

After the guilty verdicts came down, District Attorney Glenn Suddaby (now a federal judge) told reporters at a news conference that he didn't want anyone saying anything about terrorism and that, regardless of 9/11, this prosecution would have gone ahead. But six months later, on submitting a sentencing memo that asked for a sentence of not less than 24 years, he announced that Dhafir had links to terrorism. The connection? On several occasions during the 1980s, Dhafir was in Pakistan as a volunteer doctor in mujahedeen refugee camps. On one of these trips, he briefly met and interviewed Abdallah Azzam, who was later known as a teacher and mentor of Osama bin Laden; and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, future Taliban prime minister of Afghanistan. At the time Dhafir met these two, they were friends of the United States, and the government even noted this in a footnote of its memo. Yet Dhafir and other HTN defendants are now listed on the government's list of successful terrorism prosecutions.

Post-Sentencing

Within weeks of Dhafir's sentencing, Breinholt, author of the July 2003 "Terrorist Financing" paper mentioned above, and a research and practice associate at the Syracuse University (SU) Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT), presented a lecture to a group of third-year law students at SU. Entitled, "A Law Enforcement Approach to Terrorist Financing," it contained the essence of his paper and highlighted the Dhafir and HTN case. Greg West, one of the three HTN prosecutors, helped present the lecture, while the other two prosecutors, Michael Olmsted and Steve Green, were in attendance to answer questions. Breinholt told the students that Dhafir's case had been under-prosecuted and in the context of the lecture's title the implication was clear. He explained that be-

cause the "American public won't tolerate anything less than the rule of law," creative ways had to be figured out to draft laws that can be used to prosecute what they are trying to prevent. He told students that a major tool that emerged to gain convictions in terrorist financing cases is the use of International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) violations, and that in order to convict under IEEPA all that was necessary was to build a chain of inferences from available circumstantial evidence. Why was Dhafir never allowed to address the real reason for the government's prosecution in a court of law?

In December 2006, Dhafir was moved to a special new communication management unit (CMU), in Terre Haute, Indiana. It is completely self-contained and houses, almost exclusively, Arab and/or Muslim prisoners. Prisoners are video monitored 24/7, and there are severe restrictions on communication. Contact with family and friends is limited; outgoing and incoming mail is monitored and copied, with a one- to two- week delivery delay; and no contact visits are allowed. Instead of 300 minutes of phone time a month, prisoners may receive only one 15-minute call a week, which the warden has the power to reduce to just three minutes a month. Unlike the usual weekly or biweekly all-day contact visits, visits in the CMU were for two hours, just twice a month, and restricted to non-contact only. Calls and visits had to be conducted in English unless prior arrangement was made. (Since 2006, there have been some slight changes to these regulations, but nothing substantial.)

Appeal

It took 18 months to raise the money for two new appeal lawyers. As soon as the appeal team was hired, Olmsted, again, falsely told Dhafir's lawyers (both secular Jews) that Dhafir was anti-Semitic. What purpose did this serve? (In Dhafir's statement before sentencing he says: "When my home was

ransacked, one of the government's main targets was my library. They nearly emptied it. What did they take? They took my Islamic books; they came looking for books of certain authors and took all these authors' books. They took Quran recitation tapes even though these books and tapes are available at any bookstore. They didn't touch my Encyclopedia Britannica, my Encyclopedia of the American History, none of the books of Richard Nixon or Henry Kissinger, nor Norman Schwarzkopf, the memoirs of President Bush Sr., James Baker or Colin Powell. Not the history books about the Jewish people, the famous books of Abba Eban, the Israeli foreign minister, certainly not the book about the life of Golda Meir. None of the different versions of the Bible including the Arabic Bible were touched nor the books of the Jewish Laws. None of the books confiscated from my library have been returned. What do these books have to do with Medicare, HTN and taxes? I think the court should know this.")

Initially, the appeal court granted Dhafir transcripts at the expense of the court (they are essential for an appeal). But the government challenged this ruling with completely unverifiable insinuations of personal wealth and persuaded the court to place some \$15,000 in additional costs on the defense. Challenging this could have been very costly and there was no guarantee of success, so additional funds had to be raised before the appeal could move ahead.

A decision handed down by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in August 2009 upheld Dhafir's conviction, but suggested the district court look again at the sentencing guidelines. The sentencing guidelines range on which his sentence was based was erroneously increased as if he were a third-party (professional) money launderer rather than the reality, which showed that he transmitted funds derived from the very same offenses which he had been convicted for personally committing

("mail fraud" and "tax fraud"). Seventy-five letters were written to Judge Mordue on Dhafir's behalf telling, in large part, of extreme conditions in the CMU that were taxing on Dhafir's health, and asking for clemency. People who wrote to Mordue on Dhafir's behalf include Denis Halliday and Hans Von Sponeck, both of whom resigned from the UN because they were unwilling to implement a genocidal policy of sanctions against Iraq, Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire, and many including members of Dhafir's family, families of his former patients, people from his faith community and people across the world who greatly appreciate his humanitarian outreach. Resentencing was scheduled for January 5, 2012, and just 12 days before it, Dhafir was suddenly moved out of the CMU into the general population at Terre Haute, and then to the Federal Medical Center in Devens, Massachusetts. At the resentencing on February 3, 2012, Mordue upheld the 22-year sentence.

Although Dhafir was moved out of the CMU to a medium security prison, the security is still strict because of the large number of sex offenders held there. There is a camp at this prison, but Dhafir is ineligible for the camp because of an early security designation by the Bureau of Prisons on Dhafir's status. In a 2010 challenge to this designation, Dhafir's appeal attorney Peter Goldberger wrote, "It is submitted that the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) improperly found that Petitioner [Dhafir] 'required monitoring of all communications' based only on the fact that an AUSA [Assistant United States Attorney] had said he was 'regarded as a shiek (sic) and Salafi.' As discussed below, this amounts to classifying Mr. Dhafir as ineligible for a minimum security facility (camp) based only on his religious beliefs." 'Sheikh' is an honorific term referring to either an elder or leader, or to an Islamic scholar and, as mentioned above, 'Salafi' merely means someone who looks to the early Muslims for guidance (as Christian's

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ATTACKING FREEDOM

After more than a decade of investigating Dhafir with, at times, many full-time agents and 24/7 surveillance of both Dhafir and his associates, the government is still unable to find anything that would stand up in a court of law linking Dhafir to terrorist

look to the original disciples). Dhafir is again challenging this designation in the hope he will become eligible for a camp.

2255 Motion

Formerly a wealthy and generous man, Dhafir was left penniless as a result of this prosecution. He has no money for a lawyer to work on his 2255 motion and he has been unable to find a pro bono lawyer. In the best of circumstance, working on this by himself would be no easy task. Being put in the SHU for 73 days placed an added and unnecessary burden on him.

Questions

How can this have been due process when Dhafir was clearly never held “innocent until proven guilty?” After more than a decade of investigating Dhafir with, at times, many full-time agents and 24/7 surveillance of both Dhafir and his associates, the government is still unable to find anything that would stand up in a court of law linking Dhafir to terrorists. How much longer will it continue to look?

How much has this whole prosecution cost taxpayers? Is it value for money?

Is keeping Dhafir in prison for another 10 years on top of the 12 he has already served a good use of taxpayer dollars? Does

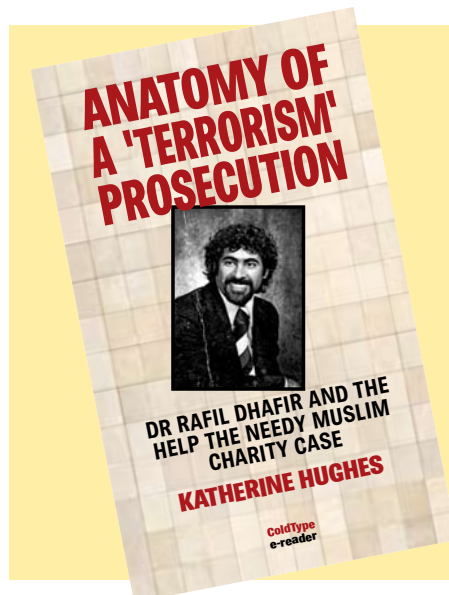
his imprisonment keep us safe from terrorist attacks?

Dhafir is in his 60s and has a number of health issues that affect his ability to endure the circumstances in which he is serving his sentence. He developed a heart condition after his arrest and has not always had the medication his condition requires. He has also had two extremely painful episodes of gout that could easily have been prevented if he had been given medication. And he had to wait a long time to have a painful hernia treated, and suffered a recurrence of the hernia which required further surgery. After his August 29 release from the SHU, he was deprived of his medication, including his heart meds, for over a week. If he does not get relief soon, he will almost certainly die in prison.

Is this fairness? Is this justice? **CT**

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Katherine Hughes has been passionate about the defense of civil liberties since seeing a documentary of the Allies going into Bergen-Belsen as a teenager 35 years ago. In the post-9/11 period, she became alarmed at the demonization of Muslims and it was this that prompted her to attend Dhafir's 14-week trial. She took notes every day and filled eight notebooks.

Her web site is: <http://dhafirtrial.net>



ANATOMY OF A 'TERRORISM' PROSECUTION

Click on the link below to download our 24-page e-book, **Anatomy Of a 'Terrorist' Prosecution**, a report by Katherine Hughes on the disturbing case of an American doctor who is now serving 22 years in jail for helping to feed sick and starving Iraqi children

<http://coldtype.net/assets.12/pdfs/1112.trial.pdf>

Ukraine and neo-Nazis

William Blum wonders why Vladimir Putin is compared to Adolf Hitler when evidence suggests that it is his opponents who are the real neo-Nazis

Ever since serious protest broke out in Ukraine in February the Western mainstream media, particularly in the United States, has seriously downplayed the fact that the usual suspects – the US/European Union/NATO triumvirate – have been on the same side as the neo-Nazis. In the US it's been virtually unmentionable. I'm sure that a poll taken in the United States on this issue would reveal near universal ignorance of the numerous neo-Nazi actions, including publicly calling for death to "Russians, Communists and Jews". But the dirty little secret has somehow poked its head out from behind the curtain a bit.

On September 9 NBCnews.com reported that "German TV shows Nazi symbols on helmets of Ukraine soldiers". The German station showed pictures of a soldier wearing a combat helmet with the "SS runes" of Hitler's infamous black-uniformed elite corps. (Runes are the letters of an alphabet used by ancient Germanic peoples.) A second soldier was shown with a swastika on his helmet.

On the 13th, the *Washington Post* showed a photo of the sleeping quarter of a member of the Azov Battalion, one of the Ukrainian paramilitary units fighting the pro-Russian separatists. On the wall above the bed is a large swastika. Not to worry, the *Post* quoted the platoon leader stating that the soldiers

embrace symbols and espouse extremist notions as part of some kind of "romantic" idea.

Yet, it is Russian president Vladimir Putin who is compared to Adolf Hitler by everyone from Prince Charles to Princess Hillary because of the incorporation of Crimea as part of Russia. On this question Putin has stated:

The Crimean authorities have relied on the well-known Kosovo precedent, a precedent our Western partners created themselves, with their own hands, so to speak. In a situation absolutely similar to the Crimean one, they deemed Kosovo's secession from Serbia to be legitimate, arguing everywhere that no permission from the country's central authorities was required for the unilateral declaration of independence. The UN's international court, based on Paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the UN Charter, agreed with that, and in its decision of 22 July 2010 noted the following, and I quote verbatim: No general prohibition may be inferred from the practice of the Security Council with regard to unilateral declarations of independence."

Putin as Hitler is dwarfed by the stories of Putin as invader (Vlad the Impaler?). For months the Western media has been beating the drums about Russia having (actually) invaded Ukraine. I recommend reading: "How Can You Tell Whether Russia has Invaded Ukraine?" by Dmitry Orlov

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I and other historians of US foreign policy have documented at length the statements of anti-American terrorists who have made it explicitly clear that their actions were in retaliation for Washington's decades of international abominations

And keep in mind the NATO encirclement of Russia. Imagine Russia setting up military bases in Canada and Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Remember what a Soviet base in Cuba led to.

Has the United States ever set a bad example?

Ever since that fateful day of September 11, 2001, the primary public relations goal of the United States has been to discredit the idea that somehow America had it coming because of its numerous political and military acts of aggression. Here's everyone's favorite hero, George W. Bush, speaking a month after 9-11:

"How do I respond when I see that in some Islamic countries there is vitriolic hatred for America? I'll tell you how I respond: I'm amazed. I'm amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. I am – like most Americans, I just can't believe it because I know how good we are."

Thank you, George. Now take your pills.

I and other historians of US foreign policy have documented at length the statements of anti-American terrorists who have made it explicitly clear that their actions were in retaliation for Washington's decades of international abominations. But American officials and media routinely ignore this evidence and cling to the party line that terrorists are simply cruel and crazed by religion; which many of them indeed are, but that doesn't change the political and historical facts.

This American mindset appears to be alive and well. At least four hostages held in Syria recently by Islamic State militants, including US journalist James Foley, were waterboarded during their captivity. The Washington Post *quoted a US official*: "ISIL is a group that routinely crucifies and beheads people. To suggest that there is any correlation between ISIL's brutality and past US actions is ridiculous and feeds into their twisted propaganda."

The Post, however, may have actually evolved a bit, adding that the "Islamic State militants ... appeared to model the technique on the CIA's use of waterboarding to interrogate suspected terrorists after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks."

Talk given by William Blum at a Teach-In on US Foreign Policy, American University, Washington, DC, September 6, 2014

Each of you I'm sure has met many people who support American foreign policy, with whom you've argued and argued. You point out one horror after another, from Vietnam to Iraq. From god-awful bombings and invasions to violations of international law and torture. And nothing helps. Nothing moves this person.

Now why is that? Are these people just stupid? I think a better answer is that they have certain preconceptions. Consciously or unconsciously, they have certain basic beliefs about the United States and its foreign policy, and if you don't deal with these basic beliefs you may as well be talking to a stone wall.

The most basic of these basic beliefs, I think, is a deeply-held conviction that no matter what the United States does abroad, no matter how bad it may look, no matter what horror may result, the government of the United States means well. American leaders may make mistakes, they may blunder, they may lie, they may even on the odd occasion cause more harm than good, but they do mean well. Their intentions are always honorable, even noble. Of that the great majority of Americans are certain.

Frances Fitzgerald, in her famous study of American school textbooks, summarized the message of these books: "The United States has been a kind of Salvation Army to the rest of the world: throughout history it had done little but dispense benefits to poor, ignorant, and diseased countries. The US always acted in a disinterested fashion, always from the highest of motives; it gave,

never took.”

And Americans genuinely wonder why the rest of the world can't see how benevolent and self-sacrificing America has been. Even many people who take part in the anti-war movement have a hard time shaking off some of this mindset; they march to spur America – the America they love and worship and trust – they march to spur this noble America back onto its path of goodness.

Many of the citizens fall for US government propaganda justifying its military actions as often and as naively as Charlie Brown falling for Lucy's football.

The American people are very much like the children of a Mafia boss who do not know what their father does for a living, and don't want to know, but then wonder why someone just threw a firebomb through the living room window.

This basic belief in America's good intentions is often linked to “American exceptionalism”. Let's look at how exceptional US foreign policy has been. Since the end of World War 2, the United States has:

1. Attempted to overthrow more than 50 foreign governments, most of which were democratically-elected.
2. Dropped bombs on the people of more than 30 countries.
3. Attempted to assassinate more than 50 foreign leaders.
4. Attempted to suppress a populist or nationalist movement in 20 countries.
5. Grossly interfered in democratic elections in at least 30 countries.
6. Led the world in torture; not only the torture performed directly by Americans upon foreigners, but providing torture equipment, torture manuals, lists of people to be tortured, and in-person guidance by American teachers, especially in Latin America.

This is indeed exceptional. No other country in all of history comes anywhere close to such a record.

So the next time you're up against a

stone wall ... ask the person what the United States would have to do in its foreign policy to lose his support. What for this person would finally be TOO MUCH. If the person mentions something really bad, chances are the United States has already done it, perhaps repeatedly.

Keep in mind that our precious homeland, above all, seeks to dominate the world. For economic reasons, nationalistic reasons, ideological, Christian, and for other reasons, world hegemony has long been America's bottom line. And let's not forget the powerful Executive Branch officials whose salaries, promotions, agency budgets and future well-paying private sector jobs depend upon perpetual war. These leaders are not especially concerned about the consequences for the world of their wars. They're not necessarily bad people; but they're amoral, like a sociopath is.

Take the Middle East and South Asia. The people in those areas have suffered horribly because of Islamic fundamentalism. What they desperately need are secular governments, which have respect for different religions. And such governments were actually instituted in the recent past. But what has been the fate of those governments?

Well, in the late 1970s through much of the 1980s, Afghanistan had a secular government that was relatively progressive, with full rights for women, which is hard to believe, isn't it? But even a Pentagon report of the time testified to the actuality of women's rights in Afghanistan. And what happened to that government? The United States overthrew it, allowing the Taliban to come to power. So keep that in mind the next time you hear an American official say that we have to remain in Afghanistan for the sake of women's rights.

After Afghanistan came Iraq, another secular society, under Saddam Hussein. And the United States overthrew that government as well, and now the country is overrun by crazed and bloody jihadists and fundamentalists of all kinds; and women

The American people are very much like the children of a Mafia boss who do not know what their father does for a living, and don't want to know, but then wonder why someone just threw a firebomb through the living room window

The KLA became renowned for their torture, their trafficking in women, heroin, and human body parts; another charming client of the empire

who are not covered up are running a serious risk.

Next came Libya; again, a secular country, under Moammar Gaddafi, who, like Saddam Hussein, had a tyrant side to him but could in important ways be benevolent and do marvelous things for Libya and Africa. To name just one example, Libya had a high ranking on the United Nation's Human Development Index. So, of course, the United States overthrew that government as well. In 2011, with the help of NATO we bombed the people of Libya almost every day for more than six months. And, once again, this led to messianic jihadists having a field day. How it will all turn out for the people of Libya, only God knows, or perhaps Allah.

And for the past three years, the United States has been doing its best to overthrow the secular government of Syria. And guess what? Syria is now a playground and battleground for all manner of ultra militant fundamentalists, including everyone's new favorite, IS, the Islamic State. The rise of IS owes a lot to what the US has done in Iraq, Libya, and Syria in recent years.

We can add to this marvelous list the case of the former Yugoslavia, another secular government that was overthrown by the United States, in the form of NATO, in 1999, giving rise to the creation of the largely-Muslim state of Kosovo, run by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA was considered a terrorist organization by the US, the UK and France for years, with numerous reports of the KLA being armed and trained by al-Qaeda, in al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan, and even having members of al-Qaeda in KLA ranks fighting against the Serbs of Yugoslavia. Washington's main concern was dealing a blow to Serbia, widely known as "the last communist government in Europe".

The KLA became renowned for their torture, their trafficking in women, heroin, and human body parts; another charming client of the empire.

Someone looking down upon all this from outer space could be forgiven for thinking that the United States is an Islamic power doing its best to spread the word – Allah Akbar!

But what, you might wonder, did each of these overthrown governments have in common that made them a target of Washington's wrath? The answer is that they could not easily be controlled by the empire; they refused to be client states; they were nationalistic; in a word, they were independent; a serious crime in the eyes of the empire.

So mention all this as well to our hypothetical supporter of US foreign policy and see whether he still believes that the United States means well. If he wonders how long it's been this way, point out to him that it would be difficult to name a single brutal dictatorship of the second half of the 20th Century that was not supported by the United States; not only supported, but often put into power and kept in power against the wishes of the population.

And in recent years as well, Washington has supported very repressive governments, such as Saudi Arabia, Honduras, Indonesia, Egypt, Colombia, Qatar, and Israel.

And what do American leaders think of their own record? Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was probably speaking for the whole private club of our foreign-policy leadership when she wrote in 2000 that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by "notions of international law and norms" or "institutions like the United Nations" because America was "on the right side of history."

Let me remind you of Daniel Ellsberg's conclusion about the US in Vietnam: "It wasn't that we were on the wrong side; we were the wrong side."

Well, far from being on the right side of history, we have in fact fought – I mean actually engaged in warfare – on the same

side as al Qaeda and their offspring on several occasions, beginning with Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s in support of the Islamic Moujahedeen, or Holy Warriors.

The US then gave military assistance, including bombing support, to Bosnia and Kosovo, both of which were being supported by al Qaeda in the Yugoslav conflicts of the early 1990s.

In Libya, in 2011, Washington and the Jihadists shared a common enemy, Gaddafi, and as mentioned, the US bombed the people of Libya for more than six months, allowing jihadists to take over parts of the country; and they're now fighting for the remaining parts. These wartime allies showed their gratitude to Washington by assassinating the US ambassador and three other Americans, apparently CIA, in the city of Benghazi.

Then, for some years in the mid and late 2000s, the United States backed Islamic militants in the Caucasus region of Russia, an area that has seen more than its share of religious terror going back to the Chechnyan actions of the 1990s.

Finally, in Syria, in attempting to overthrow the Assad government, the US has fought on the same side as several varieties of Islamic militants. That makes six occasions of the US being wartime allies of jihadist forces.

I realize that I have fed you an awful lot of negativity about what America has done to the world, and maybe it's been kind of hard for some of you to swallow. But my purpose has been to try to loosen the grip on your intellect and your emotions that you've been raised with – or to help you to help others to loosen that grip – the grip that assures you that your beloved America means well.

US foreign policy will not make much sense to you as long as you believe that its intentions are noble; as long as you ignore the consistent pattern of seeking world domination, which is a national compulsion of very long standing, known previ-

ously under other names such as Manifest Destiny, the American Century, American exceptionalism, globalization, or, as Madeleine Albright put it, “the indispensable nation” ... while others less kind have used the term “imperialist”.

In this context I can't resist giving the example of Bill Clinton. While president, in 1995, he was moved to say: “Whatever we may think about the political decisions of the Vietnam era, the brave Americans who fought and died there had noble motives. They fought for the freedom and the independence of the Vietnamese people.” Yes, that's really the way our leaders talk. But who knows what they really believe?

It is my hope that many of you who are not now activists against the empire and its wars will join the anti-war movement as I did in 1965 against the war in Vietnam. It's what radicalized me and so many others.

When I hear from people of a certain age about what began the process of losing their faith that the United States means well, it's Vietnam that far and away is given as the main cause.

I think that if the American powers-that-be had known in advance how their “Oh what a lovely war” was going to turn out they might not have made their mammoth historical blunder. Their invasion of Iraq in 2003 indicates that no Vietnam lesson had been learned at that point, but our continuing protest against war and threatened war in Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, and elsewhere may have – may have! – finally made a dent in the awful war mentality. I invite you all to join our movement. **CT**

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*”

If the American powers-that-be had known in advance how their “Oh what a lovely war” was going to turn out they might not have made their mammoth historical blunder

WRITING WORTH READING

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