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Issue 238

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING ■ PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

October 2022

THE PENTAGON WAGES WAR ON AN OVERHEATING PLANET

Stan Cox finds
nightmares in
the US national
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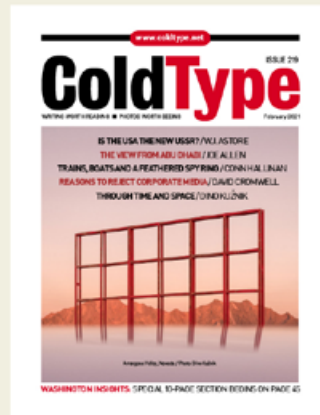


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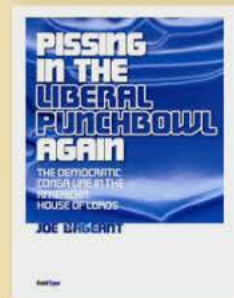
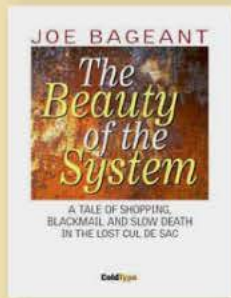
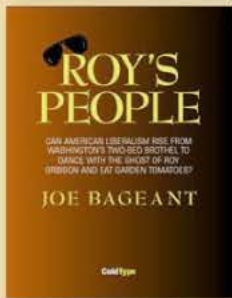
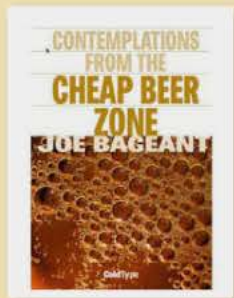
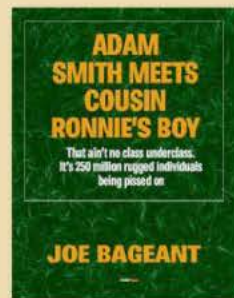
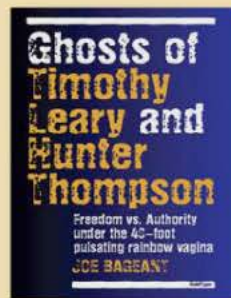
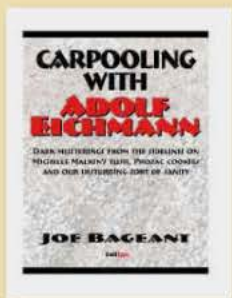
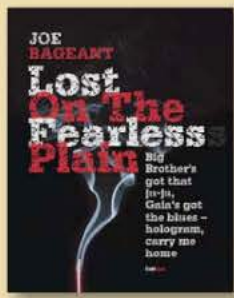
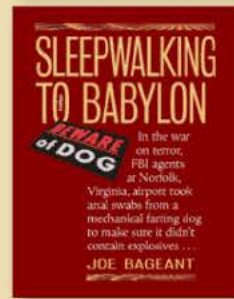
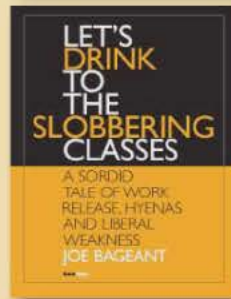
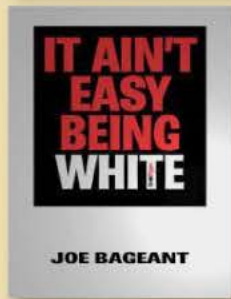
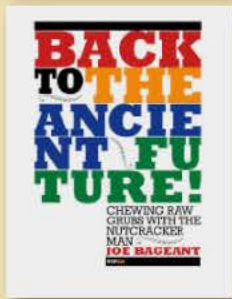
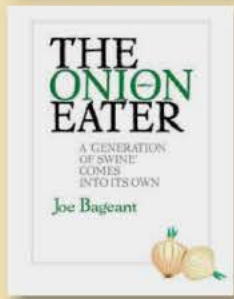
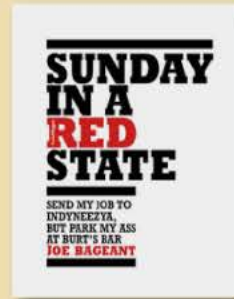
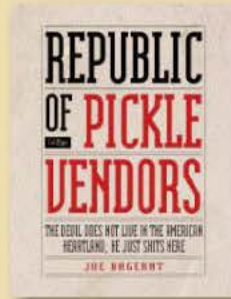
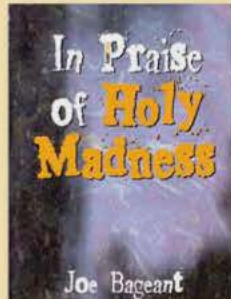
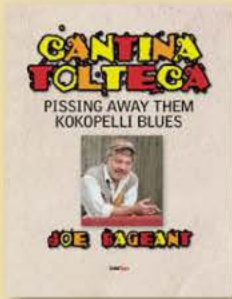
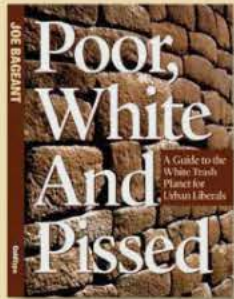
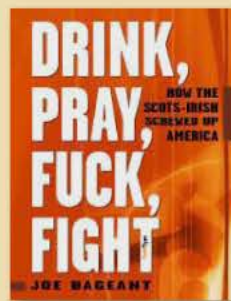
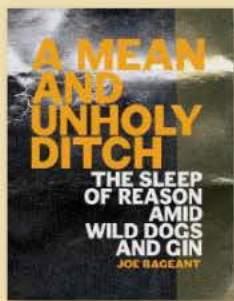
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NEWS | VIEWS | OPINIONS

INSIGHTS



Heart Aerospace

Air Canada and United Airlines have ordered 30-seat regional hybrid-electric planes from Heart Aerospace that can go about 125 miles (200 km) fully electric and 250 miles (400 km) as hybrids. With a 25-passenger configuration, the company says the hybrid distance doubles.

GÖKÇİN ÇINAR

Where's my electric plane?

Electric planes might seem futuristic, but they aren't that far off, at least for short hops.

Two-seater Velis Electros are already quietly buzzing around Europe, electric sea planes are being tested in British Columbia, and larger planes are coming. Air Canada announced on Sept. 15, 2022, that it would buy 30 electric-hybrid regional aircraft from Sweden's Heart Aerospace, which expects to have its 30-seat plane in service by 2028. Analysts at the US National Renew-

able Energy Lab note that the first hybrid electric 50- to 70-seat commuter plane could be ready not long after that. In the 2030s, they say, electric aviation could really take off.

That matters for managing climate change. About 3 percent of global emissions come from aviation today, and with more passengers and flights expected as the population expands, aviation could be producing three to five times more carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 than it did before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aerospace engineer and assistant professor Gökçin Çınar develops sustainable aviation concepts, including hybrid-electric planes and hydrogen fuel alternatives, at the University of Michigan. We asked her about the key ways to cut aviation emissions today and where technologies like electrification and hydrogen are headed.

Why is aviation so difficult to electrify?

Aircraft are some of the most complex vehicles out there, but the biggest problem for electrifying them is

INSIGHTS

the battery weight.

If you tried to fully electrify a 737 with today's batteries, you would have to take out all the passengers and cargo and fill that space with batteries just to fly for under an hour.

Jet fuel can hold about 50 times more energy compared to batteries per unit mass. So, you can have 1 pound of jet fuel or 50 pounds of batteries. To close that gap, we need to either make lithium-ion batteries lighter or develop new batteries that hold more energy. New batteries are being developed, but they aren't yet ready for aircraft.

Even though we might not be able to fully electrify a 737, we can get some fuel burn benefits from batteries in the larger jets by using hybrid propulsion systems. We are trying to make that happen in the short term, with a 2030-2035 target for smaller regional planes. The less fuel burned during flight, the fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

How does hybrid aviation work to cut emissions?

Hybrid electric aircraft are similar to hybrid electric cars in that they use a combination of batteries and aviation fuels. The problem is that no other industry has the weight limitations that we do in the aerospace industry.

That's why we have to be very smart about how and how much we are hybridising the propulsion system.

Using batteries as a power assist during takeoff and climb are very promising options. Taxiing to the runway using just electric power could also save a significant amount

of fuel and reduce the local emissions at airports. There is a sweet spot between the added weight of the battery and how much electricity you can use to get net fuel benefits. This optimization problem is at the center of my research.

Hybrids would still burn fuel during flight, but it could be considerably less than just relying entirely on jet fuel.

How hybrid electric aviation could work on large aircraft.

I see hybridization as a mid-term option for larger jets, but a near-term solution for regional aircraft.

For 2030 to 2035, we're focused on hybrid turboprops, typically regional aircraft with 50-80 passengers or used for freight. These hybrids could cut fuel use by about 10 percent.

With electric hybrids, airlines could also make more use of regional airports, reducing congestion and time larger planes spend idling on the runway.

What do you expect to see in the near term from sustainable aviation?

Shorter term we'll see more use of sustainable aviation fuels, or SAF. With today's engines, you can dump sustainable aviation fuel into the same fuel tank and burn it. Fuels made from corn, oilseeds, algae and other fats are already being used.

Sustainable aviation fuels can reduce an aircraft's net carbon dioxide emissions by around 80 percent, but supply is limited, and using more biomass for fuel could compete with food production and lead to deforestation.

A second option is using synthetic sustainable aviation fuels, which involves capturing carbon

from the air or other industrial processes and synthesizing it with hydrogen. But that's a complex and costly process and does not have a high production scale yet.

Ampaire reported that its hybrid electric EEL had fuel savings up to 40 percent compared with a standard version of the similar Cessna Skymaster. Ampaire

Airlines can also optimise their operations in the short term, such as route planning to avoid flying nearly empty planes. That can also reduce emissions.

Is hydrogen an option for aviation?

Hydrogen fuel has been around a very long time, and when it's green hydrogen – produced with water and electrolysis powered by renewable energy – it doesn't produce carbon dioxide. It can also hold more energy per unit of mass than batteries.

There are two ways to use hydrogen in an airplane: either in place of regular jet fuel in an engine, or combined with oxygen to power hydrogen fuel cells, which then generate electricity to power the aircraft.

The problem is volume – hydrogen gas takes up a lot of space. That's why engineers are looking at methods like keeping it very cool so it can be stored as liquid until it's burned as a gas. It still takes up more space than jet fuel, and the storage tanks are heavy, so how to store, handle or distribute it on aircraft is still being worked out.

Airbus is doing a lot of research on hydrogen combustion using modified gas turbine engines with an A380 platform, and aiming to have mature technology by 2025. Australia's Rex airline expects to

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start testing a 34-seat, hydrogen-electric airplane for short hops in the next few years.

Due to the variety of options, I see hydrogen as one of the key technologies for sustainable aviation.

Will these technologies be able to meet the aviation industry's goals for reducing emissions?

The problem with aviation emissions isn't their current levels – it's the fear that their emissions will increase rapidly as demand increases. By 2050, we could see three to five times more carbon dioxide emissions from aviation than before the pandemic.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations

agency, generally defines the industry's goals, looking at what's feasible and how aviation can push the boundaries.

Its long-term goal is to cut net carbon dioxide emissions 50 percent by 2050 compared with 2005 levels. Getting there will require a mix of different technologies and optimization. I don't know if we're going to be able to reach it by 2050, but I believe we must do everything we can to make future aviation environmentally sustainable. **CT**

Gökçin Çınar is Assistant Professor of Aerospace Engineering, University of Michigan. This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com.

us into a natural hierarchy of winners and losers. The doctrine has religious, quasi-Calvinist aspects: in the kingdom of the market we can see who is deserving and who is undeserving through the grace bestowed upon them by the god of money. Any policy or protest that seeks to disrupt the formation of a natural order of rich and poor is an unwarranted stay upon the divine will of the invisible hand.

For 40 years or so, neoliberalism in the UK has been unchallengeable. For the Conservatives, especially those populating the current cabinet, the dogma cannot be shaken by mere evidence of harm, even when this includes the destitution of millions and the collapse of Earth systems. For Labour, it sets boundaries that cannot be crossed, for fear of punishment by the billionaire press. As our politics has turned further and further towards neoliberalism's glittering certainties, any deviation from the doctrine is akin to blasphemy. But the countries in which the ideology has been most fiercely applied are those that have seen the steepest declines in both their economic and civic prospects.

Neoliberalism promised that it would generate growth. The benefits of this growth would trickle from the rich to the poor, enhancing everyone's conditions of life. But growth, for better or worse, has been slower globally during the neoliberal era than during the years before Thatcher, Reagan and their many imitators came to power. And it has been overwhelmingly captured by the very rich. Far from ensuring that money trickles down, neoliberalism is the pump that shifts wealth from the poor to

GEORGE MONBIOT

Britain needs hope, not another Thatcher

Soon, the focus will return, and the collapse of many people's economic prospects will dominate once more. As winter approaches, it will become clear that our politics is spectacularly lacking in answers.

Why? Because the doctrine destroying our condition of life is the doctrine Liz Truss has promised to extend to new extremes. She is fanatically devoted to an ideology misleadingly called Thatcherism or Reaganism (as if they invented it), but more accurately described

as neoliberalism.

This doctrine insists that politics submits to "the market", which means, when translated, that democracy must submit to the power of money. Any impediment to the accumulation of wealth – such as public ownership, tax, regulation, trade unions and political protest – should be torn down, either quickly and noisily or slowly and stealthily. When consumer choice is unencumbered by political interference, the market is allowed to become a Great Winnower, sifting

INSIGHTS

the rich.

In the US, for example, during the 1960s and early 1970s, the greatest beneficiaries of economic growth were the poorest 20%. But from 1980 onwards, the proceeds of growth were transferred from the poorest people to the ultra-rich. Median income in the US rose at just one-third of the rate of GDP growth, while the income of the richest 1% rose at three times the rate. By comparison to the pre-neoliberal trend, the bottom 90% lost \$47-trillion between 1975 and 2018. Between 1990 and 2020, the wealth of US billionaires, adjusted for inflation, increased roughly twelvefold. There's a similar story in the UK. Of the poorest 10% of households, almost half now have more debts than assets.

None of this is accidental. Neoliberalism is sold to us as a means of enhancing freedom and choice, but in reality it's about power. It shifts tax and regulation from those who are rich and powerful on to people who are poor and weak. The taxes the wealthy once paid have been transferred to those with far smaller resources.

Look at Truss's proposal for addressing the energy bills crisis. Instead of taxing the record profits of oil and gas companies, she's using the taxes the rest of us pay to allow them to keep raking in monstrous sums. Even this policy, presented as a means of helping poor people with their bills, will, when combined with the new cuts in national insurance, ensure that the richest households receive twice as much help with their living costs as the poorest households.

The "plan for growth" on which Truss campaigned was pure

neoliberal gospel: "cut taxes now, unshackle business from burdensome regulation, implement supply side reform ... create new, low-tax, low-regulation 'investment zones'". Her key advisers are drawn from covertly funded neoliberal thinktanks. She will go as far as electoral politics allow in transferring wealth from the poor to the rich, attacking trade unions and protesters, opening the floodgates for pollution and greenhouse gases and dismembering the NHS. Already, her government has floated proposals to scrap England's anti-obesity measures and to remove the cap on bankers' bonuses, the purpose of which is to discourage the reckless gambles that caused the last financial crash.

After 40 years of this experiment, we can state with confidence that the economic success it proclaimed is illusory. Its buy-now-pay-later economics works by inflating asset values and household debt and burning through human relationships, conditions of employment and the living world. Now that there is little more to burn, Margaret Thatcher's fire is reduced to embers, as is much of the world we knew. Yet Truss seeks only to breathe life into the coals. And this is when it gets really dangerous.

As neoliberalism wages war on social security and the public sector, impoverishes millions and destroys conditions of employment, its political consequences could be as disastrous as its economic consequences. In the 30 years following the second world war, almost everyone in politics recognised that preventing the resurgence of fascism meant ensuring everyone's needs were met, through a

strong social safety net and robust public services. But neoliberalism stripped these defences away, while shutting down choice in the name of choice. Thatcher proclaimed "there is no alternative" and Labour appears, ever since, to have agreed. Worse still, the dogma has at the same time promoted extreme self-interest and egocentricity. At its heart is a mathematically impossible promise: everyone can be No 1.

In the gap between great expectations and low delivery, humiliation and resentment grow. In these conditions, it is easy for demagogues to blame the frustration of people's hopes on scapegoats: women, asylum seekers, Muslims, Jews, black and brown people, disabled people, LGBTQ people, unions, the left, protesters. History shows that when political choice is lacking and people see no prospect of relief, they become highly susceptible to the transfer of blame. The transfer – attacking refugees and fomenting culture wars – is already well under way. Truss's techniques of distraction open the door to fascism. I no longer find it impossible to see the far right swarming into the policy vacuum left by Conservative indifference and Labour timidity, and taking power in this country.

We need real, inspiring alternatives, positive visions of a better world, rather than competing modifications of the disastrous ideology that got us into this mess. We need hope. **CT**

George Monbiot's new book is *Regenesi: Feeding the World Without Devouring the Planet*. Read more at www.monbiot.com.

INSIGHTS

JIM HIGHTOWER

Now the clocks are watching the workers

For generations, workers have been punished by corporate bosses for watching the clock. But now, the corporate clock is watching workers.

Called “digital productivity monitoring”, this surveillance is done by an integrated computer system including a real-time clock, camera, keyboard tracker, and algorithms to provide a second-by-second record of what each employee is doing.

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos pioneered use of this ticking electronic eye in his monstrous warehouses, forcing hapless, low-paid “pickers” to sprint down cavernous stacks of consumer stuff to fill on-line orders, pronto – beat the clock, or be fired.

Terrific idea, exclaimed taskmasters at hospital chains, banks, tech giants, newspapers, colleges, and other outfits employing millions of mid-level professionals.

They’ve been installing these unblinking digital snoops to watch their employees, even timing their bathroom breaks and constantly eying each one’s pace of work. They’ve plugged in new software with such Orwellian names as WorkSmart and Time Doctor to count worker’s keystrokes and to snap pictures every 10 minutes of workers’ faces and screens, recording all on digital scoreboards.

You are paid only for the min-

utes the computers “see” you in action. Bosses hail the electronic minders as “Fitbits” of productivity, spurring workers to keep noses to the grindstone, and also to instill workplace honesty.

Only... the whole scheme is dishonest.

No employee’s worthiness can be measured in keystrokes and 10-minute snapshots! What about thinking, conferring with

colleagues, or listening to customers? No “productivity points” are awarded for that work.

For example, the New York Times reports that the multibillion-dollar United Health Group marks its drug-addiction therapists “idle” if they are conversing off-line with patients, leaving their keyboards inactive.

Employees call this digital management “demoralizing,” “toxic,” and “just wrong.” But corporate investors are pouring billions into it. Which group do you trust to shape America’s workplace? **CT**

Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

HURWITT’S EYE

MARK HURWITT



INSIGHTS

SAM PIZZIGATI

The rich, the poor, and heat in the streets

This past spring the mercury hit nearly 124 degrees Fahrenheit in the Pakistani city of Jacobabad – “just below the conventional estimate for the threshold of human survival”, notes science writer David Wallace-Wells.

This summer’s US daily high temperatures continued our globe’s torrid pace. In Phoenix, daily highs averaged well over 100 all summer long. Citing the “imminent threat” of heat-driven wildfires, Oregon’s governor declared a state of emergency. California, meanwhile, declared a statewide grid emergency amid surging demand for power during another record heatwave.

Stories like these might well be focussing people’s attention on climate change. But what’s getting less coverage is how these temperatures are connected to inequality.

The inequality of modern America doesn’t just determine who suffers the most from all the heat. Inequality is actually driving the mercury higher, as new research from New York details.

A block-by-block heat assessment – the first ever – found that temperatures in the city’s low-income South Bronx run 8 degrees higher than in the high-income neighbourhoods of Manhattan’s Upper West and East Sides.

How does economic inequality generate temperature differentials?

At a most basic level, the rich and powerful use their wealth and power to shunt the most undesirable aspects of modern life onto poor neighbourhoods.

Take transportation. Five major highways – the notorious Cross Bronx Expressway among them – cut through and encircle the South Bronx. These high-traffic corridors spew contaminants into the air and deny South Bronx residents access to heat-relieving green and “blue” – public waterfront – spaces.

In the South Bronx, these spaces barely even exist. The area has about only one park for every 60,000 residents.

In New York’s most affluent neighbourhoods, streets themselves can actually become park-like when they sport plenty of tree cover. The vast majority of the South Bronx has no tree cover, and that absence – coupled with asphalt everywhere – nurtures heat pockets that compound pollution. And the South Bronx’s old housing stock leaves residents few escapes from all this bad air and heat.

One result: The Bronx overall commands just 17 percent of New York City’s population but 95 percent of the city’s hospitalisations for asthma.

Community activists in the advocacy group South Bronx Unite are working to overturn these deadly social and environmental

dynamics. They’ve proposed a plan “to provide 100,000+ people access to a public waterfront that, for decades, has been inaccessible.”

Activists are also working to offset the environmental damage that comes from the heavy daily traffic on the Cross Bronx Expressway, where the 300 diesel trucks every hour are fouling the air and leaving the South Bronx ever hotter.

They’re pushing for an ambitious project that “would add a deck on top of below-grade sections of the Cross Bronx Expressway, with filtered vents to scrub exhaust”, according to Columbia University’s public health school.

Atop the deck, under the project plan, would be a green park – a project akin to others in cities like Boston, Dallas, and Seattle.

Building out such an effort, analysts believe, would cost \$750-million. Too ambitious? Maybe not. New York City, *Forbes* reported this past spring, now boasts more billionaires “than any other city on the planet.”

The city’s 107 billionaire residents have a combined net worth of \$640-billion. A one percent annual wealth tax on that combined fortune would raise over eight times the cost of the proposed cap-the-Cross-Bronx-Expressway project in just one year.

If rising inequality can drive climate change, then closing those gaps can help reverse it – in New York and anywhere else. **CT**

Sam Pizzigati co-edits *Inequality.org*. His latest books include *The Rich Don’t Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970*

INSIGHTS

EFE/Alberto Valdes



Not even close: the new constitution was rejected by 62 percent to 38 percent EPA

CAROLE CONCHA BELL

How misinformation sank Chile constitution

Despite recently electing Chile's most progressive president in the shape of former student protest leader Gabriel Boric, voters in the country have now rejected his most important reform. A plebiscite held on September 4 to replace the constitution imposed during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet with a progressive new one led to a solid No vote. This has effectively halted Boric's agenda for reform.

The final ballot stood at 62 percent rejecting (Rechazo) the proposed document and just 38 percent approving (Apruebo). It was a result that directly contradicted

the initial plebiscite held in 2020 when 78 percent of voters backed the idea of a new constitution, after which Eliza Loncon, an indigenous left-wing academic was elected to oversee a constitutional convention to write the document.

The decision to rewrite the constitution came after months of political upheaval in 2019-20 caused by a crisis of inequality. Protests over metro fares in the capital, Santiago, developed into a mass social movement encompassing feminists, environmentalists, indigenous groups and anti-neoliberal activists calling for progressive socioeconomic change.

The new document was certain-

ly radical, with a range of political and social reforms guaranteeing a range of social rights including housing, social security, health, work and access to food. There was also a range of proposed environmental reforms making fighting climate change a state duty and requiring the state to protect biodiversity, native species and natural spaces.

Political reforms included an element of direct democracy, gender parity, indigenous rights and a restructuring of the bicameral parliamentary system to give the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house) more power at the expense of the Senate.

Conceding defeat, Boric said: "I'm sure all this effort won't have been in vain, because this is how countries advance best, learning from experience and, when necessary, turning back on their tracks to find a new route forward."

The "No" vote has not only halted the implementation of a new constitution, it has also forced a cabinet reshuffle. Boric has removed some of his more progressive ministers, including former interior minister Izkia Siches, a doctor of indigenous descent who helped shape Chile's pandemic response.

In place he has brought in figures from Chile's traditional political class such as Carolina Toha, a minister in former president Michelle Bachelet's first administration. This hints at a shift toward centrist politics.

As such, the newly elected president seems increasingly fragile and politically isolated, with a

INSIGHTS

much-reduced mandate.

Many commentators have been baffled by the referendum result, wondering how citizens that had galvanised across the nation for political change, have settled for a constitution enacted by one of Latin America's most brutal dictators.

Fake news became a defining feature of the "rechazo" campaign which, in turn, the mainstream Chilean media was more than happy to amplify for clicks and views. One such story, propagated by far-right politician Felipe Kast who Boric defeated in the 2021 election, claimed that abortions would be legalised for up to nine months into pregnancy.

Kast also claimed, before retracting the story, that Venezuelan president Nicola Maduro had supported the draft constitution. Kast circulated on his Twitter feed a video purporting to back this claim. He subsequently withdrew the claim and apologised.

Other "half-truths" circulating on TikTok, Instagram and Twitter were that private property would be expropriated, insurance funds could not be inherited, and that uniformed police would be abolished. An early 2022 survey found that 58 percent of Chileans had been exposed to some form of misinformation.

Another line of attack focused on the people involved in writing the new constitution, who some critics argued were not representative of the whole of Chilean society but had a majority from the left. One critic, Kenneth Bunker, said the quota system to ensure that

indigenous groups were properly represented on the drafting body, also didn't represent the conservative side of Chilean politics.

Ciper, an investigative media outlet, found that most of those who voted against the new constitution did so because of false information.

Ciper surveyed 120 people across 12 districts of Santiago and found that the main reasons for rejecting the new constitution were people's fear of having their property expropriated, scare campaigns about unrestricted abortions and the spectre of indigenous people having more rights

than the rest of the nation. None of these are accurate reflections of the proposed reforms.

It's a devastating blow for progressive politics in Chile. As the 50th anniversary of the military coup that ended the last progressive government in 1973 draws closer, it seems the country is no closer to shaking off Pinochet's social and economic legacy. **CT**

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CAITLIN JOHNSTONE

The trouble with Western 'values'

Have you noticed how those who shriek the loudest about tyranny in foreign countries are always the same people calling for the censorship and deplatforming of anyone who criticises the western empire?

It's an ubiquitous mind virus throughout western society. Anyone – and I do mean anyone – who aggressively and consistently criticises the foreign policy of the US and its allies in front of a sizeable audience gets branded a Russian agent by empire apologists, and this consensus is accompanied by the steadily growing opinion that Russia's operatives

and useful idiots should be banned from western platforms.

Defenders of the western empire won't admit to wanting all empire critics silenced, but that's what you get when you combine (a) the fact that they view everyone who criticises the empire with sufficient aggression as a Russian agent with (b) their opinion that those given to Russian influence ought to be censored. Whenever I criticise the foreign policy of the western empire I get its apologists telling me I'd never be allowed to criticise my rulers like that if I lived in a nation like Russia or China, when they know full

INSIGHTS

well that if it were up to them I wouldn't be allowed to criticise the western empire here either. They are the same as the tyrants they claim to despise.

The trouble with “western values” is that westerners don't value them. They think they value them, but all that reverence for free expression and holding power to account with the light of truth goes right out the window the second they see someone saying something that sharply differs from what their rulers and their propagandists have told them to think. Then they want that person silenced and shut down.

In truth, the most forceful critics of the western empire actually embody these western values infinitely more than empire apologists do. It is the critics of empire who value free speech and holding the powerful to account. It's the brainwashed bootlickers of the US-centralised empire who are calling for censorship and shouting down anyone who directs fierce oppositional scrutiny toward the most powerful people in the world.

People tell me “Move to Russia!” or “Move to China!” depending on what aspect of the empire's global power agendas I happen to be criticising at the moment, and I always want to tell them, no, you move to Russia. You move to China. You're the one trying to suppress dissent and criticism of the powerful. I'm the one who is living by western values as they were sold to me and demanding normal scrutiny of the most powerful empire that has ever existed. You don't belong here.

In school we are taught that our society values truth, free speech, equality, accountability for the

powerful, and adversarial journalism, then we grow up and we see everyone rending their garments because institutions like CBS News or Amnesty International let slip one small report which doesn't fully comply with the official line of our rulers. We see Russian media banned and censorship protocols expanded to the enthusiastic cheerleading of mainstream liberals. We see astroturf trolling operations used to mass report and shout down those who scrutinize the establishment line about Ukraine on social media. We see Julian Assange languishing in Belmarsh Prison for the crime of unauthorised journalism.

It's obvious with a look around that the “western values” we're all told about are not actually terribly common in the west. Look at the west's major media platforms and they virtually never platform anyone who is meaningfully critical of the real centres of power in

western civilization. Look at western governments and they continually dance to the beat of oligarchy and empire regardless of how people vote in their supposedly free democratic elections. Look at the internet and it's actually very difficult to find authentic criticism of imperial power unless you already know where to look.

It's we marginalised outsiders who are adamantly opposing censorship, propaganda and the empire's war on the press while continuously working to shine the light of truth on the mechanisms of power from the fringes, while we are being yelled at and accused of treason by mainstream sycophants who have far more in common with the autocrats they claim to oppose than with the western values they purport to uphold. **CT**

Caitlin Johnstone is an Australian blogger. Her website is www.caitlinjohnstone.com.

POINT OF DEPARTURE



When we do it vs. when they do it. (From Alan MacLeod /Twitter)



DAVID CROMWELL & DAVID EDWARDS

Imposed insanity

Royalty, propaganda, and the coming catastrophe

If every single high-profile journalist, politician and priest is currently expressing heartfelt devotion to Britain's deceased, 96-year-old monarch, it is not because she "served" her country diligently in doing her "duty" for 70 years. The powerful interests that determine Britain's political and media agenda are not sentimentalists; they do not impose "managed democracy" as a kind of game. Propaganda blitzes are always pragmatic.

It could hardly be more obvious that earlier propaganda campaigns defining the Iraq war, the Libya war, the Syria war, Jeremy Corbyn, and now Nato's proxy war in Ukraine, were shaped to serve those same interests.

It is no accident that damning claims – many of them simply fabricated – relentlessly target enemies of state from the front pages of every newspaper, from every TV and touchscreen. And it is no accident that corporate editors and journalists are united now in expressing deep affection for the late Queen. When everyone clearly feels obliged to say the same thing, it means they are deferring to a key requirement of elite control.

This latest blitz should be no

surprise, because wherever there is royalty, there is militarism, organised religion, bipartisan political agreement, patriotism and, of course, concentrated wealth. After all, as Peter Osborne reminded his readers, the Queen was "head of state; head of the Anglican Church; head of the judiciary; head of the armed forces, head of the Commonwealth; and ultimate fount of honour in the British state".

All of these roles rest on a series of interlinked, mutually supportive deceptions. The monarchy roots autocratic rule in esoteric "tradition" which, lost in the mists of time, presents elite control as "the natural order of things". Organised religion extends the same illusion to a cosmic King sanctifying His earthly representatives who thus rule by "divine right". Military power, swathed in the same esoterica, protects this system in the name, not just of the monarch, but of God. Who would dare challenge the will, not just of the King, but of God Himself?

As Harold Pinter liked to say, these deceptions are almost "witty" in their audacity.

The new king said of his mother: "She set an example of selfless duty which, with God's help and your

counsels, I am resolved faithfully to follow."

The ideal, endlessly repeated, is not to discover Truth, Happiness and Freedom for ourselves as creative, free-thinking individuals. Rather, it is to reject our personal needs and interests – rejected as "narrow" and "selfish" – to focus on "service", on performing a "duty" pre-defined for us by the mumbo-jumbo of patriotic "tradition".

Tolstoy captured his moment and ours exactly: "All these people do what they are doing unconsciously, because they must, all their life being founded upon deceit, and because they know not how to do anything else... Moreover, being all linked together, they approve and justify one another's acts – emperors and kings those of the soldiers, functionaries, and clergymen; and soldiers, functionaries and clergymen the acts of emperors and kings, while the populace, and especially the town populace, seeing nothing comprehensible in what is done by all these men, unwittingly ascribe to them a special, almost a supernatural, significance." (Leo Tolstoy, "Writings On Civil Disobedience and Non-Violence," *New Society*, 1987)

Thus, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said: "Her Majesty



showed us that when we build our lives on God's faithfulness, we are on the solid ground of eternity that cannot be shaken."

There is indeed nothing comprehensible here. Alas, human folly is such that many of us find these comments all the more impressive for that reason – we are surely in the presence of truth so profound that it escapes our feeble understanding.

It is ironic indeed that a classic feature of the Western propaganda system involves depicting citizens of Official Enemies as having succumbed to a Cult of Personality. We, in the West, are encouraged to scoff at those poor lost souls who glorify leaders with hagiographic portraits

A classic feature of the Western propaganda system involves depicting citizens of Official Enemies as having succumbed to a Cult of Personality

and statues; and militarised patriotic festivals and grand commemorative events.

These countries are identified as belonging to their respective heads of state. It's "Putin's Russia", "Xi Jinping's China", "Kim Jong-un's North Korea", "Gaddafi's Libya", "Saddam's Iraq".

The death of Queen Elizabeth

II on September 8 was a salient reminder that 'our' propaganda system is a vital cog in the British social machine that upholds elite privilege and domination over the majority of the population.

BBC News runs continuous livestreams on its channels, its website is draped in black, featuring 'news' stories with titles such as:

- "Nation mourns Queen with flowers, gun salutes and address from new King"
- "Obituary: a long life marked with a sense of duty"
- "Queen Elizabeth II: World leaders remember a 'kind-hearted Queen'"

There was even a BBC News piece titled "Death of Queen Elizabeth II: The moment history stops". The power of the British monarchy is

such that history itself stops!

“Royal correspondent” Jonny Dymond gushed: “This is the moment history stops; for a minute, an hour, for a day or a week; this is the moment history stops.

“Across a life and reign, two moments from two very different eras illuminate the thread that bound the many decades together. At each a chair, a desk, a microphone, a speech. In each, that high-pitched voice, those clipped precise vowels, that slight hesitation about public speaking that would never quite seem to leave her.”

The BBC purple prose continued: “One moment is sun-dappled, though the British people were suffering through a terrible post-war winter. A young woman, barely more than a girl really, sits straight-backed, her dark hair pulled up, two strings of pearls around her neck. Her youthful skin is flawless, she is very beautiful. A life opens out ahead of her.”

Newspapers ran full, front-page portraits with forelock-tugging headlines:

- “A life in service” (*The Times*)
- “Our hearts are broken” (*Daily Mail*)
- “Grief is the price we pay for love” (*Daily Telegraph*)
- “Thank you” (*Daily Mirror*)
- “Our beloved Queen is dead” (*Daily Express*)
- “We loved you Ma’am” (*The Sun*)

The Sun’s headline adorned one of the most brutal, cynical, loveless, soulless gutter tabloids on the market. Does *The Sun* have any idea what the word ‘love’ means?

As for the *Telegraph*’s declaration, “Grief is the price we pay for love”; this is a paper that reflexively supports every blood-drenched Western war going, that waged merciless propaganda war on Corbyn, incinerated Assange, and mocked



LAND OF CONTRASTS: Homeless Londoner begs in front of a poster of the dead Queen.

the climate crisis threatening all humanity for decades. But their hearts are full of love for the icon of unlimited wealth.

Anyone still harbouring illusions that the *Guardian* might offer a modicum of republican scepticism would have been disabused by the acres of royal-friendly coverage on display. The day after her death, the print edition of the paper led with fully 19 pages on the Queen plus a 20-page supplement. By painful contrast, a news piece titled, “World on brink of five ‘disastrous’ climate tipping points – study”, was buried

on page 25. The following day, the *Guardian* published a 40-page special supplement on the Queen. That paired example captures exactly the imposed insanity of the “mainstream” media that are leading us to disaster.

High-profile *Guardian* columnist, Gaby Hinsliff, wrote a piece packed with references to “grandmotherly manner”, “female power”, “rare trick for a woman”, “a woman in charge”, “ultimate feminist”, “a legacy for women”, “ultimate matriarch”, “Matriarchal power”, and so on.

We tweeted in response: “Ok, ok, gender matters! But so does medieval authoritarianism, militant patriotism and 0.1 percent control.”

As we noted, Hinsliff's dismal piece garnered 12 retweets and 71 likes in the first 16 hours. Six days since publication, the tally stands at just 14 retweets and 72 likes.

As for the Labour party, any hint of republican sentiment has long been well and truly expunged from statements issuing from its corporate HQ. Sir Keir Starmer, Knight Commander of the Order of Bath and the Leader of the "Opposition", declared: "For seventy years, Queen Elizabeth II stood as the head of our country. But in spirit, she stood amongst us."

Party managers have clearly been working hard on Keir's "compassionate" facial expression, but his delivery is still devoid of genuine human feeling. He continued in his now trademark robotic delivery: "Queen Elizabeth II created a special, personal relationship with us all. A relationship based on service and devotion to her country."

This is the standard narrative being rammed down the throats of the British, indeed global, audience.

Starmer added: "And as the world changed around her, this dedication became the still point of our turning world."

Our world revolved around the Queen? Really?

In glaring contrast to the obsequious royalist coverage elsewhere, the *Morning Star's* front page ran with: "Truss's energy boon – for the fuel fat cats".

So, in case anyone ever wondered to what extent we are living in a deeply propagandised society, the front pages of the "free press" provided a clear answer. Ash Sarkar of *Novaramedia* noted: "The fact that every single newspaper and broadcaster in the country is united in waving though the accession of an unelected head of state makes the 'no one tells us what to write' stuff

In glaring contrast to the obsequious royalist coverage elsewhere, the *Morning Star's* front page ran with: "Truss's energy boon – for the fuel fat cats"

all the more embarrassing."

Former diplomat Craig Murray also highlighted the absurdity of the notion of media "impartiality" when press and broadcasting are so blatantly pro-monarchy: "Think seriously on this. 29 percent of the population want to abolish the monarchy. Think of all the BBC coverage of the monarchy you have seen over the last decade. What percentage do you estimate reflected or gave an airing to republican views? Less than 1 percent?"

He continued: "Now think of media coverage across all the broadcast and print media.

"How often has the media reflected the republican viewpoint of a third of the population? Far, far less than a third of the time. Closer to 0 percent than 1 percent. Yes, there are bits of the media that dislike Meghan for being black or are willing to go after Andrew. But the institution of the monarchy itself?"

Murray concluded: "There can be no clearer example than the monarchy of the unrelenting media propaganda by which the Establishment maintains its grip.

"The corporate and state media are unanimous in slavish support of monarchy. Thailand has vicious laws protecting its monarchy. We don't need them; we have the ownership of state and corporate media enforcing the same."

In 2015, author Irvine Welsh observed that: "The UK is now a pointless entity, existing solely to protect entrenched privilege and continue the transference of the country's resources to a global elite."

The Queen sat atop this unjust system of extreme inequality, just as her eldest son, King Charles, does now. She was the figurehead of an unhealthy and divided British society, corrupted by hereditary wealth, degraded by the racist and exploitative legacy of Empire, and scarred by a highly-stratified class structure in which most people are struggling to obtain a decent standard of living.

Journalist and political analyst Jonathan Cook encouraged the public to scrutinise the media's subservient behaviour: "Please take this moment to study, really study, the journalists working for the BBC, ITV and Ch4. Do they seem like fearless, independent, objective observers of the world, or more like fawning courtiers? This is the moment when the mask slips. Drink it in deeply..."

Australian political analyst Caitlin Johnstone observed: "British media are even more servile and sycophantic than American or Australian media, which is truly an impressive feat."

And, indeed, live coverage in particular was, at times, hugely revealing of the mindset and priorities of these 'fearless' journalists. Shortly before the Queen's death, BBC News presenter Clive Myrie declared that the crisis in rising energy costs "is, of course, insignificant now" given "the gravity of the situation" regarding the Queen's health. Even Myrie's colleague, Damian Grammaticus, reporting live from Buckingham Palace, felt compelled to respond: "Well, certainly overshadowed, Clive".

Anna Soubry, former Tory minister, revealed a similarly bizarre mindset as Myrie when she tweet-

ed: “Everything pales into insignificance as our thoughts and best wishes are with Her Majesty the Queen and her family.”

Everything? Climate breakdown? Rising energy and food bills? Poverty? War? This is a form of fanaticism that would be ridiculed in the West if it had come from a former member of government in Russia, China or North Korea.

There have been reams of cringing rhetoric about the Queen’s “legacy” after seven decades of reigning the UK and the Commonwealth. The deeply-scrubbed and sanitised version of history was highly revealing. BBC News Africa tweeted a clip lasting 4 minutes, 35 seconds, taking “a look back at Queen Elizabeth II’s longstanding relationship with Africa”. It was imbued with patriotic sentiment throughout: “Queen Elizabeth visited more than 20 countries in Africa. She developed a close relationship with the continent during her reign.”

As a South Africa-based Twitter user pointed out, the BBC was essentially: “rebranding colonialism as long-standing relationship.”

Another Twitter user compiled an incomplete list of the UK’s crimes around the world under Elizabeth II’s reign. These included

Kenya: “In 1952 Churchill argued Kenya’s fertile highlands should only be for white people and approved the forcible removal of the local population. Hundreds of thousands of Kenyans were forced into camps.

“Yemen: Britain carried out a covert war in Yemen which led to 200,000 deaths between 1962-70 and killed with impunity in Aden.

“Today Britain arms advises and oversees Saudi Arabia bombing

**A South Africa-based
Twitter user
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was essentially:
“rebranding colonialism as
long-standing relationship.”**

Yemen.”

British Guiana: “In 1953, Britain under Churchill ordered the overthrowing of the democratically elected leader of ‘British Guiana’. He dispatched troops and warships and suspended their constitution, all to put a stop to the [British Guianan] government’s nationalisation plan.”

Iran: “On 19th August 1953, Britain leads a coup d’etat that overthrows democracy in Iran known as Operation Ajax which overthrows democratically-elected PM Mossadeqh. Coded messages were put on the BBC to let the Shah know democracy was overthrown.”

Northern Ireland: “On 30th Jan 1972, the Bloody Sunday massacre was perpetrated by the parachute regiment of the British Army who killed 14 civilians at a peaceful protest march. Following the massacre the British lied about the victims.”

Iraq: ‘Britain under Blair invaded Iraq and killed over 1-million people, displaced millions more, brought unknowable depths of suffering to the Iraqi people & gave birth to ISIS.”

Afghanistan: “Pictured here is Prince Harry, Elizabeth’s grandson who boasted he killed in Afghanistan. He flew Apache helicopters and coordinated jets to drop 500lb bombs on people he called ‘Terry Taliban’.”

Libya: “Pictured here is what Libya was transformed into after 6 months of NATO bombing which assisted thousands of terrorists

backed by Britain. The British gov played an integral role in ensuring the most developed country in Africa as per the UN’s Human Development Index was crushed.”

In the *Guardian*, Jonathan Freedland opined that the Queen “made scrupulous neutrality appear easy” with “vanishingly few intrusions by the monarch into politics”. John Pilger made a nonsense of these claims: “The dark power of royalty. In 1971, the Chagos Islanders were expelled by the British to make way for a US base. This was made possible by a meeting of the Queen’s Privy Councillors (advisers) and approved in person by the Queen. Using the same power, Blair invaded Iraq in 2003.”

In 2014, Freedland’s own newspaper reported: “The day after Prince Charles donned traditional robes and joined Saudi princes in a sword dance in Riyadh, Britain’s biggest arms company announced that agreement had finally been reached on the sale of 72 Typhoon fighters sold to the Gulf kingdom.”

The *Guardian* cited Andrew Smith, spokesman for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade: “It is clear that Prince Charles has been used by the UK government and BAE Systems as an arms dealer.”

According to the *Guardian*, Prince Andrew has performed a similar role.

You will be hard pushed to find “mainstream” mentions of the above egregious examples of British history under Elizabeth II’s “reign”. Instead, there is a saturation level of elegies across the supposed “spectrum” of national news media about how she and the royal family have provided “stability”, “held this country together – held countries together” (Nick Robinson, BBC Radio 4 Today, 9 September 2022), “the rock on which modern Britain was

built” (Prime Minister Liz Truss), “unwavering dedication and devotion”, and so on.

At times, media reporting descended into preposterous rhapsodising about Mother Nature mourning the death of the Queen. The *Daily Mail* actually published photographs of clouds in the sky under the headline: “Astonishing moment a cloud resembling Queen Elizabeth floats over English town just hours after she died”.

One tweeter japed, posting a picture of a fuzzy oblong cloud, saying: “Just saw a cloud that looked like a document advocating for a republic”.

Other reports waxed lyrical about a double rainbow over Buckingham Palace “as crowds gather to mourn Queen”. Respectfully dressed in black, Russell Brand, author of a book titled, *Revolution*, said the rainbows had “curiously” appeared. The *Daily Mirror*’s chief reporter deemed the rainbow story worthy of a tweet.

Imagine how journalists would respond to such supernatural mawkishness about the heads of state in North Korea, Russia, China, Iran, Syria or Venezuela. There would, of course, be a tsunami of Western scorn.

The extremist combination of idolatry and ideology pervades the “mainstream”, with dissent or even open discussion, seemingly banned. We are all supposed to wallow in grief or, at the very least refrain from saying anything that might be considered “unseemly”.

As Jonathan Cook wrote: “The demand for silence is not a politically neutral act. It is a demand that we collude in a corrupt system of establishment rule and hierarchical privilege.

Imagine how journalists would respond to such supernatural mawkishness about the heads of state in North Korea, Russia, China, Iran, Syria or Venezuela

“The establishment has a vested interest in enforcing silence and obedience until the public’s attention has moved on to other matters. Anyone who complies leaves the terrain open over the coming weeks for the establishment to reinforce and deepen the public’s deference to elite privilege.”

One non-violent protestor, Simon Hill, reported: “It was only when they declared Charles to be ‘King Charles III’ that I called out ‘Who elected him?’ I doubt most of the people in the crowd even heard me. Two or three people near me told me to shut up. I didn’t insult them or attack them personally, but responded by saying that a head of state was being imposed on us without our consent.”

Police then took hold of him: “I was outraged that they were leading me away, but was taken aback when they told me they were arresting me.”

Hill was driven home in a police van: “Eventually, on the way home, I was told that I had been arrested under the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act 2022 (the outrageous act passed earlier this year) for actions likely to lead to ‘harassment or distress’.”

Climate scientist Bill McGuire provided some vital perspective: “The second Elizabethan age was one of rampant, free market capitalism and the raping of our planet. The ages that follow will see us, our children, and those who follow, reap-

ing the whirlwind of catastrophic climate collapse.”

He linked to a disturbing news report – the report relegated to page 25 in the *Guardian*, mentioned above – about a scientific study showing the world is on the brink of five ‘disastrous’ climate tipping points: “Giant ice sheets, ocean currents and permafrost regions may already have passed point of irreversible change.”

One of the study’s researchers, Professor Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, warned that the Earth is: “on course to cross multiple dangerous tipping points that will be disastrous for people across the world. To maintain liveable conditions on Earth and enable stable societies, we must do everything possible to prevent crossing tipping points.”

In a recent article (see Pages 20-23), John Pilger described how he once met Leni Riefenstahl, one of Hitler’s leading propagandists “whose epic films glorified the Nazis”. Pilger wrote: “She told me that the ‘patriotic messages’ of her films were dependent not on ‘orders from above’ but on what she called the ‘submissive void’ of the German public.

“Did that include the liberal, educated bourgeoisie?”, I asked. “Yes, especially them”, she said.

“I think of this as I look around at the propaganda now consuming Western societies.”

You only have to observe the deranged level of royalist propaganda, and the serious dearth of rational analysis of today’s societal crises, to see this for yourself. **CT**

David Cromwell and David Edwards are co-editors of *Media Lens*, the UK media watchdog – www.medialens.org

STAN COX

The Pentagon wages war on an overheating planet

There's a big carbon footprint and a giant sucking sound coming from the latest US national budget

On October 1st, the US military will start spending the more than \$800-billion Congress is going to provide it with in fiscal year 2023. And that whopping sum will just be the beginning. According to the calculations of Pentagon expert William Hartung, funding for various intelligence agencies, the Department of Homeland Security, and work on nuclear weaponry at the Energy Department will add another \$600-billion to what the American taxpayer will be spending on national security.

That \$1.4-trillion for a single year dwarfs Congress's one-time provision of approximately \$300-billion under the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for what's called "climate mitigation and adaptation". And, mind you, that sum is to be spent over a number of years. In contrast to the IRA, which was largely a climate bill (even if hardly the best version of one), this country's military spending bills are distinctly anti-human, anti-climate, and anti-Earth. And count on this: Congress's military appropriations will, in all too many ways, cancel out the benefits of its new climate spending.

Here are just the three most obvious ways our military is an enemy of climate mitigation.

- First, it produces huge quantities of greenhouse gases, while wreaking other kinds of ecological havoc.

- Second, when the Pentagon does take climate change seriously, its attention is almost never focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions but on preparing militarily for a climate-changed world, including the coming crisis of migration and future climate-induced armed conflicts globally.

- And third, our war machine wastes hundreds of billions of dollars annually that should instead be spent on climate mitigation, along with other urgent climate-related needs.

The US military is this globe's largest institutional consumer of petroleum fuels. As a result, it produces greenhouse gas emissions equal to about 60-million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. Were the Pentagon a country, those figures would place it just below Ireland and Finland in a ranking of national car-

bon emissions. Or put another way, our military surpasses the total national emissions of Bulgaria, Croatia, and Slovenia combined.

A lot of those greenhouse gases flow from the construction, maintenance, and use of its 800 military bases and other facilities on 27-million acres across the United States and the world. The biggest source of emissions from actual military operations is undoubtedly the burning of jet fuel. A B-2 bomber, for instance, emits almost two tons of carbon dioxide when flying a mere 50 miles, while the Pentagon's biggest boondoggle, the astronomically costly F-35 combat aircraft, will emit "only" one ton for every 50 miles it flies.

Those figures come from "Military- and Conflict-Related Emissions," a June 2022 report by the Perspectives Climate Group in Germany. In it, the authors express regret for the optimism they had exhibited two decades earlier when it came to the reduction of global military greenhouse gas emissions and the role of the military in experimenting with new, clean forms of energy:

"In the process of us writing



this report and looking at our article written 20 years ago, the initial notion of assessing military activities... as potential ‘engines of progress’ for novel renewable technologies was shattered by the Iraq War, followed by the horror of yet another large-scale ground war, this time in Europe... All our attention should be directed towards achieving the 1.5° target [of global temperature rise beyond the preindustrial level set at the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015]. If we fail in this endeavor, the repercussions will be more deadly than all conflicts we have witnessed in the last decades.”

In March, the Defense Department announced that its proposed budget for fiscal year 2023 would include a measly \$3.1-billion for “addressing the climate crisis”. That amounts to less than 0.4 percent of the department’s total spending and, as it happens, two-thirds of that little sliver of funding will go not to climate mitigation itself but to protecting military facilities and activities against the future impact of climate change. Worse yet, only a tiny portion of the remainder would go toward reducing the greenhouse-gas emissions or other

environmental damage the armed forces itself will produce.

In a 2021 Climate Adaptation Plan, the Pentagon claimed, however vaguely, that it was aiming for a future in which it could “operate under changing climate conditions, preserving operational capability, and enhancing the natural and man-made systems essential to the Department’s success”.

It projected that “in worst-case scenarios, climate-change-related impacts could stress economic and social conditions that contribute to mass migration events or political crises, civil unrest, shifts in the regional balance of power, or even state failure. This may affect US national interests directly or indirectly, and US allies or partners may request US assistance.”

Sadly enough, however, as far as the Pentagon is concerned, an overheated world will only open up further opportunities for the military. In a classic case of projection, its analysts warn that “malign actors may try to exploit regional instability exacerbated by the impacts of climate change to gain influence or

for political or military advantage.” (Of course, Americans would never act in such a manner since, by definition, the Pentagon is a benign actor, but will have to respond accordingly.)

The CIA and other intelligence agencies seem to share the Pentagon’s vision of our hotter future as a growth opportunity. A 2021 climate risk assessment by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) paid special attention to the globe’s fastest-warming region, the Arctic. Did it draw the intelligence community’s interest because of the need to prevent a meltdown of the planet’s ice caps if the Earth is to remain a livable place for humanity? What do you think?

In fact, its authors write revealingly of the opportunities, militarily speaking, that such a scenario will open up as the Arctic melts:

“Arctic and non-Arctic states almost certainly will increase their competitive activities as the region becomes more accessible because of warming temperatures and reduced ice. ... Military activity is likely to increase as Arctic and non-Arctic states seek to protect their investments, exploit new maritime routes, and gain strategic advan-

tages over rivals. The increased presence of China and other non-Arctic states very likely will amplify concerns among Arctic states as they perceive a challenge to their respective security and economic interests.”

In other words, in an overheated future, a new “cold” war will no longer be restricted to what were once the more temperate parts of the planet.

If, in climate change terms, the military worries about anything globally, it’s increased human migration from devastated areas like today’s flood-ridden Pakistan, and the conflicts that could come with it. In cold bureaucratese, that DNI report predicted that, as ever more of us (or rather, in national security state terms, of them) begin fleeing heat, droughts, floods, and tropical cyclones, “Displaced populations will increasingly demand changes to international refugee law to consider their claims and provide protection as climate migrants or refugees, and affected populations will fight for legal payouts for loss and damages resulting from climate effects.”

Translation: We won’t pay climate reparations and we won’t pay to help keep other peoples’ home climates livable, but we’re more than willing to spend as much as it takes to block them from coming here, no matter the resulting humanitarian nightmares.

Along with the harm caused by its outsized greenhouse gas emissions and its exploitation of climate chaos as an excuse for imperialism, the Pentagon wreaks terrible damage by soaking up trillions of dollars in government funds that should have gone to meet all-too-human

Increases in national security funding alone in 2022 could have gone a long way toward supporting Biden’s failed Build Back Better bill

needs, mitigate climate change, and repair the ecological damage the Pentagon itself has caused in its wars in this century.

Months before Russia invaded Ukraine, ensuring that yet more greenhouse gases would be pumped into our atmosphere, a group of British scholars lamented the Biden administration’s enthusiasm for military funding. They wrote that, “rather than scaling back military spending to pay for urgent climate-related spending, initial budget requests for military appropriations are actually increasing even as some US foreign adventures are supposedly coming to a close”. It’s pointless, they suggested, “to tinker around the edges of the US war machine’s environmental impact”.

The funds spent “procuring and distributing fuel across the US empire could instead be spent as a peace dividend [that] includes significant technology transfer and no-strings-attached funding for adaptation and clean energy to those countries most vulnerable to climate change.”

Washington could still easily afford that “peace dividend,” were it to begin cutting back on its military spending. And don’t forget that, at past climate summits, the rich nations of this planet pledged to send \$100-billion annually to the poorest ones so that they could develop their renewable energy capacity, while preparing for and adapting to climate change. All too predictably,

the deep-pocketed nations, including the US, have stonewalled on that pledge. And of course, as the recent unprecedented monsoon flooding of one-third of Pakistan – a country responsible for less than 1 percent of historic global greenhouse gases – suggests, it’s already remarkably late for that skimpy promise of a single hundred-billion-dollars; hundreds of billions per year are now needed. Mind you, Congress could easily divert enough from the Pentagon’s annual budget alone to cover its part of the global climate-reparations tab. And that should be only the start of a wholesale shift toward peacetime spending. No such luck, of course.

As the National Priorities Project (NPP) has pointed out, increases in national security funding alone in 2022 could have gone a long way toward supporting Joe Biden’s expansive Build Back Better bill, which failed in Congress that year. That illustrates yet again how, as William Hartung put it, “almost anything the government wants to do other than preparing for or waging war involves a scramble for funding, while the Department of Defense gets virtually unlimited financial support,” often, in fact, more than it even asks for.

The Democrats’ bill, which would have provided solid funding for renewable energy development, child care, health care, and help for economically stressed families was voted down in the Senate by all 50 Republicans and one Democrat (yes, that guy) who claimed that the country couldn’t afford the bill’s \$170-billion-per-year price tag. However, in the six months that followed, as the NPP notes, Congress pushed through increases in military funding that added up to \$143-billion – almost as much as Build Back Better would have cost per year!

As Pentagon experts Hartung and Julia Gledhill commented recently, Congress is always pulling such stunts, sending more money to the Defense Department than it even requested. Imagine how much crucial federal action on all kinds of issues could be funded if Congress began deeply cutting, rather than inflating, the cash it shovels out for war and imperialism.

Various versions of America's antiwar movement have been trying to confront this country's militarism since the days of the Vietnam War with minimal success. After all, Pentagon budgets, adjusted for inflation, are as high as ever. And, not coincidentally, greenhouse gas emissions from both the military and this society as a whole remain humongous. All these years later, the question remains: Can anything be done to impede this country's money-devouring, carbon-spewing military juggernaut?

For the past twenty years, CODEPINK, a women-led grassroots organization, has been one of the few national groups deeply involved in both the antiwar and climate movements. Jodie Evans, one of its co-founders, told me recently that she sees a need for "a whole new movement intersecting the antiwar movement with the climate movement." In pursuit of that very goal, she said, CODEPINK has organised a project called Cut the Pentagon.

Here's how she describes it: "It's a coalition of groups serving issues of people's needs and the planet's needs and the anti-war movement, because all of us have an interest in cutting the war machine. We launched it on September 12 last year, after 20 years of a 'War on Terror' that took \$21trillion of our tax

The question remains: Can anything be done to impede this country's money-devouring, carbon-spewing military juggernaut?

money, to destroy the planet, to destroy the Middle East, to destroy our communities, to turn peacekeeping police into warmongering police". Cut the Pentagon, says Evans, has "been doing actions in [Washington] DC pretty much non-stop since we launched it."

Sadly, in 2022, both the climate and antiwar struggles face the longest of odds, going up against this country's most formidable strongholds of wealth and power. But CODEPINK is legendary for finding creative ways of getting in the face of the powerful interests it opposes and nonviolently upending business-as-usual.

"As an activist for the last 50 some-odd years", Evans says, "I always felt my job was to make power uncomfortable, and to disrupt it". But since the start of the Covid pandemic, she adds, "Power is making us more uncomfortable than we are making it. It's stronger and more weaponised than it has been before in my lifetime."

Among the hazards of this situation, she adds, social movements that manage to grow and become effective often find themselves co-opted and, she adds, over the past two decades, "Too many of us got lazy... We thought 'clicktivism' creates change, but it doesn't". Regarding an education bill early in the Trump administration, "We had 200-million messages going into Congress from a vast coalition, and we lost. Then a month later, we had only 2,000

people, but we were right there in the halls of Congress and we saved Obamacare. Members of Congress don't like being uncomfortable."

As the military-industrial complex and Earth-killing capitalism only seem to grow ever mightier, Evans and CODEPINK continue pushing for action in Washington. And recently, she believes, a window has been opening:

"For the first time since the sixties and early seventies, it feels like a lot of people are seeing through the propaganda, really being willing to create new structures and new forms. We need to go where both our votes and our voices matter. Creating local change – that's our work. Our divest-from-war campaigns are all local.

Folks who care about the planet need to figure out how do we make power uncomfortable... It's not a fight of words. It's a fight of being."

The major crises we now face are so deeply entangled that perhaps grassroots efforts to face them might, in the end, coalesce. The question remains: From the neighbourhood to the nation, could movements for climate mitigation and justice, Indigenous sovereignty, Black lives, economic democracy, and, crucially, an end to the American form of militarism merge into a single collective wave? Our future may depend on it. **CT**

*Stan Cox is a research fellow in ecosystem studies at The Land Institute. He is the author of *The Path to a Livable Future: A New Politics to Fight Climate Change, Racism, and the Next Pandemic, The Green New Deal and Beyond: Ending the Climate Emergency While We Still Can, and the current In Real Time climate series at City Lights Books. This article first appeared at www.tomdispatch.com.**

RAY MCGOVERN

Brainwashed for war with Russia

Putin has been so demonised that people are inclined to believe James Clapper when he claims that Russians are “almost genetically driven” to do evil

Thanks to Establishment media, the sorcerer apprentices advising President Joe Biden – I refer to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, national security adviser Jacob Sullivan, and China specialist Kurt Campbell – will have no trouble rallying Americans for the widest war in 77 years, starting in Ukraine, and maybe spreading to China. And, shockingly, under false pretences.

Most Americans are oblivious to the reality that Western media are owned and operated by the same corporations that make massive profits by helping to stoke small wars and then peddling the necessary weapons. Corporate leaders, and Ivy-mantled elites, educated to believe in US “exceptionalism”, find the lucre and the lustre too lucrative to be able to think straight. They deceive themselves into thinking that (a) the US cannot lose a war; (b) escalation can be calibrated and wider war can be limited to Europe; and (c) China can be expected to just sit on the sidelines. The attitude, consciously or unconsciously, “Not to worry. And, in any case, the lucre and lustre are worth the risk.”

The media also know they can always trot out died-in-the-wool Russophobes to “explain,” for ex-

ample, why the Russians are “almost genetically driven” to do evil (James Clapper, former National Intelligence Director and now hired savant on CNN); or Fiona Hill (former National Intelligence Officer for Russia), who insists “Putin wants to evict the United States from Europe ... As he might put it: “Goodbye, America. Don’t let the door hit you on the way out.”

Absent a miraculous appearance of clearer heads with a less benighted attitude toward the core interests of Russia in Ukraine, and China in Taiwan, historians who survive to record the war now on our doorstep will describe it as the result of hubris and stupidity run amok. Objective historians may even note that one of their colleagues – Professor John Mearsheimer – got it right from the start, when he explained in the autumn 2014 issue of *Foreign Affairs* “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault.”

Historian Barbara Tuchman addressed the kind of situation the world faces in Ukraine in her book *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. (Had she lived, she surely would have updated it to take Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine

into account). Tuchman wrote:

“Wooden-headedness...plays a remarkably large role in government. It consists in assessing a situation in terms of preconceived fixed notions while ignoring or rejecting any contrary signs. It is acting according to wish while not allowing oneself to be deflected by the facts.”

Thanks to US media, a very small percentage of Americans know that:

- Fourteen years ago, then US Ambassador to Russia (current CIA Director) William Burns was warned by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that Russia might have to intervene in Ukraine, if it were made a member of NATO. The Subject Line of Burns’s Feb. 1, 2008 Embassy Moscow cable (#182) to Washington makes it clear that Ambassador Burns did not mince Lavrov’s words; the subject line stated: “Nyet means nyet: Russia’s NATO enlargement redlines.”

Thus, Washington policymakers were given forewarning, in very specific terms, of Russia’s redline regarding membership for Ukraine in NATO. Nevertheless, on April 3, 2008, a NATO summit in Bucharest asserted: “NATO welcomes Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that

these countries will become members of NATO.”

● Eight years ago, on Feb. 22, 2014, the US orchestrated a coup in Kiev – rightly labelled “the most blatant coup in history,” insofar as it had already been blown on YouTube 18 days earlier. Kiev’s spanking new leaders, handpicked and identified by name by US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland in the YouTube-publicised conversation with the US ambassador in Kiev, immediately called for Ukraine to join NATO.

● Six years ago, in June 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin told Western reporters of his concern that so-called antiballistic missile sites in Romania and Poland could be converted overnight to accommodate offensive strike missiles posing a threat to Russia’s own nuclear forces. There is a direct analogy with the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when Moscow put offensive strike missiles in Cuba and President John Kennedy reacted strongly to the existential threat that posed to the US.

On December 21, 2021, President Putin told his most senior military leaders:

“It is extremely alarming that elements of the US global defense system are being deployed near Russia. The Mk 41 launchers, which are located in Romania and are to be deployed in Poland, are adapted for launching the Tomahawk strike missiles. If this infrastructure continues to move forward, and if US and NATO missile systems are deployed in Ukraine, their flight time to Moscow will be only 7–10 minutes, or even five minutes for hypersonic systems. This is a huge challenge for us, for our security.”

On December 30, 2021, Biden and Putin talked by phone at Putin’s urgent request. The Kremlin readout

stated:

“Joseph Biden emphasised that Russia and the US shared a special responsibility for ensuring stability in Europe and the whole world and that Washington had no intention of deploying offensive strike weapons in Ukraine.” Yuri Ushakov, a top foreign policy adviser to Putin, pointed out that this was also one of the goals Moscow hoped to achieve with its proposals for security guarantees to the US and NATO.

On February 12, 2022, Ushakov briefed the media on the telephone conversation between Putin and Biden earlier that day.

“The call was as a follow-up of sorts to the ... December 30 telephone conversation. ... The Russian President made clear that President Biden’s proposals did not really address the central, key elements of Russia’s initiatives either with regards to non-expansion of NATO, or non-deployment of strike weapons systems on Ukrainian territory ... To these items, we have received no meaningful response.” [Emphasis added.]

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine.

The US insists that Russia’s invasion was “unprovoked”. Establishment media dutifully regurgitate that line, while keeping Americans in the dark about such facts (not opinion) as are outlined (and sourced) above. Most Americans are just as taken in by the media as they were 20 years ago, when they were told there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. They simply took it on faith. Nor did the guilty media express remorse – or a modicum of embarrassment.

The late Fred Hiatt, who was op-ed editor at the *Washington Post*,

is a case in point. In an interview with the *Columbia Journalism Review* [CJR, March/April 2004] he commented:

“If you look at the editorials we wrote running up [to the war], we state as flat fact that he [Saddam Hussein] has weapons of mass destruction. ... If that’s not true, it would have been better not to say it.”

(My journalism mentor, Robert Parry, had this to say about Hiatt’s remark. “Yes, that is a common principle of journalism, that if something isn’t real, we’re not supposed to confidently declare that it is.”)

It’s worse now. Russia is not Iraq. And Putin has been so demonised over the past six years that people are inclined to believe the likes of James Clapper to the effect there’s something genetic that makes Russians evil. “Russiagate” was a big con (and, now, demonstrably so), but Americans don’t know that either. The consequences of prolonged demonisation are extremely dangerous – and will become even more so in the next several weeks as politicians vie to be the strongest in opposing and countering Russia’s “unprovoked” attack on Ukraine.

Humorist Will Rogers had it right:

“*The problem ain’t what people know. It’s what people know that ain’t so; that’s the problem.*” **CT**

Ray McGovern works with *Tell the Word*, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. His 27-year career as a CIA analyst includes serving as Chief of the Soviet Foreign Policy Branch and preparer/briefer of the President’s *Daily Brief*. He is co-founder of *Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity* (VIPS).

DUNCAN MANGHAM

Another world ...

British photographer recalls a South African journey in 1976 to see the world's biggest man-made hole in the ground



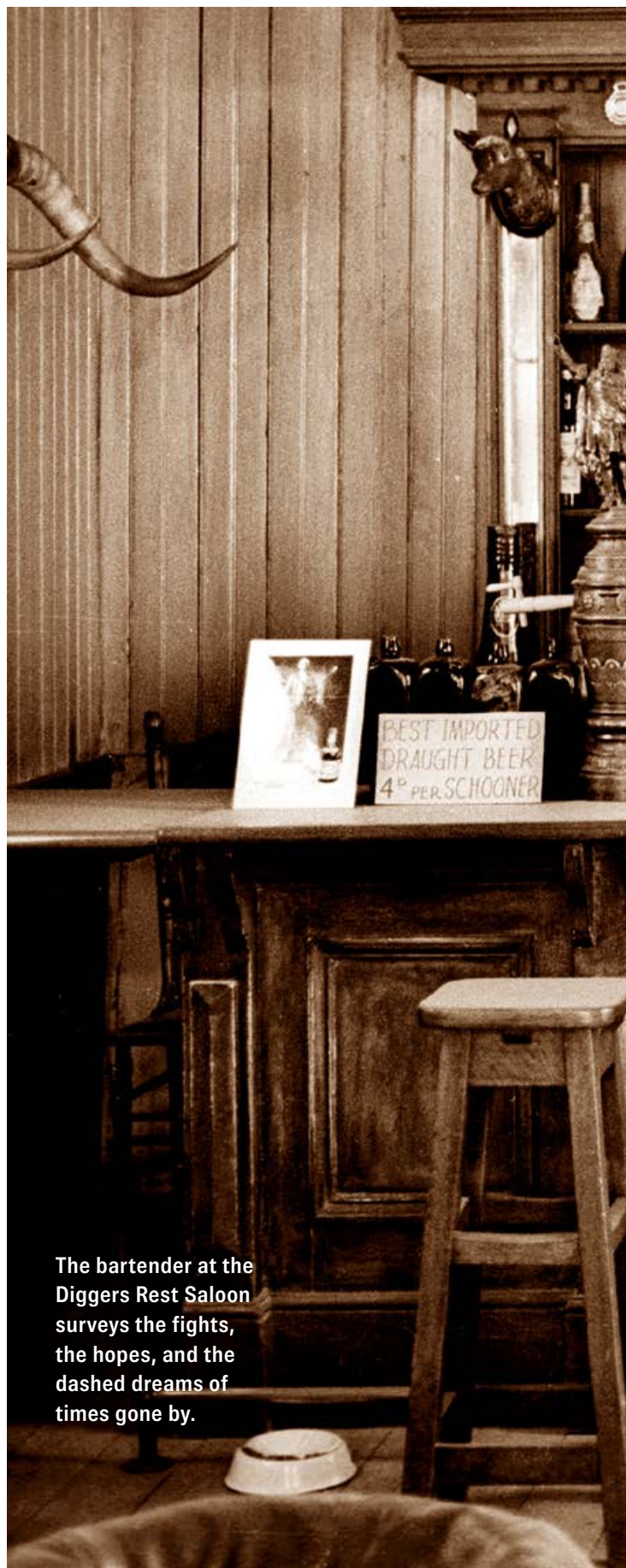
The "616" diamond, named after its weight, is the largest naturally formed octahedral diamond in the world.

In this excerpt from his upcoming book, Yorkshire photographer **Duncan Mangham** tells of his 1976 trip to a museum commemorating the diamond mine at Kimberley, South Africa ...

“It was a Tuesday afternoon in 1976 and as hot as hell. I was standing on a caged catwalk peering through my camera viewfinder at the biggest man-made hole in the world. “Gee, can you get it all in?” asked the American tourist standing next to me. I explained that was why I was using a 20mm lens but, even then, it was pushed to the limit of its super-wide capabilities – the hole was 550 yards across and a quarter of a mile deep.

I was in Kimberley, the diamond centre of South Africa, and this was the Open Mine Museum, visited by thousands of tourists who come to glean a little piece of South African history. Because of its association with diamonds and pioneers such as Cecil Rhodes, Barney Barnato, Johannes de

Duncan Mangham



The bartender at the Diggers Rest Saloon surveys the fights, the hopes, and the dashed dreams of times gone by.



... Across the road was the train that mining magnate Cecil Rhodes used to commute to Victoria Falls, carriages resplendent in black leather and velvet ...

Duncan Mangham



Cecil Rhodes's luxurious carriage that transported him from Kimberley to Victoria Falls.

Beer and the Oppenheims, a great effort has been made to preserve the town's links with the past.

It was near here, in 1869, that the first diamond was found. By 1871 New Rush, as Kimberley was then called, saw thousands of prospectors digging this huge open-cast diamond mine. Work continued until 1914 when the bottom became waterlogged, by which time it had yielded almost 15-million carats of diamonds. It remains as a monument to the 50,000 men who moved 22.5-million tons of rock, sand and earth to leave this huge crater for tourists to gaze at in awe and wonder.

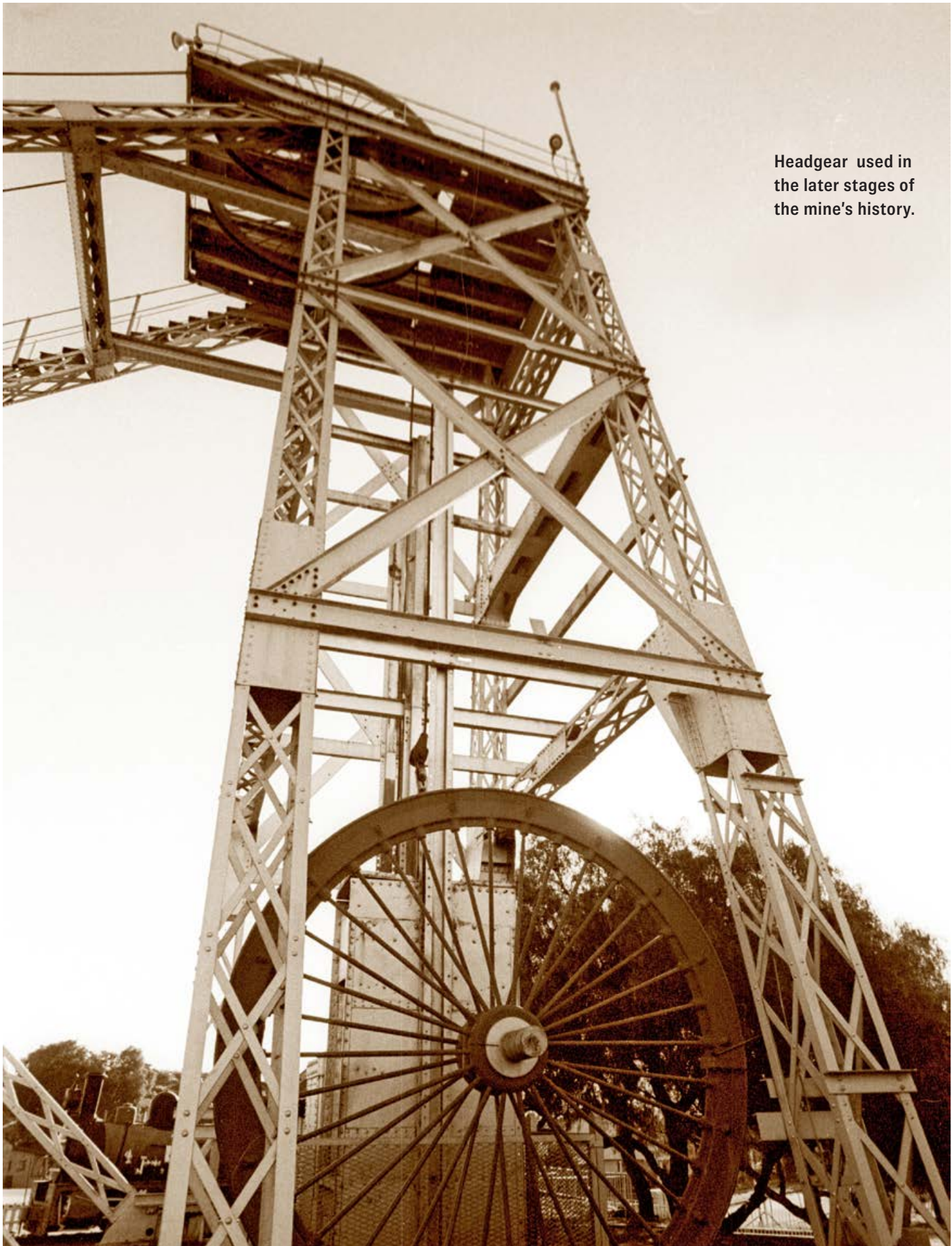
Walking back off the museum's catwalk and past historic mining paraphernalia I entered another world – the reconstructed Kimberley of the diamond rush, set out in the form of a town or, at least, part of a town, with houses, shops and offices reconstructed to give the visitor a genuine feeling of travelling back in time.

As I wandered down the main street I could almost hear the clapping of horses' hooves and the jangle of carriages, and I couldn't shake off the aura of the Wild West!

Just down the street the Diggers Rest saloon looked inviting and, on cue, an old piano started to play just as I entered. This was authenticity at its best. A card game had been left in mid play at one table, another held beer bottles and tankards. A waxen bartender gazed through sightless eyes at the many fights he must have witnessed over his long years here, as well the hopes and downfalls of the miners who drank at the other side of his bar. Over the road was the train that mining magnate and founder of Rhodesia, Cecil Rhodes used to commute to the Victoria Falls, the carriages, resplendent in black leather and velvet, containing the trappings of the very rich, its dining car set out with silver and crystal, ready for dinner . . .



As Duncan was making this trip, riots had just erupted at schools in the Soweto township of Johannesburg, 450 miles north of Kimberley, the beginning of a journey of freedom that culminated in the release from jail of Nelson Mandela and the fall of South African apartheid in 1990.



Headgear used in the later stages of the mine's history.

... It remains a monument to the 50,000 men who moved 22.5-million tons of rock, sand and earth to leave this huge crater for tourists to gaze at in awe and wonder ...

Duncan Mangham



Early sifting machinery and sorting table.

Duncan Mangham



ABOVE: Main Street with shops, and bandstand at the rear.
Right: Two wheeled cab; the taxi stand is round the corner.

Duncan Mangham



Kimberley's Big Hole in 1976, with the modern town in the background. The massive 400 metres deep mine, which produced diamonds from 1869 until 2014, is the largest hand-dug hole in the world.



● See **FREEDOM'S CHILDREN**, Duncan Mangham's previous ColdType photo essay at <http://coldtype.net/Assets.14/pdfs/0314.Mangham.Africa.singles.pdf>

JOHN PILGER

Silencing the lambs: How propaganda works

When will writers stand up, as they did against the rise of fascism in the 1930s?
When will film-makers stand up, as they did against the Cold War in the 1940s

In the 1970s, I met one of Hitler's leading propagandists, Leni Riefenstahl, whose epic films glorified the Nazis. We happened to be staying at the same lodge in Kenya, where she was on a photography assignment, having escaped the fate of other friends of the Fuhrer. She told me that the "patriotic messages" of her films were dependent not on "orders from above" but on what she called the "submissive void" of the German public.

Did that include the liberal, educated bourgeoisie? I asked. "Yes, especially them", she said.

I think of this as I look around at the propaganda now consuming Western societies.

Of course, we are very different from Germany in the 1930s. We live in information societies. We are globalists. We have never been more aware, more in touch, better connected.

Are we? Or do we live in a Media Society where brainwashing is insidious and relentless, and perception is filtered according to the needs and lies of state and corporate power?

The United States dominates the Western world's media. All but one of the top ten media companies are based in North America. The

internet and social media – Google, Twitter, Facebook – are mostly American owned and controlled.

In my lifetime, the United States has overthrown or attempted to overthrow more than 50 governments, mostly democracies. It has interfered in democratic elections in 30 countries. It has dropped bombs on the people of 30 countries, most of them poor and defenceless. It has attempted to murder the leaders of 50 countries. It has fought to suppress liberation movements in 20 countries.

The extent and scale of this carnage is largely unreported, unrecognised; and those responsible continue to dominate Anglo-American political life.

In the years before he died in 2008, the playwright Harold Pinter made two extraordinary speeches, which broke a silence.

"US foreign policy", he said, is "best defined as follows: kiss my arse or I'll kick your head in. It is as simple and as crude as that. What is interesting about it is that it's so incredibly successful. It possesses the structures of disinformation, use of rhetoric, distortion of language, which are very persuasive,

but are actually a pack of lies. It is very successful propaganda. They have the money, they have the technology, they have all the means to get away with it, and they do."

In accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature, Pinter said this: "The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis."

Pinter was a friend of mine and possibly the last great political sage – that is, before dissenting politics were gentrified. I asked him if the "hypnosis" he referred to was the "submissive void" described by Leni Riefenstahl.

"It's the same", he replied. "It means the brainwashing is so thorough we are programmed to swallow a pack of lies. If we don't recognise propaganda, we may accept it as normal and believe it. That's the submissive void."

In our systems of corporate democracy, war is an economic necessity, the perfect marriage of public subsidy and private profit: social-



ism for the rich, capitalism for the poor. The day after 9/11 the stock prices of the war industry soared. More bloodshed was coming, which is great for business.

Today, the most profitable wars have their own brand. They are called “forever wars”: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and now Ukraine. All are based on a pack of lies.

Iraq is the most infamous, with

its weapons of mass destruction that didn’t exist. Nato’s destruction of Libya in 2011 was justified by a massacre in Benghazi that didn’t happen. Afghanistan was a convenient revenge war for 9/11, which had nothing to do with the people of Afghanistan.

Today, the news from Afghanistan is how evil the Taliban are – not that Joe Biden’s theft of \$7-billion of the country’s bank reserves is causing widespread suffering. Recently, National Public Radio in Washington devoted two hours to

Afghanistan – and 30 seconds to its starving people.

At its summit in Madrid in June, Nato, which is controlled by the United States, adopted a strategy document that militarises the European continent, and escalates the prospect of war with Russia and China. It proposes “multi domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitor”. In other words, nuclear war.

It says: “Nato’s enlargement has been an historic success”.

I read that in disbelief.

A measure of this “historic success” is the war in Ukraine, news of which is mostly not news, but a one-sided litany of jingoism, distortion, omission. I have reported a number of wars and have never known such blanket propaganda.

In February, Russia invaded Ukraine as a response to almost eight years of killing and criminal destruction in the Russian-speaking region of Donbass on their border.

In 2014, the United States had sponsored a coup in Kyiv that got rid of Ukraine’s democratically elected, Russian-friendly president and installed a successor whom the Americans made clear was their man.

In recent years, American “defender” missiles have been installed in eastern Europe, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, almost certainly aimed at Russia, accompanied by false assurances all the way back to James Baker’s “promise” to Gorbachev in February 1990 that Nato would never expand beyond Germany.

Ukraine is the frontline. Nato has effectively reached the very borderland through which Hitler’s army stormed in 1941, leaving more than 23-million dead in the Soviet Union.

Last December, Russia proposed a far-reaching security plan for Europe. This was dismissed, derided or suppressed in the Western media. Who read its step-by-step proposals? On 24 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy threatened to develop nuclear weapons unless America armed and protected Ukraine. This was the final straw.

On the same day, Russia invaded – according to the Western media,

A “good” China has been airbrushed and a “bad” China has replaced it: from the world’s workshop to a budding new Satan

an unprovoked act of congenital infamy. The history, the lies, the peace proposals, the solemn agreements on Donbass at Minsk counted for nothing.

On 25 April, the US Defence Secretary, General Lloyd Austin, flew into Kyiv and confirmed that America’s aim was to destroy the Russian Federation – the word he used was “weaken”. America had got the war it wanted, waged by an American bankrolled and armed proxy and expendable pawn.

Almost none of this was explained to Western audiences.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is wanton and inexcusable. It is a crime to invade a sovereign country. There are no ‘buts’ – except one.

When did the present war in Ukraine begin and who started it? According to the United Nations, between 2014 and this year, some 14,000 people have been killed in the Kyiv regime’s civil war on the Donbass. Many of the attacks were carried out by neo-Nazis.

Watch an ITV news report from May 2014, by the veteran reporter James Mates, who is shelled, along with civilians in the city of Mariupol, by Ukraine’s Azov (neo-Nazi) battalion.

In the same month, dozens of Russian-speaking people were burned alive or suffocated in a trade union building in Odessa besieged by fascist thugs, the followers of the Nazi collaborator and antisemitic fanatic Stephen Bandera. The

New York Times called the thugs “nationalists”.

“The historic mission of our nation in this critical moment”, said Andreiy Biletsky, founder of the Azov Battalion, “is to lead the White Races of the world in a final crusade for their survival, a crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen.”

Since February, a campaign of self-appointed ‘news monitors’ (mostly funded by the Americans and British with links to governments) have sought to maintain the absurdity that Ukraine’s neo-Nazis don’t exist.

Airbrushing, a term once associated with Stalin’s purges, has become a tool of mainstream journalism.

In less than a decade, a “good” China has been airbrushed and a “bad” China has replaced it: from the world’s workshop to a budding new Satan.

Much of this propaganda originates in the US, and is transmitted through proxies and “think-tanks”, such as the notorious Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the voice of the arms industry, and by zealous journalists such as Peter Hartcher of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, who labelled those spreading Chinese influence as “rats, flies, mosquitoes and sparrows” and called for these “pests” to be “eradicated”.

News about China in the West is almost entirely about the threat from Beijing. Airbrushed are the 400 American military bases that surround most of China, an armed necklace that reaches from Australia to the Pacific and south east Asia, Japan and Korea. The Japanese island of Okinawa and the Korean island of Jeju are loaded guns aimed point blank at the industrial heart of

China. A Pentagon official described this as a ‘noose’.

Palestine has been misreported for as long as I can remember. To the BBC, there is the “conflict” of “two narratives”. The longest, most brutal, lawless military occupation in modern times is unmentionable.

The stricken people of Yemen barely exist. They are media unpeople. While the Saudis rain down their American cluster bombs with British advisors working alongside the Saudi targeting officers, more than half a million children face starvation.

This brainwashing by omission has a long history. The slaughter of the First World War was suppressed by reporters who were knighted for their compliance and confessed in their memoirs. In 1917, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, C.P. Scott, confided to prime minister Lloyd George: “If people really knew [the truth], the war would be stopped tomorrow, but they don’t know and can’t know.”

The refusal to see people and events as those in other countries see them is a media virus in the West, as debilitating as Covid. It is as if we see the world through a one-way mirror, in which “we” are moral and benign and “they” are not. It is a profoundly imperial view.

The history that is a living presence in China and Russia is rarely explained and rarely understood. Vladimir Putin is Adolf Hitler. Xi Jinping is Fu Man Chu. Epic achievements, such as the eradication of abject poverty in China, are barely known. How perverse and squalid this is.

When will we allow ourselves

The refusal to see people and events as those in other countries see them is a media virus in the West, as debilitating as Covid

to understand? Training journalists factory style is not the answer. Neither is the wondrous digital tool, which is a means, not an end, like the one-finger typewriter and the Linotype machine.

In recent years, some of the best journalists have been eased out of the mainstream. “Defenestrated” is the word used. The spaces once open to mavericks, to journalists who went against the grain, truth-tellers, have closed.

The case of Julian Assange is the most shocking. When Julian and WikiLeaks could win readers and prizes for the *Guardian*, the *New York Times* and other self-important “papers of record”, he was celebrated.

When the dark state objected and demanded the destruction of hard drives and the assassination of Julian’s character, he was made a public enemy. Vice President Biden called him a “hi-tech terrorist”. Hillary Clinton asked, “Can’t we just drone this guy?”

The ensuing campaign of abuse and vilification against Julian Assange – the UN Rapporteur on Torture called it “mobbing” – brought the liberal press to its lowest ebb. We know who they are. I think of them as collaborators: as Vichy journalists.

When will real journalists stand up? An inspirational samizdat already exists on the internet: *Consortium News*, founded by the great reporter Robert Parry, Max

Blumenthal’s *Grayzone*, *Mint Press News*, *Media Lens*, *Declassified UK*, *Alborada*, *Electronic Intifada*, *WSWS*, *ZNet*, *ICH*, *Counter Punch*, *Pearls & Irritations*, *Arena*, *Independent Australia*, *Globetrotter* and the work of Chris Hedges, Patrick Lawrence, Jonathan Cook, Diana Johnstone, Caitlin Johnstone and others who will forgive me for not mentioning them here.

And when will writers stand up, as they did against the rise of fascism in the 1930s? When will film-makers stand up, as they did against the Cold War in the 1940s? When will satirists stand up, as they did a generation ago?

Having soaked for 82 years in a deep bath of righteousness that is the official version of the last world war, isn’t it time those who are meant to keep the record straight declared their independence and decoded the propaganda? The urgency is greater than ever. **CT**

John Pilger has twice won Britain’s highest award for journalism and has been International Reporter of the Year, News Reporter of the Year and Descriptive Writer of the Year. He has made 61 documentary films and has won an Emmy, a BAFTA the Royal Television Society prize and the Sydney Peace Prize. His ‘Cambodia Year Zero’ is named as one of the ten most important films of the 20th century. This article is an edited version of an address to the Trondheim World Festival, Norway. He can be contacted at www.johnpilger.com.

VIJAY PRASHAD

The roar of death over an Irish airport

If the idea of neutrality is adopted by the Irish people, it will be because of the sacrifices of people such as Margaretta D'Arcy, Niall Farrell, and Mary Kelly

This is not a regular airport”, Margaretta D’Arcy said to me as we heard a C-130T Hercules prepare to take off from Shannon Airport in Ireland after 3 pm on September 11, 2022. That enormous US Navy aircraft (registration no. 16-4762) had flown in from Sigonella, a US Naval Air Station in Italy. A few minutes earlier, a US Navy C-40A (registration no. 16-6696) left Shannon for the US military base at Stuttgart, Germany, after flying in from Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia. Shannon is not a regular airport, D’Arcy said, because while it is merely a civilian airport, it allows frequent US military planes to fly in and out of it, with Gate 42 of the airport functioning as its “forward operating base.”

At the age of 88, D’Arcy, who is a legendary Irish actress and documentary filmmaker, is a regular member of Shannonwatch, comprising a group of activists who have – since 2008 – held monthly vigils at a roundabout near the airport. Shannonwatch’s objectives are to “end US military use of Shannon Airport, to stop rendition flights through the airport, and to obtain accountability for both from the relevant Irish authorities and political leaders”.

Edward Horgan, a veteran of

the Irish military who had been on peacekeeping missions to Cyprus and Palestine, told me that this vigil is vital. “It’s important that we come here every month”, he said, “because without this there is no visible opposition” to the footprint of the US military in Ireland.

According to a report from Shannonwatch titled “Shannon Airport and 21st Century War”, the use of the airport as a US forward operating base began in 2002-2003, and this transformation “was, and still is, deeply offensive to the majority of Irish people.”

Article 29 of the Irish Constitution of 1937 sets in place the framework for the country’s neutrality. Allowing a foreign military to use Irish soil violates Article 2 of the Hague Convention of 1907, to which Ireland is a signatory. Nonetheless, said John Lannon of Shannonwatch, the Irish government has allowed almost 3-million US troops to pass through Shannon Airport since 2002 and has even assigned a permanent staff officer to the airport. “Irish airspace and Shannon Airport became the virtual property of the US war machine”, said Niall Farrell of Galway Alliance Against War. “Irish

neutrality was truly dead.”

Margaretta D’Arcy’s eyes gleam as she recounts her time at the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp, located in Berkshire, England, and involving activists from Wales, who set up to prevent the storage and passage of US cruise missiles at this British military base. That camp began in 1981 and lasted until 2000. D’Arcy went to jail three times during this struggle (out of a total of at least 20 times she was in prison for her antiwar activism).

“It was good”, she told me, “because we got rid of the weapons and the land was restored to the people. It took 19 years. Women consistently fought until we got what we wanted”. When D’Arcy was arrested, the prison authorities stripped her to search her. She refused to put her clothes back on and went on both a hunger strike and a naked protest. In doing so, she forced the prison authorities to stop the practice of performing strip searches. “If you act with dignity, then you force them to treat you with dignity”, she said.

Part of this act of dignity includes refusing to allow her country’s airport to be used as part of the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since 2002, several brave people

have entered the airport and have attempted to deface US aircraft. On September 5, 2002, Eoin Dubsky painted “No way” on a US warplane (for which he was fined); and then on January 29, 2003, Mary Kelly took an axe onto the runway and hit a military plane, causing \$1.5-million in damage; she was also fined. A few weeks later, on February 3, 2003, the Pitstop Ploughshares (a group of five activists who belonged to the Catholic Worker Movement) attacked a US Navy C-40 aircraft – the same one that Mary Kelly had previously damaged – with hammers and a pickaxe (a story recounted vividly by Harry Browne in *Hammered by the Irish*, 2008). They also spray-painted “Pitstop of Death” on a hangar.

In 2012, Margaretta D’Arcy and Niall Farrell marched onto the runway to protest the airport being used by US planes. Arrested and convicted, they nonetheless returned to the runway the next year in orange jumpsuits. During the court proceedings in June 2014, D’Arcy grilled the airport authorities about why they had not arrested the pilot of an armed US Hercules plane that had arrived at Shannon Airport four days after their arrest on the runway. She asked, “Are there two sets of rules – one for people like us trying to stop the bombing and one for the bombers?” Shannon Airport’s inspector Pat O’Neill replied, “I don’t understand the question.”

“This is a civilian airport”, D’Arcy told me as she gestured toward the runway. “How does a government allow the military to use a civilian airport?”

The US government began illegally transporting prisoners from Afghanistan and other places to its prison in the Guantánamo Bay detention camp and to other “black

sites” in Europe, North Africa, and West Asia. This act of transporting the prisoners came to be known as “extraordinary rendition”. In 2005, when Dermot Ahern, Ireland’s minister for foreign affairs, was asked about the “extraordinary rendition” flights into Shannon Airport, he said, “If anyone has any evidence of any of these flights, please give me a call and I will have it immediately investigated”. Amnesty International replied that it had direct evidence that up to six CIA chartered planes had used Shannon Airport approximately 50 times. Four years later, Amnesty International produced a thorough report that showed that their earlier number was deflated and that likely hundreds of such US military flights had flown in and out of the airport.

While the Irish government over the years has said that it opposes this practice, the Irish police (the Garda Síochána) have not boarded these flights to inspect them. As a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights (signed in 1953) and the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (adopted in 1984 and ratified in 1987), Ireland is duty-bound to prevent collaboration with “extraordinary rendition”, a position taken by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties. In 2014, Irish parliamentarians Mick Wallace and Clare Daly were arrested at Shannon Airport for trying to search two US aircraft that they believed were carrying “troops and armaments.” They were frustrated by the Irish government’s false assurances. “How do they know? Did they search the planes? Of course not”, Wallace and Daly said.

Meanwhile, according to the Shannonwatch report, “Rather than take measures to identify past

involvement in rendition or to prevent further complicity, successive Irish [g]overnments have simply denied any possibility that Irish airports or airspace were used by US rendition planes.”

In 2006, Conor Cregan rode his bicycle near Shannon Airport. Airport police inspector Lillian O’Shea, who recognised him from protests, confronted him, but Cregan rode off. He was eventually arrested. At Cregan’s trial, O’Shea admitted that the police had been told to stop and harass the activists at the airport. Zoe Lawlor of Shannonwatch told me this story and then said, “harassment such as this reinforces the importance of our protest.”

In 2003 and 2015, Sinn Féin – the largest opposition party in the Northern Ireland Assembly – put forward a Neutrality Bill to enshrine the concept of neutrality into the Irish Constitution. The government, said Seán Crowe of Sinn Féin, has “sold Irish neutrality piece by piece against the wishes of the people.” If the idea of neutrality is adopted by the Irish people, it will be because of the sacrifices of people such as Margaretta D’Arcy, Niall Farrell, and Mary Kelly. **CT**

Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian, editor and journalist. He is a writing fellow and chief correspondent at Globetrotter. He is an editor of LeftWord Books and the director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research. He has written more than 20 books, including The Darker Nations and The Poorer Nations. His latest books are Struggle Makes Us Human: Learning from Movements for Socialism and (with Noam Chomsky) The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Fragility of US Power. This article was produced by Globetrotter.

ROY GREENSLADE

One newspaper. Two struggles. Two stories

Years of misinformation mean that most Britons are unaware of the facts about a place they regard as part of the United Kingdom

This is, quite simply, an extraordinary book. It should be on the reading list of student journalists across the globe because it illustrates how the controversial “propaganda model” proposed by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman worked, and works, in reality.

Their contention that media acts on behalf of power is proven beyond doubt by Patrick Anderson’s meticulous examination of newspaper coverage devoted to two similar anti-colonial struggles, those in Ireland and in Algeria.

Rather than dealing with the political clientelism of Britain’s populist press, he chooses to concentrate his fire on two titles, renowned for their supposed independence and liberal ethos, the *Guardian* and the *Observer*.

Before I go further, I need to record that I wrote for the *Guardian* for the best part of thirty years. But, crucially, my time there came long after the paper’s great crime against the people in the north of Ireland, which involved a persistent denial of the truth and a partiality bordering on racism.

During the period covered by Anderson’s research, the editor was Alastair Hetherington, a sainted figure in British journalism. Ire-

land, however, was one of his blind spots, and he gave his deputy, John Cole, licence to do as he liked.

As an unrepentant illiberal unionist who identified himself as British, what he liked was Stormont and its institutions of repression. Cole, “unmistakenly a Protestant son of Belfast”, as his *Guardian* obituary noted, championed internment in 1971 and went on advocating measures aimed at denying nationalists their civil rights.

It was significant that, within Britain, Cole was a blatant supporter of the Labour party, exerting an influence over its thinking – or, more pertinently – its lack of thinking about “Northern Ireland”. Remember Roy Mason and Merlyn Rees?

More on Cole in a moment. First, we need to consider the outline of Anderson’s major argument, that two very similar conflicts were treated very differently by the press. Both Algeria and Ireland were conquered by imperial nation states, France and Britain respectively.

Both were colonised. The settlers were given land confiscated from the indigenous inhabitants, which provoked considerable hostility. This was exacerbated by the fact that the incomers held different religious and cultural views. There was little assimilation.

The migrants from France to Algeria, the colons, became known as the *piets-noirs* (black feet). The planted people in Ireland’s Ulster counties regarded themselves as British and Protestant, self-identifying as unionists or loyalists. They successfully defeated the attempt to create a united independent Ire-



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THE GUARDIAN
Manchester Monday January 31 1972 5p

HOPE

Ulster civil rights march erupts in violence and bloodshed

Premier on the reasons why **13 killed as paratroops break riot**

Mr Brian Faulstich, the Ulster Premier, issued a statement last night on the killing of 13 people in the streets of Londonderry, a city in which Catholics have almost 80 per cent of the population.

These fatalities, he said, were a result of the actions of the British Army, which, he said, today a partial order of troops had been sent into the city to break up the rioting and to restore order.

From SIMON WINCHESTER in Londonderry

The tragic and inevitable Doomsday situation which has been universally forecast for Northern Ireland arrived in Londonderry yesterday afternoon when soldiers, firing into a large crowd of civil rights demonstrators, shot and killed 13 civilians.

Fifteen more people, including a woman, were wounded by gunfire and another woman was seriously injured after being knocked down by an armoured car. The army reported two military casualties and said that its soldiers had arrested between 50 and 60 people who had been allegedly involved in the illegal protest march.

After the shooting, which lasted for about 25 minutes in and around the Rossville Flats area of Bogside, the streets had all the appearance of a city at war.

It was feared at first that it was being celebrated with the British flag flying from the building. It was a general law at all universities throughout Northern Ireland.

The Government knew that the 13th January was a national day for the Republic of Ireland and that it was a day when the streets of the Republic were filled with people celebrating their country's independence.

Bhutto severs links

Electricity supplies may be cut today



Troops shelter behind armoured cars when attacked by rioters throwing stones in Londonderry yesterday.

**From the archive, 4 July 1962:
Algiers in frenzy of joy following independence**

Ben Khedda makes triumphant entry into the capital as the new Prime Minister of an independent Algeria



Algerians celebrate their country's independence in the centre of Algiers in July 1962. Photograph: AFP

The contrast in the Guardian's treatment of the civil rights struggles in Northern Ireland and Algeria is seen in its coverage of **Bloody Sunday** (above) and Algerian independence celebrations (left). The author notes that "French colonialism was unacceptable while British colonialism was essential."

land, preferring to impose their will on hundreds of thousands of people within an artificial statelet based entirely on religious grounds.

Anderson shows how British editors who were willing to overlook horrific bloodshed spilt during the dirty war fought by the French against Algeria's rebellious Arab population were unwilling to view the northern Irish conflict in the

same way.

So, French colonialism was unacceptable while British colonialism was essential. The French use of torture was intolerable; the British use of torture was understandable. Algerian nationalist freedom-fighters were good. Irish nationalist freedom-fighters were bad. So bad, indeed, that they were designated as terrorists. These binary comparisons may sound simplistic, but, at heart, it was the British media's justification for treating every aspect

of the conflicts differently.

For example, a *Guardian* editorial raged against de Gaulle's 1958 peace initiative on the grounds that it was wrong to expect the rebels to lay down their arms while the French forces would remain armed. It further contended that the disarmament process should be carried out "under impartial international auspices."

Yet *Guardian* editorials routinely called for Irish republicans to disarm without demanding that British troops should stand down. As for "impartial international auspices", the paper staunchly opposed the call, initially made by Jack Lynch, for the involvement of the United Nations.

Layer by layer, over several chapters, Anderson peels away at the inconsistent coverage. Most telling of all, his study illustrates how beneficial it was for successive British governments – meaning, of course, the British state – to have the nation's foremost liberal newspaper outlets acting as enthusiastic propagandists on its behalf.

Aware that editors are responsible for their newspaper's leading articles and also aware that, in the *Guardian's* case, the deputy editor was given responsibility for Irish affairs, he rightly links them as "Hetherington-Cole" throughout.

(Incidentally, an oddly similar situation occurred at the *London Times*. Its editor, William Rees-Mogg, later admitted that his paper's pro-unionist editorials during the Troubles were overly influenced by his chief leader writer, Owen Hickey, an Irish-born conservative).

Of the many sins of Hetherington-Cole, by far the most heinous was its willingness to justify the use of torture during interrogations by the RUC and the army. The

torture of 14 nationalists arrested in Belfast was just fine because “the information obtained” from them “was undoubtedly responsible for saving the lives of innocent civilians”. This was a giant falsehood. As for the men’s claims that they were tortured, according to Hetherington-Cole, they lacked credibility.

But the French use of torture, said the paper, was scandalous. And this time, it was official denials that it had been used that were said to lack credibility. Once again, bad France and good Britain.

Anderson quotes scores of shameful editorials about Ireland. In 1971, the *Guardian* told its readers “the restraint of soldiers” in Belfast “is superhuman”. A year later it claimed, without a shred of proof, that snipers were among civil rights marchers on Bloody Sunday. In 1973, turning truth on its head, it lamented that propaganda was the IRA’s “conspicuous talent”.

Also, it would be remiss of me to overlook the other character who, from the late 1970s, played a key role in shaping the *Observer*’s Irish coverage. Conor Cruise-

In 1973, the *Guardian*,
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“conspicuous talent”

O’Brien arrived at the paper as its editor-in-chief, fresh from his time as the Dáil minister who had introduced the broadcasting ban on Sinn Féin.

Anderson points out that he had excused atrocities carried out by the National Liberation Army of Algeria on the grounds that legitimate violence was an understandable reaction to colonisation. In Ireland, by contrast, he could not stomach the IRA’s violent resistance to colonisation, even to the extent of daring to vindicate loyalist death squads by telling Catholic victims: “Ye brought it on yourselves.”

It would be foolish to see O’Brien as a maverick. Anderson’s overall

thesis makes it clear that his views were shared by many editors and journalists in Britain (and, yes, Ireland) who were prepared to condone the ill-treatment of nationalists while averting their gaze from unionist misconduct. This was a service to the state that the *Guardian* and the *Observer* were supposedly pledged to hold to account.

We should remind ourselves that there was, in the context of the Troubles, a window of opportunity for a truth-telling media to inform the public in Britain about what was being done in their name. Instead, as we continue to see today, the years of misinformation mean that most Britons are unaware of the facts about a place they regard as part of the United Kingdom. **CT**

Roy Greenslade was formerly Professor of Journalism at City, University of London. For 28 years, he wrote about the media for *The Guardian*. He is currently writing a biography of a 19th-century Anglo-Irish landlord. This review first appeared in the *Andersonstown News* at www.belfastmedia.com

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THE TRIALS OF JULIAN ASSANGE

ColdType Issue 203 / September 2020

Extra

The last stand of Julian Assange

By Jonathan Cook



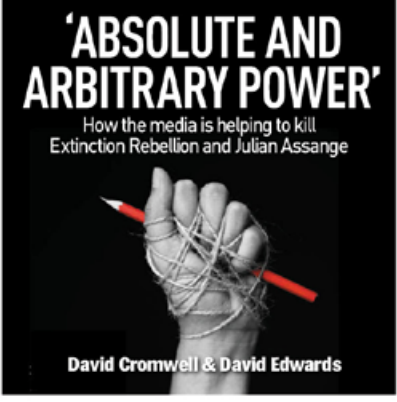
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ColdType Issue 210 / September 2020

Extra

'ABSOLUTE AND ARBITRARY POWER'

How the media is helping to kill Extinction Rebellion and Julian Assange



David Cromwell & David Edwards

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Extra

■ JOHN PILGER

Julian Assange must be freed, not betrayed

On February 22, people marched from Australia House in London to Parliament Square, the centre of British democracy. They carried pictures of the Australian publisher and journalist Julian Assange who, on February 24, faced a court that will decide whether or not he is to be extradited to the United States and a living death.

Three Australian flower-women As an Australian myself, I used to go there in my early days in London to read the newspapers from home. Opened by King George V over a century ago, its windows of red and stone, chandeliers and modern portraits, imported from Australia whose Australian soldiers were dying in the slaughter of the First World War, have earned its landmark as an imperial pile of monumental servitude.

As one of the oldest "epitaphic missions" in the United Kingdom, this relic of empire provides a plausible structure for Antigonean politics: a "martyr" rewarded or a troublemaker killed.

Known as High Commissioner, the signifier of an ambassador, the current beneficiary is George Brandis, who as Attorney General tried to water down Australia's Free Information Act and to prevent raids on whistleblowers who had revealed the truth about Australia's illegal spying on East Timor during negotiations for the carve-up of East Timor's oil and gas. This led to the prosecution of whistleblowers Bernard Collyer and "Wilson K" on bogus charges. Like Julian Assange, they are to be silenced in a Kafkaesque trial and put away.

Australia House was the ideal starting point for the Assange march.

"London," wrote Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, in 1918. "Had curators are pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a great game for the domination of the world."

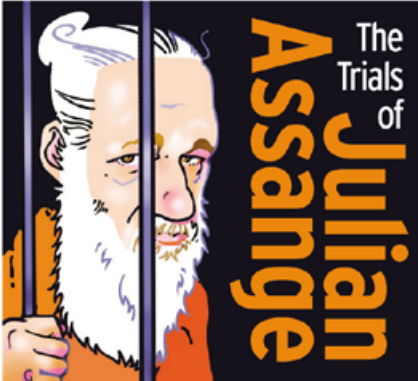
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SPECIAL ISSUE

ColdType ISSUE 183

WRITING WORTH READING ■ PHOTOS WORTH SEEING MAY 2018

The Trials of Julian Assange



DAVID EDWARDS & DAVID CROMWELL ■ JONATHAN COOK ■ CHRIS HEDGES ■ CAITLIN JOHNSTONE ■ JOHN PILGER ■ ANDRE DAMON ■ JOHN W WHITEHOUSE ■ CJ HOPKINS

Download these ColdType Specials at www.coldtype.net/Assange.html

TOM ENGELGARDT

Burning books (or rather book companies)

Looking back on my years in
– and out – of book companies

No one listened better than Studs. For those of you old enough to remember, that's Studs Terkel, of course. The most notable thing about him in person, though, was this: the greatest interviewer of his moment, perhaps of any moment, never stopped talking, except, of course, when he was listening to produce one of his memorable bestselling oral histories – he essentially created the form – ranging from *Working* and *Hard Times* to *The Good War*.

I still remember him calling my house. He was old, his hearing was going, and he couldn't tell that my teenage son had rushed to answer the phone, hoping it was one of his friends. Instead, finding himself on with Studs talking a mile a minute, my son would begin yelling desperately, "Dad! Dad!"

With that – and a recent publishing disaster – in mind this morning, I took my little stepladder to the back of my tiny study, put it in front of my bookcase and climbed up until I could reach the second to the top shelf, the one that still has Studs's old volumes lined up on it. Among others, I pulled down one of his later oral histories, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?: Reflections on Death, Rebirth, and Hunger for*

a Faith. In its acknowledgments, I found this: "Were it not for Tom Engelhardt, the nonpareil of editors, who was uncanny in cutting the fat from the lean (something I found impossible to do) and who gave this work much of its form, I'd still be in the woods."

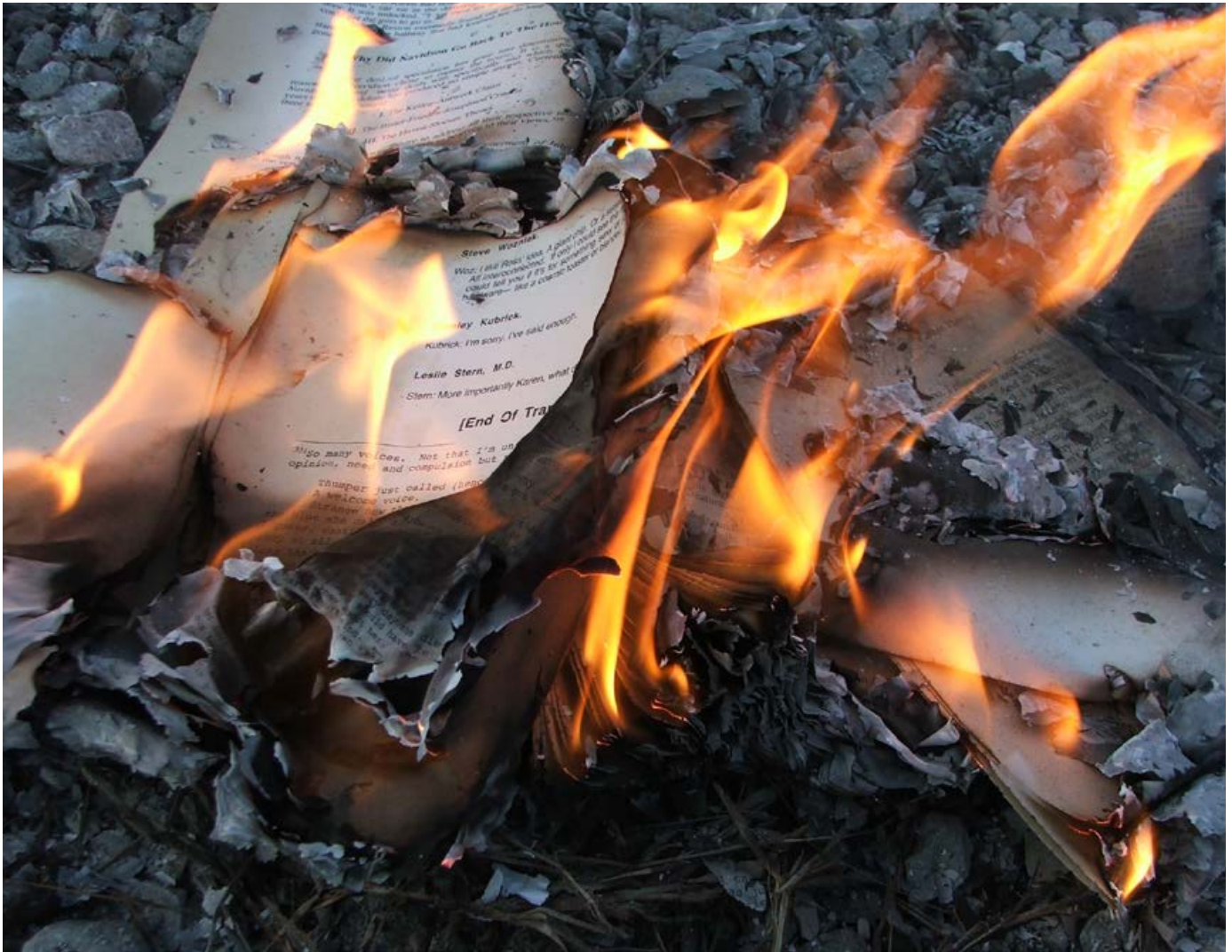
And that still makes me so proud. But let me rush to add that, in the years of his best-known work when I was at Pantheon Books (1976 to 1990), I was never his main editor. That honour was left to the remarkable André Schiffrin who started Studs, like so many other memorable authors, on his book career; ran that publishing house in his own unique way; found me in another life; and turned me into the editor he sensed I already naturally was.

For me, those were remarkable years. Even then, André was a genuinely rare figure in mainstream publishing – a man who wanted the world to change, a progressive who couldn't have been a more adventurous publisher. In fact, I first met him in the midst of the Vietnam War, at a time when I was still an Asian-scholar-to-be and involved in organising a group, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, that

had produced an antiwar book, *The Indochina Story*, that André had decided to publish.

In my years at Pantheon, he transformed me into a book editor and gave me the leeway to find works I thought might, in some modest fashion, help alter our world (or rather the way we thought about it) for the better.

Those included, among others, the rediscovery of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's early-20th-century utopian masterpiece *Herland*; the publishing of *Unforgettable Fire, Pictures Drawn by Atomic Bomb Survivors* (not long before, in the early 1980s, an anti-nuclear movement in need of it would arise in this country); Nathan Huggins's monumental *Black Odyssey*; Eduardo Galeano's unique three-volume *Memory of Fire* history of the Americas; Eva Figes's novel *Light*; John Berger's *Another Way of Telling*; Orville Schell's "Watch Out for the Foreign Guests!": *China Encounters the West*; and even – my mother was a cartoonist – the Beginner's comic book series, including *Freud for Beginners*, *Marx for Beginners*, *Darwin for Beginners*, and, of course, Art Spiegelman's *MAUS*, to mention just a modest number of works I was responsible for ushering into existence here in America.



What a chance, in my own fashion and however modestly, to lend a hand in changing and improving our world. And then, in a flash, in 1990 it all came to an end. In those years, publishing was already in the process (still ongoing) of conglomerating into ever fewer monster operations. Si Newhouse, the owner of Condé Nast and no fan of progressive publishing, had by that time taken over Random House, the larger operation in which Pantheon was lodged and he would, in the end, get rid of André essentially because of his politics and the kind of books we published.

We editors and most of the rest of the staff quit in protest, claiming we had been “Newhoused.” (Writers

Suddenly, I found myself back in the heartland of mainstream publishing, a “consulting editor” left to do my damndest

like Barbara Ehrenreich and Kurt Vonnegut would join us in that protest.) The next thing I knew, I was out on the street, both literally and figuratively, and my life as a scrambling freelancer began.

Yes, Pantheon still existed in name, but not the place I had known and loved. It was a bitter moment indeed, both personally and po-

litically, watching as something so meaningful, not just to me but to so many readers, was obliterated in that fashion. It seemed like a publishing version of capitalism run amok.

And then, luck struck a second time. A few years later, one of my co-editors and friends at Pantheon, Sara Bershtel, launched a new publishing house, Metropolitan Books, at Henry Holt Publishers. It seemed like a miracle to me then. Suddenly, I found myself back in the heartland of mainstream publishing, a “consulting editor” left to do my damndest, thanks to Sara (herself an inspired and inspiring editor). I was, so to speak, back in business.

And as at Pantheon, it would

prove an unforgettable experience. I mean, honestly, where else in mainstream publishing would Steve Fraser and I have been able to spend years producing a lineup of books in a series we called, graphically enough, *The American Empire Project*? (Hey, it even has a Wikipedia entry!) In that same period, Sara would publish memorable book after memorable book like Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* and Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, some of which made it onto bestseller lists, while I was putting out volumes by authors whose names will be familiar indeed to the readers of TomDispatch, including Andrew Bacevich, James Carroll, Noam Chomsky, Michael Klare, Chalmers Johnson, Alfred McCoy, Jonathan Schell, and Nick Turse.

And it felt comforting somehow to be back in a situation where I could at least ensure that books I thought might make some modest (or even immodest) difference in an ever more disturbed and disturbing America would see the light of day.

I've written elsewhere about the strange moment when, for instance, I first decided that I had to publish what became Chalmers Johnson's remarkable, deeply insightful, and influential book *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* on the future nightmares my country was then seeding into the rest of the planet. Think, for instance, of Osama bin Laden who, Johnson assured his readers well before 9/11 happened, we had hardly heard the last of. (Not surprisingly, only after 9/11 did that book become a bestseller!) Or consider Noam Chomsky's *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*, which I published in 2003. So many years later, its very title still sums up remarkably well the

**Metropolitan,
a similarly progressive
publishing house
in the mainstream world,
was consigned
to the waves**

dilemma we face on a planet where what's on the mind of top foreign policy officials in Washington these days is – god save us! – a new cold war with China. We're talking, in other words, about a place where the two major greenhouse gas emitters on Planet Earth can't agree on a thing or work together in any way.

But let me not linger on ancient history when, just the other day, it happened again. And by it I mean a new version of what happened to me at Pantheon Books. It's true that because, in my later years, my website TomDispatch has become my life's work, I hadn't done anything for Metropolitan for a while (other, of course, than read with deep fascination the books Sara published). Still, just two weeks ago I was shocked to hear that, like Pantheon, Metropolitan, a similarly progressive publishing house in the mainstream world, was consigned to the waves; its staff laid off; and the house itself left in the publishing version of hell.

Initially, that act of Holt's, the consigning of Metropolitan to nowhere land, was reported by the trade publication *Publisher's Weekly*, but count on one thing: more is sure to come as that house's authors learn the news and respond.

After all, like Pantheon, at the moment of its demise, it was a lively, deeply progressive operation, churning out powerful new

titles – until, that is, it was essentially shut down when Sara, a miraculous publisher like André, was shown the door along with her staff. Bam! What did it matter that, thanks to her, Metropolitan still occupied a space filled by no other house in mainstream publishing? Nothing obviously, not to Holt, or assumedly Macmillan, the giant American publishing conglomerate of which it was a part, or the German Holtzbrinck Publishing Group that owns Macmillan.

How strange that we're in a world where two such publishing houses, among the best and most politically challenging around, could find that there simply was no place for them as progressive publishers in the mainstream. André, who died in 2013, responded by launching an independent publishing house, The New Press, an admirable undertaking. In terms of the Dispatch Books I still put out from time to time, I find myself in a similar world, dealing with another adventurous independent publishing outfit, Haymarket Books.

Still, what an eerie mainstream we now inhabit, don't we?

I mean, when it comes to what capitalism is doing on this planet of ours, book publishing is distinctly small (even if increasingly mashed) potatoes. After all, we're talking about a world where giant fossil-fuel companies with still-soaring profits are all too willing to gaslight the public while quite literally burning the place up – or perhaps I mean flooding the place out. (Don't you wonder sometimes what the CEOs of such companies are going to tell their grandchildren?)

So the consignment of Metropolitan Books to the trash heap of history is, you might say, a small matter indeed. Still, it's painful to see what is and isn't valued in this

society of ours (and by whom). It's painful to see who has the ability to cancel out so much else that should truly matter.

And believe me, just speaking personally, twice is twice too much. Imagine two publishing houses that let me essentially find, edit, and publish what I most cared about, what I thought was most needed, books at least some of which might otherwise never have made it into our world. (The proposal for *MAUS*, for instance, had been rejected by more or less every house in town before it even made it into my hands.)

Yes, two progressive publishing houses are a small thing indeed on this increasingly unnerving planet of ours. Still, think of this

The proposal for *MAUS*, for instance, had been rejected by more or less every house in town before it even made it into my hand

as the modern capitalist version of burning books, though as with those fossil-fuel companies, it is, in reality, more like burning the future. Think of us as increasingly damaged goods on an increasingly damaged planet.

In another world, these might be considered truly terrible acts. In ours, they simply happen, it

seems, without much comment or commentary even though silence is ultimately the opposite of what any decent book or book publisher stands for.

You know, it suddenly occurs to me. Somebody should write a book about all this, don't you think? **CT**

Tom Engelhardt created and runs the website *TomDispatch.com*, where this article was first published. He is a co-founder of the *American Empire Project* and author of a highly praised history of American triumphalism in the Cold War, *The End of Victory Culture*. A fellow of the *Type Media Center*, his sixth and latest book is *A Nation Unmade by War*.

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TREVOR GRUNDY

The spectre of fascism is haunting Europe

A far-right sister leads her brothers to victory in Italy
a century after Mussolini's March on Rome

Apologies to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels but 174 years after the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* another spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of born-again fascism.

Despite her overwhelming victory at last month's general election, the 45-year-old Rome-born Giorgia Meloni will have to wait until the end of the month before she is officially made prime minister of the third largest country in the European Union and head of a right-wing coalition that will lead Italy for the next five years.

Italy is about to have the most right-wing government since Benito Mussolini acted as midwife during the birth of fascist movements throughout World War I-scarred Europe after his arrival in the Eternal City at the head of his black-shirted legions in October 1922.

For Giorgia Meloni waiting means time wasted in a country reeling from the energy crisis. She has a whole host of changes planned, including lower taxes, a directly elected president and a pledge to pursue energy self-sufficiency amid the cost-of-living crisis that has paralysed growth and turned millions of young people into lost souls searching for a way forward – all

of those a breeding ground not only for communism but also its fiercest rival, fascism.

But at the end of October, President Sergio Mattarella will nominate her as prime minister. She plans to hit the floor running by first handing out ministerial positions to her own party and its two coalition allies, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Matteo Salvini's (Northern) League.

The European Union is on high alert, worried about the coalition's attitude towards Ukraine and Putin and more importantly Italy's future role within the EU itself.

The EU Commission's Ursula von der Leyden has expressed concern that Italy under the new right-wing coalition might seek closer ties with two of the EU's least popular regimes, Poland and Hungary.

Even before election results were announced, she hinted that the EU would cut funds to countries pursuing policies she didn't like.

The number of political populist parties on her hate list must be growing and surely includes the Swedish Democrats with their neo-Nazi links and growing popularity in that Scandinavian country.

Matteo Salvini, head of the League, accused her of 'shameful arrogance.'

And that's only for starters.

But Italy, a born-again fascist state? The very question is brain-battering.

What is so disturbing is this: If Italy does turn into a fully-fledged fascist state a hundred years after Mussolini marched on Rome, what could follow and who might be next?

Of course, no-one can say what will happen. But what we can do is examine the roots of the now dominant Brothers of Italy hoping that history will not repeat itself first as tragedy and then as comedy. Or (and even worse) first as tragedy and then as a BBC historical documentary.

Hundreds of academics and journalists, politicians and pollsters are hard at work telling us what to think, with most expressing disgust (but little understanding) about the way smiling out-of-the-closet fascists are daring to show their faces again and – ten times worse – win a general election in a democratic and civilised country, Italy.

They chime like grand-father clocks on the wall of safe Victorian-built houses – 'But of course it couldn't happen here.'



Giorgia Meloni, whose right wing Fratelli d'Italia party won last month's Italian general election, will become the country's prime minister later this month.

Essayist/screenwriter Roberto Saviano, author of the 2006 book *Gomorrah* that took the lid off organised crime in Naples, says Giorgia Meloni has constantly denied that she is carrying the baton for Mussolini, although she was groomed as a teenager in one of the country's post-war fascist parties, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI).

Saviano tells us that Italy's first woman prime minister is "a danger to the democratic balance in Europe. Her leadership looks to be the antithesis of what Italy needs – and not just at this difficult moment."

In a penetrating analysis of recent events in his country, the writer reminds us that Italy has always been a laboratory and had foreshadowed so many times the coming crises in other European

countries.

"Italy had Mussolini before Hitler and the left-wing Red Brigades before Action Directe appeared in France and the Red Army Faction followed suit in Germany. Italy had Berlusconi before the US got Trump. And after years of Berlusconi mis-rule, Italy produced the Five Star Movement, the first populist party led by a comedian before the rest of Europe caught up".

Saviano is concerned about Meloni's admiration for Hungary's Victor Orban and her support for the anti-Semitic regime in Poland.

He writes, "Meloni has never made any secret of collaborating closely with Orban and his allies in pursuing the common goal of

strengthening the European hard right in the name of respect for national sovereignty, defence of the natural family, Christian identity and the social market economy".

Of course, he says, Italy's next prime minister denies she is a fascist.

But, he adds, "Parties whose lineage can be traced back to neo-fascist movements have gone to great lengths to detoxify and soften their image, declaring their opposition to antisemitism, racism and the historical fascist experience."

He goes on to say, "Meloni dog-whistles to her neo-fascist ancestors with the Mussolini-era slogan God, Homeland, Family (*Dio, Patria, Famiglia*).

Saviano adds, "God, for her, does not seem to represent faith but rather a brand of Catholicism imposed as the only religion worthy of rights. The homeland's borders must be defended, with violence if necessary, and the family is not the cradle of affection but of imposition, obligation and prescription. The family is always heterosexual, its children born and recognised in the impose form."

What disturbs Saviano the most, however, should also disturb the rest of us as waves of populist politicians show their faces and raise their voices – not only in Europe and the USA, but also in many countries fed with 70 years of Marxism and Leninism in the former Soviet Union. That is the ability for politicians to disguise their true intentions by embracing popular, liberal, democratic causes and damning those who criticise them.

He writes, "Meloni appears the most dangerous Italian political figure not because she explicitly evokes fascism or the practices of the blackshirted *squadristi* (militia)

but because of her ambiguity.

“She condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and has been vocal in support of NATO and military aid to Kyiv. But she opposed EU sanctions on Russia, after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. And in her 2021 book *I am Georgia*, she wrote that Putin’s Russia ‘defends European values and Christian identity.’”

But in her ambiguity, Meloni and her partners in coalition have directed attacks on migrants. “She has fuelled Italians’ fears, created an enemy, a scapegoat on which to off-load blame for public incompetence and mismanagement. During the election campaign she has tried to pass for a moderate, muting her message and advancing what she claims are new ideas to solve the so-called migrant emergency and restore the Italian spirit.”

For those who love Italy and bow before its culture, its music, poetry and see that country as the one that

Her great victory has come about because of the weakness, the stupidity and the in-fighting of what’s so loosely called the left

gave Europe the Renaissance in the 14th-century, the overwhelming reality is that Giorgia Meloni won and will soon have power to be good or bad, true or false, open or ambiguous.

She has what anyone and everyone wants when he or she steps into the political arena – the power to act.

And her great victory has come about because of the weakness, the stupidity and the in-fighting of what’s so loosely called the left.

Says Saviano, “The far right can succeed in Italy because the left had failed, exactly as in much

of the world, to offer credible visions or strategies. The left asks people to vote against the right, but it lacks a political vision or an economic alternative. The left sounds elitist when it communicates, while the right has found a hyper-simplified discourse: keyword, slogans, concepts reduced to the most basic, especially on migrants, from whose violence and terrorism Italians, it seems, must be saved. Meloni is, I believe, dangerous because she comes closest to the Berlusconi school of political lies and the populist playbook that says the more total a lie is, the more people will believe it.”

Be careful, this courageous and insightful man says to us – “Where Italy goes, the rest of Europe will soon follow.” **CT**

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ABBA SOLOMON

South Africa's solution won't be Palestine's

Author says something will have to change to end Israeli ethno-nationalist domination from the river to the sea

Human rights organisations Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem have determined Israel's rule of Palestinians meets the criteria for the internationally-designated crime of apartheid, a crime against humanity named after the system of laws that enshrined white-minority rule in South Africa between 1948 and 1994.

A new book by South African-Israeli sociologist Ran Greenstein, *Anti-Colonial Resistance in South Africa and Israel/Palestine*, is a natural source for the similarities and differences that exist between the human rights struggles of Israel/Palestine and South Africa.

Greenstein has previously in his career addressed the history of both the victory for majority rule in South Africa, and the history of anti-colonial resistance in Palestine, including a previous book from 2014, which traces the small democratic movements overtaken by the momentum of Jewish nation-state nationalism (and the oppression that it required), from the onset of the Zionist project onward.

The purpose of this new book is to observe the differences and similarities in these particular

versions of both colonialism and resistance.

One might think these could lead to envisioning how Israel/Palestine could experience a similar transition from an oppressive ethno-national state to democracy, as South Africa did. Yet Greenstein's argument is slightly more sobering, concluding that Palestinians do not now have the traction

to force a "South African solution" leading to a peaceful agreement modelled after the framework of majority rule with protections for minorities.

Greenstein explains his reasoning in his concluding chapters (after first taking us through a review of the histories of resistance in South Africa and Palestine). Here, Greenstein critiques the usefulness of "settler colonialism" as a label and an analytical category when applied to both South Africa and Palestine:

"Its strongest point is also its weakest: it is applicable to a great diversity of conditions.

"It can be applied to societies in which settlers overwhelmed the indigenous population to the point that it became negligible, no more than 2-3 percent of the population in the United States of America (USA), Canada, and Australia... [and can be applied to places like] Kenya, Rhodesia, Algeria, Mozambique, and South Africa – [where] indigenous people remained the bulk of the population and the main source of labour power."

Greenstein notes that Palestinians are demographically divided into four main groups – citizens of Israel, residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza, neighbour-



ing refugees, and the worldwide diaspora of Palestinians – all with different priorities and ranges of activity.

Even with the existence of solidarity between those groups, Greenstein argues that the record shows an inability on the part of these disparate communities to seriously threaten the continuation of the Zionist state and its dedication to Jewish control.

In contrast to white South Africa, which was absolutely dependent on the labour of non-whites, Israel needed nothing from Palestinians except that they mostly leave and not return. Labour from the West Bank (and previously, from Gaza) is useful but not essential.

Greenstein asserts that in the South African case, external boycott pressure against apartheid supplemented the robust power of years of organising the African and “coloured” workforce, together with a broad civil resistance movement led by the African National Congress.

He says that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign abroad, though admirable and worthwhile, cannot augment missing Palestinian power, and nor can it exert pressure on the Israeli regime on its own.

“The Israel/Palestine system meets the definition of apartheid in international law but presents different challenges for the campaign against it than was the case for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The most important of these is the challenge of effecting change from within when the bulk of the forces seeking such change are located without, both physically and conceptually.”

In Greenstein’s opinion, expecting the same results as boycotts of white-ruled South Africa ends up

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ignoring the most important part of South Africa’s anti-apartheid strategy: “the internal mass struggle to undermine and transform the political system from within.”

Greenstein points out that throughout its history, white supremacy in South Africa “was a means to ensure white prosperity, using black labour as its foundation.” Apartheid was just an institutionalized continuation of that history, and a means of entrenching “white domination.”

In contrast, Zionist colonisation was of the land, not the people. “Hebrew labour” and the “Conquest of the Land” were the main slogans during the era of the pre-1948 Yishuv.

Zionist projects meant armed Zionist settlements with Jewish-only workers, Jewish-only enterprises, Jewish-only commercial channels, and Jewish-only land purchases by the Jewish National Fund (ever since 1901) “for the Jewish people”, all of this being in service of creating a “self-sufficient” Jewish society that could operate independently of the indigenous Palestinian population, even before the Nakba.

Land bought by the Zionist organisation meant tenant farmers were removed. This confirmed the meaning of Zionist immigration – to Arabs – as dislocation and

beggary in their own country, as properties were turned to enterprises, intentionally to the exclusive benefit of Jews.

Understanding the nature of Jewish settlement organized by Zionist organisations makes clear why developing pressure for a resolution by mutual accommodation is elusive, as Zionist doctrines only value Jewish hegemony, as isolated as possible from Arabs, despite PR flim-flam.

Greenstein analyses the difference as follows:

“Israel/Palestine has experienced a different trajectory, producing two distinct ethno-national groups competing over territory and resources, without entering into relations of inter-dependence as was the case in South Africa... Political domination was primarily a means to an economic end in South Africa and an end in itself in Israel/Palestine.”

There is one function that the population of the West Bank and Gaza serve for Israel’s biggest new industry – world-wide arms and security technology sales. Jeff Halper describes the Palestinians residing there as the test bed for new product development.

The power of Israel to use, at will, a matrix of high-tech surveillance and targeted assassination, is refined and developed when it is used against Palestinian resistance, *sumud* [the will to resist] and bare human determination, as Mariam Barghouti has reported in her profile of Ibrahim Nabulsi, the “lion of Nablus.”

Greenstein diagrams the power relations in South Africa and Palestine in the 20th-century that reduced Palestinian resistance to individual martyrs with personal weapons against a technologically modern army, and to various

militias that can fire low-grade rockets.

With much of its population exiled from Israel proper in 1947-48, the Palestinian resistance/liberation movement needed to organise in neighbouring Arab states. This made the Palestinian resistance beholden to inconstant external “allies” that Israel had the resources to threaten or co-opt. He wonders if the movement would have done better to have had no support – or at least have done no worse.

Outside support ultimately hobbled developing a unified Palestinian-centred front and goals, alternating between Palestinian, pan-Arab nationalist, religious-affiliated, international Communist, and big power politics imperatives.

Fatally, what joint Jewish-Arab organising that does exist is not a mass movement. Greenstein points out that 100 years of Zionist work forced a rigid Jewish/non-Jewish binary in Palestine, forestalling significant alliances based on other shared interests and identities across that chasm.

A unifying set of articulated goals was one of the strengths of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. When the time came for negotiations there was an agreed set that could be forcefully demanded, with thought-through features of universal respect of rights that enabled white acceptance.

The ANC could offer both the credible threat of making apartheid governance impossible – using labour actions and mass mobilisations – and credible plans for a multi-racial democracy.

The basic thrust of Greenstein’s thesis is that something will have to change to end Israeli ethno-nationalist domination from the river

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to the sea. This conclusion is not bright and hopeful. The nationalisms of Palestine and Zionist Israel have no overlap that can lead to foreseeing a “South African-style” negotiated resolution based on a shared identity between dominator and subjugated.

This conclusion has political implications. The project of Israeli settlement beyond the 1949 armistice lines means the time of the internationally-favoured “two-state solution” is over. In fact, it was never really a serious Israeli goal to begin with.

The now-many human rights reports that have found Israel guilty of the crime of apartheid have also highlighted how the pressing need for Palestinian freedom and political rights is a direct mirror of the imperative for freedom that animated the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, including the need to equitably share resources, but without any obvious road to that goal – except through bloody cataclysm.

It may seem that Greenstein is indulging in an academic exercise by comparing what South Africa was able to achieve to the struggle of Palestine. But without intoxicating rhetoric and cheer leading, he ventures his consideration of Palestine’s struggle against its own versions of apartheid and settler

colonialism, and whether any common interests can cross the rigid Zionist distinction of Jewish Israeli and Arab Palestinian.

This book is no polemic; it does not aim to argue that the partition in 1947 was wrong, or that the Nakba was a historic crime, or that the occupation is a continuation of that Zionist original sin. Those are all given.

Rather, the assumption and implicit exploration of the book is that proving the justice of the Palestinian cause will do nothing alone. Justice must be accompanied by the exercise of effective pressure in order to realise it. The question then becomes: by what forces?

One may very well ask at this point what relevance South Africa holds for the future of Palestine? Does Greenstein’s survey of organising strategies in both countries matter?

For this author, it seems that the example of South Africa is relevant because it was a case of brutal repression based on race. Concerted pressure and negotiation created a new country based on shared citizenship with multiple identities.

It’s worth at least a look at how that happened, considering the suffering built into the alternative for Israel/Palestine – an ugly situation of brutal repression based on ethnicity, and a constant train of martyrs. **CT**

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