
ONE WOMAN AGAINST A NUCLEAR SUB | Chellis Glendinning
TROIKA FEVER HITS THE MIDDLE EAST | Danny Sjursen
HIGH HOPES AND STOLEN DREAMS | Tony Sutton

ISSUE 186

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING ■ PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

MID-JUNE 2019



Chewed up, spat out and left to suffer

At a time when our leaders spend an inordinate amount of time reflecting on the 'sacrifices' made by young soldiers killed in usually-avoidable wars, it's worth remembering those who didn't die, but returned home to be ignored. This might give real meaning the phrase 'Never Again'

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Issue 186

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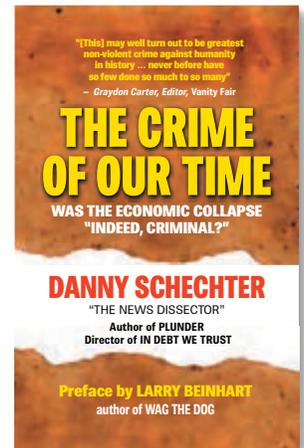
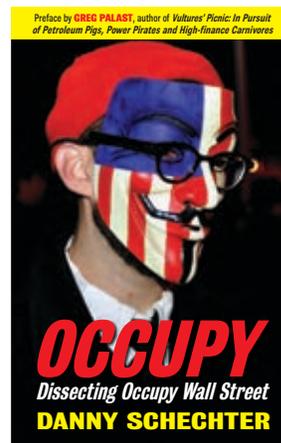
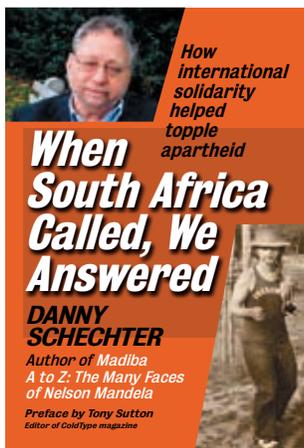
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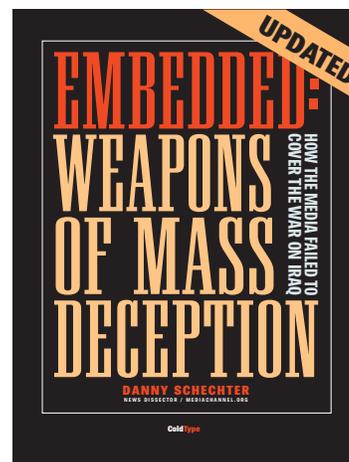
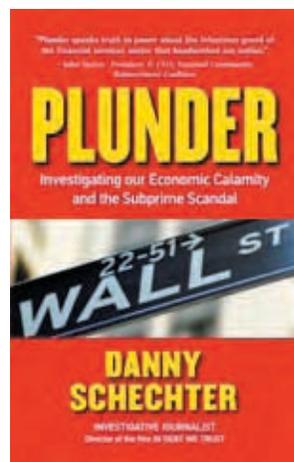
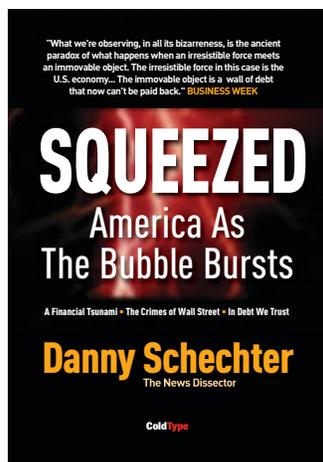
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REMEMBERING **Danny SCHECHTER** 1942 - 2015



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Insights



Corporate media's instant reversal on Assange – from rapist scum to First Amendment hero within minutes – elevates self-serving hypocrisy to high art

Photo: TV screenshot

Hacking the government's dirty secrets not a crime

By Ted Rall

BRITISH goon cops acting at the request of the United States government entered Ecuador's embassy in London, dragged out WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and prepared to ship him across the pond last month.

After this event most of the mainstream media reacted with spiteful glee about Assange's predicament and relief that the Department of Justice had

exercised self-restraint in its choice of charges. "Because traditional journalistic activity does not extend to helping a source break a code to gain illicit access to a classified network, the charge appeared to be an attempt by prosecutors to sidestep the potential First Amendment minefield of treating the act of publishing information as a crime", reported a pleased the *New York Times*.

At the time, the feds had accused Assange of hacking conspiracy because he and Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning allegedly discussed how to break into a Pentagon computer.

Bob Garfield of NPR's "On the Media", a veteran reporter who should and probably does know better, was one of many establishmentarians who opined that we needn't worry because Assange isn't a 'real' journalist.

This being the Trump Administration, self-restraint was in short supply. It turns out that the short list of Assange charges was a temporary ploy to manipulate our gullible English allies. Now Assange faces

17 additional charges under the Espionage Act and a finally-concerned *Times* calls it “a novel case that raises profound First Amendment issues” and “a case that could open the door to criminalising activities that are crucial to American investigative journalists who write about national security matters”.

Corporate media’s instant reversal on Assange – from rapist scum to First Amendment hero within minutes – elevates self-serving hypocrisy to high art. But that’s OK. Whatever gets Assange closer to freedom is welcome – even the jackals of corporate media.

May we linger, however, on an important point that risks getting lost?

Even if Assange were guilty of hacking into that Pentagon computer ...

Even if it had been Assange’s idea ...

Even if Manning had had nothing to do with it ...

Even if Trump’s DOJ hadn’t larded on the Espionage Act stuff ...

Assange should not have faced any charges.

Included in the material Manning stole from the military and posted to WikiLeaks were the “Afghan War Logs”, the “Iraq War Logs”, files about the concentration camp at Guantánamo and the “Collateral Murder” video of the US military’s 2007 massacre of

civilians in Baghdad.

For the sake of argument let’s assume that Assange, without Manning, had personally hacked into a Pentagon computer and, in doing so, discovered proof that US occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were guilty of war crimes, including torture and the mass murder of civilians for fun – and put that evidence of criminal wrongdoing online. Would Assange deserve a prison term? Of course not. He would merit a medal, a ticker-tape parade, a centrally-located handsome statue or two.

Even if Assange were ‘guilty’ of the hacking charges, so what? The ‘crime’ of which he stands accused pales next to the wrongdoing he helped to expose.

Good Samaritan laws protect people who commit what the law calls a “crime of necessity”, If you save a child from your neighbour’s burning house the police shouldn’t charge you with trespassing.

Similarly if the only way to expose government or corporate lawbreaking is to steal confidential documents and release them to the press à la Edward Snowden, you should be immune from prosecution. That principle clearly applies to the materials Manning stole and Assange released as a public service to citizens unaware of the misdeeds committed under their name and at their expense.

Even among liberals it has

become fashionable to observe that people who engage in civil disobedience must be prepared to face legal punishment. This is a belief grounded in practicality: individuals who confront the state need to understand that theirs will be a difficult struggle.

Over the past few decades, however, what was common sense has become perverted into a bizarre justification for oppression: Snowden, Assange, Manning, and Winner violated laws, they knew what they were doing; that’s the risk they took, and so – this is the weird part – the Left need not defend them.

Yes, these whistleblowers knew (or ought to have known) that they risked prosecution and prison time. But that’s the way things are, not the way they ought to be. The project of a Left must be to fight for society and politics as they should be, not to blandly shrug our shoulders and accept the status quo. Laws should be rewritten to protect whistleblowers like Manning and journalists like Assange who expose official criminality.

Whistleblowers should never face prosecution. **CT**

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Ted Rall (*Twitter: @tedrall*), the political cartoonist, columnist and graphic novelist, is the author of *Francis: The People’s Pope*. His web site is www.rall.com

English football: A proxy for feuding Gulf states

By **Simon Chadwick**

THERE'S nothing like a Saturday night scoop to get social media buzzing. Revelations that a Qatari investor wants to acquire a stake in Leeds United football club certainly did. If the story is correct, then it seems Qatar Sports Investments (QSI), which already owns French club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), is interested in buying shares in the Yorkshire based English Championship club.

In some ways, we shouldn't be surprised by the report, as Leeds United's current majority shareholder, Italian Andrea Radrizzani, is thought to be seeking a buyer for his holding in the club. Indeed, some reports suggest that he may be negotiating with as many as six parties with a view to them buying a stake.

That a Qatari group is showing interest should be no surprise either; after all, the Yorkshire outfit already has a partnership with the small Gulf nation's Aspire Academy. Over the last two years, rumours have been recurrent that big money from Doha will, sooner or later, be invested.

Hence, it was the timing of



Badge of Leeds United, another team seeking Middle East billions.

the latest rumour's emergence that was actually more revealing than the rumour itself. It came after a tumultuous week in football (and sport more generally) which was stitched together by a narrative stretching from Manchester, through Paris, to Doha and Abu Dhabi.

The previous weekend, Abu Dhabi-owned Manchester City won the English FA Cup, which ensured the club secured an unprecedented domestic treble of trophies (alongside the club's Premier League title and Carabao Cup win). City's success, however, was very quickly tempered by stories that UEFA may ban the club from the Champions League for what are alleged to

be serious breaches of the European football governing body's Financial Fair Play regulations.

Later in the week, news came through that two PSG board members – Nasser Al-Khelaifi and Yousef Al-Obaidly – are being investigated on suspicion of corruption in connection with Qatar's bid to host the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championship in Doha. Significantly, Al-Khelaifi is president of PSG but also chairman of QSI (the Qatari investment group behind the alleged Leeds bid) and a member of UEFA's executive committee. Al-Obaidly is chief executive of the Qatari media group beIN.

It was quite a week for the Qataris, as news also broke that FIFA will concede during its forthcoming council meeting that the 2022 World Cup will be contested by 32 teams. FIFA had been pressing for an increase in tournament size to 48 teams, though this would have necessitated Qatar sharing the tournament with at least one other country. Qatar, though, is currently engaged in an acrimonious feud with its near neighbours, notably the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, so FIFA's capitulation was effectively a victory for Qatar over its rivals.

The Gulf feud is ongoing, having broken out two years ago following a visit to Riyadh by a bellicose Donald Trump. Since then, all manner of tactics

have been used by the countries involved, ranging from heavy political lobbying in Washington DC through to an online war in which misinformation has been spread.

The spat has spread into sport, too. Frequent reports allegedly spread by pro-Saudi consultants have sought to discredit Qatar's World Cup hosting by making dubious claims about its ability to stage the tournament.

Meanwhile, the TV service BeIN has fallen victim to a massive and concerted bootlegging operation instigated by BeoutQ, which appears to be a Saudi Arabian-backed pirate channel that has stolen the Qatari broadcaster's content.

Qatar hasn't stood idly by in the face of such provocation, often spending lavishly both to demonstrate its oil and gas fuelled economic strength and to project its soft power. The world record breaking transfer of Brazilian international Neymar, from FC Barcelona to PSG, is the most potent symbol of this, as the government in Doha set out to shift attention away from its rivals while simultaneously making a statement about the aspirations of Qatar.

As such, the news that QSI may be circling Leeds United doesn't seem to be about a Qatari penchant for Yorkshire puddings, nor is it merely a nice opportunity to generate some Saturday night clickbait.

Rather, it suggests the opening of another front in a feud which, instead of resolving itself, appears to be intensifying. Rather than being the dawn of a new era for Leeds United, the club may consequently be on the cusp of being drawn into a bitter battle of competing geopolitical interests.

The dense network of connections and conflicts between the likes of Qatar Sports Investments, Saudi Arabia, UEFA and Abu Dhabi may therefore be about to span the English Pennines, sparking a new War of the Roses between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Given the on-off speculation about Saudi Arabia's purchase of Manchester United, and Abu Dhabi's continued lavishing of its wealth upon Manchester City (as well as its rumoured acquisition of Newcastle

United), these Gulf states are strengthening their hold over Lancashire, the western side of the Pennines, and possibly further north too.

In buying Leeds United, their rival, Qatar, would be shoring up its own defences in neighbouring Yorkshire, meaning that the Gulf region's proxy war could spill into English football. Thus, as fans on both sides of a historic English divide anticipate the prospect of their clubs' battle for supremacy, they should remain mindful that Elland Road and the Etihad Stadium could become proxy battlefields in a new stand-off between the houses of York and Lancaster. **CT**

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Simon Chadwick is Professor of Sports Enterprise at the University of Salford in England. This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com

Now Cuba travel is victim of wrath of John Bolton

By Medea Benjamin

JOHN Bolton hates the governments of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, calling them the "troika of tyranny" and the "three stooges of socialism," and is determined to use his time as national

security adviser to eliminate the vestiges of socialism in our hemisphere. He has openly stated that the 1823 Monroe Doctrine is "alive and well," conveying that the United States will dictate the terms of

governance in the Western Hemisphere, by military force if necessary. Furious that he has been unable to successfully orchestrate a coup in Venezuela, Bolton is now lashing out at Cuba, explicitly punishing the nation for its support of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The travel restrictions announced on June 4 represent another page from Bolton's "regime change" playbook.

The new travel restrictions will severely limit the ability of Americans to travel to Cuba. The restrictions prohibit group educational trips to Cuba, known as "people-to-people" travel, as well as passenger vessels, recreational vessels, and private aircraft. These bans go to the heart of the Cuban economy, which has become increasingly dependent on tourism.

Despite the island's devastation from Hurricane Irma and increased restrictions from the Trump administration in 2017, Cuba had a record number of visitors in 2018 – 4.75 million, with the United States and Canada being the largest contributors. In just the first four months of 2019, over 250,000 US visitors travelled to Cuba, an increase of 93 percent from the same months in 2018. Most visitors came from cruise ships, which are included under the new restrictions. Trump's move will impact an estimated 800,000 cruise passenger bookings, cutting the island out of millions of dollars a year in docking fees and payments for



John Bolton

on-shore excursions. It comes at a time of severe economic weakness for Cuba, which is struggling to find enough cash to import basic food and other supplies following a drop in aid from Venezuela.

The Trump administration wants to punish the Cuban government, but the restrictions on "people-to-people" travel will be particularly harmful to Cuba's private entrepreneurs who have poured their lives' savings into restaurants and home-based lodgings catering to American travellers, and greatly benefited from Obama-era policies.

While John Bolton insists he wants to spread democracy abroad, his Cuba restrictions violate the freedom of the American people. The United States is the only country that restricts travel to Cuba. Canadians have always travelled freely to the island, as have people from Latin America, Europe and all over the globe. The US also allows Americans

to travel to the world's most repressive countries – from North Korea to Myanmar to Saudi Arabia – but unfairly singles out Cuba.

Restricting US-Cuba ties also runs contrary to the will of the American people. Poll after poll shows that the majority of Americans support the normalization of US-Cuba relations, as President Obama discovered when he began re-establishing relations with Cuba over the course of his first term. In 2014, Obama engaged in 18-month-long negotiations with Cuba to restore diplomatic ties. Both countries reopened their embassies, opening the door for normal diplomatic services for citizens of both nations. While Obama was not able to convince Congress to lift the embargo, he was able, by executive order, to ease trade and travel. By the time Obama left office, American travel to Cuba had tripled in size.

The new travel restrictions come on the heels of another Bolton-inspired attempt to strangle the Cuban economy, which is the implementation of Title III of the 1996 Helms-Burton act. This allows Cuban Americans to sue foreign companies in Cuba for property taken from them at the time of the revolution – 60 years ago! It is a punitive measure designed to make foreign companies afraid of investing in Cuba, with Bolton stating that he "can't wait for all the lawsuits" that would be filed against companies

doing business in Cuba.

The measure is particularly aimed at European and Canadian companies, which have investments in businesses ranging from tourism to mining to agriculture. “The extra-territorial application of the US embargo is illegal and violates international law,” said Alberto Navarro, the European Union ambassador to Cuba. “I personally consider it immoral. For 60 years the only thing that’s resulted from the embargo is the suffering of the Cuban people.” Navarro might have added that the embargo is also hypocritical, given that the US government encourages investments in some of the world’s most repressive regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin justified the new measures against Cuba by alleging that “Cuba continues to play a destabilising role in the Western Hemisphere, undermining the rule of law, and suppressing democratic processes.” Yet the US aligns itself with brutal Latin American governments from Honduras to Brazil, and denies refuge to Latin American immigrants fleeing horrific violence.

While the Trump administration claims that there are 20,000-25,000 Cuban security forces propping up the Venezuelan government, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno

Rodríguez Parrilla insists that there are no Cuban soldiers in Venezuela, “only medical staff in humanitarian mission”. Cuba has a long-standing agreement with Venezuela to provide doctors and nurses in exchange for Venezuelan oil. This is part of Cuba’s “army of white coats,” as Cuban officials call them, who are currently working across 67 countries.

While the attacks on Cuba and the other members of the “troika of tyranny” are designed to stop the spread of socialism, they are also aimed at the 2020 elections. They pander to a tiny sector of the US population – conservative Cubans, Venezuelans and

Nicaraguans mainly in the Miami area – in a craven effort to solicit their votes in both congressional and presidential elections, where margins of victory can be razor blade thin.

The Cuban people, and the rights of Americans, should not be held hostage to brazen partisan politics. And they certainly should not be held hostage to the imperial hubris of madman John Bolton. **CT**

Medea Benjamin is the author of Inside Iran: The History and Politics of the Islamic Republic and co-director of the peace group CODEPINK. This article was produced by Local Peace Economy, a project of the Independent Media Institute.

Who puts a Good Samaritan behind bars?

By **Jim Hightower**

LET us now contemplate the morality tale of the Good Samaritan. Not the one in the New Testament, but the one out in the high desert region around Marfa, Texas, just 60 miles from the Mexican border.

It’s the story of Teresa Todd, the city attorney in Marfa. On February 27, she was driving home on a dark road when,

suddenly, three young Central American migrants desperately flagged her down. She could’ve just sped on, but the bedraggled migrants – two brothers and their sister – looked about the same age as Todd’s own teenage boys. So she instinctively turned around and went back because, as she put it, “I can’t leave a kid on the side of the road.”

Forced from their home

by gang threats, the three refugees had become lost in the Texas desert, had run out of food and water, and the sister had fallen deathly ill. Putting them in her car, Todd was frantically trying to get medical help when – luckily? – a sheriff's deputy pulled up behind them.

But – unluckily – the deputy was not there to help. He called the Border Patrol and turned the young refugees over to ICE. The officers also confiscated Todd's purse, arrested her for

suspicion of “transporting illegal aliens,” hauled her to a holding cell, and later seized her phone.

“It was totally surreal,” she said. It still is. Even though she's not been formally charged, federal officials say the incident remains “an active case,” and they're still contemplating criminal charges against her.

“This is all about trying to chill people from helping others,” Todd says. “I'm simply a

mom who saw a child in need and pulled over to try to help.” During her ordeal, she says she kept thinking: “What country am I in? This is not the United States.”

No, indeed, it's Donald Trump's un-American, disunited state of autocracy. We need to build a wall around him. **CT**

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Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. Distributed by www.OtherWords.org



London says 'Hi!' to Mr President

Photos by **Ron Fassbender**

Despite his Tweets to the contrary, Donald Trump was not exactly greeted with joy during this month's state visit to England. Tens of thousands of protesters hurled abuse when he arrived, outside his feast with the Queen at Buck Palace, and at every other stop in his tour, making it clear that neither Trump nor his destructive trade deals were welcome. **CT**



As part of a PR exercise, the US Army asked Twitter subscribers how service in the armed forces has impacted people. The answers it received were not what they expected. **Caitlin Johnstone** looks at some of them

Chewed up, spat out and left to suffer

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AFTER posting a video of a young recruit talking to the camera about how service allows him to better himself ‘as a man and a warrior’, the US Army tweeted, “How has serving impacted you?” As of this writing, the post has over 5,300 responses. Most of them are heartbreaking.

In tweet after tweet after tweet, people used the opportunity that the Army had inadvertently given them to describe how they or their loved one had been chewed up and spit out by a war machine that never cared about them.

Here’s a sampling, slightly edited for clarity. There are many, many more.

● “After I came back from overseas I couldn’t go into large crowds without a few beers in me. I have nerve damage in my right ear that, since I didn’t want to look weak after I came back, I lied to the VA rep. My dad was exposed to Agent Orange which destroyed his

At a time when our leaders spend an inordinate amount of time reflecting on the ‘sacrifices’ made by young soldiers killed in usually-avoidable wars, it’s worth remembering those who didn’t die, but returned home to be ignored. This might give real meaning the phrase ‘Never Again’ -
Editor

lungs, heart, liver and pancreas and eventually killing him five years ago. He was 49, exposed post-Vietnam, and will never meet my daughter or my nephew. I still drink too much and crowds are OK most days, but I have to grocery shop at night and can’t work days because there is too many people.”

● “The dad of my best friend when I was in high school had served in the army. He strug-

gled with untreated PTSD and severe depression for 30 years, never told his family. Christmas Eve of 2010, he went to their shed to grab the presents and shot himself in the head. That was the first funeral I attended where I was actually told the cause of death and the reasons surrounding it. I went home from the service, did some asking around, and found that most of the funerals I’ve attended before have been caused by untreated health issues from serving.”

● “My dad was drafted into war and was exposed to Agent Orange. I was born with multiple physical / neurological disabilities that are linked back to that chemical. And my dad became an alcoholic with PTSD and a side of bipolar disorder.”

● “I met this guy named Christian who served in Iraq. He was cool, had his own place with a pole in the living room ... My best friend at the time started dating him so we spent a week-



end at his crib. After a party, at 6am, he took out his laptop. He started showing us some pics of his time in the army. Pics with a bunch of dudes. Smiling, laughing. It was cool. I was drunk and didn't care. He started showing us pics of some little kids. After a while, his eyes went completely fucking dark. I was, like, man, dude's high as fuck. He very calmly explained to us that all of those kids were dead, 'but that's what war was. dead kids and nothing to show for it but a military discount.' Christian killed himself two months later."

- "Chronic pain with a 0 percent disability rating (despite medical discharge) so no benefits, and anger issues that I cope with by picking fist fights with strangers."

- "My parents both served in

the US Army and what they got was PTSD for both of them, along with anxiety issues. Whenever we go out in public and sit down somewhere, my dad has to have his back up against the wall just to feel a measure of comfort that no one is going to sneak up on him and kill him. And walking up behind either of them without announcing that you're there is most likely going to either get you punch in the face or choked out".

- "I didn't serve but my dad did. In Vietnam. It eventually killed him, slowly, over a couple of decades. When the doctors were trying to put in a pacemaker to maybe extend his life a couple of years, his organs were so fucked from the Agent Orange, they disintegrated to the touch. He died when I was ten. He never saw me graduate

high school. He never saw me get my first job or buy my first car. He wasn't there. But hey! Y'all finally paid out 30k after another vet took the VA to the Supreme Court, so. You know. It was cool for him."

- "Many of my friends served. All are on heavy antidepressant/anxiety meds, can't make it through Fourth of July or New Year's Eve, and have all dealt with heavy substance abuse problems before and after discharge. And that's on top of one crippled left hand, crushed vertebra, and GSWs".

- "Left my talented and young brother a broken and disabled man who barely leaves the house. Left my mother hyper-vigilant and terrified due to the amount of sexual assault and rape covered up and looked over by COs. Friend joined right out

of HS, bullet left him paralysed neck down.”

● “It’s given me a fractured spine, TBI, combat PTSD, burn pit exposure, and a broken body with no hope of getting better. Not even medically retired for a fractured spine. WTF”.

● “Y’all killed my father by failing to provide proper treatments after multiple tours”.

● “Everyone I know got free PTSD and chemical exposure and a long engagement in their efforts to have the US pay up for college tuition. Several lives ruined. No one came out better. Thank God my recruiter got a DUI on his way to get me or I would be dead or worse right now”.

● “I have PTSD and still wake up crying at night. Also have a messed up leg that I probably will have to deal with the rest of my life. Depression. Anger issues”.

● “My grandfather came back from Vietnam with severe PTSD, tried to drown it in alcohol, beat my father so badly and so often he still flinches when touched 50 years later. And I grew up with an emotionally scarred father with PTSD issues of his own because of it. Good times”.

● “Hmmm. Let’s see. I lost friends, have 38 inches of scars, PTSD, and a janky arm and hand that don’t work”.



“My cousin went to war twice and came back with a drug addiction that killed him. My other cousin could never get paid on time and when he left they tried to withhold his pay”

● “My Grandpa served in Vietnam from when he was 18-25. He’s 70 now and every night he still has nightmares where he stands up tugging at the curtains or banging on the walls screaming at the top of his lungs for someone to help him. He refuses to talk about his time and when you mention anything about the war to him his face goes white and he has a panic attack. He cries almost every day and night and had to spend 10 years in a psychiatric facility for suicidal ideations from what he saw there”.

● “My best friend joined the Army straight out of high school because his family was poor and he wanted a college education. He served his time and then some. Just as he was ready to retire he was sent to Iraq. You

guys sent him back in a box. It destroyed his children”.

● “Well, my father got deployed to Iraq and came back a completely different person. Couldn’t even work the same job he had been working 20 years before that because of his anxiety and PTSD. He had nightmares, got easily violent and has terrible depression. But the army just handed him pills, now he is 100 percent disabled and is on a shit ton of medication. He has nightmares every night, paces the house barely sleeping, checking every room just to make sure everyone’s safe. He’s had multiple friends commit suicide”.

● “Father’s a disabled Vietnam veteran who came home with severe PTSD and raging alcoholism. VA has continuously ignored him throughout the years and his medical needs and he receives very little compensation for all he’s gone through. Thanks so much!!”

● “I was #USNavy, my husband was #USArmy, he served in Bosnia and Iraq and that nice, shy, funny guy was gone, replaced with a withdrawn, angry man ... he committed suicide a few years later ... when I’m thanked for my service, I just nod”.

● “Someone I loved joined right out of high school even though I begged him not to. A few months after his deployment ended, we reconnected. One night, he told me he loved me and then shot himself in the head. If you’re

gonna prey on kids for imperialism, at least treat their PTSD”.

● “I’m permanently disabled because I trained through severe pain after being rejected from the clinic for ‘malinger-ing’. Turns out my pelvis was cracked and I ended up having to have hip surgery when I was 20 years old”.

● “My brother went into the Army a fairly normal person, became a Ranger (Ft. Ord) and came out a sociopath. He spent the first three weeks home in his room in the dark, only coming out at night when he thought we were asleep. He started doing crazy stuff. Haven’t seen him since 1993”.

● “I don’t know anyone in my family who doesn’t suffer from PTSD due to serving. One is signed off sick due to it and thinks violence is OK. Another



“I recently attended funeral for a West Point grad with a 4-year-old and 7-year-old daughter because he blew his face off to escape his PTSD but that’s nothing new”

(navy) turned into a psycho & thought domestic violence was the answer to his wife disobeying his orders”.

● “Bad back, hips, and knees. Lack of trust, especially when coming forward about sexual harassment. Detachment, out of fear of losing friends. Missed birthdays, weddings, graduations, and funerals. I get a special license plate tho.”

● “My Dad served two tours in Middle East and his personality changes have affected my family forever. VA ‘counseling’ has a session limit and doesn’t send you to actual psychologists. Military service creates a mental health epidemic it is then woefully unequipped to deal with.” **CT**

Caitlin Johnstone is an Australian blogger. Follow her at www.caitlinjohnstone.com

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1970s school leavers tell how industrial decline and political incompetence shattered their town and fragmented the community, writes **Tony Sutton**

Generations apart - high hopes and stolen dreams

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THERE was a time, in the not-so-distant past, when the English fishing town of Grimsby proudly lived up to its full name – Great Grimsby (so named to distinguish itself from a nearby village, Little Grimsby). Situated at the mouth of the Humber in North East Lincolnshire, it was the world’s biggest fishing port, lording over the North Atlantic deep-sea fishing grounds.

The fishermen were, Peter Rowley tells us in his book *Class Work*, ‘three-day millionaires’, who braved often-terrifying weather during weeks-long voyages before returning to indulge themselves during short breaks at home. Their haunt was Freeman Street, the town’s main shopping artery. Close to the docks, it was “a vital area, full of life, more akin to a wild west frontier town”, says Rowley.

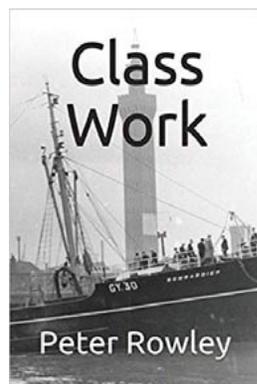
The fishermen, “identified by their suits, powder blue, bottle green, red, yellow, expensive and distinctive with pleats and belted jackets”,

have long gone, their industry shattered by the triple hammer of ruinous ‘cod wars’ with Iceland in the 1970s and 1980s, the European Union’s Common Fisheries Policy, and Margaret Thatcher’s devastating 11-year reign as British prime minister. Freeman Street, formerly “packed with shoppers, tailors, jewellers, a plethora of watering holes and a massive conveyor belt of semi-skilled and unskilled employment”, hit the nadir of its 40-year decline in 2018 when it was declared the ‘Unhealthiest High Street in Britain’, due to the number of takeaway food outlets, betting

shops and off licence booze outlets that fill the spaces between now-shuttered storefronts.

A former schoolteacher and college lecturer, Rowley describes the period covered by *Class Work* as one of “political upheaval, stunning change, an economy on a roller coaster as seen through the eyes of Grimsby school leavers from the 1970s to the present”. His book is an oral history, told by ex-students of Harold Street Secondary School, that traces the transformation of the town’s East Marsh area – which provided the crews for the town’s trawler fleets – from a deep-rooted, close-knit community into an outpost of almost paralysed decay, afflicted by drugs, violence and other anti-social behaviour.

Their stories highlight the pressing need for stronger links between community, schools and industry to enable children to progress through an education system designed to



**CLASS
WORK**

**Peter
Rowley**

Available
from
Amazon

£7.99



Above: Freeman Street today - stores in Grimsby's main thoroughfare are now shuttered and the street is desolate. But in the 1970s (right), the street was the thriving heart of the town.



prepare them for quality work that pays the bills, provides for the needs of a family, and encourages further education and training for personal and career advancement.

That might sound like an utopian dream, but it is precisely what existed in Grimsby and other British towns and cities before Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal disrupters emerged in the late 1970s to trash the existing, but already fragile, post-war status quo.

Rowley's ex-pupils, who attended Harold Street from 1969 to 1976, were at the bleeding edge of a union-busting, money-grubbing political blitz that caused much of the industrial

decline that has ravaged the north of England over the past 35 years.

In this period, Grimsby's East Marsh was transformed from what ex-pupil Diana Sanford remembers as, "a friendly place where there was a genuine community spirit where people looked out for one another", into one in which, "We have landlords who buy bulk houses and have no interest in offering a decent standard of service. Drugs are endemic and family situations challenging. Some

seem to lack any real aims or purpose in life, which inevitably leads to a lack of self-esteem, pride and self-respect".

That splintering of community is also noted by Karon Kennington, who recalls a time when "the area bustled with life and there were corner shops everywhere". But it degenerated so much she was forced to "move my dad out of the family home in 2008. Basically, he was frightened by the vandalism and crime. He became a virtual recluse in his own home. It's not

the Grimsby I grew up in”.

Kennington adds, “I think today’s school leavers would be shocked at how I got my first job. The careers officer came to school with a batch of job cards. My friend was interested in fashion and got a job in a fashion shop”, while she and two others found work in the food hall of a department store.

In contrast, Rob Rowntree, a pupil at the school from 1969 to 1974, is infuriated at the cynicism of the great youth employment cover-up by today’s Tory government: “My lad is at Primark. He works 32 hours per month. He doesn’t pay tax. That’s how you get a ‘jobs miracle’, four/five jobs created where really the hours are consistent with one full-time genuine job. The community is collapsing from within”.

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In the second part of *Class Work* Rowley lays the blame for the decay that has bedeviled working class communities on Thatcher’s destructive spell in power from 1979 to 1990, famously characterised by her much-reviled quote, “There is no such thing as society . . .”

She was determined to upset the often-uneasy equilibrium that had existed between workers and bosses during the post-war years and set about eliminating worker power. Her increasingly-harsh actions culminated in crushing the mineworkers’ strike of 1983-84, which helped shatter trade unions and paved the way to



End of the line: North Sea trawler the *Ross Tiger* rests at its final home at Grimsby’s Fishing Heritage Centre.



This statue commemorating the thousands of Grimsby fishermen who died at sea over the years, was erected in 2005 after a six-year fund-raising campaign by the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph*.

the crisis that exists today.

Thatcher’s attitude to young workers was displayed when her Tory government set up the Manpower Services Commission, a youth training programme to help youngsters find jobs. Agreeing with cynical observers, who claimed the

scheme served only to mask real unemployment figures, Rowley highlights the arrogance and condescension of the commission, whose boss, David Young, declared in a 1982 newspaper article that, “Youth rates of pay in Britain are far too high ... The young should be a source of cheap labour”.

Young also advised employers, “You now have the opportunity to take on young men and women, train them and let them work for you almost entirely at our expense, and then decide whether or not to employ them”.

His thoughts were amplified in a MSC memo a couple of years later which concluded that, “People must be educated once more to know their place”. Working class people needed, it seemed, to be “re-socialised to be more acceptable to employers”.

This mindset was shared by Chancellor of the Excheq-

uer Nigel Lawson who bluntly declared that the government's intentions towards youth training were, "No tech rather than low tech".

The future for Britain's youth, notes Rowley, "seemed to be as a nation of personal servants, textile sweat shops, burger flippers and caterers for tourists in a giant heritage theme park".

35 years later, the effects of that Tory ideological group-think, continued by Tony Blair's New Labour, and culminating in a crippling austerity campaign by the Cameron/May Tory government are clear. The hopes and dreams of several generations have been dashed by the greed of asset-stripping hucksters, who have denuded industry, off-shored profits, introduced zero-hour contracts, and created the most unequal society in a century.

What of the future? Well, we shouldn't expect to see free-spending fishermen parading down Grimsby's Freeman Street in their colourful suits any time soon, but there are signs of hope in regeneration projects under way – parts of the main street are being demolished to make way for housing and offices, while heavy investment is also being made in the offshore windfarm industry.

And the people on the East Marsh? Rowley tells us that the area's Shalom Youth Club, led for 40 years by vicar John Ellis, has had a huge influence on

"Something has been lost that cannot be replaced, and the town is now diminished because of it. A community built on physical resilience and the ability to work incredibly hard has vanished"

recent generations, helping youngsters escape the nihilistic emptiness of life without hope, while also running a thrice-weekly soup kitchen.

"I was looking through some old Church records and there was a soup kitchen on this site in 1861," says Ellis. "It records an oxen head being made into stew for the poor. It's like back to the future".

Almost without exception, concludes Rowley, everyone interviewed in *Class Work* remembers Grimsby's East Marsh area in the 1970s as a happy, integrated community. "Something has been lost that cannot be replaced and the town is now diminished because of it. A community built on physical resilience and the ability to work incredibly hard has vanished.

"We are now at a crossroads. What is required in towns like Grimsby are all the elements of Jeremy Corbyn's socialist programme of change, to replace a brutal neoliberal ideology which has patently failed the mass of people in society".

Rowley believes the next UK general election (slated for 2022,

but likely to happen sooner) may be the last chance to begin the process of making Grimsby – and Britain – 'Great' again. "It is not merely winning the election, it is about changing the course of history by a permanent transformation in the balance of power and changing a system currently rigged against working people", he says.

But will Corbyn get a chance to introduce changes that will cater 'for the many, not the few?' It's anybody's guess now that the country has become so divided after three years of the Tory party's Brexit disaster.

That, along with the mass media's relentlessly cynical campaigns against Corbyn, has helped generate huge working class support for political chancer Nigel Farage and his single-issue concoction, the Brexit Party, which advocates a swift and chaotic exit from Europe – with scant regard to the consequences.

Citizens of Grimsby's East Marsh should be rooting for Corbyn: if Farage wins power, their suffering will almost certainly get worse.

Postscript: Class Work put author Peter Rowley in contact with East Marsh United, a residents' group committed to transforming their area. The group has won more than £1-million to support projects in construction training and community housing projects, as well as the acquisition of a community centre. CT

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Tony Sutton is the editor of *ColdType* – editor@coldtype.net

Kevin Neish recalls his most memorable dinner ever - sitting at a table in Bethlehem with the business end of an Israeli tank staring him in the face

Dinner with Fatima and an uninvited Israeli tank

IN March 2002 I volunteered with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) to be a human shield for Palestinian farmers in Bethlehem. It was supposed to be a fairly easy going gig, with us simply accompanying farmers in their fields in order to protect them from rabid Zionist settlers and Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), while the Palestinians pruned their olive trees near illegal Israeli settlements.

Unfortunately, the Israelis

RADICAL VIGNETTES

had different plans as they decided to re-invade the West Bank just after I arrived. In a matter of hours the IOF ruthlessly swept across the West Bank, killing, maiming and destroying as they went. But not in Bethlehem, as the Zionists 'charitably' decided to not invade and desecrate the symbolic centre of three major reli-

gions, at least not during Easter weekend (for that would be bad PR).

So all was quiet in Bethlehem, as we ISMers hunkered down with our Palestinian partners in the Azza refugee camp, until Easter ended at the stroke of midnight on Monday, at which moment hundreds of soldiers, tanks, APCs, drones, helicopter gunships and jets immediately poured into and over Bethlehem.

We watched the IOF system-

Riding with Jesus and Abraham. Maybe God is on my side?

ON to Bethlehem! My driver Abraham tries several checkpoints, but all are closed, so he drops me off two blocks from a pedestrian crossing that might be open. "That's as close as I can go, or they may shoot. I will have my brother Jesus pick you up on the other side". Jesus and Abraham, teaming up to deliver an atheist to Bethlehem. God may have a plan here, or a sense of humour!

The checkpoint building is dark, but unseen whispering soldiers and the crackle of radios follow me as I walk unchallenged through a

maze of concrete barriers. Maybe God is on my side?

Jesus arrives and we drive through eerily dark empty streets at very high speeds. "Not much traffic?" I comment. "Oh, it is very dangerous to be on the road!", he says.

"What? Then why are we out here?" I ask. He replies "It is very important that people like you are here to bear witness. It's worth the risk". I decide that there is no harm in having God, with Jesus, on my side in this particular situation.



Camp kids take a deadly risk to watch the tanks roll in.

atically as, floor-by-floor and room-by-room, they blew up apartment buildings around us. Then they assaulted and occupied the Bethlehem University just up the road from us, before, finally, invading Manger Square and attacking the Church of the Nativity.

Once the dust had settled a bit, we ISMers spent our time keeping the IOF from entering our little refugee camp, while also patrolling the local streets as protective witnesses and riding with Red Crescent ambulances to prevent them from being confiscated at check points.

For the next week Bethlehem was under a round-the-clock shoot-to-kill curfew, so no Palestinians could leave their homes. Even leaning out of a window was an invitation to being shot.

Under such circumstances any resistance by the Palestinians seemed to me to be extremely dangerous and likely futile, but Fatima, a young mother on the second floor of my building, showed me I was wrong.

Fatima's balcony overlooked the Bethlehem University, where the IOF bivouacked their masses of soldiers and vehicles. One day she invited me to come for lunch, and when I showed up she had set up a lovely festive dinner table in the family's living room, covered with what little food and drink they had.

She showed me to my seat at the head of the table, and then threw open the wide folding doors to her balcony at the other end of the table, presenting me with a beautiful panoramic view of Bethlehem.

Except there was an Israeli tank positioned less than a

block away in the middle of John Paul II road (how ironic), sitting eye level with us, with its barrel pointed directly at us (me). I had been watching this particular tank as it sat there day after day, randomly swinging its turret around, occasionally shooting 50-calibre machine gun rounds into nearby buildings or spraying bullets into the air over our neighbourhood.

The turret would always return to rest pointing at our building at the entrance to the camp, a none-too-subtle warning to us all.

Fatima had decided that, although she couldn't leave her building or even walk out onto her balcony, she was going to symbolically thumb her nose at the Israeli soldiers, by holding a long, boisterous, and joyous meal with her family (and me) directly and purposely in the sights of that tank's cannon barrel. It was a wonderful (and memorable) meal, with no one outwardly paying the slightest attention to the tank or whoever was at the other end of that barrel, but I noticed that during the whole meal the turret didn't move.

The Palestinians have a word to describe Fatima and her family, 'sumud,' meaning 'steadfast in English', and that Israeli tank crew certainly got a visual lesson in Palestinian steadfastness that day in Bethlehem, and so did I.

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Kevin Neish is a very serious international activist, who also appreciates the power of humour.

If the US is concerned about belligerent forces in the Middle East sit should take a closer look at some of its key allies, writes **Danny Sjursen**

Troika fever hits the Middle East

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AMERICAN foreign policy can be so retro, not to mention absurd. Despite being bogged down in more military interventions than it can reasonably handle, the Trump team recently picked a new fight in Latin America.

That's right! Uncle Sam kicked off a sequel to the Cold War with some of our southern neighbours, while resuscitating the bogeyman of socialism. In the process, National Security Advisor John Bolton treated us all to a new phrase, no less laughable than Bush the younger's 2002 'axis of evil' (Iran, Iraq, and North Korea). He labelled Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua a 'troika of tyranny'.

Alliteration no less! The only problem is that the phrase ridiculously overestimates both the degree of collaboration among those three states and the dangers they pose to their hegemonic neighbour to

the north. Bottom line: in no imaginable fashion do those little tin-pot tyrannies offer either an existential or even a serious threat to the United States.

Evidently, however, the phrase was meant to conjure up enough ill will and fear to justify the Trump team's desire for sweeping regime change in Latin America. Think of it as a micro-version of Cold War 2.0.

Odds are that Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, both unrepentant neocons, are the ones driving this Latin American Cold War reboot, even as, halfway across the planet, they've been pushing for war with Iran.

Meanwhile, it's increasingly clear that Donald Trump gets his own kick out of being a 'war president' and the unique form of threat production that goes with it.

Since it's a recipe for disaster, strap yourself in for a bumpy ride. After all, the demonisa-



tion of Latin American 'socialists' and an ill-advised war in the Persian Gulf have already been part of our lived experience. Under the circumstances, remember your Karl Marx: history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce.

And add this irony to the grim farce to come: you need only look to the Middle East to see a genuine all-American troika of tyranny.

I'm thinking about the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the



MINE'S BIGGER!: Donald Trump gets ready to dance while a guest of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia in 2017.

military junta in Egypt, and the colonising state of Israel – all countries that eschew real democracy and are working together to rain chaos on an already unstable region.

If you weren't an American, this might already be clear to you. With that in mind, let's try on a pair of non-American shoes and take a brief tour of a real troika of tyranny on this planet, a threesome that just happen to be President Trump's best buddies in the Middle East.

America's favourite kingdom

The Saudi royals are among the worst despots around. Yet Washington has long given them a pass. Sure, they possess oodles of oil, black gold upon which the US was once but no longer is heavily dependent. American support for those royals reaches back to World War II, when President Franklin Roosevelt took a detour after the Yalta Conference to

meet King Ibn Saud and first struck the devilish deal that, in the decades to come, would keep the oil flowing. In return, Washington would provide ample backing to the kingdom and turn a blind eye to its extensive human rights abuses.

Ultimately, this bargain proved as counterproductive as it was immoral. Sometimes the Saudis didn't even live up to their end of the bargain. For example, they shut the oil spigot during the 1973 Yom Kippur

War to express collective Arab frustration with Washington's favouritism toward Israel. Worse still, the royals used their continual oil windfall to build religious schools and mosques throughout the Muslim world in order to spread the regime's intolerant Wahhabi faith. From there, it was a relatively short road to the 9/11 attacks in which 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals (and not one was an Iranian).

More recently, in the Syrian civil war, Saudi Arabia even backed the al-Nusra Front, an al-Qaeda franchise. That's right, an American partner funded an offshoot of the very organisation that took down the twin towers and damaged the Pentagon. For this there have been no consequences.

In other words, Washington stands shoulder to shoulder with a truly abhorrent regime, while simultaneously complaining bitterly about the despotism and tyranny of nations of which it's less fond. The hypocrisy should be (but generally isn't) considered staggering here. We're talking about a Saudi government that only recently allowed women to drive automobiles and still beheads them for 'witchcraft and sorcery'. Indeed, mass execution is a staple of the regime. Recently, the kingdom executed 37 men in a single day. (One of them was even reportedly crucified.) Most were not the 'terrorists' they were made out to be, but dissidents from Saudi Arabia's Shia minority convicted, as Amnesty International

We're talking about a Saudi government that only recently allowed women to drive automobiles and still beheads them for 'witchcraft and sorcery'

put it, 'after sham trials that... relied on confessions extracted through torture'.

During the Arab Spring of 2011, the Saudi royals certainly proved anything but friends to the budding democratic movements brewing across the region. Indeed, its military even invaded a tiny neighbour to the east, Bahrain, to suppress civil-rights protests by that country's embattled Shia majority. (A Sunni royal family runs the show there.) In Yemen, the Saudis continue to terror-bomb civilians in its war against Houthi militias.

Tens of thousands have died – the exact number isn't known – under a brutal bombing campaign and at least 85,000 Yemeni children have already starved to death thanks to the war and a Saudi blockade of what was already the Arab world's poorest country. The hell unleashed on Yemen has been dubbed the world's worst humanitarian crisis. It has already produced millions of refugees and, at present, the world's worst cholera epidemic.

Through it all, Washington stood by its royals time and

again, with The Donald far more gleefully pro-Saudi than his predecessors. His first foreign excursion, after all, was to that kingdom's capital, Riyadh, where the president seemed to relish joining the martial pageantry of a Saudi 'sword dance'. He also let it be known that the cash would keep flowing from the kingdom into military-industrial coffers in this country, announcing a supposedly record \$110-billion set of arms deals (including a number closed by the Obama administration and ones that may never come to fruition). Son-in-law Jared Kushner even continues to maintain a bromance with the ambitious and brutal ruling Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

In other words, with fulsome support from Washington, sophisticated American weapons, and a boatload of American cash, Saudi Arabia continues to unleash terror at home and abroad. This much is certain: if you're looking for a troika of tyrants, that country should top your list.

America's favourite military autocracy

The US also backs – and Trump seems to love – Egypt's military ruler Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. At a press conference at the White House in September 2017, the president leaned toward the general and announced that he was 'doing a great job'. Hardly anyone inside the Beltway, in the media, or even on Main Street batted an eye. Washington has, of course, long supported

Egypt's various tyrants, including the brutal Hosni Mubarak who was overthrown early in the Arab Spring. Cairo remains the second largest annual recipient of American military aid at \$1.3-billion annually. In fact, 75 percent of such aid goes to just two countries, the other being Israel. In a sense, Washington simply bribes both states not to fight each other. Now, that's diplomacy for you!

So, how's Egypt's military using all the guns and butter the US sends its way? Brutally, of course. After Mubarak was overthrown in 2011, Mohamed Morsi won a free and fair election. Less than two years later, the military, which abhors his Muslim Brotherhood organisation, seized power in a coup. Enter General al-Sisi. And when Morsi supporters rallied to protest the putsch, the general, who had appointed himself president, promptly ordered his troops to open fire. At least 900 protesters were killed in what came to be known as the 2013 Rabaa Massacre. Since then, Sisi has ruled with an iron fist, extending his personal power, winning a sham reelection with 97.8 percent of the vote, and pushing through major constitutional changes that will allow the generalissimo to stay in power until at least 2030. Washington, of course, remained silent.

Sisi has run a veritable police state, replete with human rights abuses and mass incarceration. Last year, he even had a show trial of 739 Muslim Brotherhood-associated defendants, 75 of

**Sisi also uses
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whom were sentenced to death in a single day. He also uses 'emergency' counterterrorism laws to jail peaceful dissidents. Thousands of them have gone before military courts. In addition, in US-backed Egypt most forms of independent organisation and peaceful assembly remain banned. Cairo even collaborates with its old enemy Israel to maintain a stranglehold of a blockade on the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which the United Nations has termed 'inhumane'.

Yet Egypt gets a hall pass from the Trump administration. It matters not at all that few places on the planet suppress free speech as effectively as Egypt now does – not since it buys American weaponry and generally does as Washington wants in the region. In other words, a diplomatic state of marital (and martial) bliss protects the second member of the real troika of tyranny.

**America's favourite
apartheid state**

Some will be surprised, even offended, that I include Israel in this imaginary troika. Cer-

tainly, on the surface, Israel's democracy bears no relation to the political worlds of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Still, scratch below the gilded surface of Israeli life and you'll soon unearth staggering civil liberties abuses and a penchant for institutional oppression. After all, so extreme have been the abuses of ever more right-wing Israeli governments against the stateless Palestinians that even some mainstream foreign leaders and scholars now compare that country to apartheid South Africa.

And the label is justified. Palestinians are essentially isolated in the equivalent of open-air prisons in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – not unlike the bantustans of South Africa in the years when that country was white-ruled. In the impoverished, refugee-camp atmosphere of these statelets, Palestinians lack anything resembling civil rights. They can't even vote for the Israeli prime ministers who lord it over them. What's more, the Palestinian citizens of Israel (some 20 percent of the population), despite technically possessing the franchise, are systematically repressed in a variety of ways.

Evidence of an apartheid-style state is everywhere apparent in the Palestinian territories. In violation of countless international norms and UN resolutions, Israel imposes its own version of a police state – functionally, a military occupation of land legally possessed by Arabs. It has begun a de

facto annexation of Palestinian land by building a ‘security wall’ through Palestinian villages. Its military constructs special ‘Jewish only’ roads in the West Bank linking illegal Israeli settlements, while further fracturing the fiction of Palestinian contiguity. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not only refused to withdraw those settlements or halt the colonisation of Palestinian territory by Jewish Israelis, but during the recent Israeli election promised to begin the actual annexation of the West Bank in his new term.

Israeli military actions are regularly direct violations of the principles of proportionality in warfare, which means that the ratio of Israeli to Palestinian casualties is invariably absurdly disproportionate. Since last spring, at least 175 Palestinians (almost all unarmed) have been shot to death by Israeli soldiers along the Gaza Strip fence line, while 5,884 others were wounded by live ammunition. Ninety-four of those had to have a limb amputated. A staggering 948 of the wounded were minors. In that period, just one Israeli died and 11 were wounded in those same ‘clashes’.

Life in blockaded Gaza is almost unimaginably awful. So stringent are the sanctions imposed that one prominent official in a leaked diplomatic cable admitted that Israeli policy was to ‘keep Gaza’s economy on the brink of collapse’. In fact, back in 2012, one of that country’s military spokesmen even

Since last spring, at least 175 Palestinians (almost all unarmed) have been shot to death by Israeli soldiers along the Gaza Strip fence line

indicated that food was being allowed into the blockaded strip on a 2,300 calories a day count per Gazan – just enough, that is, to avoid starvation.

Through it all, with President Trump at the wheel, Netanyahu can feel utterly assured of the near limitless backing of the United States. The Trump team has essentially sanctioned all Israeli behaviour, thereby legitimising the present state of Palestinian life. Trump has moved the US embassy to contested Jerusalem – admitting once and for all that Washington sees the holy city as the sole property of the Jewish state – recognised the illegal Israeli annexation of the conquered Syrian Golan Heights, and increased the flow of military aid and arms to Israel, already the number-one recipient of such American largesse.

Sometimes, in the age of Trump, it almost seems as if ‘Bibi’ Netanyahu were the one guiding American policy throughout the Middle East. No wonder Israel rounds out that troika of tyranny.

Beyond their wretched human rights records and undemocratic tendencies, that troika has another particularly relevant commonality as the

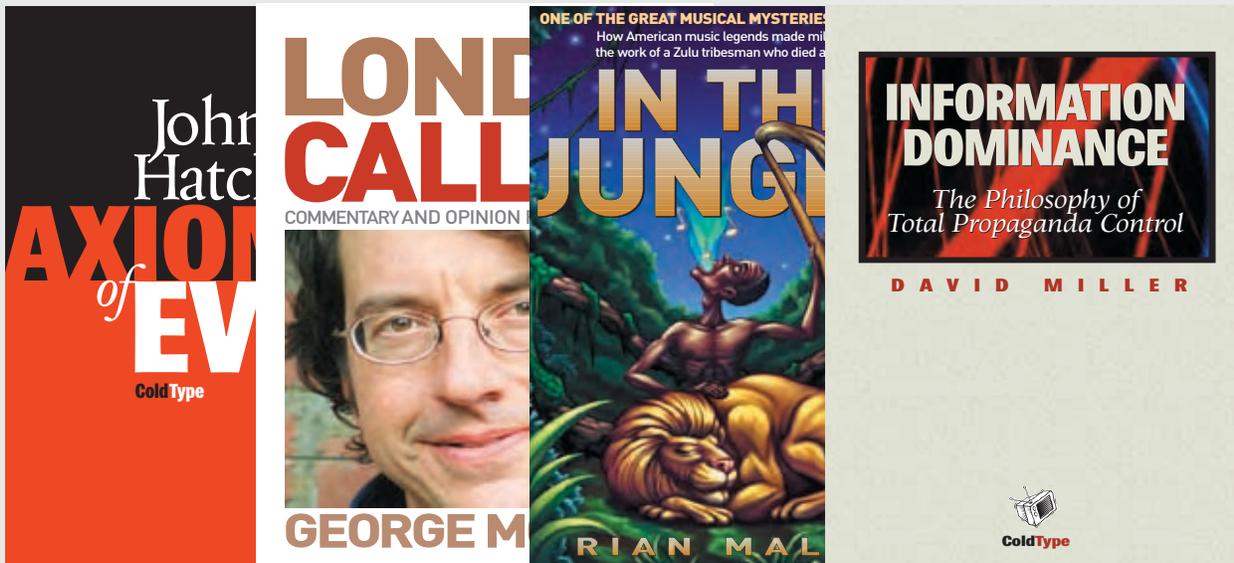
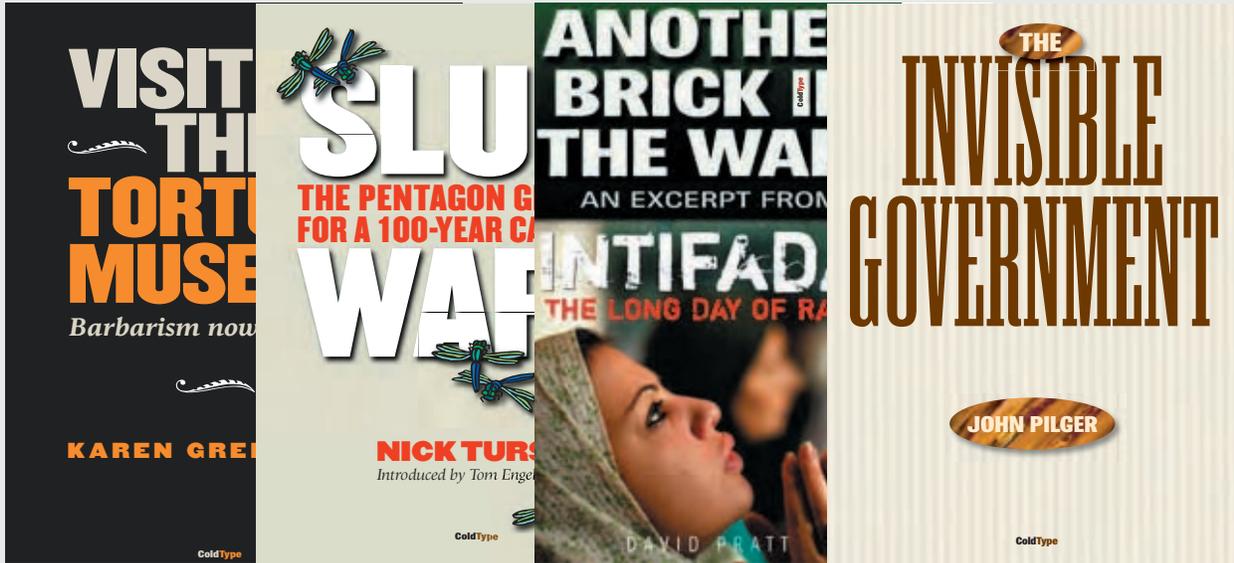
US reportedly prepares for a possible war with Iran. Two of those countries – Israel and Saudi Arabia – desperately desire that the American military take on their Iranian nemesis. The third, Egypt, will go along with just about anything as long as Uncle Sam keeps the military aid flowing to Cairo. Think of it as potentially the ultimate ‘wag the dog’ scenario, with Washington taking on the role of the dog.

This alone should make Washington officials cautious. After all, war with Iran would surely prove disastrous (whatever damage was done to that country). If you don’t think so, you haven’t been living through the last 17-plus years of this country’s forever wars. Unfortunately, no one should count on such caution from John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, or even Donald Trump.

Settle into your seats folks and prepare to watch the empire swallow the republic whole. **CT**

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Danny Sjursen is a retired US Army major and former history instructor at West Point. He served tours with reconnaissance units in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has written a memoir of the Iraq War, *Ghost Riders of Baghdad: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Myth of the Surge*. Follow him on Twitter at @SkepticalVet and check out his podcast *Fortress on a Hill*, co-hosted with fellow vet Chris ‘Henri’. This essay first appeared at www.tomdispatch.com

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“The hordes of ‘ Hamas and Hezbollah supporters, neo-Nazis, and conspiracy theorists’ that the media had warned us were coming, oddly, never showed their faces ... clearly, the ‘Bild kippas’ scared them off ,” writes **CJ Hopkins**

Berlin survives the great Quds Day Panic of 2019

So it appears we managed to survive another terrifying Quds Day in Berlin.

It was certainly touch and go for a while, what with the media issuing hysterical warnings about the hordes of ‘ Hamas and Hezbollah supporters, neo-Nazis, and conspiracy theorists’ that were going to materialise out of the ether, goose-step down the Kurfürstendamm, and reenact Kristallnacht, or something.

The city was braced for an all-out Perso-Palestinian Quds Day Pogrom, which is always a threat on Quds Day in Berlin, but the hysteria level this year was elevated, due to the Antisemitism Pandemic that mysteriously erupted in 2016 for no apparent reason whatsoever.

OK, what, you’re probably asking, is Quds Day? It’s an annual event initiated by Iran to show support for the Palestinians and opposition to Zionism. It takes place on the last Friday of Ramadan, in

opposition to Israel’s Jerusalem Day, the national holiday commemorating Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem in the aftermath of the Six-Day War.

In Berlin, there’s an annual Quds Day march, which the German media typically respond to by whipping up antisemitism hysteria and fanatical, guilt-ridden support for Israel. This year was no exception.

A week or so before the event, Felix Klein, Germany’s ‘Commissioner for Jewish Life and the Fight Against Antisemitism’, warned Jews not to wear kippas in public, on account of the unprecedented explosion of antisemitism throughout the country.

According to the interior ministry, there were 62 violent antisemitic attacks in Germany during 2018, compared to 37 in 2017, which, in a nation of 83-million people, and with a history of real-life, goose-stepping Nazis, and of perpetrating the Holocaust, and so on ...

well, you can understand the Commissioner’s alarm.

The international corporate media began spreading the news that antisemitism was once again on the march in Germany. The BBC reported that official figures showed that 1,646 hate crimes had been committed against Jews in 2018, up 10% from 2017! CNN reported that antisemitic hate crimes had increased by almost 20%! According to the *Jerusalem Post*, there were 1,800 antisemitic incidents committed against Jews in 2018! It was almost as if the Antisemitism Pandemic was retroactively metastasising right before our eyes.

But whatever. The statistics don’t really matter. The point was, ‘Jews are not safe in Germany!’ The Putin-Nazis had teamed up with the Iranian Nazis and the Syrian Nazis, who were backing the Palestinian Nazis, whose irrational hatred of the State of Israel the German Nazis had somehow weaponised (probably with a

bunch of fake Facebook ads), and they were all going to storm the historic high-end shopping boulevard of West Berlin!

Then, on May 31, the day before Quds Day, in a desperate, last-minute, tactical manoeuvre, German politicians and cultural figures exhorted Jews and gentiles alike to defiantly wear their kippas on Quds Day. *Bild*, the leading German tabloid, even printed little cut-out 'Bild kippas' (complete with meticulous assembly instructions), and called on Germans to wear them on Quds Day to show their solidarity with the state of Israel ... uh, sorry, I meant with the Jewish people.

The *Bild* kippa tactic was a huge success! On Quds Day, fewer than a thousand people, many of them women and children, peacefully strolled along the Kurfürstendamm chanting slogans such as 'Free, Free Palestine', and asking the world to stop the Israelis from penning people up in de facto ghettos, shooting their legs off with dum dum bullets, demolishing their houses, hospitals, and schools, stealing their land, randomly murdering them, and otherwise behaving like sadistic fascists.

The hordes of ' Hamas and Hezbollah supporters, neo-Nazis, and conspiracy theorists' that the corporate media had

warned us were coming, oddly, never showed their faces ... clearly, the 'Bild kippas' scared them off.

Or maybe it was the counter-demonstrators. Hundreds of anti-antisemites, including prominent German government officials, Israeli diplomats, Antifa factions, members of the local Jewish community, and *Bild* subscribers confronted the march, wearing kippas, waving Israeli flags, displaying giant 'MAGA' banners, shout-

Jews can come back out of hiding, although it isn't quite clear whether Germany wants them to wear their kippas in public or not now. Hopefully, we'll be receiving some sort of official directive from Commissioner Klein (or possibly Axel Springer) about that.

But, seriously, you can't really blame the Germans for a going a little overboard with their anti-antisemitism hysteria or for being reluctant to criticise Israel. It wasn't all that long ago that their parents and grandparents were heiling Hitler and systematically murdering millions of Jews, or looking the other way while it happened. Most of the Germans I'm acquainted with still feel kind of awful about that. Which isn't terribly surprising, is it?

I mean, imagine, if you're one of my American readers, if some other country conquered the USA, and put our political

and military leaders on trial for all the war crimes they've committed, and for the millions of people they've systematically murdered, and taught our children the truth about our history ... that might give you some idea of how most Germans feel about the Nazis and the Holocaust.

So, yes, Germans are a bit hypersensitive about anything resembling antisemitism, and they tend to conflate opposi-



CUT-OUT Kippa: On the front page of Beeld.

ing 'long live Israel' and 'free Gaza from Hamas', and giving the marchers the finger, and so on (which, OK, I found a little confusing, as, the last time I checked, Trump was still Hitler, and Antifa were supposedly a bunch of anarchists).

In any event, the hysteria has subsided. Berlin and Israel appear to have survived. The

tion to Israel with hatred of the Jewish people (although Israel is doing a pretty convincing impression of the Nazis, what with its ethnic cleansing, walls, ghettos, sadistic goons, propaganda, and so on). Many Germans also overcompensate for their feelings of shame about the holocaust by displaying an awkward fascination and enthusiasm for anything 'Jewish' (you know, like many liberal Americans fetishise Native and African Americans), so that might explain the 'Bild kippa' nonsense.

No, I'm not mocking or scolding the Germans ... they're still trying to work their history out. I'm just trying to track the propaganda and cynical emotional manipulation that we are increasingly being subjected to as the global capitalist ruling classes wage their War on Populism. The Quds Day Panic of 2019 is just one example. There are many more, both manufactured and all-too-real. The Charlottesville Nazis. Charlottesville II. The MAGA bomber. The Tree of Life shooting. The Christchurch attack. Jussie Smollett.

I'm sorry if this comes as a shock to anyone, but the world has always contained a minority of racist and antisemitic whack jobs. They didn't suddenly start murdering people when Brexit passed and Trump got elected

MAGA hat Smirk Boy. And the list goes on ... pretty much as it always has.

I'm sorry if this comes as a shock to anyone, but the world has always contained a minority of racist and antisemitic whack jobs. They didn't suddenly start murdering people when Brexit passed and Trump got elected. They've been doing that for quite some time. And of course there is still antisemitism in Germany. Saxony is crawling with neo-Nazis. And Iran really would like to wipe out Israel, just as Israel would like to wipe out Iran. None of this is in any way new or shocking to anyone who has been paying attention.

The only thing that has significantly changed since

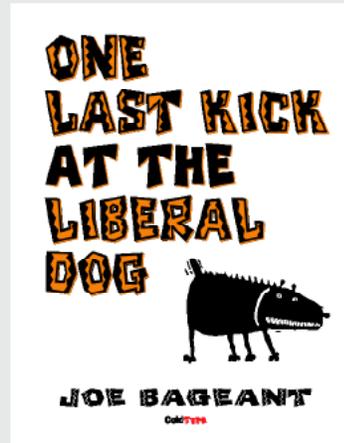
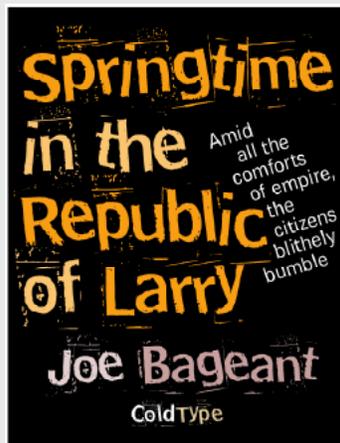
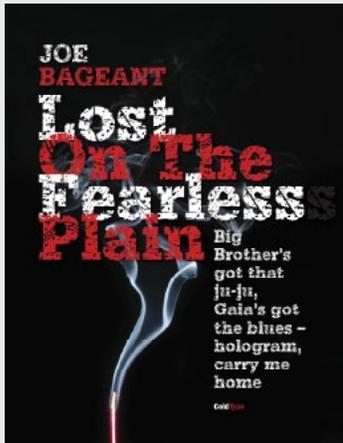
November 8, 2016, is the official narrative we are being fed, in which anyone opposing global capitalism and the hegemony of neoliberal ideology is either a Russian or some kind of Nazi, and a new 'antisemitism' or 'fascism' panic is whipped up for us on a monthly basis.

The Quds Day Panic of 2019 (like the Charlottesville Kristallnacht of 2017) is going to be rerun, over and over, in endless variations, until 2020, or whenever the global capitalist ruling classes manage to restore Normality. By that time Israeli sports teams will probably be wearing little Palestinians on their caps, Julian Assange will be locked away in Supermax, and satirists like me ... well, I think you know. **CT**

CJ Hopkins is an award-winning American playwright, novelist and political satirist based in Berlin. His plays are published by Bloomsbury Publishing (UK) and Broadway Play Publishing (USA). His debut novel, *ZONE 23*, is published by Snogsworthly, Swaine & Cormorant Paperbacks. He can be reached at www.cjhopkins.com or www.consentfactory.org

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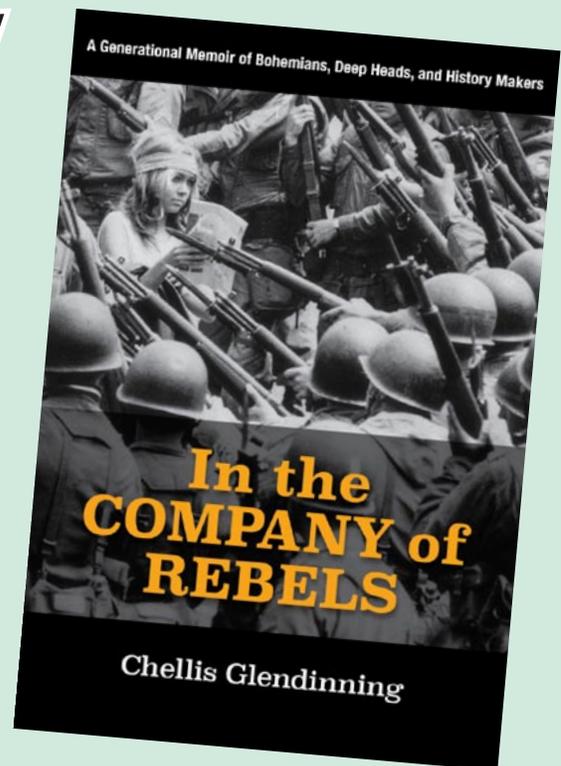
IN THE COMPANY OF REBELS

**A Generational Memoir of Bohemians,
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From Berkeley to Bolivia, from New York to New Mexico, a complex, multi-layered radical history unfolds through the stories and lives of the characters. From **Marty Schifenhauer**, who fought through the first rent-control law in the United States, to **Ponderosa Pine**, who started the All-Species Parade and never wore shoes, to **Dan and Patricia Ellsberg**, who released the Pentagon Papers and became life-long anti-war and antinuclear activists, the portraits bring out some of the vibrant, irreverent energy, the unwavering commitment, and the passion for life of this generation of activists

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31

From housing costs to wildlife collapse, we pay the price while the rich boost their profits. But from today we can fight back, writes **George Monbiot**

Want to tackle inequality? Start by changing land laws

WHAT is the most neglected issue in British politics? I would say land. Literally and metaphorically, land underlies our lives, but its ownership and control have been captured by a tiny number of people. The results include soaring inequality and exclusion; the massive cost of renting or buying a decent home; the collapse of wildlife and ecosystems; repeated financial crises; and the loss of public space. Yet for 70 years this crucial issue has scarcely featured in political discussions.

I hope, this changes, with the publication of the report to the Labour party – *Land for the Many* – that I’ve written with six experts in the field. Our aim is to put this neglected issue where it belongs: at the heart of political debate and discussion.

Since 1995, land values in this country have risen by 412 percent. Land now accounts for an astonishing 51 percent of the UK’s net worth. Why? In large part because successive governments have used tax exemptions

and other advantages to turn the ground beneath our feet into a speculative money machine. A report published this week by Tax Justice UK reveals that, through owning agricultural land, 261 rich families escaped £208-million in inheritance tax in 2015-16. Because farmland is used as a tax shelter, farmers are being priced out. In 2011, farmers bought 60 percent of the land that was on the market; within six years this had fallen to 40 percent.

Homes are so expensive not because of the price of bricks and mortar, but because land now accounts for 70 percent of the price. Worse still, when planning permission is granted on agricultural land, its value can rise 250-fold. Though this jackpot was created by society, the owner gets to keep most of it. We pay for this vast inflation in land values through outrageous rents and mortgages. Capital gains tax is lower than income tax, and council tax is propor-

tionately more expensive for the poor than for the rich. As a result of such giveaways, and the opacity of the system, land in the UK has become a magnet for international criminals seeking to launder their money.

We pay for these distortions every day. Homes have become so expensive not because the price of bricks and mortar has risen, but because the land that underlies them now accounts for 70 percent of their price. Twenty years ago, the average working family needed to save for three years to afford a deposit. Today, it must save for 19 years. Life is even worse for renters. While housing costs swallow 12 per-cent of average household incomes for those with mortgages, renters pay 36 percent.

Because we hear so little about the underlying issues, we blame the wrong causes for the cost and scarcity of housing: immigration, population growth, the green belt, red tape. In reality, the power of landowners and building companies, their tax and financial advantages and the vast

shift in bank lending towards the housing sector have inflated prices so much that even a massive housebuilding programme could not counteract them. The same forces are responsible for the loss of public space in cities, a right to roam that covers only 10 percent of the land, the lack of provision for allotments and of opportunities for new farmers, and the wholesale destruction of the living world. Our report aims to confront these structural forces and take back control of the fabric of the nation.

A Labour government should replace council tax with a progressive property tax, payable by owners, not tenants. Empty homes should be taxed at a higher rate. Inheritance tax should be replaced with a lifetime gifts tax levied on the recipient. Capital gains tax on second homes and investment properties should match or exceed the rates of income tax. Business rates should be replaced with a land value tax, based on rental value. A 15 percent offshore tax should be levied on properties owned through tax havens.

To democratise development and planning, we want to create new public development corporations. Alongside local authorities, they would assemble the land needed for affordable homes and new communities. Builders would have to compete on quality, rather than by amassing land banks. These public corporations would use compulsory purchase to buy land at agricultural prices, rather than having to pay through the nose for the uplift created

by planning permission. This could reduce the price of affordable homes in the south-east by nearly 50 percent.

We propose a community participation agency, to help people, rather than big companies, become the driving force in creating local plans and influencing major infrastructure. To ensure a wide range of voices is heard, we suggest a form of jury service for plan-making. To represent children and the unborn, we would like every local authority to appoint a future generations champion.

Councils should have new duties to create parks, urban green spaces, wildlife refuges and public amenities. We propose a new definition of public space, granting citizens a legal right to use it and overturning the power of private landowners in cities to stifle leisure, cultural events and protest.

We propose much tighter rent and eviction controls, and an ambitious social housebuilding programme. We also want to create new opportunities for people to design and build their own homes, supported by a community right to buy of the kind that Scotland enjoys. Compulsory sale orders should be used to bring vacant and derelict land on to the market, and community groups should have first rights to buy it.

To help stabilise land prices and make homes more affordable, we propose a new body, called the Common Ground Trust. When people can't afford

to buy a home, they can ask the trust to purchase the land that underlies it, while they pay only for the bricks and mortar (about 30 percent of the cost). They then pay the trust a land rent. Their overall housing costs are reduced, while the trust gradually accumulates a pool of land that acts as a buffer against speculation, and creates common ownership on a large scale.

We call for a right to roam across all uncultivated land and waterways (except gardens and similar limitations). We want to change the Allotments Act, to ensure that no one needs wait for a plot for more than a year. We would like to use part of the Land Registry's vast surplus to help community land trusts buy rural land for farming, forestry, conservation and rewilding. We would like a new English land commission to decide whether to make major farming and forestry decisions subject to planning permission, to help arrest the environmental crisis. And we want to transform the public's right to know, by ensuring that all information about land ownership, subsidies and planning is published freely as open data.

These proposals, we hope, will make the UK a more equal, inclusive and generous-spirited nation, characterised not by private enclosure and public squalor, but by private sufficiency and public luxury. Our land should work for the many, not just the few. **CT**

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George Monbiot is a columnist at the *Guardian*. His website is www.monbiot.com

Disobedience in a wetsuit: An excerpt from *In The Company of Rebels*, a new book by **Chellis Glendinning**

One woman against a nuclear sub

"I ask myself: how did I come to find myself facing a machine gun pointed directly at me?"
– *Sunshine Appleby, letter to Chellis Glendinning, 2015*

I AM sure that many people don't know what to do with Susan Upton, by her own choice known as Sunshine Appleby. Her parents certainly didn't; they locked her away in the loony bin for three years where – and I speak with certainty – she wowed the doctors with her intelligence, alertness, and imagination. And I hope that they all know now that their whacky patient became one of them: a registered nurse and certified massage therapist.

I myself can't be sure how I met Sunshine; she seemed always to be there. Maybe through our elder feminist-

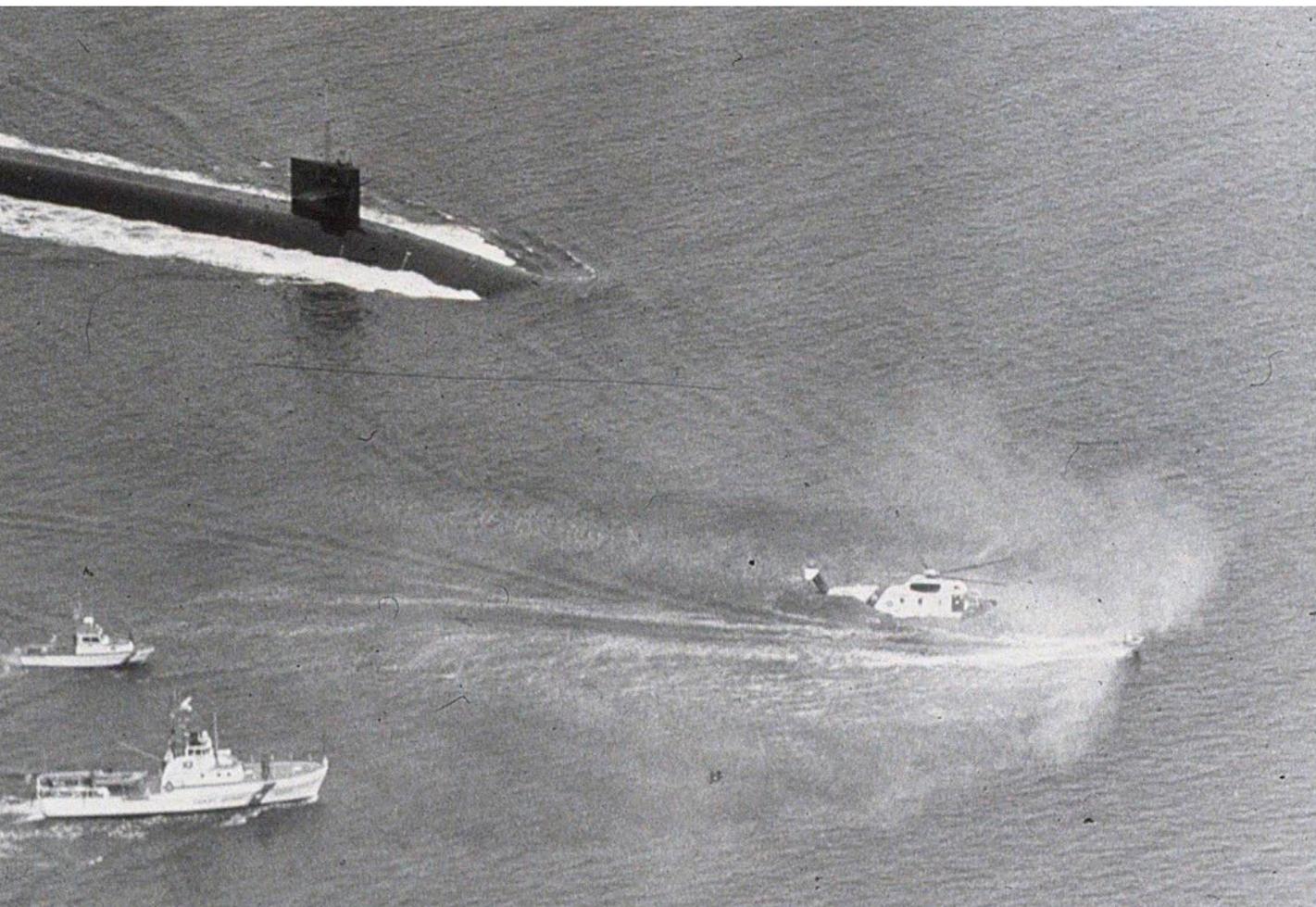
dyke friend, Sarah Davis, who lived in a painted Victorian in the Haight? Marc Kasky knew her from the Ecology Center. And then, there she was in the whirlwind of the anti-nuclear movement.

She was everywhere, and everywhere she stood out. Tall, peppery blonde-brown hair, slightly jutting front teeth – more concerned with doing the right thing than with caring about what people thought of her – she was usually dressed in a wrinkled shirt bought for twenty-five cents at Goodwill and tattered yoga pants. From her backpack arose little sacks of sunflower sprouts, hand-ground peanut butter slathered on thick slices of whole-wheat bread, and a glass jar of filtered water. I visited one of the slews of apartments she rented in San Francisco, a slightly below-ground affair, and learned that



every single item that was brought into the kitchen met one of three fates: it was devoured; it was recycled into another use; or it was transmogrified into compost. The woman had a steel water filter and a Champion juicer, with nary a plastic bag in sight.

Yes, Sunshine was a live-lightly freak with a predilection for raw foods. Her footprint, decades before the Ecological Footprint was even a glister in the eye of its inventor, resembled that of a tyre-sandalled Guatemalan peasant more than of



Pursued by a helicopter and the US Coast Guard, Sunshine Appleby swims towards the US Ohio nuclear submarine during a protest in 1982. She is the swirl of little waves to the left of the protest boat.

a saddle-shoed white woman born into an East Coast upper middle class family.

But born into that family she was: the T. Graydon Uptons of Hartland Four Corners, Vermont and Washington, DC. Through the years her father, T. Graydon, worked at the US Treasury Department, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Her mother, Vassar-educated Ann Nash Upton, was a homemaker with four children. Early on, Susan had health problems

that included panic attacks, ulcerative colitis, and insomnia, causing unbearable pain that without warning would bedevil her in any situation from shopping to riding the bus and would always cause her mother not concern, but embarrassment. Susan was also legally blind and wore thick glasses. Despite such impediments to her parents' stereotypical expectations, the still ever-promising Susan was the apple of their eye – that is, until they discovered that this daughter of theirs was

her own person.

1963 was Sunshine's breakaway year. A recent high-school graduate, she crafted her own free-form summer: she went west, jumped a freight train from California to Colorado, and chased circles around her dream to be a poet like the Beatnik women who had, by a few short years, predated her. But when the maples and oaks swathed the hills of the eastern seaboard in cloaks of dazzling red and yellow, she returned to perform her familial duty,

entering the exclusive women's Bennington College.

All along she had thought of herself as a pacifist. But that first semester, after an incident in which she angrily pounded the roommate who had usurped her cot and pitched her clothes and books into the hallway, Sunshine locked herself in a bathroom stall for three days, "being unable to respond to anything but the question of how can I harbour two such radically different feelings at the same time: loving peace and having the ability to be a killer at the same time?" When the janitor unscrewed the hinges of the toilet door, Sunshine's mother checked her into a mental institution.

Although she rarely talks about her subsequent dedication to non-violent civil disobedience, she described what followed this enforced dark night of the soul in a personal letter to me as "a journey inward". Upon release, she took classes at George Washington University in DC where, by a fluke of fate, she found herself in the middle of an anti-war protest; witnessed heavily armed police atop horses beating people with batons: was tear-gassed by helicopters and went totally blind for six weeks, during which time she lost her rental, her job, and her academic scholarship. Not to be daunted by disagreeable fortune, she took off for Mexico, where she witnessed the injustice of poverty, studied with Liberation Theology priests as well as with Ivan Illich, and was in Mexico City

**She found herself
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in 1968 when the historic massacre of protestors in Tlatelolco Square took place.

Out of curiosity she attended a community meeting for people interested in non-violent, faith-based activism; here she met pacifists Elizabeth McAllister and Philip Berrigan, two people who became life-catalysers. In 1980 she returned to the nation's capital, this time certain of her purpose in the world. She moved into Jonah House where McAllister, Berrigan, and a bevy of nonviolent peace activists and priests lived. Here she began reading such subversive material as Dorothy Day, Peace Pilgrim, and Mahatma Gandhi, as well as everything she could get her hands on regarding nuclear weapons and US participation in the arms race.

Years later, on the seventieth anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, August 9, 2015, she wrote me a letter about her dedication to civil disobedience, a lifelong practice in which she had, as of 2016, racked up a whopping ninety-two arrests:

"The main thing that enabled me to act as I did was the general field I was hanging out in and the enormous pressure of the times. . . . Civil rights. Hundreds of ordinary citizens protesting the Vietnam War. Kent State when the US government was shooting its own citizens. Millions marching in the streets protesting racial inequalities, the fervour of Martin Luther King. Living under martial law in DC, where tanks rolled down the avenues, soldiers roamed the streets carrying machine guns, and no more than three people were allowed to gather publicly. . . . It was not one thing [that thrust me into activism], but rather the effect of the 100th snowflake when finally the branch bends".

Also by the 1980s, Sunshine had finished her education as an on-call nurse, and thus she was able to dip into and out of paid work, but her "portable profession" – travelling from Washington State to California to New Hampshire in order to protest – was her true calling. Early on she learned that the government does not give a hoot for its citizens; rather we are merely, in military terms, "collateral damage". And, without a monstrous income, she was able to live simply, cheaply, and communally wherever she was – sharing with her fellow activists both the emotional burden of existence under the constant threat of extinction and visions of creative strategies for a world at peace.

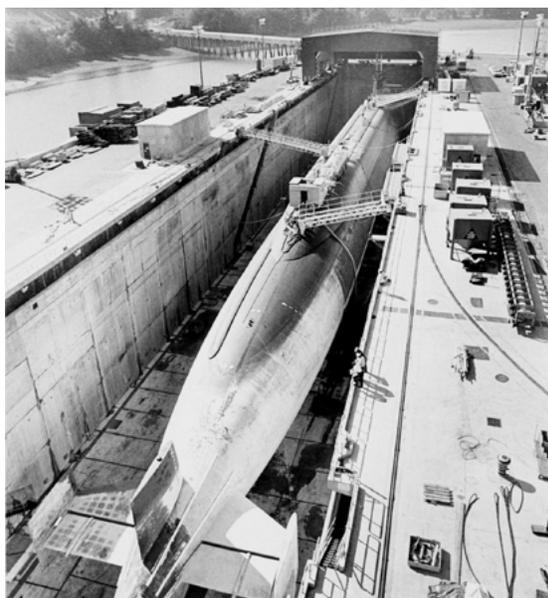
I visited Sunshine one afternoon in yet another basement

apartment in San Francisco – as if in an underground air-raid shelter, she always seemed to be nesting below ground – and I noticed that a window opening to an air well could not be locked, leaving it blatantly ajar. The neighbourhood was a dangerous one.

“Aren’t you afraid?” I wondered. Her answer came like a sudden thunder crack on a sunny day.

“Listen. After you’ve been face-to-face with a nuclear submarine with nothing but a thin layer of rubber and a few feet of water between you and it”, she replied, “little things like a man entering your apartment tend to fade”.

Among her hundreds of acts of civil disobedience, most all of them directed at the US military, perhaps the most dramatic was the aforementioned. It took place in 1982 – in a wet suit. The adversary was a 560-foot-long (read: nearly the length of two football fields) Trident nuclear submarine that, after manufacture in Groton, Connecticut, was to be housed at the Navy base at Bangor, Washington. The vessel carried up to twenty-four intercontinental ballistic missiles, each of which had as many as eight independently targeted warheads, in all holding an explosive force of 300 kilotons of TNT – some twenty times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. In other words, according to climate-change activist Matt Dundas in his 2008 article *The Rise of Non-*



The USS Ohio undergoes final checks in drydock before its first voyage. The ship was targeted by peace activists. Sunshine Appleby jumped from the protest vessel and swam towards the giant submarine and blocked its path.

Violent Civil Disobedience: The Peace Blockade, Part 2, the port was slated to be “the service station of the world’s deadliest weapons”. The plan to oppose such had been hatched by theologian Jim Douglass while in jail from a different action, the idea being that small but fast-moving boats would deflect the ingress of this USS Ohio in a kind of water-based guerrilla resistance.

When the action was announced by the Ground Zero Center for Non-Violent Action, forty-six people signed on to participate, many admitting that they did so because they didn’t have a choice: they knew

that they could die in this battle, but it was necessary.

Execution presented several hurdles. One was timing; no one knew exactly when the ship would arrive. This problem was miraculously solved by movement contacts at the Panama Canal who would report when the USS Ohio passed through, and from there the trip up the coast would take a few days. Another challenge had to do with skills. The action would require the kind of technical ability and discipline normally associated with an army. Very quickly, for the arrival seemed imminent, Greenpeace offered a three-day training in which basic water safety was taught, as well as how to lift and lower nine one-person rowboats out of two larger boats in less than three minutes. A last challenge concerned support. Here the movement’s success at building relationships with other sectors of society came to the fore. Simultaneous with the action,

Greenpeace taught water safety, as well as how to lift and lower nine one-person rowboats out of two larger boats in less than three minutes

a 6,500-person rally protesting the stationing of the submarine took place on the S’Klallam Reservation, while twelve bishops and church executives from six denominations, along with their parishioners, held a prayer vigil on a boat in a nearby cove. Plus, the international press was standing by to film.

Between 2 and 3 a.m. on August 12, 1982, Ground Zero sentinels noted Coast Guard (CG) cutters moving about the bay like ants upset by a disturbance to their hill. The activists bolted awake, said their prayers, got into their wetsuits, and hurried down to the dock. Here the CG burst upon them brandishing M-16s, seizing boats, and hauling them away. In the scuffle a few boats got away and raced into the harbour.

Just then, like a monstrous water snake, the USS Ohio slithered into sight.

Dundas describes what happened next: “Video footage taken at the time shows protesters getting washed overboard by high-powered Coast Guard hoses”, he writes. “The boats that got away from the initial Coast Guard onslaught tore toward the ‘National Security Zone’, a 1000-yard perimeter around the submarine, a boundary that once crossed meant risking [a] ten-year prison sentence and \$10,000 fine”. Seventy-eight-year-old Ruth Youngdahl Nelson was riding in her son’s tiny motorised rubber dinghy and a Coast Guard craft was hot and heavy in pursuit. Just

“A speedboat carrying Renee Krisco, Ed Turtle, and Sunshine Appleby circled the colossal beast while outrunning multiple Coast Guard boats and a helicopter”

as a Guardsman was about to hose the team into the sound, Dundas recalls, Ms. Nelson shouted, “Young man, not in my America!” Stunned, the Guardsman lowered his hose, and the resisters escaped for another run at the humongous submarine – only to be surrounded, captured, and arrested.

“With almost every Ground Zero boat at a halt”, Dundas continues, “there was only one which succeeded in advancing all the way to the Ohio. A speedboat carrying Renee Krisco, Ed Turtle, and Sunshine Appleby circled the colossal beast while outrunning multiple Coast Guard boats and a helicopter. Surrounded by law enforcement, the boat got right up next to the Ohio”.

As Sunshine describes the encounter in a letter:

“We three, in a tiny rubber boat with a gas engine the size of a lawnmower, were able to block the path of the Trident, circle it, and jump into the water. I swam toward it; our driver Renee, a nun, guided

the boat away from the Trident; while Turtle, a teacher, jumped out and swam away in an attempt to confuse the suddenly appearing-upon-the-scene helicopter and a large CG boat. The military men were yelling at me with sexual allegations – the C word – telling me what they were going to do to me if I didn’t stop swimming toward the submarine. Meanwhile, I nearly blind and quite well-dressed in my wetsuit, red bathing cap, rubber booties, and rubber gloves – continued to dog-paddle towards the monstrous behemoth, black in colour and several football fields long. Inside my wetsuit I carried a loaf of bread to feed the soldiers bread, not bombs, and an arrest warrant signed by the attorney general because, under international treaties, the Trident is illegal: its load of some 200 nuclear weapons would not distinguish between noncombatants (read: women and children) and the armed soldiers resisting an attack.

“I was on a mission.

“However, with the helicopter coming closer to the water creating heavy waves and the boat of shouting soldiers getting louder, I turned onto my back, closed my eyes, and said ‘God help me’. At that moment the Trident disappeared, the helicopter, the Coast Guard boat, the waves, the screaming voices: I entered a place/non-place of silence and peace that passed all understanding. I had the experience of being rocked in the arms of the Divine Mother. I felt a love really indescribable.

“About twenty minutes later I ‘awoke’ to the voices of my boat mates calling me to help them reconnect the gas line the CG had cut with a long boat hook. I looked around me and saw nothing but a vague outline of my boat mates in the mist. I noticed something was different but could not put my finger on it, a sense of peace. We held the gas line together manually and put-putted back to shore.

“What I realised is that when we feel from our gut that there is nothing left to lose, no matter the personal consequences, the danger of nuclear war overshadows all of one’s small concerns. I became free to act from my heart. As I was swimming towards the Trident, I felt only profound determination.

“I think the action was a wake-up call for the US military. The people on the CG boat came from the small town of Bangor, where the Trident was to be stationed. The protestors organising the blockade came from that same small town. The two groups knew each other; their children attended the same schools, they saw each other in the market, at church, at the movies. They knew we were unarmed and peaceful: thus the reluctance to fire upon us. A modest but for me life-changing benefit of the action: I was healed of my irritable bowel syndrome and have never had an attack since”.

By 2010 Sunshine was aware of the inner tension presented

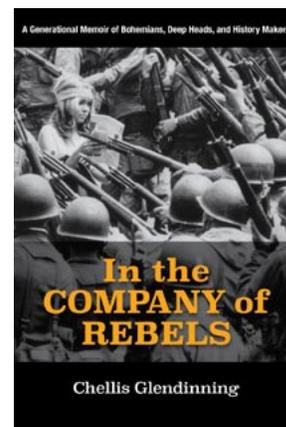
‘When we feel from our gut that there is nothing left to lose, no matter the personal consequences, the danger of nuclear war overshadows all of one’s small concerns’

by life within the superpower with the greatest cache of nuclear weapons and the most rationalisations for detonating them. Plus, now that computers connecting law enforcement agencies could reveal her inef-fable arrest record wherever she went, she felt that further use of civil disobedience would be ill-advised. She decided to move to New Zealand, a place she regarded as saner, healthier, and more ecological. She also decided to leave behind her role as an employed health professional and “move from the stress of nursing to the joy of authentic healing work”. Although she did apply for and receive a New Zealand registered nurse licence, she opened a massage therapy practice instead and relaunched her campaign for low-footprint, ecological living and the medicinal value of raw foods.

New Zealand did not turn out to be the eco paradise Sunshine had imagined; as she puts it, it was more like a “US-in-training,” with its agricultural industry spraying tons of pesticides, genetic-engineering firms releasing altered organ-

isms, coal mining and hydraulic fracking causing water pollution. Disappointed, she wrote to me, wondering if she should come to South America. At age seventy-one, though, after a life chock-full of jail cells and basement apartments, Sunshine decided to stop moving around; the nomadic protestor bought a small, sunlit house in Takaka/Golden Bay. There, amid straight-spine saguaro cacti and spreading silver fern, she continues with her massage work, promotion of healthy diet – plus legal protest against the use of pesticides. **CT**

CHELLIS GLENDINNING is a psychologist, essayist, poet, yoga practitioner, and the author of nine books, of which the second most recent is *Objetos (La Paz, Bolivia: Editorial 3600, 2018)*. She lives in Chuquisaca, Bolivia.



IN THE COMPANY OF REBELS

A Generational Memoir of Bohemians, Deep Heads, and History Makers

Chellis Glendinning

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The belief that heroic gun-toting civilians are the solution to US gun crimes goes right back to the early days of pulp fiction, writes **Susanna Lee**

How ‘good guy with a gun’ became a deadly fantasy

AT the end of May, it happened again. A mass shooter killed 12 people, this time at a municipal centre in Virginia Beach. Employees had been forbidden to carry guns at work, and some lamented that this policy had prevented ‘good guys’ from taking out the shooter.

This trope – ‘the good guy with a gun’ – has become commonplace among gun rights activists. Where did it come from?

On Dec. 21, 2012 – one week after Adam Lanza shot and killed 26 people at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut – National Rifle Association Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre announced during a press conference that “the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun”.

Ever since then, in response to each mass shooting, pro-gun pundits, politicians and social media users parrot some version of the slogan, followed by calls to arm the teachers, arm

the churchgoers or arm the office workers. And whenever an armed citizen takes out a criminal, conservative media outlets pounce on the story.

But ‘the good guy with the gun’ archetype dates to long before LaPierre’s 2012 press conference. There’s a reason his words resonated so deeply. He had tapped into a uniquely American archetype, one whose origins I trace back to American Pulp crime fiction in my book *Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and the Decline of Moral Authority*.

Other cultures have their detective fiction. But it was specifically in America that the ‘good guy with a gun’ became a heroic figure and a cultural fantasy.

Beginning in the 1920s, a certain type of protagonist started appearing in American crime fiction. He often wore a trench coat and smoked cigarettes. He didn’t talk much. He was honourable, individualistic – and armed.

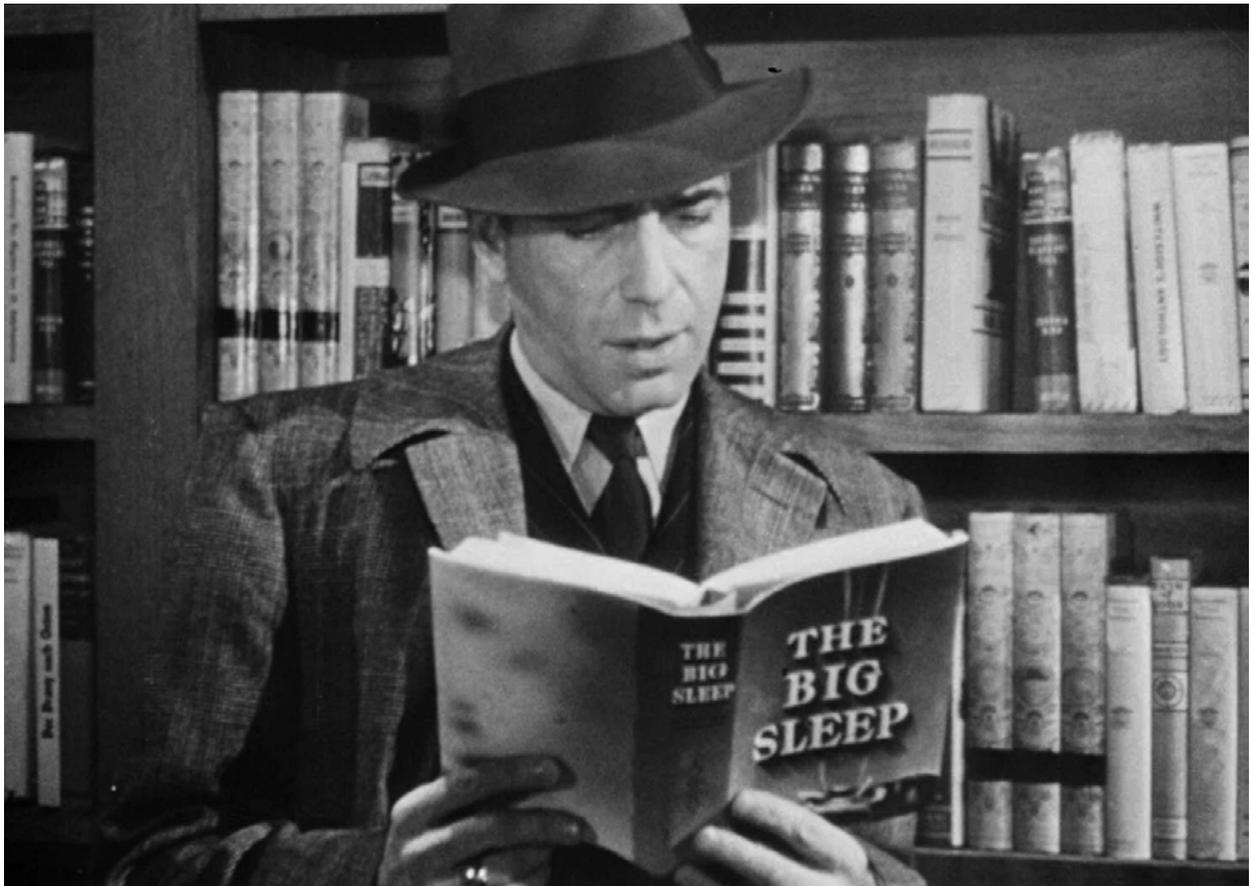
These characters were dubbed ‘hard-boiled’, a term that originated in the late 19th century to describe ‘hard, shrewd, keen men who neither asked nor expected sympathy nor gave any, who could not be imposed upon’. The word didn’t describe someone who was simply tough; it communicated a persona, an attitude, an entire way of being.

Most scholars credit Carroll John Daly with writing the first hard-boiled detective story. Titled *Three Gun Terry*, it was published in *Black Mask* magazine in May 1923.

“Show me the man”, the protagonist, Terry Mack, announces, “and if he’s drawing on me and is a man what really needs a good killing, why, I’m the boy to do it”.

Terry also lets the reader know that he’s a sure shot: “When I fire, there ain’t no guessing contest as to where the bullet is going”.

From the start, the gun was a crucial accessory. Since the detective only shot at bad guys



HARD-BOILED: Screenshot from the film trailer for *The Big Sleep*, featuring Humphrey Bogart (above) as private detective Philip Marlowe and Lauren Bacall as Vivian Rutledge in the first film version of Raymond Chandler's 1939 novel of the same name.

and because he never missed, there was nothing to fear.

Part of the popularity of this character type had to do with the times. In an era of Prohibition, organised crime, government corruption and rising populism, the public was drawn to the idea of a well-armed, well-meaning maverick – someone who could heroically come to the defence of regular people. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, stories that featured these characters became wildly popular.

Taking the baton from Daly, authors like Dashiell Ham-

mett and Raymond Chandler became titans of the genre.

Their stories' plots differed, but their protagonists were mostly the same: tough-talking, straight-shooting private detectives.

In an early Hammett story, the detective shoots a gun out of a man's hand and then quips he's a "fair shot – no more, no less".

In a 1945 article, Raymond Chandler attempted to define this type of protagonist: "Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who

is neither tarnished nor afraid. ... He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honour, by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it".

As movies became more popular, the archetype bled into the silver screen. Humphrey Bogart played Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe to great acclaim.

By the end of the 20th-century, the fearless, gun-toting good guy had become a cultural hero. He had appeared on magazine covers, movie posters, in tel-

evision credits and in video games.

Gun rights enthusiasts have embraced the idea of the ‘good guy’ as a model to emulate – a character role that just needed real people to step in and play it. The NRA store even sells T-shirts with LaPierre’s slogan, and encourages buyers to ‘show everyone that you’re the good guy’ by buying the T-shirt.

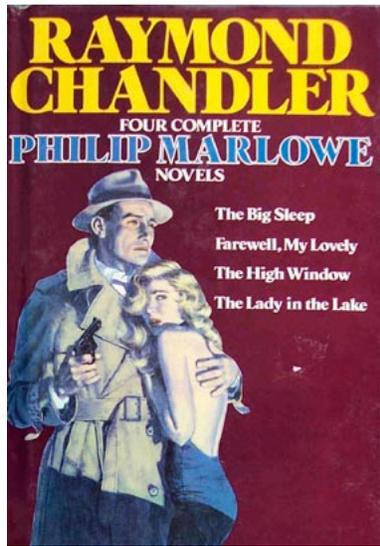
The problem with this archetype is that it’s just that: an archetype. A fictional fantasy.

In pulp fiction, the detectives never miss. Their timing is precise and their motives are irreplicable. They never accidentally shoot themselves or an innocent bystander. Rarely are they mentally unstable or blinded by rage. When they clash with the police, it’s often because they’re doing the police’s job better than the police can.

Another aspect of the fantasy involves looking the part. The ‘good guy with a gun’ isn’t just any guy – it’s a white one.

In *Three Gun Terry*, the detective apprehends the villain, Manual Sparo, with some tough words: “‘Speak English,’ I says. I’m none too gentle because it won’t do him any good now.”

In Daly’s *Snarl of the Beast*,



A drawing of Philip Marlowe, an icon of hard-boiled detective fiction created by author Raymond Chandler.

the protagonist, Race Williams, takes on a grunting, monstrous immigrant villain.

Could this explain why, in 2018, when a black man with a gun tried to stop a shooting in a mall in Alabama – and the police shot and killed him – the NRA, usually eager to champion good guys with guns, didn’t comment?

Most gun enthusiasts don’t measure up to the fictional ideal of the steady, righteous and sure shot. In fact, research has shown that gun-toting independence unleashes much

more chaos and carnage than heroism. A 2017 National Bureau of Economic Research study revealed that right-to-carry laws increase, rather than decrease, violent crime. Higher rates of gun ownership is correlated with higher homicide rates. Gun possession is correlated with increased road rage.

There have been times when a civilian with a gun successfully intervened in a shooting, but these instances are rare. Those who carry guns often have their own guns used against them. And a civilian with a gun is more likely to be killed than to kill an attacker.

Even in instances where a person is paid to stand guard with a gun, there’s no guarantee that he’ll fulfil this duty.

Hard-boiled novels have sold in the hundreds of millions. The movies and television shows they inspired have reached millions more. What started as entertainment has turned into a durable American fantasy.

Maintaining it has become a deadly American obsession. **CT**

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A new book by rock star **Bryan Adams** highlights the plight of people 'who fall between the cracks' of society

From the other side of the street

SIX years ago, Canadian rock star Adams was asked to shoot portraits of homeless street vendors for *The Big Issue*, a London weekly magazine – also published in Asia and Africa – that is sold on the streets to provide the homeless with cash and facilitate their reintegration into society. That story inspired an in-depth photographic look at sellers. The result is *Homeless*, a book from Steidl, the royalties of which will be donated to The Big Issue Foundation.

“The photographs I took of people who live rough on the streets of London highlight an unavoidable fact, and almost every city around the world has a similar problem”, writes Adams in a short essay accompanying the portraits. “Too many people fall between the cracks and have no means to sustain a roof over their head. ... When I was in Chicago recently, I discovered that homeless war veterans were painfully evident on the streets, some just outside the venue where I was rehearsing, with passers-by seemingly immune to their plight”.

Adams believes “Every human being deserves a safe place to call home, which is why I was moved to take the photographs for this book. Hopefully after reading it, you might think twice as you walk past someone trying to make their way selling the magazine, or even busking on the street. These are people like you and me who have lost their anchor and their compass, so need our compassionate understanding and our help”. **CT**

Right: Sam Woodlock. A Londoner, she was previously employed as a social worker. After becoming homeless, she joined up with *The Big Issue* 21 years ago.





Above, Left - Chris Stanion: After becoming homeless and taking drugs, he sold *The Big Issue* in London from 2008 which raised his confidence, gave him a sense of self, and helped him with his issues. Moved on in 2016.

Above - Peter Le Page: A popular vendor in Pimlico, London. Became homeless following addiction but has been drug-free for a decade. Proud father to a daughter, and has saved up money from selling *The Big Issue* to fund trips to Mauritius and Canada.

Left - John Nuttall. Sold *The Big Issue* in Waterloo, London, until 2017 - no longer vending.

Proceeds from the sales of
Homeless are going to
The Big Issue Foundation
 - www.thebigissue.org.uk

Right:
Roger Philip Morrison
Currently selling
The Big Issue in
Holborn, London.



HOMELESS
Bryan Adams
Published by Steidl
www.steidl.de
\$45 / \$60 Canada

Fed up with your standard European holiday? Perhaps you should set your sights further east, urges **Nate Robert**

Independence day in a country that doesn't exist

A **GA**INST a current backdrop of over-tourism in Europe, there's a growing number of offbeat travellers embarking on journeys through lesser-known lands. They're heading to the deepest crevices of post-Soviet Eastern Europe, seeking the bleakest of winters and the greyest of cities, dreaming of being surrounded by beautifully expressionless women, listening to 1980's pop music being played through tinny mobile-phone speakers, and cautiously eyeing intimidating mafiaesque men drinking levathan quantities of alcohol.

Several post-Soviet countries, mostly in Europe, are untravelled, but I've yet to be mugged in Abkhazia, nor have I experienced the organised crime utopia of South Ossetia, and I'm not banned from Azerbaijan for entering the Republic of Artsakh. However, for the third time in the last few years I've ended up in the city of Tiraspol, Transnistria – to celebrate a unique independ-

ence day in a country that doesn't actually exist.

Transnistria is peak Eastern Europe. On an early September morning each year in Tiraspol, the small capital city awakes. Locals leave their Soviet-era apartment blocks to watch a fairly restrained and sombre military parade celebrating national independence. Soon after, the streets overflow with traditional peasant clothing, high-heels, and bootleg sportswear.

People begin dancing in circles to madly dizzying regional folk music; they drink locally produced Vodka and 'Cognac', and eat huge chunks of grilled BBQ meats and fresh vegetables. Children play with guns, ride donkeys, and clamber over missile launchers and other military hardware.

From one street to the next, Tiraspol is filled with live entertainment and pop-up displays of locally produced small appliances, fur coats, portable electricity generators, and fancy bedding. Hand-made nationalis-

tic trinkets share the limelight with loaves of bread decorated with symbols of communism.

And, to add an increase the post-Soviet Eastern European feel, Russian flags are flying everywhere. The national colours and emblems of both Russia and the USSR can be seen throughout Tiraspol on banners and clothing.

Locals drop Transnistrian *Rubles* on I Love Russia pins, and proudly wear pro-Russia, pro-USSR, and pro-Putin T-shirts. Even the national crest of Transnistria is a colourful throwback to the times of the Soviet Union, featuring a red star, hammer and sickle, corn cobs, grapes, and stalks of wheat, placed around a rising sun.

Indeed, Transnistria is absolutely enamoured with Russia. Their shared recent history continues to bind these nations, and the events that motivated this devotion are mostly remembered with gratitude.

The 20th-century in this region was genuinely compli-



Tiraspol, Transnistria. He's probably a tourist from Denmark.

cated, even an abbreviated list of major events and turning points would be too extensive and well beyond the scope of this article, but I will do my best to explain what led to the birth of Transnistria.

Geographically squeezed in between Ukraine and Moldova, Transnistria is over 4,000 square kilometers of landlocked territory on the edge of Eastern Europe. It's small enough to cross from east-to-west in an hour, but large enough to hold half-a-million people living in more than 100 cities, towns and other settlements.

Sharing no borders with Russia itself, Transnistria was part

of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic during the time of the Soviet Union. Just before the collapse of the USSR, this entire region became the independent nation of Moldova – encompassing all of Transnistria.

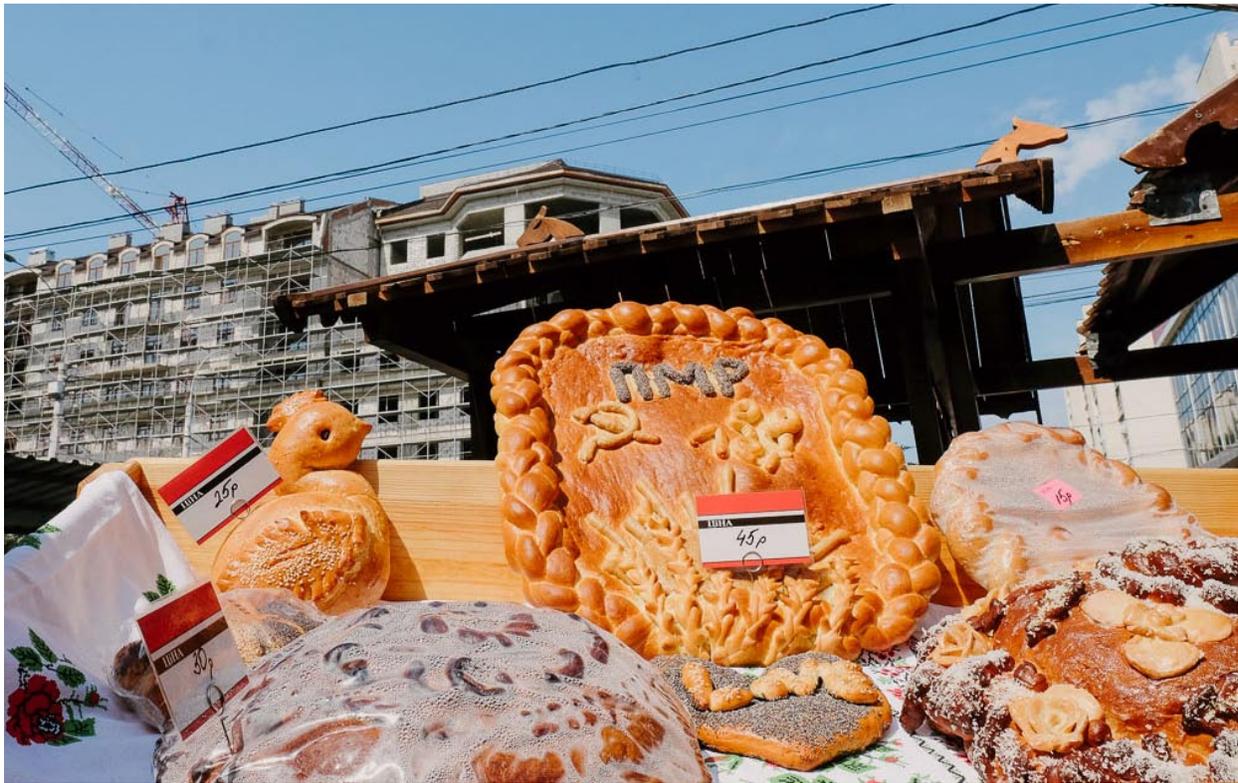
Linguistically and ethnically, however, the make-up of Transnistria differed significantly from the rest of Moldova. Even before the Soviet dissolution, tensions had been rising. In one particularly volatile action, the Moldovan government officially removed Russian, the commonly accepted lingua franca of Transnistria – along with the Cyrillic alphabet – as a state language. More extreme proposals were put forth, including a plan to expel all ethnic Russians and Ukrainians from the

Transnistria.

In response, activists in Transnistria created a separatist movement. Then, unwilling to be part of an independent Moldova, Transnistria declared independence on September 2 1990. Relations soured further, and armed clashes developed into a full-scale war between pro-Moldova and pro-Transnistria groups.

Volunteers and armed forces from Transnistria, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, and Russia were involved in the conflict, in which hundreds of people died. There was a significant Russian military involvement – it was officially neutral – that was crucial to the outcome of the war.

By the middle of 1992, howev-



INDEPENDENCE DAY FEAST: Soviet-inspired bread for sale on the streets of Tiraspol.

er, a ceasefire was signed. Since that time peace has indeed held, with the assistance of a small Russian peacekeeping force based in a demilitarised zone between Moldova and Transnistria. In 2019, the outcome remains unresolved, one of a small number of ongoing post-Soviet ‘frozen conflicts’.

Moldova has completely lost (or abandoned) all effective control over it, but continues to claim Transnistria as part of its nation. However, Transnistria (officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic) may now be considered a de-facto independent state, with its own parliament, army, air force, currency, stamps, flag, national anthem, and passports (although the travel document

is only recognised by three other, also unrecognised, post-Soviet territories).

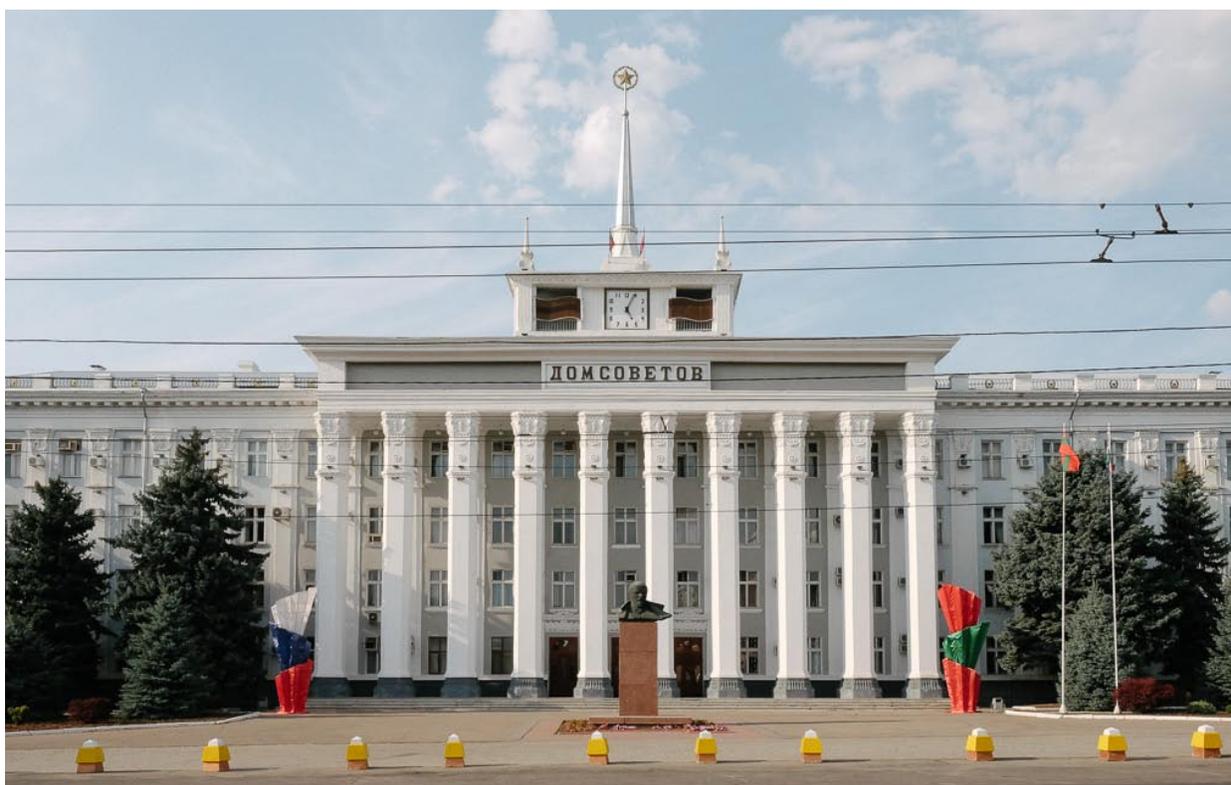
The country has most of what defines an independent country, with one major omission: it has no international recognition – almost three decades after declaring independence, not one member of the United Nations recognises the existence of Transnistria.

However, despite being unrecognised by any other country, including Russia, this year Transnistria celebrated its 28th annual Independence Day.

People are friendly towards the small number of foreign tourists who choose to visit Transnistria on Independence

Day. One older gentleman gifted our small group a large bottle of vodka, obviously proud and a little bit excited to be seeing foreign tourists in his city (pre-midday, the gift was conditional upon being immediately opened and consumed, so, not wishing to offend, we were happy to oblige).

Although Tiraspol locals are often fascinated by the unfamiliarity of tourists in their city, there’s a little confusion as to why anyone would want to visit. Transnistria isn’t for everyone: your travel insurance probably isn’t valid, there’s no consular representation, you’ll need to bring a wad of Euros or US dollars to exchange for plastic coins of an unrecognised currency,



STALIN WOULD BE PROUD: Tiraspol's 'House of Soviets' on 25th October Street.

and your credit cards won't be accepted.

Still, after three visits, I'm unable to find consistent opinions on the safety of the local tap water.

There are other, more formidable, issues for tourists. Back in 2013, I had to negotiate in broken Russian for half an hour with two border agents who weren't going to let me leave Transnistria until I paid a significant bribe. In 2017 and 2018, upon entering Moldova proper, I had to visit the government department that deals with refugees before they would allow me to leave Moldova. In their judgment, I'd entered the country across a border they didn't recognise and needed to explain my actions or apply for

asylum.

Certainly, there are some issues with entering – and leaving – Transnistria, but these are improving with time, and are largely dependent upon which border crossings you choose. In my opinion, any issues are worth the effort.

Sure, when selecting holiday destinations, most travellers people prefer somewhere a little less adventurous. These days, short Thai beach vacations, punishing jet-ski's and railing bath-salts, seem to be much more popular with the kids. I understand that.

To be honest, for most of the year, Transnistria is little more than a sleepy version of old-

Russia, a stop-over for ardent Sovietophiles, collecting worn-out stories and a rare set of who-cares passport stamps.

However, on Independence Day, walking around the city, passing by one Lenin statue after another, you've genuinely stepped out of the real world and gone through a fantastical cold-war-era time-warp. It's surreal and great fun, one of the world's unique travel experiences. I'll be back again in September. **CT**

***Nate Robert** has travelled the world full time since 2012, through 54 countries running "un-tours" to destinations including Iran, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Ukraine. His web site is www.yomadiv.com*

The danger posed by the police state applies equally to all of us, lawbreaker and law-abider alike, writes **John W. Whitehead**

When the state muzzles the right to speak freely

“There will come a time when it isn’t ‘They’re spying on me through my phone’ anymore. Eventually, it will be ‘My phone is spying on me.’” – Philip K. Dick

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RED pill or blue pill? You decide. Twenty years after the Wachowskis’ iconic 1999 film, *The Matrix*, introduced us to a futuristic world in which humans exist in a computer-simulated non-reality powered by authoritarian machines – a world where the choice between existing in a denial-ridden virtual dream-state or facing up to the harsh, difficult realities of life comes down to a red pill or a blue pill – we stand at the precipice of a technologically-dominated matrix of our own making.

We are living the prequel to *The Matrix* with each passing day, falling further under the spell of technologically-driven virtual communities, virtual realities and virtual conveniences managed by artificially

intelligent machines that are on a fast track to replacing us and eventually dominating every aspect of our lives.

Science fiction has become fact.

In *The Matrix*, computer programmer Thomas Anderson aka hacker Neo is wakened from a virtual slumber by Morpheus, a freedom fighter seeking to liberate humanity from a life-long hibernation state imposed by hyper-advanced artificial intelligence machines that rely on humans as an organic power source. With their minds plugged into a perfectly crafted virtual reality, few humans ever realise they are living in a dream world.

Neo is given a choice: to wake up and join the resistance, or remain asleep and serve as fodder for the powers-that-be. “You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe”, Morpheus says to Neo in *The Matrix*. “You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep

the rabbit hole goes”.

Most people opt for the red pill.

In our case, the red pill – a one-way ticket to a life sentence in an electronic concentration camp – has been honey-coated to hide the bitter after taste, sold to us in the name of expediency and delivered by way of blazingly fast Internet, cell phone signals that never drop a call, thermostats that keep us at the perfect temperature without our having to raise a finger, and entertainment that can be simultaneously streamed to our TVs, tablets and cell phones.

Yet we are not merely in thrall with these technologies that were intended to make our lives easier. We have become enslaved by them.

Look around you. Everywhere you turn, people are so addicted to their internet-connected screen devices – smart phones, tablets, computers, televisions – that they can go for hours at a time submerged in

a virtual world where human interaction is filtered through the medium of technology.

This is not freedom.

This is not even progress.

This is technological tyranny and iron-fisted control delivered by way of the surveillance state, corporate giants such as Google and Facebook, and government spy agencies such as the National Security Agency.

We are living in a virtual world carefully crafted to resemble a representative government, while in reality we are little more than slaves in thrall to an authoritarian regime, with its constant surveillance, manufactured media spectacles, secret courts, inverted justice, and violent repression of dissent.

So consumed are we with availing ourselves of all the latest technologies that we have spared barely a thought for the ramifications of our heedless, headlong stumble towards a world in which our abject reliance on internet-connected gadgets and gizmos is grooming us for a future in which freedom is an illusion.

All of those internet-connected gadgets we just have to have (*Forbes* refers to them as “(data) pipelines to our intimate bodily processes”) – the smart watches that can monitor our blood pressure and the smart phones that let us pay for purchases with our fingerprints and iris scans – are setting us up for a brave new world where there is nowhere to run and nowhere

to hide. Imagine what a SWAT team could do with the ability to access, monitor and control your internet-connected home: locking you in, turning off the lights, activating alarms, etc.

Thus far, the public response to concerns about surveillance has amounted to a collective shrug.

It’s hard to truly appreciate the intangible menace of technology-enabled government surveillance in the face of the all-too-tangible menace of police shootings of unarmed citizens, SWAT team raids, and government violence and corruption. However, both dangers are just as lethal to our freedoms if left unchecked.

Consider that on any given day, the average American going about his daily business is monitored, surveilled, spied on and tracked in virtually every way by both government and corporate eyes and ears.

We are now in the final stage of the transition from a police state to a surveillance state.

It’s not just what we say, where we go and what we buy that is being tracked.

We’re being surveilled right down to our genes, thanks to a potent combination of hardware, software and data collection that scans our biometrics – our faces, irises, voices, genetics, even our gait – runs them through computer programs that can break the data down into unique ‘identifiers’, and then offers them up to the government and its corporate

allies for their respective uses.

Control is the key here.

Total control over every aspect of our lives, right down to our inner thoughts, is the objective of any totalitarian regime.

Now there are still those who insist that they have nothing to hide from the surveillance state and nothing to fear from the police state because they have done nothing wrong.

To those sanctimonious few, secure in their delusions, let this be a warning: the danger posed by the American police state applies equally to all of us, lawbreaker and law-abider alike.

In an age of too many laws, too many prisons, too many government spies, and too many corporations eager to make a fast buck at the expense of the American taxpayer, there is no safe place and no watertight alibi.

We are all guilty of some transgression or other.

Eventually, as I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, we will all be made to suffer the same consequences in the electronic concentration camp that surrounds us. **CT**

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John W. Whitehead is a constitutional attorney and author. He is founder and president of *The Rutherford Institute*. His book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People* is available online at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org

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