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ISSUE 176

ColdType

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MID-JANUARY 2019

**WHY IS
THERESA
MAY
STILL
PRIME
MINISTER?**



Because the British establishment has shown it will do anything to stop Jeremy Corbyn from taking power

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KIT KNIGHTLY

Why is Theresa May still Prime Minister?

The British establishment has shown that it will do anything and everything in its power to stop Jeremy Corbyn from taking power

IMAGINE that Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party had won the 2017 General Election. Such a reality was within his grasp, after all. A few hundred votes here and there and we'd be living under a Labour government. The specifics of the alternate universe don't really matter – just that Jeremy Corbyn is Prime Minister ...

In just the last few months Corbyn's cabinet has been blighted by dozens of resignations, a UN report has condemned the UK's growing poverty and described the government as being "in denial" about the problem, and his cabinet is the first in the history of the nation to be found in contempt of Parliament. Then, on top of all that, his proposed Brexit deal suffered the most lopsided, the most humiliating, Parliamentary defeat in nearly 100 years.

If all this had happened to a Jeremy Corbyn government, what would the national reaction be? More tellingly, what would the reaction of the press be? How many newspapers would run front-page editorials calling for his resignation? I would suggest all of them. They would strike different tones, and would support different replacements, but every paper would be repeating that old David Cameron line: "For Heaven's sake man, go!"

In this hypothetical world, would Jeremy Corbyn still be Prime Minister? No. He would not.

Of course – Jeremy Corbyn isn't Prime Minister, Theresa May is. Still. Somehow. And, of course, each of the above things happened to her and her government in the last six months.

Since the 2017 election, Theresa May has field-

ed 32 resignations – roughly one every two weeks, more than 20 of them in the last six months. Her Home Secretary resigned in disgrace over her lying to Parliament, only to be re-appointed to the cabinet, in a different position, just six months later.

In November 2018 Professor Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, released a report on poverty in the UK. The statistics are unpleasant reading:

"14 million people, a fifth of the population, live in poverty. Four million of these are more than 50 percent below the poverty line, and 1.5 million are destitute, unable to afford basic essentials. The widely respected Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts a 7 percent rise in child poverty between 2015 and 2022, and various sources predict child poverty rates of as high as 40 percent".

But more telling are the parts that are directly critical of the government (my emphasis):

"The Government has remained determinedly in a **state of denial**. Even while devolved authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland are frantically trying to devise ways to 'mitigate', or in other words counteract, at least the worst features of the Government's benefits policy, Ministers insisted to me that all is well and running according to plan".

The costs of austerity have fallen disproportionately upon the poor, women, racial and ethnic minorities, children, single parents, and people

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with disabilities. The changes to taxes and benefits since 2010 have been highly regressive, and the policies have taken the highest toll on those least able to bear it. The government says everyone's hard work has paid off, but according to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, while the bottom 20 percent of earners will have lost on average 10 percent of their income by 2021/22 as a result of these changes, top earners have actually come out ahead.

Imagine if UNSR had written these words about a Labour government: Would they have been so buried? Would you be reading about them here? Or would they be splashed across the front pages of the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Mail* and *Sun*?

On December 4, Theresa May's government was found to be in contempt of parliament over its refusal to publish Brexit legal advice. To hammer home the impact of this: it's the first time, ever, that a sitting government has been found in contempt of parliament. Imagine if a Corbyn government had been the first EVER to be found in contempt of parliament. How long would you expect his career as Prime Minister to last? How many editorials would be calling for his head?

So we come to the Brexit vote of January 15, defeated by more than 230 votes, the heaviest defeat of a government bill since the 1920s. Theresa May's "best possible deal" is dead. Gone. Finished. But Theresa May soldiers on.

Each of these failures is enough to bring down a government. Governments of the past have crashed and burned over far less. The famous incident, oft-cited the last few days, is Neville Chamberlain resigning as PM after winning a vote, because the 80 vote margin of victory was far less than his majority.

Theresa May's government has a strong argument for being the worst in the history of our

democracy. So why is it allowed to continue?

The Conservatives are hamstrung by the situation. They can't replace May, because a new unelected PM justifies Labour's calls for a general election. They have nailed their colours to the mast of the Mary Rose. They have chosen their hill to die on, and it's a heap of Theresa May's failed deals, broken promises and resignation letters, strewn with the bodies of rejected benefit claimants. Their position, though contemptible, is understandable. They have no choice.

The media, however, are far worse. Disgusting, even. They are more than complicit in this, they are a vital component. A driving force. Their selective reporting hides the embarrassing incompetence of the cabinet. Where are the editorials calling for May's resignation? Where the notionally "left wing" or "progressive" journalists demanding an immediate general election? They are nowhere to be seen. The media hold their fire while May stands out in the open with a target on her chest. A sitting duck. A very small barrel full of very large fish. She begs to be put out of her misery, but the media let her limp along.

Corbyn is right to refer the Conservative "zombie government". It is dead. A construct. Propped up and posed by an

establishment terrified of the only alternative. They have turned our politics into a farce. A cross between House of Cards and Weekend at Bernie's. An embarrassment.

So I ask again: Why is Theresa May still Prime Minister? The answer is simple: Because she has to be, because the only alternative is Jeremy Corbyn, and the establishment has shown that it will do anything and everything in its power to stop that happening. **CT**

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Kit Knightly is co-editor of OffGuardian – www.offguardian.org – where this article first appeared.



Photo: Detail from graffiti from a wall in London. Photo: Duncan C / Flickr.com

THOMAS S HARRINGTON

Informational eugenics

The elites will continue to consolidate their unfettered control over our lives unless we stand up and do something about it

A PBS documentary on January 16 highlighting the horror that was the practice of eugenics in early 20th-century America. In it, we see the typical cohort of talking heads explaining the history of this barbarous practice with the mixture of academic-style cool and barely suppressed outrage preferred by Americans when talking about disturbing phenomena that are safely distant from them in space and/or time.

The 60 years between 1870 and 1930 were period of extraordinary change in both America and Europe. Thanks to the combined arrival of industrialisation and urbanisation, traditional elites were confronted, for perhaps the first time in history, with the need to acknowledge the social and political agency of the great mass of humanity living around them. Most were unable to do so with calm or equanimity. Rather, they tended to seek refuge in that most versatile, and unfortunately frequently effective, of counterinsurgency devices: moral panic.

Though it is seldom read or mentioned today, the elite literature of moral panic from that era is a rich one. One classic example – published, in typically Spanish fashion at the end of the historical epoch in question – is José Ortega y Gasset’s *Revolt of the Masses* (1930). While most of the panicked elites, like Ortega, were content to simply exhort their fellow mandarins to exert greater political control and ethical vigilance over the increasingly indocile masses, others, like Francis Galton and Charles Davenport, the two men featured in The

Eugenics Crusade on PBS, saw a need for more strident measures.

Emboldened by a deep and childish faith in the inexorability of human progress through science, they decided that it was incumbent on them to cleanse our rapidly expanding gene pool of what they, in their narrowly racial and class-bound purviews, had identified as its less than admirable elements. With support from powerful financial and governmental backers in the US, Davenport embarked on a grisly programme of forced sterilisation, along with a campaign to restrict the entry into the US of nations or races “known” to be overloaded with defective genetic tendencies.

While watching, I could not help but reflect on the parallels between the events portrayed in the film and our current circumstance. After several decades of relative peace and stability between the elites and the masses in the US and Europe – peace and stability made possible by the implantation, to one degree or another, of the welfare state in these places after WWII – the elites are now once again in a state of fear before the great mass of their fellow men and women. That it was precisely their collective decision to begin dynamiting the post-war social pact in the 1980s that has led them to their present state of disquiet, does not seem to have given them cause for reflection.

No, just like their turn of the century forebears they are instead recurring to the cheap and destructive politics of moral panic ... but with a key difference.

The world of the eugenicists, which is to say the

THOMAS S HARRINGTON

world of industrial modernity, was defined, more than anything else, by its physicality. The new masses built things, and ate and drank strangely-scented foods and alcohols in what their “betters” like Davenport considered malodorous bars, that is, when they were not sweating openly and profusely all across the urban landscape.

It is thus not surprising that the discourse of moral panic erected by the turn-of-the-century elites was rooted in a deeply physical sense of repugnance toward the new mass of others, a disgust that expressed itself first in the drive for the prohibition of alcohol, and then reached its zenith with the eugenicists’ disturbingly successful attempts to mutilate the core human prerogative of the rurally-raised and often foreign-born working creatures in their midst.

Thanks to the off-shoring of most manufacturing, US and European elites are for the most part, no longer forced to engage on a day-to-day basis with the “messy” and “smelly” human consequences of the processes that bolster their wealth. They, and many of us, now live, as we have been told again and again, in an Information Age, wherein social power increasingly depends not so much on the ownership of manufacturing capability, but rather the ability to generate and maintain discourses of reality that portray the exalted financial status of the current elites, achieved largely through speculation and war-making, as natural and essential to the preservation of the common good.

Hence, what is now considered “messy” and “smelly” and thus deserving of the type of mutilating vengeance meted out by the early 20th-century eugenicists, are those people and entities who question the discourse of beneficence surrounding the elite’s waging of unprovoked wars that ruin entire civilisations and their impoverishment of millions of people through the blunt instrument of austerity.

Despite what you might have read or heard recently, “fake news” has always been with us. You need only look back to the information provided to the public in the lead-up to the Iraq War, or the ubiquitous presentation of the proudly racist state of Israel as a model democracy, for proof. What is new, however, is the carefully planned use of the idea, or meme of “fake news” (paradoxically, by many of the same people who have most availed

themselves of its propaganda benefits in the recent past) to restrict the flow of information that in any way questions the moral legitimacy of the elites and the elite-controlled entities that have obscenely enriched themselves while heedlessly plunging millions in to war and poverty over the last four decades.

Like Dr. Davenport and his powerful backers, people at places such as Propornot, the Atlantic Council, the Canary Project, the Integrity Initiative, Facebook, the *Washington Post* and Google are convinced that they not only have the right to perform such “informational eugenics”, upon our body politic, but that doing so will allow them to eke out more years of largely unfettered control over our lives. Whether or not they succeed in their efforts, depends largely on us, on the extent to which the wide swath of our educated classes that has fallen into a state of quivering moral panic before our rapidly changing world, decides to grow up and get on with the slow and discerning task of dealing with the new complexity of our circumstance, including its rich bevy of rightfully angry dissident voices.

If not, we will soon lose access to large, and potentially life-renewing elements of our shared patrimony of ideas, and will be left with the pathetic consolation prize of someday watching a PBS documentary (or its future correlate) in which talking heads that explain, with the shocked incredulity of the neighbour who discovers she has been living beside a child rapist for years, how the “logic” of today’s informational eugenics was largely accepted by most who, by dint of their privileged place in the educational hierarchy of the culture, could have done something to halt its devastating march of “progress”. **CT**

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Is Donald Trump an asteroid?

We have no place to go, despite NASA's plans to send humans to Mars, the rise of privatised projects for space tourism, and a Chinese spacecraft's landing on the far side of the moon

SIXTY-SIX million years ago, scientists tell us, an asteroid slammed into this planet. Landing on what's now Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, it gouged out a crater 150-kilometers wide and put so much soot and sulphur into the atmosphere that it created what was essentially a prolonged "nuclear winter". During that time, among so many other species, large and small, the dinosaurs went down for the count. (Don't, however, tell that to your local chicken, the closest living relative – it's now believed – of Tyrannosaurus Rex.)

It took approximately 66-million years for humanity to evolve from lowly surviving mammals and, over the course of a recent century or two, teach itself how to replicate the remarkable destructive power of that long-gone asteroid in two different ways: via nuclear power and the burning of fossil fuels. And if that isn't an accomplishment for the species that likes to bill itself as the most intelligent ever to inhabit this planet, what is?

Talking about accomplishments: as humanity has armed itself ever more lethally, it has also transformed itself into the local equivalent of so many asteroids. Think, for instance, of that moment in the spring of 2003 when George W Bush, Dick Cheney, and crew launched the invasion of Iraq with dreams of setting up a Pax Americana across the Greater Middle East and beyond. By the time US troops entered Baghdad, the burning and looting of the Iraqi capital had already begun, leaving the National Museum of Iraq trashed (gone were the tablets on which

Hammurabi first had a code of laws inscribed) and the National Library of Baghdad, with its tens of thousands of ancient manuscripts, in flames. (No such "asteroid" had hit that city since 1258, when Mongol warriors sacked it, destroying its many libraries and reputedly leaving the Tigris River running "black with ink" and red with blood.)

In truth, since 2003 the Greater Middle East has never stopped burning, as other militaries – Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Russian, Saudi, Syrian, Turkish – entered the fray, insurgent groups rose, terror movements spread, and the US military never left.

"How many people go to the middle of the desert to hold a wedding ...?"

By now, the asteroidal nature of American acts in the region should be beyond question. Consider, for example, the sainted retired general and former secretary of defence, Jim "Mad Dog" Mattis, the man who classically said of an Iraqi wedding party (including musicians) that his troops took out in 2004, "How many people go to the middle of the desert... to hold a wedding 80 miles from the nearest civilisation?" Or consider that, in the very same year, Mattis and the 1st Marine Division he commanded had just such an impact on the Iraqi city of Fallujah, leaving more than 75 percent of it in rubble.

Or focus for a moment on the destruction caused by some combination of US air power, ISIS suicide bombers, artillery, and mortars that, in seven



months of fighting in 2017, uprooted more than a million people from the still largely un-reconstructed Iraqi city of Mosul (where 10-million tons of rubble are estimated to remain). Or try to bring to mind the rubbleised city of Ramadi. Or consider the destruction of the Syrian city of Raqqa, the former “capital” of ISIS’s caliphate, left more than 80 percent “uninhabitable” after the US (and allied) air forces dropped 20,000 bombs on it. All are versions of the same phenomenon.

Yet when it comes to asteroids and the human future, one thing should be obvious. Such examples still represent relatively small-scale local impacts, given what’s to come.

If you happened to be an Afghan, Iraqi, Libyan,

Syrian, Somali, or Yemeni in the 21st-century, can there be any question that life would have seemed asteroidal to you? What Osama bin Laden began with just 19 fanatic followers and four hijacked commercial airliners the US military continued across the Greater Middle East and North Africa as if it were the force from outer space (which, in a sense, it was). It doesn’t matter whether you’re talking about cities turned to rubble, civilians slaughtered, wedding parties obliterated, populations uprooted and sent into various forms of exile, the transformation of former nations (however autocratic) into failed states, or the spread of terrorism.

It’s been quite a story. More than 17 years and at least \$5.6-trillion after the Bush administration launched its Global War on Terror, can there be

any question that the wildest dreams of Osama bin Laden have been more than fulfilled? And it's not faintly over yet.

More remarkable still, just about all of this has largely been ignored in the country that functionally made it so. If you asked most Americans, they would certainly know that almost 3,000 civilians were slaughtered in the terror attacks of 9/11, but how many (if any) would be aware of the several hundred civilians – brides, grooms, revellers, you name it – similarly slaughtered in what were, in essence, US terror attacks against multiple wedding parties in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen? And that's just to begin to mention the kinds of destruction that have gone on largely unnoticed here.

In the first 18 years of this century, tens of millions of people have been uprooted and displaced – more than 13-million in Syria alone – from what had been their homes, lives, and worlds. Many of them were sent fleeing into countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Sooner or later, more than one-million Syrians made it to Europe and 21,000 even made it to the United States. In the process, Washington's wars (and the conflicts that unfolded from them) unsettled ever more of the planet in much the way those particulates in the atmosphere did the world of 66-million years ago. So consider it an irony that, here in the US, so few connections have been made between such events and an unceasing series of American conflicts across the Greater Middle East and Africa – or that the thought of even the mildest sorts of retreats from any of those battlegrounds instantly leaves political and national security elites in Washington (and the media that cover them) in an uproar of horror.

Consider this a tale of imperial power gone awry that – were anyone here truly paying attention – could hardly have been uglier. And no matter what happens from here on, it's hard to imagine how things won't, in fact, get uglier still. I'm not just thinking about Donald Trump's Washington in 2019, where such ugliness is par for the course. I'm thinking about all of those lands affected by America's unending post-9/11 wars

(and the catastrophic American-backed Saudi one in Yemen that goes with them) – about, that is, the region and the conflicts from which Donald Trump sorta, maybe, in the most limited of ways was threatening to begin pulling back as last year ended and about which official Washington promptly went nuts.

We're talking, of course, about the conflicts from hell that have long been labelled “the war on terror” but – given the spread of terror groups and the rise of the anti-immigrant right in Europe and the United States – should probably have been called “the war for terror” or the “war from hell”. And it's this that official Washington and much of the mainstream media can't imagine getting rid of or out of.

Even if ISIS doesn't rebound, don't imagine that other horrors can't ...

Naturally, doing so will be ugly. In functionally admitting to a kind of defeat (even if the president insists on calling it victory), Washington will be tossing aside allies – Kurds, Afghans, and others – and leaving those who don't deserve such a fate in so many ditches (just as it did in Vietnam long ago). Worse yet, it will be leaving behind a part of the world that, on its watch, became not just a series of failed or semi-failed states, but a failed region. It will be leaving behind populations armed to the teeth, bereft of normal lives, or often of any sort of life at all, and of hope. It will be leaving behind a generation of children robbed of their futures and undoubtedly mad as hell. It will be leaving behind those cities in rubble and a universe of refugees and insurgents galore. Even if ISIS doesn't rebound, don't imagine that other horrors can't arise in such circumstances and amid such wreckage. Ugly will be the word for it.

And for some of that ugliness, you can indeed thank Donald Trump, whether he withdraws American troops from Syria, as promised, or not. After all, here's the strange thing: though no one in Washington or elsewhere in this country had paid more than passing attention to it, the recent Syrian “withdrawal” decision wasn't The Donald's first. Last March, he “froze” \$200-million that had been promised for Syrian aid and reconstruction,

TOM ENGELHARDT

money that assumedly might have gone to derub-bleising parts of that country – and rather than being up in arms about it, rather than offering a crescendo of criticism (as with his recent decision to withdraw troops), rather than resignations and protests, official Washington and the media that covers it just shrugged their collective shoulders. It couldn't have been uglier, but Washington was unfazed.

As for countermanding the president's order and staying, we already know what more than 17 years of endless American war have delivered to that region (as well as subtracted from the American treasury). What would another two, four, or eight years of – to use a fairly recent Pentagon term – “infinite war” mean? Here's one thing for sure: ugly wouldn't even cover it. And keep in mind that, despite Donald Trump's recent Syrian and Afghan decisions (both of which are reversible), so much of what passes for American war in this century, including the particularly grim Saudi version of it in Yemen and those Air Force and CIA drone assassination strikes across much of the region, has shown little sign of abating any-time soon.

Then, of course, there's that other issue, the one where withdrawal can't come into play, the one where ugly doesn't even begin to cover the territory.

In case you haven't instantly guessed – and I suspect you have – I'm thinking about what's happening to the place known to its English-speaking inhabitants as Earth. It no longer takes a scientist or a probing intelligence to know that the planet that welcomed humanity all these thousands of years has begun to appear a good deal less gracious thanks to humanity's burning of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. By now, no matter where you live, you should know the litany well enough, including (just to start down a long list): temperatures that are soaring and only promise to rise even more; a record melting of Arctic ice; a record heating of ocean waters; ever fiercer storms; ever fiercer wildfires (and ever longer fire seasons); rising sea levels that promise to begin drowning coastal

cities sometime later this century; the coming of mega-droughts and devastating heat waves (that by 2100 may, for instance, make the now heavily populated North China plain uninhabitable).

Nor do you have to be a scientist these days to draw a few obvious conclusions about trends on a planet where the last four years are the hottest on record and 20 of the last 22 years qualify as the warmest yet. And keep in mind that most of this was already clear enough at the moment in planetary history when a near-majority of Americans elected as president an ardent climate-change denier, as were so many in the party of which he became the orange-haired face. And also keep in mind that the very term climate-change denier no longer seems faintly apt as a description for him, “his” party, or the crew he's put in control of the government. Instead, they are proving to be the most enthusiastic group of climate-change aiders and abettors imaginable.

In other words, the administration heading the country that, historically, has been the largest emitter of greenhouse gases is now in the business – from leaving the Paris climate accord to opening the way for methane gas releases, from expanding offshore drilling to encouraging Arctic drilling, from freeing coal plants to release more mercury into the atmosphere to rejecting its own climate-change study – of doing more of the same until the end of time. And that's certainly a testament to something. Ultimately, though, what it's doing may be less important than what it isn't doing. On a planet on which, according to the latest UN report, there are only perhaps a dozen years left to keep the long-term global temperature rise under 1.5 degrees centigrade, the Trump administration is wasting time in the worst way imaginable.

Even 18 years into a series of “quagmire” Middle Eastern wars, the US could still withdraw from them, however ugly the process might be. It could indeed bring the troops home; it could ground the drones; it could downsize the Special Operations forces that now add up to a secret army of 70,000 (larger than the armies of many nations) at present deployed to much of the globe. It could do many things.

What Washington can't do – what we can't do

– is withdraw from the Earth, which is why we are now living on what I increasingly think of as a quagmire planet.

In the 1960s, that word, quagmire (“a bog having a surface that yields when stepped on”), and its cognates – swamp, sinkhole, morass, quicksand, bottomless pit – were picked up across the spectrum of American politics and applied to the increasingly disastrous war in Vietnam. It was an image that robbed Washington of much of its responsibility for that conflict. The quagmire itself was at fault – or as historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, put it at the time: “And so the policy of ‘one more step’ lured the United States deeper and deeper into the morass... until we find ourselves entrapped in that nightmare of American strategists, a land war in Asia”.

Embedded in the war talk of those years, quagmire was, in fact, not a description of the war as much as a worldview imposed on it. That image turned Vietnam into the aggressor, transferring agency for all negative action to the land itself, which had trapped us and wouldn’t let us go, even as that land was devalued. After all, to the Vietnamese, their country was anything but a quagmire. It was home and the American decision to be there a form of hated or desired (or sometimes, among America’s allies there, both hated and desired) intervention. Much the same could be said, of course, of the Greater Middle East in this century.

When it comes to this planet in the era of climate change, however, quagmire seems like a far more appropriate image, as long as we keep in mind that we are the aggressors. It is we who are burning those fossil fuels. It is, as our president loves to put it, “American energy dominance” that is threatening to submerge Miami, Shanghai, and other coastal cities in the century to come. It is the urge of the Trump administration to kneecap the development of alternative energies, while promoting coal, oil, and natural gas production that is threatening the human future. It is the acts and attitudes of Trumpian-like figures from Poland to Saudi Arabia to Brazil that threaten our children and grandchildren into the distant future, that

threaten, in fact, to turn the Earth itself into a rubbleised, ravaged planet. It is Vladimir Putin’s Russian petro-state that is at work creating a future swamp of destruction in the Arctic and elsewhere. It is a Chinese inability to truly come to grips with its use of coal (not to mention the way it’s exporting coal plants to Africa and elsewhere) that threatens to make our world into a morass. It is the lack of any urge on the part of fossil fuel CEOs to “keep it in the ground” that will potentially take humanity down for the count.

In that context, think of the man who, from his earliest moments in the Oval Office, wanted to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement, filled his cabinet with climate-change aiders and abettors, was desperate to obliterate his predecessor’s modest steps on climate change, and never saw a coal mine, oil rig, or fracking outfit he didn’t love as the latest asteroid to hit Planet Earth. Under the circumstances, if the rest of us don’t get ourselves together, we are likely to be the dinosaurs of the Anthropocene era.

Donald Trump himself is, of course, just a tiny, passing fragment of human history. Already 72, he will undoubtedly be taken down by a Big Mac attack or something else in the years to come and most of his record will become just so much human history. But on this single subject, his impact threatens to be anything but a matter of human history. It threatens to play out on a time scale that should boggle the mind.

He is a reminder that, on this quagmire planet of ours, we – the rest of us – have no place to go, despite NASA’s plans to send humans to Mars, the rise of privatised projects for space tourism, and a Chinese spacecraft’s landing on the far side of the moon. So, if we care about our children and grandchildren, as 2019 begins there is no time to spare and no more burning issue on Planet Earth than this.

CT

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*Tom Engelhardt is a co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of a history of the Cold War, *The End of Victory Culture*. He runs *TomDispatch.com*. His sixth and latest book is *A Nation Unmade by War*. This essay was first published at www.tomdispatch.com*

How to end corporate pillage of the state

We all have the ability to say, "I object. I will not help with your villainy"

EVERY year a certain number of American soldiers decide they'd rather not be involved in shooting people they don't know so that ExxonMobil can have more oil or Lockheed Martin can make more cash or MSNBC / Fox News can give their hosts topics for their upcoming poetry books. Basically, these soldiers do something horrifying, something terrible, something often called "treasonous" ...

They – wait for it – think for themselves! (Glass shatters. Woman screams. Baby cries.)

Nothing is more frightening for our endless war machine than a military grunt who thinks for him or herself. They're supposed to do nothing more than follow orders. They're supposed to ask a superior officer for permission to wear a different coloured pair of socks or type of underwear. That's right – the biggest, toughest gladiators in our society have to get authorisation to switch from boxers to briefs.

I'll get to what this has to do with our inverted totalitarian corporate pillaging in a moment.

One of the more notable soldiers who stood up this year was Spenser Rapone – a second lieutenant discharged on June 18, 2018, for disparaging the US war machine online and promoting a socialist revolution. (Clearly our enormous globe-spanning military complex can obliterate any possible enemies except independent thought, which promptly turns it to a mush akin to pea soup.) Apparently reading about the true story of Pat Tillman pushed Rapone toward the realisation

that he was a pawn in the middle of a massive lie.

"Pat Tillman showed me I could resist the indoctrination," Rapone said. "I did not have to let the military dehumanise me and turn me into something monstrous. When I learned how his death was covered up to sell the war, it was shocking".

To sell the war. Why is it they would need to sell a war? Oh, I know – because it's completely unjustifiable. For activities people naturally agree with or enjoy doing, you don't have to advertise them. Like you don't see ads saying, "Hey, feed your kids. ... Don't forget". Or a commercial saying, "Try having sex some time. It's fun!" That stuff comes pretty naturally. But you do need promotion (read: media propaganda) for our endless war games because it does not come naturally to most of us. War comes naturally to sociopaths, and then it's sold to the rest of us, much like a used car or an ill-advised timeshare in Cleveland.

But the military is not the only place where conscientious objectors play a role. It might be the only one where walking away can get you locked up in prison spending your days sewing McDonald's uniforms, but there are a lot of moments in our messed-up world when you can turn your back and do the right thing.

For example, fewer and fewer people are willing to do the job of killing millions of animals every year. A recent report "revealed that staff shortages at slaughterhouses [in the UK] were

LEE CAMP

threatening Christmas sales. Some 10,000 positions are unfilled at major abattoirs. ... The report explains that for most potential applicants, the industry's low pay is not the problem but that 'people simply do not want to do this work anymore.'"

Oh come on, you fragile snowflakes! "Ewww, I can't handle chopping the heads off a thousand pigs a day. It hurts my feelings to end the life of hundreds of sentient beings who haven't done anything to me to warrant such treatment. WAAH! I don't like loading buckets of adorable chickadees into the grinding colander so they can be turned into a meat milkshake that will ultimately be served to a labradoodle or a pugle. BOO HOO HOO!" (I might have made up the term "grinding colander".)

In all seriousness, working at the killing fields of a factory farm has life-long impacts that no one talks about. (And by "no one," I mean the media and our politicians and most everybody else.) As the *Guardian* reported, "Slaughterhouse work has been linked to a variety of disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder and perpetration-induced traumatic stress. One pig slaughterer said the 'worst thing' about the work is its 'emotional toll'. ... A worker at a chicken plant said one of his colleagues was 'hailed off to the mental hospital' after he 'kept having nightmares that chickens were after him.'" (It's tough to say what the chickens would've done with him had they caught him. Professional torture is made difficult by a lack of hands.)

These workers who have walked off the killing floors should be honoured as conscientious objectors. They should be rewarded for realising it's better to get paid to hand out coffees at the coffeehouse than death sentences at the slaughterhouse.

And conscientious objection happens in the big tech world too. Last May, a dozen Google employees quit to protest the company's role in drone-killing technology created for the Pentagon, and another 4,000 signed an internal petition to stop the partnership.

There have been many great objectors in our



STANDING UP: Ray Lewis, a retired Philadelphia police captain who is now a critic of police abuse and militarisation. Photo: CaptainRayLewis / Facebook

police forces, too. Captain Ray Lewis was in the Philadelphia police force for 23 years. Then he became an outspoken critic of police abuse, militarisation, excess force and the inequality that has hollowed out our society like an aggressive virus. He shows up to protests in full uniform and stands on the front lines to help remind the other cops what they should be protecting – and it's not oil pipelines or Wall Street banks. Perhaps most importantly, he does it all with a moustache that looks like it houses squirrels in the winter. It's quite possible that without the facial hair, not a single police officer would give a shit.

Conscientious objectors even show up in the grand hallways of the famously lockstep mainstream media outlets. Just a few weeks ago, veteran national security journalist William Arkin left his job at NBC and MSNBC and basically blasted them in an open letter, "... for becoming captive and subservient to the national security state, reflexively pro-war... and now the prime propaganda instrument of the War Machine's promotion of militarism and imperialism". Of course, anyone who regularly reads independent outlets would probably say Mr. Arkin is roughly 30 years late to this realisation. Yet it still takes

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nerve, gonads and a spine to turn against your employer while calling them out for manufacturing consent for hundreds of thousands of innocent deaths. (Certain types of deep-water fish are made up of only nerves, gonads and a spine, and they're constantly being insolent to their employers.)

The truth is, we the people may not have that much power. We don't control our democracy anymore now that every decision is based on money. We can't instantly change the entire system. But we have one very powerful tool – we have the power of our labour.

Watch Lee Camp's new comedy special

If you'd like to hear Lee Camp's other latest predictions, check out his brand new stand-up comedy special "Super Patriotic Very Uncle Sam Comedy Special Not Allowed On American TV." It's only available at

www.leecampcomedyspecial.com

Millions of Americans, and hundreds of millions worldwide, work for corporations or organisations that do evil every single day. This list includes:

- People at the big banks that fund the destruction of our world
- Officials sent to steal children from their mothers and fathers
- People working at big oil companies, pushing papers while knowing we only have 11 years left to completely change our behaviour
- Soldiers told to drone bomb a guy they've never met before

The list is endless, and ALL of these people have the ability to say, "I object. I will not help with your villainy".

If they all objected – we would see a different world overnight. **CT**

Lee Camp is an American stand-up comedian, writer, actor and activist. Camp is the host of the weekly comedy news TV show Redacted Tonight With Lee Camp on RT America. This essay first appeared at www.truthdig.com



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Israel's Nakba claim is a moral travesty

Israel demands Arab and Iranian hand over billions of dollars for its own 'Nakba'

ISRAEL, believe it or not, is demanding that seven Arab countries and Iran should pay \$250-billion as compensation for what it claims was the forceful expulsion of Jews from Arab countries during the late 1940s. The events that Israel cites allegedly occurred at a time when Zionist Jewish militias were actively uprooting nearly one million Palestinian Arabs and systematically destroying their homes, villages, and towns throughout Palestine.

The Israeli announcement, which reportedly followed “18 months of secret research” conducted by the government’s Ministry of Social Equality, should not be filed under the ever-expanding portfolio of Israel’s shameless misrepresentations of history. It is actually part of a calculated effort by the Israeli government, especially by Minister Gila Gamliel, to create a counter-narrative to the legitimate demand for the implementation of the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees ethnically cleansed by Jewish militias between 1947 and 1948.

There is a reason behind the Israeli urgency to reveal such questionable research: the relentless US-Israeli attempt over the past two years to dismiss the rights of Palestinian refugees, to question their numbers by re-defining who they are and to marginalise their grievances. It is all part and parcel of the ongoing plot disguised as the “Deal of the Century”, with the clear aim of removing from the table all major issues that are central to the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

“The time has come to correct the historic injus-

tice of the pogroms [against Jews] in seven Arab countries and Iran, and to restore, to hundreds of thousands of Jews who lost their property, what is rightfully theirs”, said Gamliel.

The phrase “...to correct the historic injustice” is no different to that used by Palestinians who have for 70 years and counting been demanding the restoration of their rights as per UN Resolution 194. The deliberate conflating of the Palestinian narrative and the Zionist narrative is aimed at creating parallels, with the hope that a future political agreement will result in grievances cancelling each other out.

Contrary to what Israeli historians want us to believe, though, there was no forced mass exodus of Jews from Arab countries and Iran. What took place was a massive campaign orchestrated by Zionist leaders at the time to replace Palestine’s indigenous Arab population with Jewish immigrants from all over the world. The ways in which this mission was achieved often involved violent Zionist plots, especially in Iraq.

In fact, the call for Jews to gather in Israel from all corners of the world remains the rallying cry of Israeli leaders and their Christian Evangelical supporters. The former want to ensure a Jewish majority in the state, while the latter is seeking to fulfil a Biblical condition for their long-awaited Armageddon and Rapture. To hold Arabs and Iran responsible for this bizarre and irresponsible behaviour is a transgression of the true historical narrative in which neither Gamliel nor her ministry is interested.

On the other hand, and unlike what Israeli military historians often claim, the expulsion of Palestinians from Palestine in 1947-48 (and the subsequent purges of the native population that followed the war of 1967) was a premeditated act of ethnic cleansing and genocide. It has been (and remains) part of a long-term and carefully calculated campaign that, from the very start, served as the main strategy at the heart of the Zionist movement's "vision" for the Palestinian people.

"We must expel the Arabs and take their place", wrote Israel's founder, military leader and first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion in a letter to his son, Amos, in October 1937. That was over a decade before Plan D (for Dalet) – which saw the destruction of the Palestinian homeland at the hands of Ben Gurion's militias and Zionist terrorist groups – was put into action.

Palestine "contains vast colonisation potential", Ben Gurion also wrote, "which the Arabs neither need nor are qualified to exploit." This clear declaration of a colonial project in Palestine, communicated with the same kind of unmistakable racist language and insinuations that accompanied all of the other western colonial experiences throughout many centuries, was not unique to Ben Gurion. He was merely paraphrasing what was, by then, understood to be the crux of the Zionist enterprise in Palestine at the time.

As Palestinian Professor Nur Masalha concluded in his book, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, the idea of the "transfer" – the Zionist term for ethnic cleansing – of the Palestinian people, was and remains fundamental to the realisation of Zionist ambitions in Palestine. Palestinian Arab "villages inside the Jewish state that resist 'should be destroyed... and their inhabitants expelled beyond the borders of the Jewish state,'" wrote Masalha, quoting the *History of the Haganah* by Yehuda Slutsky. The Haganah was the main Zionist militia which went on to become the Israel Defence Forces, along with remnants from the Irgun and Stern Gang terrorist groups.

What this meant in practice, as delineated by Palestinian historian Walid Khalidi, was the joint targeting by various Jewish militias of all population centres in Palestine systematically and with-

out exception. "By the end of April [1948], the combined Haganah-Irgun offensive had completely encircled [the Palestinian city of] Jaffa, forcing most of the remaining civilians to flee by sea to Gaza or Egypt; many drowned in the process," wrote Khalidi in *Before Their Diaspora*.

This tragedy grew to affect all Palestinians everywhere within the borders of their historic homeland. Tens of thousands of refugees joined up with hundreds of thousands more at various dusty trails throughout the country, growing in number as they walked further, before finally pitching their tents in areas that were meant to be temporary refugee camps. Alas, these remain Palestinian refugee camps today, spread across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

None of this was accidental. The determination of the early Zionists to establish a "national home" for Jews at the expense of the country's Palestinian Arab people was communicated, openly, clearly and repeatedly throughout the formation of early Zionist thought, and the translation of those well-articulated ideas into reality.

Seventy years have passed since the Nakba – the Catastrophe of 1948 – and Israel has never taken responsibility for its actions, and nor have Palestinian refugees received any measure of justice, however small or symbolic. For Israel to be seeking compensation from Arab countries and Iran is, therefore, a moral travesty, especially as Palestinians refugees continue to languish in refugee camps across Palestine and the Middle East.

Yes, indeed "the time has come to correct the historic injustice," but not of what Israel is now alleging to have been "pogroms" carried out by Arabs and Iranians. The real historic injustice is the ongoing and tragic destruction of Palestine and its people.

CT

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MARTIN JENKINSON

Who we are, the lives we live

Granville Williams visits an exhibition devoted to the work of a photographer whose work celebrated the drama and detail of life in the North of England

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GEOERGE “Geordie” Brealey, the miner featured in Martin Jenkinson’s photograph (right) at Orgeave during the UK’s 1984-85 miners’ strike, is engaged in humorous banter with a policeman as he “inspects” the police lines wearing his toy policemen’s helmet. There’s another similar photograph, by the *Guardian*’s Don McPhee, where the two face each other with fixed expressions.

Both pictures have been widely reproduced since – in books, magazines, on T-shirts – but it is the Jenkinson photograph that does it for me. It is one of a number of powerful images Martin took during the epic year-long strike when he was the official photographer for the Yorkshire Area of the National Union of Mineworkers and



Wearing a joke police helmet, George “Geordie” Brealey, a picket at Orgeave during the 1984-85 miners’ strike, jokes with a group of police officers, none of whom are wearing identification numbers. June 6, 1984



MARTIN JENKINSON



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People's March for Jobs, Yorkshire to London leg, Loughborough, Leicestershire. May 15, 1984.

their newspaper, the *Yorkshire Miner*.

Jenkinson died from cancer in February 2012, and now the former “steel city”, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, has honoured him with an exhibition, *Who We Are*, displaying more than 80 of his photographs.

The exhibition, at Weston Park Museum, does him proud. You are immediately drawn into the breadth of his work by a wall display of his press passes for the events he covered, ranging from a UB40 gig to the People's March for Jobs, from trade union conferences to the pit camps set up in the wake of the Tory government plan announced in October 1993 to close 31 pits with the loss of 31,000 jobs.

There's also a life-size mock-up of Martin's “studio” – in fact it was inside a gloomy garage. Mark Harvey, a photographer friend of Martin's, spoke on the opening night of the Weston Park exhibition and acknowledged



Police arrest picket at the British Steel plant at Tinsley Park, Sheffield, during one-day strike. October 22, 1982.



Striking Yorkshire miner digs for coal between railway lines in the shadow of Hickleton Colliery, Thurnscoe, South Yorkshire. January 15, 1985.

MARTIN JENKINSON

that it was the first time he had seen the studio clearly. He pointed out one exhibit from the office – a bulky Canon digital camera, one of the first to be made, which Martin used.

Jenkinson, a Londoner, moved to Sheffield with his wife Edwina and daughter Justine in 1976. For three years he worked in the steel industry. After being made redundant in 1979, he found a job on a local community newspaper, the *Woodpecker*, using his hobby – photography – to earn a living.

Martin's photography bears witness to a different city, one that bore the brunt of the ravages of Thatcherism, the attacks on jobs and living standards and the surge in unemployment. His strong sense of social justice, fairness and equality shines through all his work – exemplified, perhaps, in the photograph of a striking miner in South Yorkshire digging through snow to find coal to heat his home.

But the exhibition also reflects another important aspect to his work – the images of the pathos and humour of working-class life in and around Sheffield: among them are Von, a newspaper vendor; Maxine Duffat, Sheffield's first black female bus driver, and



Supt John Nesbit arrests Arthur Scargill, NUM President, at Orgreave during the 1984-85 miners' strike. May 30, 1984.



1,500 People queued for up to two hours for 50 jobs at a new restaurant, Woodstock Diner, Sheffield. February 7, 1983



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Above: Women Against Pit Closures pit camp, Armthorpe. January 11, 1983.

Left: Von the Sheffield Star newspaper seller at BSC River Don Works, Sheffield. September 16, 1982.

MARTIN JENKINSON



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A football supporter places a wreath outside the Hillsborough Stadium at Sheffield the day after 96 football fans were killed during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. April 15, 1989.

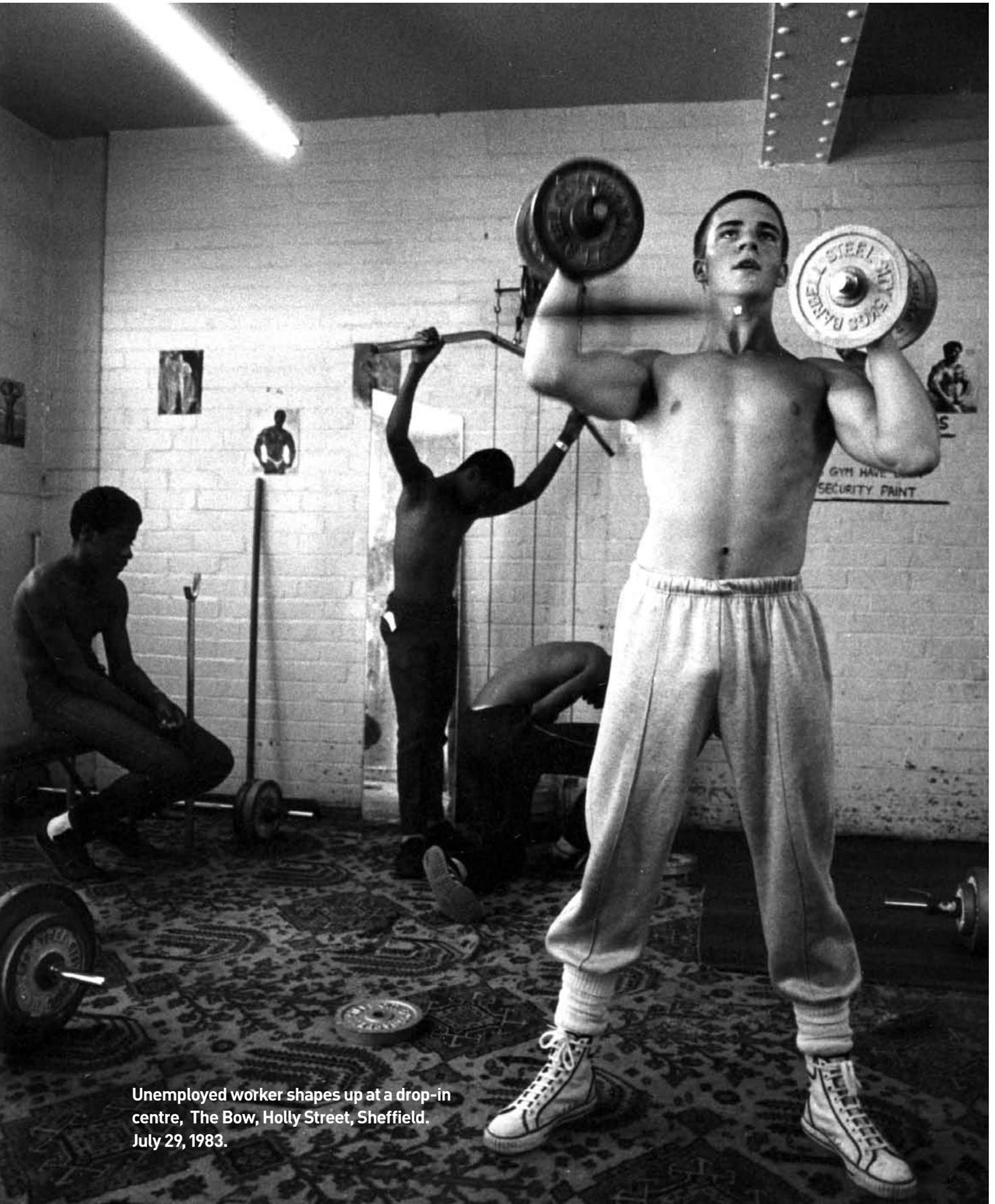
the 1,500 unemployed people queuing to apply for 50 jobs at a restaurant in Sheffield in 1983. **CT**

*Granville Williams is the coordinator for the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (North). For copies of its newsletter MediaNorth, please contact cpbfnorth@outlook.com. He is currently producing the second edition of the book *Shafted: The Media, the Miners' Strike and the Aftermath*, to be published in March 2019, marking the 35th anniversary of the start of the year-long UK miners' strike.*

Who We Are: Photographs by Martin Jenkinson – Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, England, continues until April 14, 2019. Admission is free



Maxine Duffus, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport's first black woman bus driver. Herries Road bus garage, Sheffield. November 18, 1983



Unemployed worker shapes up at a drop-in centre, The Bow, Holly Street, Sheffield. July 29, 1983.

Don't breathe

Pollution is now the biggest threat to children's health.
So why is it so neglected?

26

IMAGINE that you could buy, in thousands of shops across the country, canisters containing toxic gas. Imagine that some people walked the streets, squirting this gas into the face of every child they passed. Imagine that it became a craze, so that a child couldn't walk a metre without receiving a faceful. Imagine that, while a single dose was unlikely to cause serious harm, repeated doses damaged their hearts, lungs and brains, affecting their health, their intelligence and their life chances.

It would be treated as a national emergency. Sales of the canisters would immediately be banned. The police would be mobilised. If existing laws against poisoning children were deemed insufficient, new legislation would be rushed through parliament. It's not hard to picture this response, is it? Yet the mass poisoning is happening. And nothing changes.

According to a paper in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, burning fossil fuels is now "the world's most significant threat to children's health". Their life chances are compromised before they are born. Toxic particles from exhaust fumes pass through the lungs of pregnant women and accumulate in the placenta. The risk of premature birth and low birth weight this causes is described in the *British Medical Journal* as "something approaching a public health catastrophe".

Among the likely impacts of repeated poisoning, researchers now believe, is a "huge reduction" in intelligence. A paper published last year found

that "long-term exposure to air pollution impedes cognitive performance in verbal and math tests". Pollution stunts the growth of lungs as well as minds, raising the risk of asthma, cancer, stroke and heart failure.

How will this affect the Diesel Generation: in other words, those born since 2001? This was the year in which Tony Blair's government, rather than delivering the integrated public transport it had long promised, sought to tweak the carbon emissions from cars by taxing diesel engines at a lower rate than petrol engines. Diesel cars might produce a little less carbon dioxide, but they release more nitrogen oxides and particulates, a tendency exacerbated by the manufacturers' cheating. An entire generation – 18 years of births – has been exposed to the results of this folly.

Given that researchers have found an association between air pollution and childhood mental illness, could this help explain the rising prevalence of psychiatric disorders among English children since the first major survey, in 1999? A study conducted in London suggests that people with the highest exposure to pollution also have a greater risk of developing dementia. Might we have triggered a dementia timebomb, that could explode in 40 or 50 years?

The only difference between the absurd scenario with which this article began and reality is intent: no one means to poison children with their exhaust fumes. But the absence of a *mens rea* makes no difference to their health. The one-tonne metal canisters are still on sale (though the

GEORGE MONBIOT

number bought has dipped slightly in the past year) and toxic gas is pumped into our children's faces with every step they take.

Especially on the way to and from school. These are the times at which children inhale the most particulates (especially if they are driven – exposure is much greater inside a car than on the pavement). Horrifying recent data also reveals that pollutants from nearby roads accumulate in classrooms, leading to higher levels inside than out. Due to the continued failure of successive governments to address this crisis, taking children to school damages their minds.

This is a national emergency. As 90 percent of the world's children are now exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution, it is an international emergency. So why don't we react as we would if the poisoning were deliberate, and ban the sale of toxic gas canisters? In the UK, the government says it will end the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans (though not buses and lorries) by 2040. Another generation poisoned. In the latest budget, it exacerbated the problem, announcing a further £30-billion for roads, creating more space for toxic gas flasks.

When the government won't act, only palliatives remain. In desperation, Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, has started installing air filters in nurseries and classrooms. It's as if, rather than vaccinating children against diphtheria, they were issued with face masks.

After the *Lancet* commission on pollution and health reported, in 2017, that pollution kills more people than tobacco – and three times as many as Aids, tuberculosis and malaria combined – you might have hoped that governments, development agencies and health charities would have made it a priority. But they remain focused on communicable disease, while ignoring the greater, man-made threat. Where is Save the Children? Where is Médecins Sans Frontières? Where are the philanthropists seeking to eliminate deaths from ambient air pollution, as Bill and Melinda

Gates and others seek to wipe out malaria?

When the World Heart Federation built a global coalition to conquer heart disease and stroke, and when the charity Vital Strategies launched a similar initiative on cardiovascular illness – with Gates, Bloomberg and Zuckerberg money – they overlooked air pollution, even though it kills more people than the factors they emphasised (such as salt and trans fats). The same weird silence afflicts the UN taskforce on noncommunicable diseases and the World Health Organization's global action plan. Pollution is off the agenda. Why?

I think there may be three reasons. The first is that there is no heroic narrative built around tackling air pollution, while there are plenty (Louis Pasteur, Alexander Fleming, John Snow) surrounding the fight against infection. The second

is that the necessary interventions are not discrete but systemic. Rather than distributing mosquito nets or reducing the salt in processed food, you must change entire transport and industrial systems. The third is that, while no one has a commercial interest in spreading tuberculosis or polio, there is a massive global lobby, com-

prised of fossil fuel, motor and infrastructure companies, blocking effective action against pollution and the technologies that cause it. If you take on pollution, you take on the combined might of some of the world's most powerful industries. Pollution is the tangible manifestation of corruption.

The solution is political: confronting the power of this lobby and overturning the governments it has captured, then replacing private cars and ever-expanding roads with electric mass transit, walking and cycling, and imposing stringent conditions on dirty industries. We have been abandoned by those who claim to defend our children from disease. So we must mobilise. **CT**

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George Monbiot's latest book, How Did We Get Into This Mess?, is published by Verso. This article was first published in the Guardian. Monbiot's web site is www.monbiot.com



The war on populism

Remember when the War on Terror ended and the War on Populism began?
That's OK, no one else does, either

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T happened in the Summer of 2016, also known as “the Summer of Fear”. The War on Terror was going splendidly. There had been a series of “terrorist attacks”, in Orlando, Nice, Würzburg, Munich, Reutlingen, Ansbach, and Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, each of them perpetrated by suddenly “self-radicalised” “lone wolf terrorists” (or “non-terrorist terrorists”) who had absolutely no connection to any type of organised terrorist groups before suddenly “self-radicalising” themselves by consuming “terrorist content” on the Internet. It seemed we were entering a new and even more terrifying phase of the Global War on Terror, a phase in which anyone could be a “terrorist” and “terrorism” could mean almost anything.

This broadening of the already virtually meaningless definition of “terrorism” was transpiring just in time for Obama to hand off the reins to Hillary Clinton, who everyone knew was going to be the next president, and who was going to have to bomb the crap out of Syria in response to the non-terrorist terrorist threat. The War on Terror (or, rather, “the series of persistent targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America”, as Obama rebranded it) was going to continue, probably forever. The Brexit referendum had just taken place, but no one had really digested that yet ... And then Trump won the nomination.

Like that scene in Orwell’s *1984* where the Party switches official enemies right in the middle of the Hate Week rally, the War on Terror

was officially cancelled and replaced by the War on Populism. Or ... all right, it wasn’t quite that abrupt. But seriously, go back and scan the news. Note how the “Islamic terrorist threat” we had been conditioned to live in fear of on a daily basis since 2001 seemed to just vanish into thin air. Suddenly, the “existential threat” we were facing was “neo-nationalism”, “illiberalism”, or the pejorative designator du jour, “populism”.

Here we are, two-and-a-half years later, and “democracy” is under constant attack by a host of malevolent “populist” forces ... Russo-fascist Black vote suppressors, debaucherous eau de Novichok assassins, Bernie Sanders, the yellow-vested French, emboldened non-exploding mail bomb bombers, Jeremy Corbyn’s Nazi Death Cult, and now brain-devouring Russian-Cubano crickets.

The President of the United States is apparently both a Russian intelligence operative and literally the resurrection of Hitler. NBC and MSNBC have been officially merged with the CIA. The *Guardian* has dispensed with any pretence of journalism and is just making stories up out of whole cloth. Anyone who has ever visited Russia, or met with a Russian, or read a Russian novel, is on an “Enemies of Democracy” watch list (as is anyone refusing to vacation in Israel, which the Senate is now in the process of making mandatory for all US citizens).

Meanwhile, the “terrorists” are nowhere to



be found, except for the terrorists we've been using to attempt to overthrow the government of Bashar al Assad, the sadistic nerve-gassing Monster of Syria, who illegally invaded and conquered his own country in defiance of the "international community".

All this madness has something to do with "populism", although it isn't clear what. The leading theory is that the Russians are behind it. They've got some sort of hypno-technology (not to be confused with those brain-eating crickets) capable of manipulating the minds of ... well, Black people, mostly, but not just Black people. Obviously, they are also controlling the French, who they have transformed into "racist, hate-filled liars" who are "attacking elected representatives, journalists, Jews, foreigners, and homosexuals", according to French President Emmanuel Macron, the anointed "Golden Boy of Europe". More terrifying still, Putin is now able to project words out of Trump's mouth in real-time, literally using Trump's head as a puppet, or like one of those Mission Impossible masks. (Rachel Maddow conclusively proved this by spending a couple of hours on Google comparing the words coming out of Trump's mouth to words that had come out of Russian mouths, but

had never come out of American mouths, which they turned out to be the exact same words, or pretty close to the exact same words!) Apparently, Putin's master plan for Total Populist World Domination and Establishment of the Thousand Year Duginist Reich was to provoke the global capitalist ruling classes, the corporate media, and their credulous disciples into devolving into stark raving lunatics, or blithering idiots, or a combination of both.

But, seriously, all that actually happened back in the Summer of 2016 was that the global capitalist ruling classes recognised that they had a problem. The problem that they recognised they had (and continue to have, and are now acutely aware of) is that no one is enjoying global capitalism ... except the global capitalist ruling classes. The whole smiley-happy, supranational, neo-feudal corporate empire concept is not going over very well with the masses, or at least not with the unwashed masses. People started voting for right-wing parties, and Brexit, and other "populist" measures (not because they had suddenly transformed into Nazis, but because the

Right was acknowledging and exploiting their anger with the advance of global neoliberalism, while liberals and the Identity Politics Left were slow jamming the TPP with Obama and babbling about transgender bathrooms, and such).

The global capitalist ruling classes needed to put a stop to that (ie, the “populist” revolt, not the bathroom debate), so they suspended the Global War on Terror and launched the War on Populism. It was originally only meant to last until Hillary Clinton’s coronation, or the second Brexit referendum, then switch back to the War on Terror, but ... well, weird things happen, and here we are.

We’ll get back to the War on Terror, eventually ... as the War on Populism is essentially just a temporary rebranding of it. In the end, it’s all the same counter-insurgency. When a system is globally hegemonic, as our current model of capitalism is, every war is a counter-insurgency (ie, a campaign waged against an internal enemy), as there are no external enemies to fight. The “character” of the internal enemies might change (eg, “Islamic terrorism”, “extremism”, “fascism”, “populism”, “Trumpism”, “Corbynism”, etcetera) but they are all insurgencies against the hegemonic system ... which, in our case, is global capitalism, not the United States of America.

The way I see it, the global capitalist ruling classes now have less than two years to put down this current “populist” insurgency. First and foremost, they need to get rid of Trump, who, despite his bombastic nativist rhetoric is clearly no “hero of the common people”, nor any real threat to global capitalism, but who has become an anti-establishment symbol, like a walking, talking “fuck you” to both the American and global neoliberal elites. Then, they need to get a handle on Europe, which isn’t going to be particularly easy.

What happens next in France will be telling, as will whatever becomes of Brexit ... which I continue to believe will never actually happen, except perhaps in some purely nominal sense.

And then there’s the battle for hearts and minds, which they’ve been furiously waging for the last two years, and which is only going to intensify. If you think things are batshit crazy now (which, clearly, they are), strap yourself in. What is coming is going to make COINTELPRO look like the work of some amateur meme-freak. The neoliberal corporate media, psy-ops like Integrity Initiative, Internet-censoring apps like NewsGuard, ShareBlue and other David Brock outfits, and a legion of mass hysteria generators will be relentlessly barraging our brains with absurdity, disinformation, and just outright lies (as will their counterparts on the Right, of course, in case you thought that they were any alternative). It’s going to get extremely zany.

The good news is, by the time it’s all over and Trump has been dealt with, and normality restored, and the working classes put back in their places, we probably won’t remember that any of this happened. We’ll finally be able to sort out those bathrooms, and get back to paying the interest on our debts, and to living in more or less constant fear of an imminent devastating terrorist attack ... and won’t that be an enormous relief?

CT

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ONE MAGAZINE'S 10-YEAR QUEST FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Before I wound up in Toronto and ColdType, I designed **Frontline** magazine, South Africa's top liberal-left magazine, for 10 years during the 1980s as it battled for justice and equality during the final years of Apartheid. Now, we're digitising Frontline, as a case study of prophecy and history. The first digital issues are now on line; more will follow each month.

– **Tony Sutton, Editor**



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Women who made suffragette history

A century after some UK women won the vote, most of the suffragette stories we hear still focus on the elite. But this was a diverse movement

In October 1909, aristocratic suffragette Lady Constance Lytton was arrested and sent to Newcastle prison in the north of England. When the police discovered that she was the daughter of Lord Lytton, former Viceroy of India, they ordered her release after two days.

Along with her fellow militant suffragettes, Lytton had gone on hunger strike in protest at her arrest and the continued denial of the vote to women in the UK. But she was already in poor health and authorities feared she would die and become a martyr to the suffrage cause.

This was one factor in the decision to release her. But Lytton believed that her class and status had led to her release – that she received special treatment for this, with the police treating her with more politeness and delicacy compared to many others in the militant movement.

When Lytton next attended a protest, outside Walton Gaol, she disguised herself as a maid called Jane Warton. She was arrested and, again, went on hunger strike. This time, however, rather than be released, she was force-fed by the police eight times.

Force feeding was a common, brutal form of torture used against suffragettes, with food poured down the throats of restrained women or through nasal tubes. There is some evidence that women were even force-fed anally.

** This essay was written by Sian Norris while she was the Ben Pimlott Writer In Residence at Birkbeck University of London.*

Lytton's poor health was still evident at the time of this arrest, but because she was assumed to be lower-class, the authorities did not care.

She wanted to expose different attitudes from the police towards working-class women – she wanted the world to know that while the rich escaped some measure of brutality, the police routinely harmed and tortured poorer women.

It was this determination to show solidarity with her fellow women that led the militant suffragette Annie Kenney to write that Lytton's: "passion and devotion for the working-class women was extraordinary".

These acts of solidarity reflect a suffragette movement that was defined by cross-class activism, where members of the elite stood alongside working class women to expose institutionalised misogyny and fight for freedom.

In researched stories of suffragette cross-class solidarity, such as aristocrats like Constance Lytton working with survivors of child labour like Kenney, while the Ben Pimlott Writer In Residence at Birkbeck University of London. What I found was diversity – among the suffragettes and the broader political issues they campaigned on. I also found a lot that resonates with feminist struggles today.

When Kenney went to work in a factory as a child, it's unlikely she imagined that, just a few years later, she'd be addressing rallies, taking on male politicians, facing imprisonment, or finally



FACTORY GIRL: Suffragette leader Annie Kenney.

Photo: Bain News Service / Wikimedia COMMONS

writing in her memoir that “in the end, we won”.

Indeed, in that memoir *Memories Of A Militant*, she wrote that in her early years “politics did not interest me in the least”.

A “factory girl”, Kenney became a trade unionist, later on noting that there were “96,000 women members of the trade union and not any women officials”. This inequality was of course reflected in the voting laws of her time, when the lives of half the population were regulated by male voters and MPs, without their input. It wasn’t until Kenney was 38 years old, in 1918, that some women won the vote.

Kenney wasn’t unique in her position as a working-class woman fighting for the vote. She was joined by women like Mary Gawthorpe, a fellow survivor of child labour who became a teacher and a union activist.

Gawthorpe had campaigned for free school meals and labour rights before the arrest of Kenney and the militant suffragette organisation Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) co-founder Christabel Pankhurst in October 1905 convinced her that the right to vote was needed to

change things for women.

She quickly became a committed suffragette, writing to Christabel Pankhurst at this time that she, too “was ready to go to prison”.

Cross-class solidarity mattered to Gawthorpe. In her book *Suffrage Days*, historian Sandra Stanley Holton wrote that Gawthorpe found “a unity of purpose in the suffrage movement which made social distinction seem of little importance”, and experienced “sexual solidarity with women from other classes”.

Gawthorpe was paid £2 a week by the WSPU to rally her fellow working-class women to the cause. In her memoir, fellow militant suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst recalled one of their meetings where “throng[s] of mill women kept up the chorus in broad Yorkshire: ‘shall we win? Shall we have the vote? We shall!’”

One of the best-known members of the WSPU was Kenney, who travelled across the country rallying women to fight for the vote. Addressing crowds in Manchester, or heckling Winston Churchill at an electoral rally, she an electrifying speaker.

Like Gawthorpe, Kenney knew the importance of reaching out to the poorest in society. For them, the vote was not to be won for the rich or the elite. It had to be a tool which could change women’s lives wherever and however they lived.

In her memoir, Kenney described with admiration the courage of women who joined the fight for the vote from the slums of London’s East End, amidst daily struggles with extreme poverty, reflected in their “thin, sallow, pinched, pain-stricken” faces.

Kenney thought that, through the struggle for suffrage, “we gave them [East End women] something to dream about, and a hope in the future”. She had felt this herself, describing with emotion how the movement “absolutely changed” her life and was a “school for experience... a chance for those who loved adventure”.

Kenney also spoke to the Wigan pit girls. These were women who worked in the coal mines in the town of Wigan, in the north west of England. In 1908 they joined other suffragettes and campaign-

ers in a historic march on parliament to demand the vote.

She knew that, for pit and factory girls like herself, risking arrest was a significant sacrifice. Working-class women – as Constance Lytton’s experiment exposed – were treated differently, and had more to lose, in prison and after. But this didn’t stop the Wigan pit girls, and many other working-class women, who joined the movement despite these risks.

Kenney also recalled taking “fishwives, pit brow girls, East End women, laundresses, teachers, nurses, tailoresses, factory girls” to meet MPs. At one protest, she described meeting a “tin plate worker who said she had come alone, and [had been] determined to come whether she got killed or not”.

These women are not the popular representations of the suffragettes as middle-class, ‘middle England’ women that we are used to in the UK. While we celebrate the work of famous and class-privileged suffragettes such as the Pankhursts, the brave women from the pits, slums and factories who marched alongside them, and risked so much, have often been erased from the story.

But women from all walks of life, including those from the poorest backgrounds, with the least political and social power, recognised the need for the vote, and were prepared to sacrifice their safety and freedom to get it. The real story of the suffragettes includes the poorest women standing up to the most powerful men in the country to demand a better future.

Of course, the 1918 Representation of the People Act denied those very women the vote by extending suffrage only to women over 30 years old who held property. It wasn’t until 1928 that all adult women won the right to vote.

Many suffragettes had radical aims that went beyond the vote. They saw suffrage as a tool to improve society for women’s economic and sexual as well as legal equality.

Lytton, in her 1909 satirical essay *No Votes For Women*, said that one argument against giving women the vote was that they didn’t contribute to society or the economy. Her stinging rebuke reflected Edwardian feminist views on

unpaid labour. “How could [men] be released and equipped for work”, she wrote, “but for the mother, wife, sister, daughter, who as housekeeper, cook, laundrywoman, needlewoman, nurse, who spare him the time and thought he would otherwise have to spend on these essential details of maintenance?”

Winning the vote was part of broader movements to build a better world for women – as it would give women a say in the laws that impacted them.

The UK’s most famous suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst, made this argument in her 1913 article *Why We Are Militant*, describing “women in my country who have spent long and useful lives trying to get reforms, and because of their voteless condition, they are unable even to get the ear of MPs, much less... secure those reforms”.

The prison system was also a target of these women’s campaigns, AND Following their arrests, suffragettes like Kenney and Lytton became even more determined to improve the conditions of women behind bars.

Kenney wrote in her 1907 article *Prison Faces* about the cruel treatment of pregnant inmates, which she also connected to women’s lack of the vote. She declared: “Cowards! that you will allow laws to exist that will force a woman into prison on the eve of her confinement [an archaic term for going into labour] and at the same time withhold from all other women any power by which we could help abolish such a cruel and inhuman system”.

Meanwhile, Lytton campaigned to ensure that women in prison received “sanitary napkins” after Gawthorpe wrote about the “nauseating undergarment – stained in a revolting and suggestive manner” she was forced to wear during her detention.

She also wrote an influential book, *Prisons and Prisoners*, in 1914, exploring a range of different issues with the prison system.

Both Lytton’s *No Votes For Women* essay, and Pankhurst’s *Why We Are Militants* article, also talked about prostitution – another key issue for some suffragettes. In Lytton’s essay in particular,

we can see echoes of what’s now called “The Nordic Model” – policies that decriminalise the sale of sex while criminalising the purchase.

The idea that men should take responsibility for the sexual exploitation of women, rather than seeing women in the sex industry as immoral or sinful, was radical then, as today, while debates continue to rage about this issue.

Laws like the Contagious Diseases Act 1864 criminalised and stigmatised women who worked in the sex industry. Meanwhile, nineteenth century moral campaigners treated women in prostitution as “fallen” and in need of “saving”.

Neither was the case for suffragettes such as Lytton and Teresa Billington-Greig, who emphasised that a double standard was feeding this industry. Lytton wrote in 1909: “If to provide the supply be so criminal, what about the demand?... Is it honourable to buy in the market where, according to universal principle, it is so ignoble to sell?”

I wouldn’t claim that all the suffragettes held radical views about the sex industry that identified this sexual double standard, male sexual entitlement, and the exploitation of women as drivers of women’s oppression.

There were suffragettes who would have shared punitive positions towards sex workers with the moral crusaders of their time – as well as those like Kitty Marion who have recently been framed as “sex positive” for their approach to the sex industry (a concept that I reject – all feminists are “positive” about women’s free expression of sexuality regardless of their views on this industry).

But I want to point out that the suffragettes were grappling with some of the same issues that feminists still campaign on today. They held diverse views on how to resolve women’s inequality, just as the current feminist movement does.

Whether it was about unpaid labour, prison conditions, or the sex industry, women like Lytton, Kenny and Gawthorpe promoted and campaigned for radical reforms for women that went beyond the right to vote.

There’s no single narrative of the suffragettes.

These women came from different class backgrounds, fought for more than the right to the vote, and saw the battle for the franchise as a way to win greater equality.

A century since the 1918 act that began to widen the franchise to women, the suffrage movement has been (often rightly) accused of ignoring working class women, and of being racist and white supremacist.

But, the picture is more complicated than that. There is no doubt that many suffragettes held classist and racist views – Edwardian Britain (as Britain is today) was a classist, racist, society.

That some of our feminist foremothers held such views, and in some cases fought to repress other women, must be acknowledged. At the same time, criticisms of suffragettes have often led to an erasure of the radical working class women who fought for the vote. When criticising the movement for not being diverse, we run the risk of ignoring the diversity that did exist.

That powerful diversity brought together women from different classes, ethnicities and sexualities to challenge patriarchal power and build a fairer world. It’s that same patriarchal power which is invested in, and benefits from, silencing women’s stories – especially those of radical working class women.

While we must not be afraid to critique feminist movements on crucial issues of inclusivity and diversity, we must be careful not to collude in the patriarchal project of erasing the diverse voices that helped to make history. To do so is to silence those radical, working class women who risked everything for a fairer, more equal world. **CT**

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CAITLIN JOHNSTONE

All that's wrong with mainstream feminism

Women controlling the military-industrial complex is not feminism, it's toxic masculinity

OUTLETS like MSNBC and Politico have recently been excitedly running headlines titled “The military-industrial complex is now run by women”, and “How women took over the military-industrial complex“. Apparently four of America’s five top defence contractors are now women, whose names I will not bother to learn or report on because I do not care.

These headlines are being derided by skeptics of the establishment mindset for the cartoonish self-parody of the corporate liberal mindset that they so clearly are. Rightly so. Pretty much everything in American mainstream liberalism ultimately boils down to advancing mass murder, exploitation and ecocide for profit while waving a “yay diversity” banner, so that the NPR crowd can feel good about themselves while signing off on it. But the fact that these stories exist and have an audience can also be blamed more specifically on the failures of mainstream feminism.

A lot of men (and the occasional cultishly servile woman) like to bitch about the problem with modern feminism as though it is something that hurts men, threatens men, demonises men, or robs men of their place in society or anything else they feel entitled to.

This is all dopey nonsense which amounts to nothing other than a childish temper tantrum over men losing control over women that they never should have had in the first place; it’s people whining about losing their slaves. That imaginary piffle is not what is wrong with mainstream femi-

nism. What is wrong with mainstream feminism is exemplified perfectly in a mass media parade celebrating the rise of women to the top of the most depraved industry on earth.

The problem that true feminism seeks to address is not that there aren’t enough women at the top of the corporate ladder, or that Americans refused to elect a woman to do the bombing, exploiting and oppressing in 2016. The problem has always been that we’re trying to value women with a value system created by a few very powerful men.

By leaving in place the value system created by patriarchy (ie capitalism), we are now valuing women but only for their ability to play men’s games. Nobody has ever become a billionaire by being a mother, even the very best mother in the world, and nobody ever will because capitalism was designed by men, for men, to value men’s qualities.

This has created a species-threatening imbalance because inequality is baked in to the system. When men reluctantly allowed women out of their house-shaped cages in the ’60s, they did so on the condition that they would not change a thing about themselves. Women could play, but it was the women who had to change. As usual.

It’s interesting to go back to seminal texts such as Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* and see how much time feminists spent back then thinking about how women could be paid for domestic

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Germaine Greer, author of *The female Eunuch*, at the University of Melbourne. Photo: Helen Morgan, Flickr.com

and child-rearing work. Fifty years ago, feminists of the time could easily see how financial abuse runs rampant through marriages because women don't get paid for the majority of their work. They could see how if women were to ever be truly free, that had to be fixed. If you're not getting paid, then you're not able to leave, and if you can't leave, you're a slave. Despite all of feminism's gains, today if you dare suggest that women be paid for bearing children, you will be jeered at. It was decided somewhere along the line that, fine, you can be a fake man if you want to, but don't expect us to value YOU. Men refused to value women's work, which is why most of it is still essentially slavery. And that was a crucial, planet-threatening mistake.

By refusing to value women and what skills they naturally bring, humanity continued to not value the meta work of the feminine. We contin-

ued to not value the health of our environment, the health of our social cohesion, the mental health of each other.

By refusing to place a hard and fast value on cleaning, healing, networking, redistributing goods, disappearing problems, restoring, reusing, collaboration, happiness and health, we are strengthening all their opposites.

Many men will knee-jerk argue that they too are slaves to the corporatocracy, and that's true. That's what you get when you don't change a valuing system that was created by slave-owners to distract their slaves from killing them and to keep them working anyway.

That's what you get when you insist everyone change to suit a system that was created by power to keep power in place. We laugh about how indigenous people were fooled into handing over vast swathes of their land for handfuls of shiny shells, while we hand over our labor, our land, our rights and our freedoms for paper rectangles, today.

True feminism doesn't hold that the world would be better off if women ran things; shifting control from one gender to the other would change very little as long as the current valuing system remains in place. True feminism holds that all of humanity needs to change its valuing system to one which rewards feminine work as much as masculine, instead of only rewarding women when they succeed at climbing the ladder of the patriarchal paradigm.

Women controlling the military-industrial complex is not feminism, it's toxic masculinity. It's the fruit of the sick valuing system that is blackening our air, poisoning our water, filling the oceans with plastic, bulldozing the rainforests, and marching us toward the brink of nuclear Armageddon. True feminism means turning away from the toxic valuing system which elevates the most ambitious sociopaths and toward one which values empathy, collaboration, nurturing and peace instead. **CT**

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Private governments that screw workers

Corporate dictatorships must be destroyed, and they will only be destroyed by sustained popular protest such as we see in the streets of Paris

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CORPORATE dictatorships – which strip employees of fundamental constitutional rights, including free speech, and which increasingly rely on temp or contract employees who receive no benefits and have no job security – rule the lives of perhaps 80 percent of working Americans. These corporations, with little or no oversight, surveil and monitor their work forces. They conduct random drug testing, impose punishing quotas and targets, routinely engage in wage theft, injure workers and then refuse to make compensation, and ignore reports of sexual harassment, assault and rape. They use managerial harassment, psychological manipulation – including the pseudo-science of positive psychology – and intimidation to ensure obedience.

They fire workers for expressing leftist political opinions on social media or at public events during their off-hours. They terminate those who file complaints or publicly voice criticism about working conditions. They thwart attempts to organise unions, callously dismiss older workers and impose “non-compete” contract clauses, meaning that if workers leave they are unable to use their skills and human capital to work for other employers in the same industry. Nearly half of all technical professions now require workers to sign non-compete clauses, and this practice has spread to low-wage jobs including those in hair salons and restaurants. The lower the wages the more abusive the conditions. Workers in the food and hotel industries, agriculture, construc-

tion, domestic service, call centres, the garment industry, warehouses, retail sales, lawn service, prisons, and health and elder care suffer the most. Walmart, for example, which employs nearly one percent of the US labour force (1.4 million workers), prohibits casual conversation, which it describes as “time theft”. The food industry giant Tyson prevents its workers from taking toilet breaks, causing many to urinate on themselves; as a result, some workers must wear diapers.

The older, itinerant workers that Amazon often employs are subjected to gruelling 12-hour shifts in which the company electronically monitors every action to make sure hourly quotas are met. Some Amazon workers walk for miles on concrete floors each shift and repeatedly get down on their hands and knees to perform their jobs. They frequently suffer crippling injuries. The company makes injured employees, whom it fires, sign releases saying the injuries are not work-related. Two-thirds of workers in low-wage industries are victims of wage theft, losing an amount estimated to be as high as \$50-billion a year. From four-million to 14-million American workers, under threat of wage cuts, plant shutdowns or dismissal, have been pressured by their employers to support pro-corporate political candidates and causes.

The corporations that, in effect, rule the lives of American workers constitute what University of Michigan philosophy professor Elizabeth Anderson refers to as “private governments”. These “workplace governments”, she writes, are “dictatorships, in which bosses govern in ways that are

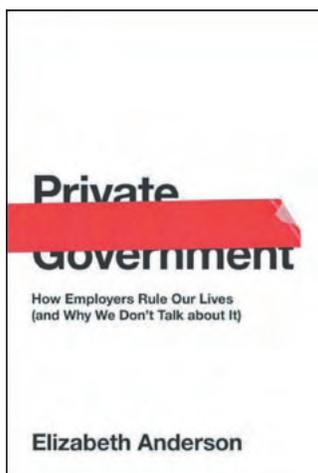
CHRIS HEDGES

largely unaccountable to those who are governed. They don't merely govern workers: they dominate them". These corporations have the legal authority, she writes, "to regulate workers' off-hour lives as well – their political activities, speech, choice of sexual partner, use of recreational drugs, alcohol, smoking, and exercise. Because most employers exercise this off-hours authority irregularly, and without warning, most workers are unaware of how sweeping it is".

"If the US government imposed such regulations on us, we would rightly protest that our constitutional rights were being violated", Anderson writes in her book *Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don't Talk About It)*. "But American workers have no such rights against their bosses. Even speaking out against such constraints can get them fired. So most keep silent".

Once workers sign contracts they essentially cede their rights as citizens to the corporations, except the few rights guaranteed by law, for the duration of the contracts. "Employers' authority over workers", Anderson writes, "outside of collective bargaining and a few other contexts, such as university professors' tenure, is sweeping, arbitrary, and unaccountable – not subject to notice, process, or appeal. The state has established the constitution of the government of the workplace; it is a form of private government". These corporations, by law, can "impose a far more minute, exacting, and sweeping regulation of employees than democratic states do in any domain outside of prisons and the military".

These myriad corporate dictatorships, or private governments, ensure American workers are docile and compliant as the superstructure of the corporate state cements into place a species of corporate totalitarianism. The ruling ideology of neoliberalism and libertarianism, used to justify the corporate domination and social



PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

Elizabeth Anderson

Princeton University Press

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inequality that afflict us, sells itself as the protector of freedom and liberty. It does this by subterfuge. It claims workers have the freedom to enter into employment contracts and terminate them, while ignoring the near-total suspension of rights during the period of employment. It pretends that workers and corporations function as independent and autonomous sellers and buyers, with workers selling their labour freely and corporate owners buying this labor.

This neoliberal economic model, however, is defective. The relationship between the corporation and the worker is not the same as the relationship between a self-em-

ployed baker, for example, and his customers. The self-employed baker and those who buy the bread appeal to mutual self-interest in the exchange. "The buyer is not an inferior, begging for a favour", Anderson writes. "Equally importantly, the buyer is not a superior who is entitled to order the butcher, the brewer, or the baker to hand over the fruits of his labour. Buyers must address themselves to the other's interests. The parties each undertake the exchange with their dignity, their standing, and their personal independence affirmed by the other. This is a model of social relations between free and equal persons".

Once a worker is bonded to a corporation, however, he or she instantly loses this dignity, standing and personal independence, especially if the job is temporary, entry-level or menial. Relations are no longer free and equal.

"When workers sell their labour to an employer, they have to hand themselves over to their boss, who then gets to order them around", Anderson writes. "The labour contract, instead of leaving the seller free as before, puts the seller under the authority of their boss". The worker either fulfils the demands of management, which he or she has little ability to question or formulate, or is reprimanded, demoted, sanctioned or fired. The corporate manager wields total authority over the worker. "The performance of the contract embod-

ies a profound asymmetry in whose interests count”, Anderson writes, “henceforth, the worker will be required to toil under conditions that pay no regard to his interests, and every regard for the capitalist’s profits”.

Neoliberalism posits that the choice is between a free market and state control, whereas, as Anderson writes, “most adults live their working lives under a third thing entirely: private government”. Neoliberalism argues that the essence of freedom is free enterprise, while never addressing workers’ surrender of basic freedoms. Neoliberalism holds out the promise, which has not been true since before the Industrial Revolution, that workers can become self-employed if they are hardworking and innovative. We all have the ability to achieve economic independence or become industry leaders if we draw on our inner resources, according to the neoliberal mantra, one popularised by mass culture.

The neoliberal ideologues’ solution to the cannibalisation of the economy is to call for fostering a nation of entrepreneurs. This is a con. Corporations and their lobbyists write the laws and the legislation, creating a two-tiered legal system in which poverty is criminalised and we are controlled, taxed and punished. The corporate oligarchs, however, live in a world where monopoly, fraud and other financial wrongdoing are legal or rarely punished and taxes are minimal or nonexistent.

Among the population, only a tiny percentage – most of whom come from inherited wealth and have been groomed in elitist, plutocratic universities and institutions – dominate the corporate hierarchy. Public discourse, controlled by corporate power, ignores this one-sided power arrangement. It cannot address a problem it refuses to acknowledge. Subjugation is freedom.

Anderson calls this corporate economic system communist – that’s communist with a small “c” – because these private governments “own all the non-labour means of production in the society it governs. It organises production by means of central planning. The form of the government is a dictatorship. In some cases, the dictator is appointed by an oligarchy. In other cases, the dictator is self-appointed.” Private governments, their sanctioning powers lacking the state’s abil-

ity to imprison or execute (although they often have internal security forces with the power to arrest), ensure compliance by using wholesale surveillance and the threats of demotion and exile, plus the potential rewards of salary raises and promotions. Also, there usually is a steady barrage of company propaganda.

“We have the language of fairness and distributive justice to talk about low wages and inadequate benefits, we know how to talk about the fight for \$15, whatever side of this issue you are on”, Anderson writes. “But we don’t have good ways to talk about the way bosses rule workers’ lives”.

American workers have never achieved the array of rights won by workers in other industrialised countries. At the height of union representation in 1954, only 28.3 percent of American workers were union members. This number has fallen to 11.1 percent, with only 6.6 percent of private-sector workers belonging to unions. Wages have for decades declined or been stagnant. Half of all US workers make less than \$29,000 a year, effectively putting their families in poverty.

Workers, lacking unions and the ability to pressure management through collective bargaining, have no say in their working conditions. If they choose to leave abusive employment, where do they go? The inequalities and the workers’ loss of liberty and agency are embedded within the corporate structure. It is impossible, as Anderson warns, to build a free, democratic society dominated by private governments. As these private governments merge into the superstructure of the corporate state we are cementing into place an unassailable corporate tyranny. It is a race against time. Our remaining freedoms are being rapidly extinguished. These omnipotent dictatorships must be destroyed, and they will only be destroyed by sustained popular protest such as we see in the streets of Paris. Otherwise, we will be shackled in 21st-century chains. **CT**

*Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, a New York Times best-selling author. His latest book is *America: The Farewell Tour*. This article first appeared at www.newsdig.com*

BETSY KAREL

Photo from America's Stage: Times Square, by Betsy Karel, published by Steidl www.steidl.de



In the heart of the city

New York's Times Square, where fantasy parades as reality

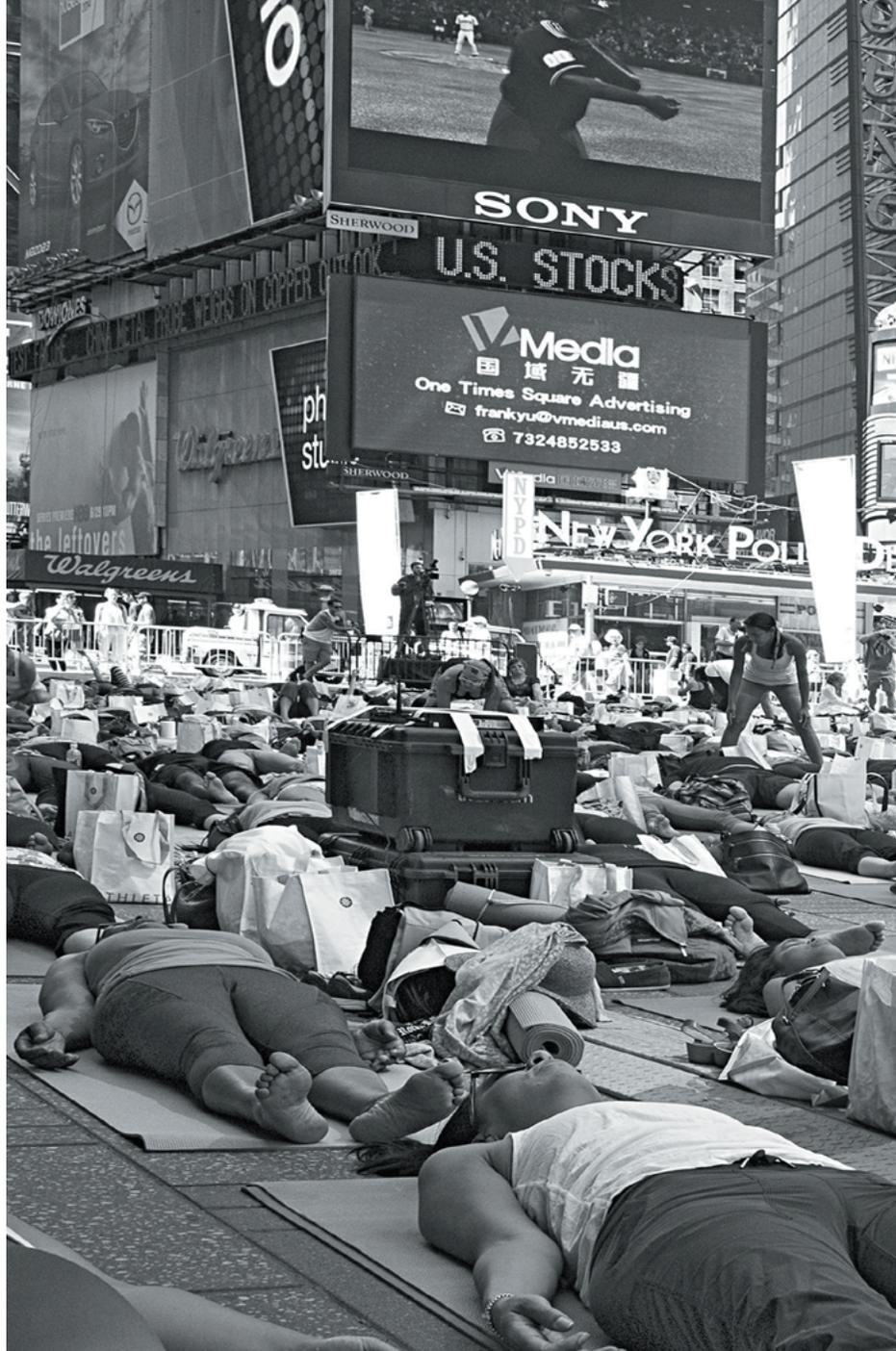
THE ruby red, translucent stairs that anchor the north end of Times Square at 47th Street, magical stairs that go nowhere, first drew me to this area. I had never explored the area on foot, and I wanted to survey Times Square from the top, a view that turned out to be a flat-out spectacular. It was the eve of the summer solstice, 2014.

BETSY KAREL

Immediately, I knew that I wanted to photograph here and, after wandering around for a few hours, I began to see this iconic landscape as a metaphor for urban America today. My premise is that, here in these five blocks from 42nd to 47th Streets, many of the major trends of our society – consumerism, hypersexualisation, hucksterism, surveillance, narcissism, globalism – are condensed and amplified. Fantasy parades as reality. Tourists flock to Times Square to see and be seen. It is the “ground zero” of our post-fact world, where media and audience engage in a constantly shifting dance, unclear who is leading whom. Corporate interests claim almost every inch of public space. Change is constant.

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And yet, beneath the incessant barrage of the football-field-sized



AMERICA'S STAGE: TIMES SQUARE

Betsy Karel

Published by Steidl (www.steidl.de)
\$30.59 (Amazon)





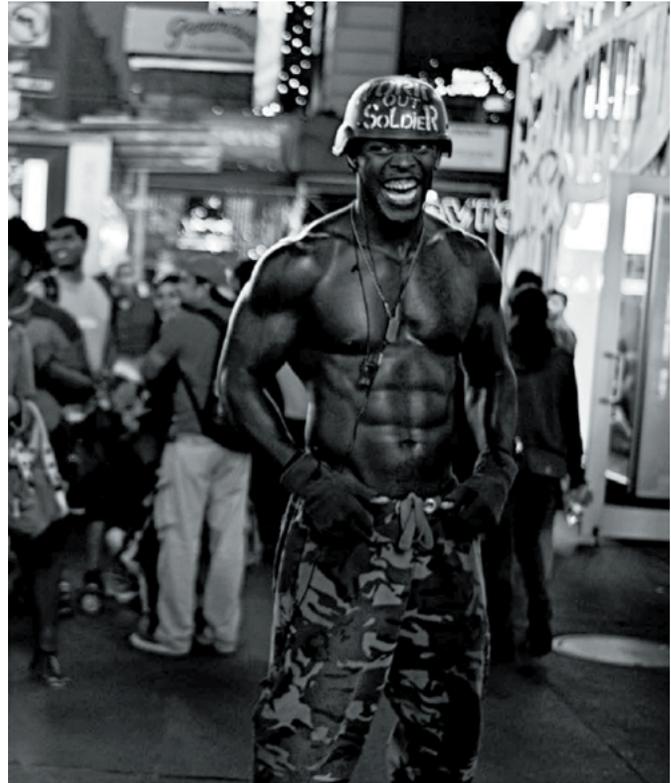
Photos from America's Stage: Times Square, by Betsy Karel, published by Steidl www.steidl.de

BETSY KAREL

billboards, there is something redemptive about this place. Those with political, religious, or social messages have seemingly unlimited freedom of expression. People from every background peacefully co-exist. In the wee hours of the morning the homeless find a safe place to sleep. And occasionally moments of tenderness and care cut through the electric static.

No matter how many times I return to Times Square, I am still filled with wonder and horror. **CT**

***Betsy Karel** was born in New York City in 1946 and today lives in Washington DC. Karel worked as an award-winning photojournalist in the 1970s. In 1998, after a hiatus of nearly 20 years working as a professional photographer, she participated in *The Way Home*, a national exhibition on homelessness in America.*



Photos from America's Stage: Times Square, by Betsy Karel, published by Steidl www.steidl.de

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ColdType Insights

- NAI BARGHOUTI
- TREVOR GRUNDY
- JILL RICHARDSON
- DENIS BECKETT
- TIM KNIGHT

Defying racism: My ordeal at Israel Airport

Nai Barghouti was furious at the Israeli security officer's ugly racism and vengefulness, but she still felt bad for her

LEFT home on Monday January 7, at 9:30 am to be at Ben Gurion Airport, near Tel Aviv, at 10:30 am to catch my 12:45 pm flight to Amsterdam, where I am currently pursuing my bachelor's degree in music.

Before packing my suitcase the night before, I made a packing list to make sure I didn't forget anything. I crossed everything off the list and be at the airport on time. But there was one thing I forgot to write down ... one very important detail that I simply forgot to think about ... I am Palestinian!

Like all Palestinians carrying Israeli citizenship and living under Israel's regime of apartheid, I always have a bad feeling about going to the airport, and this time was no exception. The flu I caught the night before did not help either. My mother, who drove me to the airport, was really worried about a military checkpoint on the way that could

make me miss my flight, but we got "lucky" this time.

A colonial military occupation, brutalising you for so many years, can really mess up your expectations. Crossing a military roadblock starts giving you this strange feeling of achieve-

Nai Barghouti
[author photo]



ment. Your basic human rights become a privilege rather than the norm, and that becomes the new norm.

One of the most dangerous aspects about regimes of colonial oppression is that they strive to occupy the mind of the oppressed, not just their land.

We arrived at the airport, and I tied to convince my mother not to wait for me to finish the dehumanising "security" check as she always does. While I love to see her face at a distance, behind the thick glass, waving her reassuring hand, I hate to see her angrily but helplessly observe the racist Israeli security officials trying to humiliate me just because of who I am – a Palestinian. I begged her to leave, but she insisted: "I can't just leave you in this horrible place. You never know what happens." She was right!

My Arabic name on my passport immediately gave away my identity, inviting their "royal" treatment. When the security officer asked me whether I spoke Hebrew and I said no, her anger was visible. When she asked me what I was doing in Amsterdam and I answered that I was studying jazz, she could no longer contain her racist vibes. How could I so bluntly destroy her bigoted stereotype of "Arab women?" She told me I had to undergo an intrusive "body search".

I immediately accused her of racism, of racial profiling, and of being vengeful against me because of who I am and what I do. She shouted back that she was

doing her job. I reminded her that many unspeakable crimes in history have been perpetrated under that immoral excuse.

She took her revenge by claiming that my laptop did not pass her security check and therefore could not go with me on the plane. This was despite the fact that she asked me to open it and turn it on, which I did successfully. She said they would send it by mail to my address in Amsterdam. I laughed at her audacity and objected strongly. I know from my own experience, and from other Palestinians' experiences, that leaving your laptop with Ben Gurion airport security invariably means it will be hacked, damaged or "lost".

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I told her that I could not travel without my laptop as all my music and lecture notes were on it and without that I could not go to any of my classes.

Her supervisor supported her vindictive decision, so I was forced to miss my flight. I took my laptop and walked out to where my mother was anxiously waiting. She greeted me with the warmest of hugs and a few tears and said, "Don't worry about a thing, we'll find a solution. I am so proud of you!"

The next day, she drove me to the land crossing with Jordan. After spending a lovely night with family in Amman, enjoying my great-aunt's famous white cheese and spinach pies, I travelled through the welcoming Amman airport and arrived in

Amsterdam safe, with my laptop and with my dignity intact.

As furious as I am at the Israeli security officer's ugly racism and vengefulness, I felt slightly bad for her. Despite her best efforts to humiliate me, I shall go on resisting her state's racism and apartheid with my music, and one day I may actually make a difference in my people's struggle for liberation. She, however, will continue to search Palestinians' underwear, to lie about our laptops not passing security checks, and to be an insignificant tool of a system of racist oppression.

As I was about to get out of

the airport, I raised my voice to make sure my finale reached as many people in the airport as possible. "You know what is very close to Amsterdam? The Hague. One day, you and your leaders will be prosecuted for crimes at the International Criminal Court there".

She remained silent and looked down, and I walked out with a smile, my head held up high, and saw Mama's hand still waiving. **CT**

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Nai Barghouti is a Palestinian studying music in Holland. This article was first published at www.mondoweis.net

Hot spots and danger zones

Trevor Grundy reviews an unsettling book that examines the subcontinent's environmental history in order to gain insights into the climate stresses it faces today

In the 14th century, the Kashmiri Prophetess Lalishri warned of dark days to come, a time when nature would bow "to them that walk in wrongful ways".

"What shall ye do then that seek the light?" she asked.

Then came her chilling prediction that human neglect would end with Nature itself confused when "the apple of the autumn time/Ripens with the summer apricot".

At last year's climate change conference in Katowice, deep

An Environmental History of India – From Earliest Times to the Twenty-First Century

by Michael H. Fisher

Cambridge University Press, (£21.99)

in the heart of Poland's coal-mining region, broadcaster Sir David Attenborough, 92, told 30,000 delegates from 196 countries that not only is Nature confused but human civilisation could collapse and many species be driven to extinction unless there is immediate action. "If we don't take action, the collapse of

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our civilisation and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon”, he said.

And while so much of the world burns, or drowns, those who should know better in the West point their fingers eastwards, to China and India.

A few months before the summit in Poland, reports published in the *Times* of London told how Arctic reindeer sought shade in road tunnels, Sweden’s biggest glacier is melting, and France faced a snail shortage as Europe prepared for the hottest days since records began.

In Britain, National Trust wildlife expert Matthew Oates has warned that, as seasons become less distinct, certain plant and animal species are struggling to survive. Scientists are also keeping a close watch on two little known glaciers in Pine Island Bay, Antarctica, which are so huge that they act as a plug holding back enough ice to pour 11 feet of sea-level rise into the world’s oceans – an amount that would submerge every coastal city on the planet.

But it’s not all gloom and doom! In the Dolomites, Italian children are bathing in Lake Landro near Cortina d’Ampezzo, which is popular with skiers and ice skaters in winter when temperatures can drop to minus 30c. Last year, wine-makers on the banks of the Rhine started the harvest three weeks earlier than normal and après ski millionaires lifted glasses full of excellent German wine to toast the good life which would continue forever if only greedy countries

such as China and India would play their part and control carbon emissions.

After all, of all the most polluting nations – the US, China, Russia, Japan and the European Union bloc – only India’s carbon emissions are rising, five per cent in 2016. Samir Saran at the Observer Research Foundation in Delhi, commented: “India, with its 1.5 billion population, is the front-line state. Two thirds of India is yet to be built. So please understand, 16 per cent of mankind is going to seek the American dream. If we can give it to them on a frugal climate, we will save the planet. If we don’t, we will either destroy India or destroy the planet”.

But how did this happen? Who caused it, what economic system encouraged it, where were the warning voices? Why the deafening silence from religious leaders until now, when it is too late? Our need to know will not save the planet but will enable those who still care to see more clearly.

So, three cheers for a new book by one of the world’s most distinguished environmental historians, Michael H. Fisher, the Robert S. Danforth, Professor of History at Oberlin College in the US. *An Environmental History of India* is his twelfth book and fellow academics say it is his most timely and important.

The book is divided into 12 sections, shepherding the reader from the Indus and Vedic relationships with the Indian environments (3500 BCE–c.600

BCE) through to the state of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh at independence and to the present, by way of the Mughal Empire (1526–1707) and the British Raj, Mahatma Gandhi and the anti-colonial movements (1857-1947).

The last three chapters are devoted to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (1971–1992), and the author speaks about likely future prospects for the region and the main national, sub-continental and global issues challenging the whole of South Asia in the 21st century.

Fisher writes: “The sub-continent of India has historically played a vital part in the world and will increasingly do so in the future. Its population of 1.5-billion people, one fifth of humanity, totals more than Africa or Europe and North America combined. It contains major fauna and flora bio-diversity “hot spots” but also regions among the world that are most polluted and vulnerable to climate change”.

One chapter deals with the way forest dwellers structured and improved, but also damaged, the environment; another is devoted to how religious beliefs have affected the manner in which the environment was structured.

Fisher’s contribution on this subject is worth a small book on its own. Chapter five, for example (headed *Insiders, Jewish, Christians and Muslim Immigrants and the environment*) tells a fascinating story about the way religious leaders built

and severely altered the natural environment between c.700 and c.1600; of how enlightened a lot of the Hindus were when it came to the treatment of animals; and how appalling the Jews and Christians were with their endless animal sacrifices.

Chapter eight is of particular interest as we prepare to mark the centenary of the Amritsar Massacre in March and also because it speaks of Gandhi and his struggles against British capitalist-driven imperialism in South Africa and India. Many of today's environmentalists find models and inspiration in Gandhi's life, economic ideals and his attitude towards Nature and the Indian environment.

Writes Fisher: "Over these many centuries, the diverse human communities of India (and later also Pakistan and Bangladesh) developed distinctive cultural and material relationships to the changing world around them. I found some of the most revealing evidence for cultural attitudes in religious, literary, and state/governmental expressions about, and valuations of, the land, water, minerals, flora and fauna around them".

He continues: "Many of the people of South Asia are among those most vulnerable to the dire effects of climate change which has resulted far less from their actions than from those of the long-developed and long-polluting West".

Then this dire warning: "Yet, sea-level rise, increasing temperatures and extreme weather events all will especially affect

their 1.5-billion citizens. Only by engaging all parts of their diverse societies and incorporating their several cultural traditions can these nations adapt and become more resilient in today's environmental changes and challenges".

Cambridge University Press should be congratulated for including so many excellent maps, diagrams and illustrations

which make even more compelling the text of this well-written and beautifully presented, but at times most chilling of books. **CT**

Trevor Grundy is a journalist and author who lives in Canterbury, England. This article was first published in Asianaffairs, the London-based monthly magazine.

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Is anyone really offended by MF-word?

Republicans stood by a president who bragged about assaulting women. Now they have thoughts about propriety, writes **Jill Richardson**

DON'T think anyone in Washington is actually offended by Rep. Rashida Tlaib's use of profanity. If you haven't heard, Rep. Tlaib, a freshman Democratic representative from Michigan, said of President Trump, "We're going to go in there and impeach the motherfucker", to a group of progressive supporters in Detroit.

The remark could offend for two reasons: its intent or its salty language.

The first reason, the intent, is the more substantial of the two. Actually impeaching the president is more consequential for the nation than having a potty mouth. But a single member of Congress cannot impeach the president all by herself.

The leadership of the Demo-

cratic Party has always been cautious around the topic of impeaching Trump. Whether they want to or not, or think it would be justified, doesn't matter much. Previously, they couldn't do it. Republicans controlled the House, and Republicans would not vote to impeach.

Now that the Democrats control the House, they could impeach Trump. But since Republicans still have the Senate, the Democrats couldn't remove Trump from office without considerable Republican support in the Senate.

(Remember, the House can impeach, but the Senate then has to convict a president for him or her to actually be removed from office. Bill Clinton was impeached but not convicted and

remained president.)

In short, Trump isn't going anywhere unless the nation becomes aware of such serious crimes that even Republicans in the Senate support his removal. For Democrats, calling for impeachment right now is mostly political, since they can't actually do it.

Given that the comment was mostly symbolic – a signal to Tlaib's supporters that she's on their side and serious about opposing Trump – we can take her use of profanity in that light too. (And, as it turns out, the use of the "MF" word has a storied history in Detroit politics, so local reporters say it was fine for her audience.)

But Republicans just can't stop being offended by it.

Here's what I don't believe: Republicans who continued to stand behind the president after he bragged about assaulting women, who have no problems with their colleague Rep. Duncan Hunter's alleged stealing from his own campaign coffers for personal gain, who even supported Roy Moore after it came to light that as a grown man he romantically pursued and harassed teenage girls, really care about the use of a naughty word.

I think they're willing to grab any reason to politically damage a Democrat and run with it.

"Scandalous" video of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez doing a goofy "Breakfast Club" dance in college? Try to use that. Rashida Tlaib uses profanity? Try to use

that. Use anything that might lop off a point or two of a Democrat's approval ratings, anything that might energise your own base.

In Washington, hypocrisy doesn't matter, so long as it works.

Don't fall for it. Don't buy their fake outrage. Don't be distracted.

There are two alternatives, neither of them good. Either they're generating fake outrage to score cheap political points, or they're expressing actual outrage because they care more about a single swear word than corruption, crimes, and assaults on

women combined.

Whichever it is, they aren't worth paying attention to.

We send Congress to Washington to do a job and govern our nation. It's that job that matters, that keeps our country safe and our economy strong, and it's foolish to be distracted from focusing on that because of a single word, appropriately used. **CT**

Jill Richardson is pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She lives in San Diego. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

Moral lesson from a thief and car salesman

Denis Beckett sacked WalkTall 20 years earlier.
When they meet again, steel glints from WalkTall's hand

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MORE than a year since Walk Tall died, peacefully in his bed as violent people so often so ironically do, I bumped into his friend Godknows. Who asked, "Did you do him a tribute?"

What an odd idea, a tribute to someone whose main claim to fame is to have cheated his enemy's knives and bullets. But then ... Walk Tall was not just a thug. He was a philosopher, a poet, a mensch, and a very long-standing institution in my life.

Many years ago, as an apprentice manager at Johannesburg's *Star* newspaper, I arranged an African staff year-

end picnic at the Smuts farm in Irene, Gauteng. (That was a drama of its own, 18 years before apartheid ended. "Wotchumean, African? Like, Natives?")

Then, with 300 employees and their families present, one person went (way) out of order, offering to cut off the farm's lady manager's ears to avenge an allegedly short helping at the carvery.

My endeavours to control things by reason and civility got nowhere. With as much relief as embarrassment, I was sidelined by a former Rhodesian policeman. But on the Monday the follow-up fell to me.

Insights

No-one seemed to know the offender's name – Peter Soga – but there was a stir when he pitched up. As Walk Tall, he was famed as a kind of cousin of Bad Bad Leroy Brown. He turned out, sober, to be personable, pleasant, persuasively apologetic. I felt bad firing him.

Two decades later, a grim winter evening, I'm making my solitary way on foot through a back end of Joburg, south-east among scruffy deserted warehouses. Suddenly, figures loom out of the dusk. These are not friendly figures. Steel glints from their hands. They close around me. I reach for wallet and watch, wanting to offer all I have in hope of emerging with blood and bones intact.

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I recognise the lead guy. My heart slips right down to my boots. Here is Walk Tall's revenge!

A millisecond later, Walk Tall recognises me. Bamboozling

me utterly, his face breaks into a mighty grin. He bursts out "Mister Beckett!" in unmistakable tones of long-lost-brother, and gestures knives away.

Next thing, the gang is captive audience while auld acquaintance is summonsed. What happened to Ephraim? Where is Naphtal? How is Phutheho? Emboldened, I risk "... and how about you?"

Still laughing, Walk Tall says "I never got another job after you fired me".

I mumble sympathies and make sounds of heading for my car, a few blocks away near the Carlton. I receive one of my most memorable moments ever. This sentence of Walk Tall's I still quote precisely, another quarter-century on: "No, no, we must come with you, there are bad people".

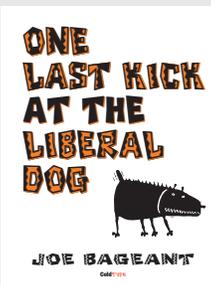
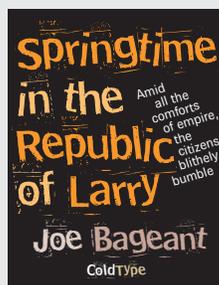
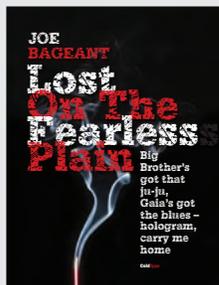
At the car, among people and lights, I venture revisiting the danger terrain: doesn't he bear some, er grudge, about that firing and its consequences? He

airily dismisses that: "No, you shook my hand when you fired me, and wished me good luck".

History since then has been rich, graduating from a patron/beneficiary flavour into solid friendship. He brought me many unexpected insights of which I cite now one that smote me particularly. A few months after I found him a job selling used cars, he quit. His case: "I want you to know that I was more honest when I was a criminal than since you set me straight. When I mugged rich people they usually lost only some money that didn't mean much to them. In my job I told poor people lies that cursed their lives".

Good thinking, Godknows. Human value is not measured by wealth. Not finally by respectability either. Walk Tall has a tribute. **CT**

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Denis Beckett is a South African journalist and author and columnist for Johannesburg's Star newspaper.



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The war correspondent who couldn't retire

Tim Knight pays tribute to his colleague Don North, a great Canadian war reporter

DON North was a war correspondent. A bang-bang man, up there with the very best of that elite breed. He came out of Vancouver, worked at CTV, Global and CBC in Canada, and ABC, CBS and NBC in New York.

He reported from more wars and insurrections than most of us can name or remember.

Vietnam, Cuba, Borneo, Cambodia, Afghanistan, El Salvador, Egypt, Israel, the Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq.

Don hated injustice. Last time I saw him he was working on *Inappropriate Conduct: Mystery of a Disgraced War Correspondent*, his fine and angry book about how the *Toronto Star* betrayed its own correspondent, Paul Morton, back in World War II.

As the years slipped by and wars were won and lost, most of Don's colleagues retired gracefully to play bowls or go fishing. But not Don. He could never resist the thunder of the guns. The thunk-thunk-thunk of the 'copters and the noisy, gritty, urgent camaraderie of soldiers and journalists joined in battle.

When news came to Fairfax,

Virginia, of yet another war in yet another foreign field, the old warhorse would casually mention to his lovely wife Deanna that he was thinking he might take his camera, drop over there. Just for a look. Maybe file a story or two back to the networks.

Don't worry, he'd tell her, I'm too old for all that battle shit. So I'll just hang around some safe



ABC reporter Don North at Kontum ARVN firebase in 1967.

hotel and work on backgrounders and forecasters. Nothing too risky. Nothing too dangerous. Don was lying, of course.

Don, and war correspondents like him, always want just one more battle. To go back where they belong, with all the other men and women who go to war, not to fight, but to report and

risk their lives and hang out in hotel bars and swap stories of triumphs and disasters and smell napalm in the morning. And toast their many colleagues who died in the line of duty.

Deanna would know Don was lying about staying safe and smile sadly and remind him that he'd promised that the war he's just returned from would be his last. But she understood.

Because she knew that Don – whatever else he was doing, however old he got – was always at heart a war correspondent.

And war correspondents, both by nature and choice, answer the call of the bang-bang because they must, because they have no choice.

If there's a heaven for journalists, I know Don will be there at the bar of an evening and they'll argue about wars and other things that matter and order another round and toast their comrades gone and those still working the honourable craft back on earth and remind them to get it first, but first get it right.

Don North died in bed at 80. He was a gentleman, a fine and decent man of considerable integrity. And a first class bang-bang man. **CT**

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Tim Knight is an Emmy-award winning journalist and filmmaker who lives in Cape Town. He worked with Don North at the NBC and CBC television networks.

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