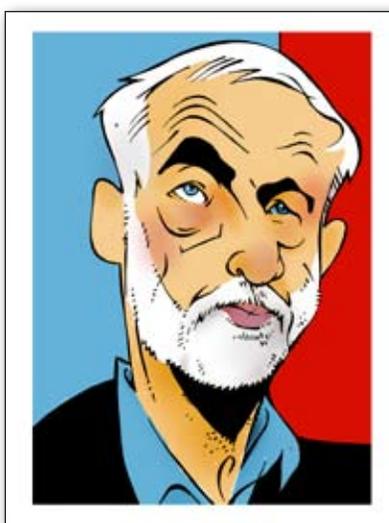


INTERVIEW WITH A REVOLUTIONARY | CHELLIS GLENDINNING
HOW GUANTANAMO CHANGED MY LIFE | JOSEPH HICKMAN
LEGS LIKE ANGIE DICKINSON | DELL FRANKLIN

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ISSUE 121



BREXIT

BRITAIN'S JUNE SURPRISE

19-PAGE SPECIAL WITH JONATHAN COOK | KIT KNIGHTLY | JOHN PILGER | CONN HALLINAN | SEAN LANG | PEPE ESCOBAR | GEORGE MONBIOT | DAVID CROMWELL & DAVID EDWARDS | WILLIAM BOWLES



Cover art

Britain's Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn. Caricatures by Tony Jenkins, www.jenkinsdraws.com

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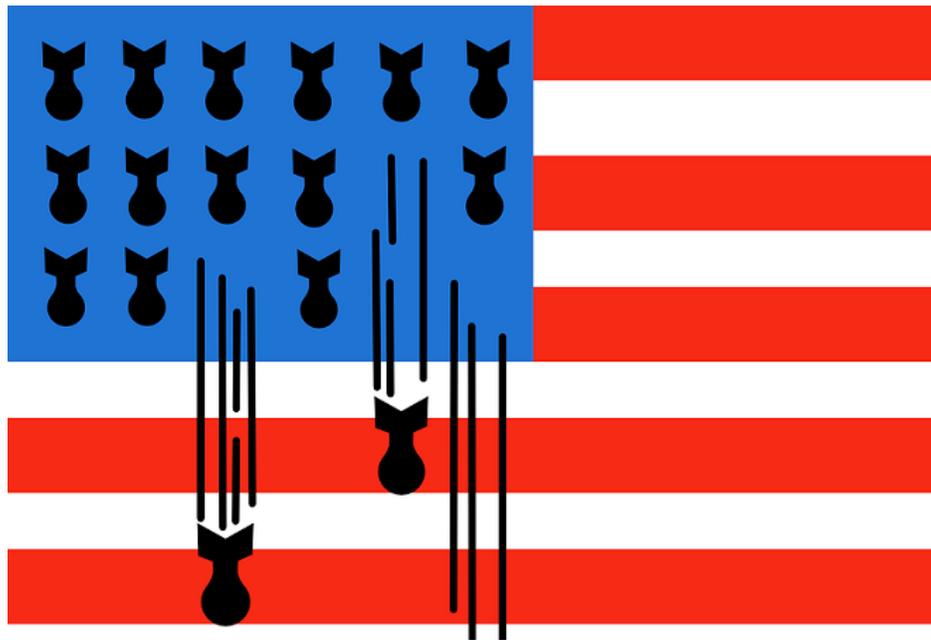
Who says nothing is made in the USA?

JP Sottile finds one area in which US business continues to grow

Who says nothing is made in the USA anymore? Certainly not the well-heeled denizens of the State Department's diplomatic corps. And they should know. That's because they're stationed on the frontlines of the ongoing battle to preserve Uncle Sam's dominant market share of the global weapons trade. Luckily for the military-industrial complex, it turns out that "Made In the USA" inspires a lot of brand loyalty, even if actual loyalty is often a harder sell (paging Saudi Arabia). To wit, not only was America the world's leading arms dealer in 2014 with \$36.2-billion in sales, but it topped that 35 percent surge in sales over 2013 with yet another profitable spike to \$46.6-billion in 2015.

As Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) determined in its recent report on the global arms trade, the United States maintains a commanding "33 percent share of total arms exports" and is the world's top seller for five years running. And its customer base includes "at least" 96 countries, which is nearly half of the world's nations. A robust 40 percent of those exports end up in the Middle East. Perhaps that's why the State Department is so darn bullish on the prospects of Uncle Sam's booming business of selling things that go "boom!"

That's the takeaway from a recent report



in Defense News highlighting the marketing push by "Commercial Officers" stationed at the US embassy in Jordan. They worked the crowd at the kingdom's eleventh bi-annual Special Operations Forces Exhibition and Conference (SOFEX). Like many of the nearly 100 military-themed trade shows held around the world this year alone, SOFEX offered the profiteers of doom an opportunity to display their merchandise and to cut deals with bellicose browsers ready to pull the trigger on a deadly impulse buy. Some of the bigger, "glitzy" trade shows – such as the International Defence Expositi-

Some of the bigger, "glitzy" trade shows are full-on one-stop shopping destinations for the up-and-coming military power on the move

BOOMING SALES

“The trick is how to enter the market, who to sell to, and making sure of export licence”

tion and Conference (IDEX) held yearly in Abu Dhabi – are full-on one-stop shopping destinations for the up-and-coming military power on the move, the newly-minted pro-Western junta eager to armour-up, and the forward-thinking “coalition partner” looking for the latest in “kinetic warfare.”

If nothing else, trade shows offer defence contractors a chance to give out promotional tchotchkes to potential future customers who might be swayed to double-back by a branded camouflage carry-all or a Digi Camo Military Bert Stress Reliever. No doubt it’s a tedious affair, but the presenters toiling behind the displays are not alone on the battlefield of commerce. That certainly was the case at SOFEX, where the US Embassy deployed Senior Commercial Officer Geoffrey Bogart and Regional Safety and Security chief Cherine Maher to act as sale-force multipliers for America’s military moneymakers. As Jen Judson detailed at www.defensenews.com, Bogart and Maher tracked down sales leads throughout a region gripped by chaos since America wantonly destroyed a bystander nation under false pretenses (a.k.a. Iraq).

Here are Judson’s highlights from Bogart and Maher’s magical misery tour of the profitable market forces currently shaping America’s recently reshaped Middle East:

JORDAN: “We are very high on the safety and security market in Jordan,” Geoffrey Bogart, a commercial officer at the US Embassy said. Bogart said there is an abundance of market prospects for US companies to do business in Jordan, including in border security, cyber security, command and control centers, telecommunications equipment, military vehicles, artillery, tactical equipment, bomb and metal detectors, and closed circuit television (CCTV) and access control.

EGYPT: “Egypt is facing a lot of challenges especially in terms of border control and whether it’s from the West or the East or

the North or the South, so the main project that is going on is border and perimeter control,” Maher said, which means the country really wants bomb detection, jammers and improvised explosive device diffusers.

LIBYA: The current instability in Libya has led to challenges for US firms, according to Maher; however, US companies’ products are in high demand there. “The trick is how to enter the market, who to sell to, and making sure of export licence,” she said, adding some products that had been permitted to be sold to Libya now have restrictions.

TUNISIA: There is continuous growth in Tunisia’s defence market, Maher said. Tunisia plussed up its security forces budget in 2016 due to growing terrorist threats in the region. The country wants to build up its force capacity to deter regional threats, strengthen defensive capabilities and support counterterrorism operations.

LEBANON: Lebanon is interested in border security; however, it’s particularly interested in securing public buildings and providing for civilian protection, due to ongoing insecurity in some towns and cities near Beirut, Maher said.

IRAQ: Maher said Iraq has a particularly “dynamic” market, valued in 2014 at about \$7.6-billion, which is about 3.44 percent of its GDP. With the ongoing war against the Islamic State group, it is anticipated that Iraq will soon spend around \$19-billion, which would make up about 18 to 20 percent of its GDP. Like all the other countries in the region, Iraq is investing heavily in safety and security equipment, and also wants personal protective gear and security systems for residential and commercial buildings, according to Maher.

A “dynamic” market is right ... that is, if you’re General Dynamics. Or Lockheed Martin. Or Boeing. Or any of the big six de-

fense contractors who together took home \$90.29-billion of the over \$175-billion worth of taxpayer dollars doled out last year to the top 100 military contractors. Not coincidentally, seven of the top eight US Government contractors are defence companies, with only health care services provider McKesson making it past a phalanx of defence wheelers and dealers.

It's a rarified world greased last year by \$127.39-million of lobbying largesse and another \$32.66-million spent so far this year, according to OpenSecrets.org. Of course, lobbying offers a great bang for the buck when it comes to stoking sales. A MapLight analysis earlier this year found that "major US government contractors have received \$1,171 in taxpayer money for every \$1 invested in lobbying and political action committee contributions during the last decade."

Now that's some serious ROI!

Still, nothing quite compares to the breeder reactor effect that comes from using expensive military hardware to destroy regimes in a never-ending global war against a tactic. Regime change touched off civil war in Iraq. That spread to Syria which, in turn, sent more than 660,000 refugees into Jordan and more than a million refugees into Lebanon . . . all of which explains why Bogart and Maher are so bullish on the sale of security-related products to those two nations and why the entire region is in the midst of a military buying spree.

Then there is the chaotic aftermath of regime change in Libya, which threatens to spill over to two more booming markets – Tunisia and Egypt. Of course, Egypt had its own US-endorsed internal regime change at the hands of a loyal customer and long-time recipient of American "aid" – the Egyptian military. It was really a coup, but US law would've prevented selling Egypt's military junta tear gas canisters marked "Made In USA" (among other things) if it was officially a coup d'etat, so the Obama administration simply didn't call it a coup.

Now, according to Ms. Maher, Egypt's

military is in the market for yet more military hardware that, according to a new GAO report detailed by The Intercept, is not being properly or legally vetted by the State Department. Those purchases are easily funded by the \$6.4-billion in US aid since the coup in 2011. And (go figure) Egypt's wish list is justified, in part, by the sudden need to ward off interlopers from regime-changed Libya, which, according to the aforementioned Ms. Maher, is still a red-hot market for US arms dealers . . . if they can get the export licences.

And so the dynamic market churns onward – with tax dollars paying the salaries of State Department "Commercial Officers" who work for the heavily-subsidized US defence industry as salespeople in overseas markets destabilized by taxpayer-funded wars fought by taxpayer-supported American soldiers armed with weaponry purchased from that self-same defence industry with – you guessed it – more tax dollars.

The "diplomats" in the State Department act as important go-betweens in the process, helping "customers" navigate the military-industrial complexities of end-user certificates, export licences, and human rights restrictions, so they can spend taxpayer-funded US "aid" that invariably ends up back in the coffers of Lockheed, Boeing, Raytheon, and so on.

Once the money makes it back home to the defence industry, those companies invest some of their windfalls into lobbying, into SuperPACS, into both political parties, and directly into campaigns of the Congressional cronies who dutifully rubber stamp the defence budget that enriches the defence industry. So far this year, they've poured more than \$17-million into those efforts and, in turn, they've provided the fuel to run the "dynamic" perpetual machine in which the State Department is a vital cog. And this is why the folks at the State Department know full-well that, in fact, America still actually makes something – it is the world's leading manufacturer of war.

"The trick is how to enter the market, who to sell to, and making sure of export licence"

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JP Sottile is a freelance journalist, historian, radio co-host and documentary filmmaker (*The Warning*, 2008). His weekly show, *Inside the Headlines With The Newsvandal*, co-hosted by James Moore, airs every Friday on KRUU-FM in Fairfield, Iowa. This article was originally published by www.theAntiMedia.org

CT

I saw the real Guantanamo – and it changed my life

Although appalled at the injustices at the detention camp, it took a war crime to persuade **Joseph Hickman** to speak out against the military

My commander flat-out lied to the media about what happened, claiming the detainees committed suicide in their cells as a form of asymmetrical warfare

Ten years ago I was on duty as the sergeant of the guard at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. While I was standing in a watchtower inside Camp Delta overlooking the detainees, I saw something that would radically change my life.

I witnessed three detainees leave the camp in a white van and be transported to a top secret CIA facility, only to return to the camp a few hours later, dead. Over the next few hours, after the bodies returned to Camp Delta, I watched a cover-up being orchestrated by the GTMO Command. My commander flat-out lied to the media about what happened, claiming the detainees committed suicide in their cells as a form of asymmetrical warfare.

That day ten years ago shook the foundation of all I thought to be true. Prior to that night, I was a “true believer” – I was a proud soldier in the US Military, I was one of the good guys in the Global War on Terror. After that night, I began to question those beliefs.

When I first arrived at GTMO a few months prior to that evening, I had my doubts about whether GTMO was a humane place. I was appalled at the conditions of the camp and the treatment of the detainees. But somehow I always found a way to rationalise what I saw. The treatment of the detainees was harsh and their living con-

ditions inhumane. They looked more like poor farmers than the “worst of the worst” terrorists in the world; but my country told me they were and I believed them.

On June 9, 2006, all of that changed. Three men died on my watch. I knew the three detainees did not die in their cells. I knew they were murdered outside of the camp at a top secret CIA facility that the US government denied existed. This was inexcusable. It was a war crime.

Even though going against the US military’s official story of what happened that day would most assuredly end my military career, it was my duty as a soldier to report it. I went to the US Army Inspector General and the Justice Department and reported what I witnessed. After I reported it to the Justice Department, they opened an official investigation and the FBI spent almost a year looking into my allegations.

They finally contacted my attorney and told him that while “the gist of what I reported was true,” they were closing the case, and were not going to pursue any charges against those involved.

Shortly after the Justice Department decision, I left the military. Not a day goes by that I don’t think about that night. I have spent years investigating the deaths and other issues concerning GTMO. I wrote a book laying out all the facts about what happened that night, hoping that one day



DAUNTING: Observation tower at the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. Photo: Joint task Force Guantanamo (via www.flickr.com)

another investigation will be opened and truth and justice will prevail. Though my hope for that is fading, I will never give up.

Since that night, a lot has changed at GTMO. Most of the detainees have been released and sent home or sent to different countries to try to start a new life. Unfortunately, there are still dozens of people being detained in GTMO with no evidence against them, living the nightmare of being held without charge or due process.

GTMO needs to be closed. Yet it remains open, and the GTMO command claims it is transparent and has nothing to hide. They even set up VIP tours for reporters, politicians, and attorneys. The tours are rehearsed for weeks prior to the VIPs' arrival on the Island. They show the VIPs only what they want them to see, making it appear as if they are hiding nothing.

In reality, GTMO is shrouded in secrecy.

No reporter, politician, or attorney, has ever seen the real GTMO. The only people that have seen it are the detainees, the guards, and the GTMO command. If they ever did see the real GTMO, maybe then justice would be served.

CT

Joseph Hickman spent most of his life in the military, first as a marine, then as a soldier in both the army and the National Guard. He has deployed on several military operations throughout the world, sometimes attached to foreign militaries. He is currently working as an independent researcher and Senior Research Fellow at Seton Hall Law School's Center for Policy and Research. His revelations about the abuse of prisoners at Gitmo resulted in a National Magazine Award-winning story in Harper's magazine and a 2015 book, Murder at Camp Delta. This report originally appeared at www.shadowproof.com

There are still dozens of people being detained in GTMO with no evidence against them, living the nightmare of being held without charge or due process

Interview with a revolutionary

A survivor of Bolivia's Teoponte guerrilla group talks to **Chellis Glendinning** about his life as a freedom fighter after the death of Che Guevara

Boxer had made both three-month protest marches from Trinidad to La Paz and was forever travelling from the reserve to the city to raise funds, sell videos, and speak on the radio

When I first arrived in Bolivia in 2006, I found it easy to meet political activists. At the cantina Co-Café Arte, amid posters of Frida Kahlo's monkey and Picasso's Guernica panorama, I fell into the sea of debates. Caracol was another hotbed. Filled with the smoke of Cuban Habanos and the songs of Mercedes Sosa, its tiny rooms were vibrating with urgency.

I happened upon Jorge Bayro Corrochano at the Caracol in 2012. When I walked in, I spotted Fernando 'Boxer' Machiceo nursing a drink at the bar. Boxer was one of the most committed urban supporters of the *indígenas* who were fighting the government's global-economic plan to cut a superhighway through their constitutionally-protected territory, the traditional lands where they still practiced hunting-gathering, which was also home to the nation's richest biodiversity. Boxer had made both three-month protest marches from Trinidad to La Paz and was forever travelling from the reserve to the city to raise funds, sell videos, and speak on the radio. He stood up, and, with his old *compañero* Jorge Bayro, moved us to a table in the back. Bayro, one of the few survivors of the now-largely-forgotten guerrilla revolt known as Teoponte, immediately launched into a rap on the significance of insurgency

Teoponte was conceived as proof to the world that the anti-totalitarian movements

in Bolivia had not been crushed just because Che Guevara and his band of rebeldes had been gunned down. It was 1969-70, and this new guerrilla – the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) – was made up of more than 70 budding fighters referred to as “the sons of Che.” They were Christians, Communists and Trotskyites: the majority middle class, many of them students, while a few were *obreros* or *campesinos* – workers or peasant farmers. With heroism pumping through their veins, on 18 July 1970, they took their boots, jungle fatigues, and Uzis to the jungle not far from La Higuera where Che had been shot dead in a schoolhouse before being taken by helicopter to Vallegrande.

Just as with Che's army, though, there were not enough of them, they didn't have enough weapons, and they didn't know the terrain. But perhaps the most significant factor in what happened was the cocky self-importance of Bolivia's bellicose *jefes* [folks] due to their recent triumph in doing away with the most notorious revolutionary in the world. The military was gung-ho to squelch this nascent uprising; their orders were, “Not one wounded. Not one prisoner. All dead.” The first to be captured were forced to dig their own graves before being machine-gunned into the holes. Near the end the army mobilised more than 1,000 soldiers against the dwindling cadre of starving rebels, using internationally prohibited napalm.

Translation by
Jaasial Bueno



Che Guevara in Bolivia, 1967, not long before he was assassinated

It may seem ridiculous nowadays, but letting your hair grow long was serious then. It wouldn't matter if you were a good student or led a conventional life, some policeman would show up and drag you to a barber shop! Can you imagine that?

By the beginning of November they had perpetrated the deciding massacres – with only nine survivors escaping the carnage.

To talk about Teoponte, Bayro and I met on the patio of one of Cochabamba's old hotels in February, 2016. Over iced tea, he revealed details of his life that he had never before divulged.

JORGE BAYRO – Back in the 1960s, Cochabamba was a small town where we all knew each other. Our friends belonged to the upper middle-class, and we didn't have any kind of real relationships with those below. Then something happened – through music and books new ideas arose. "There's more to life than this!" chimed the new voices. We started to challenge the establishment. It may seem ridiculous nowadays, but letting your hair grow long was serious then. It wouldn't matter if you were a good student or led a conventional life, some policeman would show up and drag you to a barber shop! Can you imagine that?

The experience of Che's battle and the

rising of Latin American literature by authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, and Julio Cortazar influenced us. Early in the '60s, my eight brothers and I were entering adolescence. It was a hard time in Bolivia: we had grown up with our family's memories, inherited from our parents and grandparents who had lived through the revolution of 1952. Most of them had a negative view of that achievement, for they were its enemies, their land, farms, houses, and *indigenas* taken away.

CHELLIS GLENDINNING – They owned people?

JB Sure they did. The system was called *pongo*. We rebelled, saying, "It doesn't have to be like this." We were a bunch of kids searching for truth. We distrusted just about everything. We read history, but with a critical eye. You've got to keep in mind we were not in touch with miners, factory workers, or farmers, yet we were catching a glimpse – in our hearts. Even though the conversion mainly happened through books, we got to under-

An old lady asked, "What do you read?" and so I showed her the book, For Whom The Bell Tolls. She started yelling, "Shame on you!" and called a priest to explain how serious the matter was

stand their struggles, the persecution and massacres they were suffering. Something similar was happening in politics: newly organised parties like the Communist Party (CP) made their appearance, while the earlier leftist parties were decaying. The CP grew, and Trotskyite participation was strong. We started questioning religion – in the sense of its role as a partner in crime with injustice. Small youth groups blossomed at universities, along with others organised by rebel Dominicans, Augustinians and priests from the Company of Jesus. They would say, "One's got to rebel. The Church is wrong."

CG – Liberation Theology?

JB – That would arrive later in 1968-69 when some important groups made their appearance. The most popular, I think, was FRUC.

CG – What does FRUC stand for?

JB – Frente Revolucionario Universitario Cristiano. It was organised by priests. A more potent group was Partido Demócrata Cristiano, a social-democracy party that still exists today. My brothers and I started travelling during holidays, but it wasn't the old journey into nature to have fun – I went to the mines. This began when my parents passed away.

CG – When was that?

JB – In 1960 and 1961. That's when my brothers and I began to rebel. We decided to live alone – without adults. It was a scandal! Everyone looked down on us and whispered, "This can't bring any good." But we did it anyway. Ours was a libertarian home. We had respect for the culture we were crafting. We put away the fancy, classical, furniture and made our own out of wooden crates that we got for free. The older siblings would take care of the youngest. The house was spick-and-span. At the front door was a small piece of furniture that we built. Guests would take their shoes off there like the Japanese do, because we cared about the labour of the person whose job that week was to

clean the floor. It was a matter of values and respect.

CG – Anarchy?

JB – Yes. And a time came when 40-50 people a day would drop by the Bayro household. Do the math: nine brothers times five friends. The house was like a cauldron where something was always brewing.

CG – One brother, José, is now a well-known painter and sculptor in Mexico.

JB – Carlos was a promising artist, too. By the age of 14, he already painted well, and his work brought art into the house, not classical religious art, but a broader culture of art. Before he was hunted down, tortured, and murdered, he was also a *dirigente* [leader] in the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). We had a library with Marxism, Leninism, el Che, Latin authors, all forbidden stuff. I remember reading For Whom the Bell Tolls when I was 12. An old lady asked, "What do you read?" and so I showed her the book. She started yelling, "Shame on you!" and called a priest to explain how serious the matter was.

CG – I imagine that these experiences laid the ground for becoming a *guerrillero* . . .

JB – For sure! The great strategist Inti Peredo returned to Bolivia from Cuba in 1969 to re-organise Che's war which, as we all know, came to an abrupt end in 1967. The Cubans didn't agree with this new plan, but helped us anyway. A wing of the Liberación Nacional (LN) party of Chile, of which Salvador Allende was a member, alongside some of Che's militants, also sent support. By 1969 we were well-equipped, our storage houses full of armaments, our logistics fine-tuned. We had boots, bags, up-to-date weapons and communication equipment. We could launch a long-term resistance, and when the urban repression started, we fought back.

CG – So there was armed warfare not just in the mountains, but in the cities?



Inti fell at a safe house. He was defending himself when a grenade thrown through the window blew him to shreds

Bolivia's military take-over begins.

JB – That's right. Especially in La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, also in Santa Cruz. We lost our storage houses. And Inti was murdered. Our leader! Dead!

CG – In the city?

JB – Inti fell at a safe house. He was defending himself when a grenade thrown through the window blew him to shreds. Despite all the obstacles, the ELN made the decision to continue, a decision that is criticised in retrospect. Yet we were under pressure regarding our responsibility to Che, Inti, the organisation's history, and what was going on throughout Latin America. It was a time when dictatorships were taking over governments everywhere, and that alone justified taking action. To my mind it was a mistake. But we gathered all sorts of ammo and weapons from those who were helping us. Imagine you were there, Chellis, you would have

helped us. Nobody would know, but you'd be committed to the cause and, along with you, some of your more radical and trusted friends.

CG – So then . . .

JB – I got my first gun in 1969 – a .45. I was already being hunted. A "MOST WANTED" poster even featured my mug! I didn't live with my family anymore; I was in hiding. My orders were to stay in the city, so I had to say farewell to my comrades on their way to the mountains. I remember I handed my .45 to a friend because he would need it more than I did, and he said, "But you can't go around unarmed." So he gave me a grenade.

CG – What was your job?

JB – We were organised in a vertical fashion like the military, but clandestine because we were being pursued. It was for that reason

It was war, and wars leave deep scars. Also, some people change over time; those closest to you can harm you. It's not easy to survive, or to be a survivor

that you didn't necessarily know who the others were. Each team had its specific tasks. Our first-and-always *comandantes* were Che Guevara and Inti Peredo. About five people were on the central team, some of whom were well-trained personnel who had been involved in the planning and organisation of Che's activities at Ñancahuazú. Then there were the squads. Below them came the new recruits undergoing training. Those who were experienced would have their own gun, the others went unarmed. Different degrees of enrollment existed. Those tasks of greatest risk were assigned to the innermost circle.

CG – Are there any survivors of that central group?

JB – Yes, but they are too few, and it's hard to get to see them. Maybe I could arrange that you meet one of them. But you need to know: the personal stories of those who survived are tragic. I mean, it was war, and wars leave deep scars. Also, some people change over time; those closest to you can harm you. It's not easy to survive, or to be a survivor.

CG – What was your role in the structure?

JB – When I entered the ELN, I was 18. I had been trained already. I had studied at a university in Chile.

CG – What did you study?

JB – I studied footwear at the Tech Institute Bata. It's a shoe brand called Manaco in Bolivia. They still have that institute in Chile, next to the factory. I had left home in search of expanding my boundaries. Cochabamba had become a small world. In Chile my revolutionary, anti-imperialist commitment became clear. I was becoming aware of reality, and I was dedicated to building a socialist world, as was the slogan back then. I met friends from Cochabamba who also studied at Chilean universities. Some studied social sciences, mostly sociology. I hung out with them. At the time Chile was Latin America's most democratic model. A lot of healthy

debate went on. And demonstrations. Inti Peredo showed up on his way from Cuba to Bolivia and invited us to re-initiate revolutionary activities. One by one, we started coming back. Chileans from LN were sent to join us, too. Others came from abroad. We organised ourselves in small groups. The most urgent matter was formation. I was the youngest so the elders put their efforts into educating me. I distinguished myself with my commitment, decision-making, and combat skills. I became an explosives expert. A gun expert, too, as one thing leads to another. Along with two comrades – both of whom died in Teoponte – we crafted all the explosives to be used in the mountains, and we made more for our urban troops. The place looked like a gun store where you could find all sorts of armaments, guns, grenades, and anti-personnel weapons. We crafted everything, guided by Vietnamese craftsmanship, and we made it all with recycled trash, tin cans and the like. When our depots were eventually taken down, we started to make sleeping bags, hammocks, raincoats, everything that would be needed.

CG – I guess your Bata studies paid off.

JB – Even more important were my studies at Saint Augustine School in Cochabamba. There they taught not just math, languages, and philosophy, but also handcraft skills such as woodwork. All that helped. Besides crafting all that would be needed, actions were taken. Like stealing money.

CG – What do you mean?

JB – We referred to it as “expropriation.” Stores, banks – this is a common method among Latin American revolutionary movements. The Tupamaros, a Uruguayan Marxist urban guerrilla group of the 1960s and 1970s, would kidnap in order to get rescue money. To build safe houses, one person would play-act “normal” to rent a place. The neighbours would see him coming and going, leading a regular life, while we inside were toiling away, building armaments,

training, hiding the pursued.

CG – How many people were working in the cities?

JB – I 200-500. By the time of the Teoponte massacres, I calculate that there were 500 of us in the city and in the field.

CG – The end of the struggle happened in 1970. What did you do then?

JB – I left Bolivia. Most of my comrades were dead or disappeared. Others fled. The largest group remaining went to Allende’s Chile. I have never requested political asylum or been a political exile. I’ve just carried on fighting. My contacts in the highest rungs of the government offered me Chilean nationality, scholarships, a job. I rejected all that in order to keep fighting. The Junta de Coordinación Revolucionaria was just being founded, including Uruguay’s Tupamaros, el Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Argentino, Chile’s MIR, Bolivia’s ELN. I joined the junta. I fought in Argentina. I went to Peru representing the junta. I travelled to places as an international soldier and did many things. But I don’t think this interview needs that sort of information; it’s wiser to keep certain things unsaid.

CG – Point taken, my friend.

JB – In 1976 my orders were to return to Bolivia. Our people were being jailed or killed again. I went to the mines in Llallagua, and there I chose not to hide out, but rather to become a miner. Wearing my helmet and boots, carrying a lantern, I was disguised. I’d walk from my rented room to get water, and eat in single-men dining halls. Everyone knew me. Such is one way for self-preservation, not hiding out in a pit waiting for the enemy. Hell, no.

I found an unusual willingness to join the movement there. I managed a column of miners called Juana Azurduy de Padilla. We got arms and performed combat maneuvers. Then real combat. The police would search sky and earth for us yet, in our min-

er’s clothes, we’d be right under their noses. They couldn’t figure out who were the ones they hunted. Meanwhile, the ELN decayed. They destroyed us, killing comrades, jailing others. There was nothing for us to do, but start over. But by the time democracy made its way into Bolivian elections in 1983-4, we were too few.

By now, decades have passed. These new generations don’t pledge themselves to the revolutionary call, and it has been silenced with the entrance of globalisation’s unlimited access to internet information. People have stopped reading, they’ve stopped thinking. If there is a wonderful 500-page book, they read a 10-page summary. I have stopped believing in hope for a human way of life. We have fallen into oblivion. Our very history is forgotten. But people can’t exist without history.

CG – Many thanks for telling me your story.

JB – Until my last day I will be a living testimonial to my comrades. I no longer give talks at conferences or participate in demonstrations. I go unarmed. But I do my work mindfully. I discuss, I fight. Ha! Just like a loco.

CT

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JORGE BAYRO is still recognised on the streets of Cochabamba and called by his revolutionary handle, Ramiro. He has worked in hotel management, community organising, and election monitoring, and was principle researcher for Gustavo Rodriguez Ostria’s *Teoponte: La otra guerrilla guevarista en Bolivia*. He still watches his back.

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HELLIS GLENDINNING is a psychotherapist specialising in recovery from trauma, and the author of seven books, including *My Name Is Chellis* and *I’m in Recovery from Western Civilization*, and *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade*. The latter won the (US) National Federation of Press Women book award for nonfiction. Her latest is the book-blog, *luddite.com*. Chellis’ website is www.chellisglendinning.org

The police would search sky and earth for us yet, in our miner’s clothes, we’d be right under their noses. They couldn’t figure out who were the ones they hunted

Petty corruption?

Uri Avnery shows how Benjamin Netanyahu's \$100,000-a-day trip to New York fits with the sudden acquisition of wealth by previous Israel leaders

Moshe Dayan was an amateur archeologist. He stuffed his private villa with ancient artifacts that he dug up all over the country. That was illegal, but everybody winked. After all, Dayan was a national hero

Many years ago I received a phone call from the prime minister's office. I was told that Yitzhak Rabin wanted to see me in private.

Rabin opened the door himself. He was alone in the residence. He led me to a comfortable seat, poured two generous glasses of whisky for me and himself and started without further ado – he abhorred small talk – “Uri, have you decided to destroy all the doves in the Labour Party?”

My news magazine, *Haolam Hazeh*, was conducting a campaign against corruption and had accused two prominent Labour leaders, the new president of the central bank and the minister for housing. Both were indeed members of the moderate wing of the party.

I explained to Rabin that in the fight against corruption I could make no exceptions for politicians who were close to my political outlook. Corruption was a cause in itself.

The first generation of the founders of Israel was free of corruption. Corruption was unthinkable. Indeed, purism was carried to extremes. Once a prominent Labor leader was criticised for building for himself a villa in a Jerusalem suburb. There was not the slightest suggestion of corruption. He had inherited the money. But it was considered scandalous for a Labour leader to live in a

private villa. A “comrades’ court” decided to expel him from the party, and that was the end of his career.

At the same time, an official residence was built for the foreign minister, so he could receive foreign dignitaries in decent surroundings. The minister at that time, Moshe Sharett, believed that it was wrong to hold on to his own private apartment, so he sold it and donated the money to several charitable associations.

The next generation was quite different. It behaved as if it owned the place by divine right. Its most typical representative was Moshe Dayan. He was born in the country and David Ben-Gurion appointed him chief of staff. In this capacity, he directed several retaliation raids across the border and then the 1956 attack on Egypt which ended in a resounding victory (helped by the Franco-British invasion of the Suez Canal area behind the back of the Egyptian army.)

Dayan was an amateur archeologist. He stuffed his private villa (by that time, villas were already allowed) with ancient artifacts that he dug up all over the country. That was strictly illegal, since unprofessional digging destroyed historical evidence, making it impossible to define the date. But everybody winked. After all, Dayan was a national hero.

Then my magazine published a shatter-

ing revelation: Dayan did not just keep the artifacts in his garden, but them all over the world, with a personal signed note that shot their prices up. This revelation triggered a huge scandal and inflamed a lot of hatred – towards me. In a public opinion poll published that year I was chosen as the most hated person in the country, beating the chief of the Communist Party to the title. (Such polls have since been discontinued.)

Dayan’s brother-in-law was Ezer Weitzman, the general responsible for the air force that was victorious in the 1967 Six-day War. It was an open secret that Weitzman was kept by an American Jewish millionaire and lived in a luxurious villa in Caesarea, the most prestigious place in the country (where Benjamin Netanyahu now has his own private villa.)

For some years this has been a general fashion. Every Jewish millionaire in America had his Israeli general, whom he kept in style and who was his pride and joy. For rich Jews, having an Israeli general at family feasts was an obligatory status symbol.

Ariel Sharon, for example. The son of poor parents, inhabitants of a cooperative village, he finished his army career and – lo and behold – he was suddenly the owner of a huge ranch, given to him as a present by an ex-Israeli American multi-millionaire. (Rumour had it that the millionaire deducted the money from his US taxes.)

That was at a time when Israeli generals were not only heroes at home, but all over the world. Moshe Dayan, easily recognizable by his black eye-patch, was a hero in Los Angeles no less than in Haifa.

All these generals (apart from Ezer Weitzman, who came from a rich family) grew up in very straitened circumstances. Their parents were members of kibbutzim (communal villages) or moshavim (cooperative villages), all of which were at the time extremely poor. Sharon, a moshav-boy, told me that every day he walked for half an



Benjamin Netanyahu: \$100,000 a day.

We are bombarded almost daily with accusations of corruption against Benjamin Netanyahu and his highly unpopular former air stewardess wife, Sarah

hour to and from his high school to save the bus fare.

That was true for the next generation of leaders, too. Ehud Olmert, the ex-prime minister – now in prison for corruption – grew up in a very poor neighbourhood and became obsessed with owning expensive things. The ex-president of the state, Moshe Katzav, now also in prison, but for rape, not corruption, also grew up in poverty as a new immigrant.

(The current joke has it that after a concert in prison the warden announces: “Everybody remain seated until the President and Prime Minister leave.”)

Ehud Barak, a former chief of staff and prime minister, is now amassing a large fortune by “giving advice” to foreign governments. He grew up in a poor village.

I was spared this craving for money, though I, too, lived in utmost poverty after arriving Palestine at the age of 10. Luckily, I grew up in very well-to-do circumstances in Germany, and since my family and I were much happier in Israel than in Germany, I learned that happiness has nothing to do with riches.

All this crosses my mind because we are

FOLLOW THE CASH

Generous Israeli taxpayers (including me) paid for the five days of Bibi's stay in New York last fall, to the tune of some \$600,000. This sum – more than \$100,000 dollars per day – included a \$1,600 payment for his private hairdresser, and \$17,50 to his make-up woman

bombarded almost daily with accusations of corruption against Benjamin Netanyahu and his highly unpopular former air stewardess wife, Sarah.

What is really disturbing is that Sarah Netanyahu, who was not elected by anyone, seems to be in charge of all senior public appointments. No one can reach these heights without being interviewed and approved by her personally. She has appointed all three senior law-enforcement officials: the legal advisor (actually the super-attorney general), the powerful state comptroller and the chief of police.

Now the three of them are sitting day and night, consulting each other about what to do with the flood of disclosures about the Netanyahu family's financial affairs. They desperately want to avoid indicting the Netanyahus for anything, but that becomes increasingly difficult, since they are subject to the supervision of Israel's Supreme Court.

I have already reported on some of these disclosures, but new ones pop up every week. It has become a kind of national sport. It began with the disclosure that before becoming prime minister, at a time when he was in and out of government, Netanyahu used to be paid twice or thrice for his first-class air tickets by different unsuspecting institutions, without declaring that as income. This is now called, in Israeli slang, "Bibitours."

Since then he has been involved in all kinds of affairs which are in various stages of "examination." The three Netanyahu-appointed legal officers are in constant consultation about whether to order a criminal investigation, which might compel him to leave office at least temporarily.

The climax was achieved when a Jewish financier accused in France of colossal fraud disclosed to the court that had had privately donated to Netanyahu a million Euros and had paid Bibi's extremely expensive hotel bills in many cities, including the French Riviera.

And generous Israeli taxpayers (including me) paid for the five days of Bibi's stay in New York last fall, to the tune of some \$600,000. This sum – more than \$100,000 dollars per day – included a \$1,600 payment for his private hairdresser, and \$17,50 to his make-up woman. The purpose of the trip was to address the UN General Assembly. I wonder how much each word cost. The information was disclosed by order of the court under the Freedom of Information Law.

For many of Netanyahu's own voters, mostly poor people of Oriental Jewish origin, the disclosures only show that he is a clever person, who knows how to exploit opportunities, as they themselves would love to do.

How to treat these disclosures, which dominate so many TV news programs and newspaper headlines? I treat them with some disdain, for what are these instances of petty corruption compared to Netanyahu's actions and non-actions which have a direct influence of the fate of Israel?

I consider Benjamin Netanyahu as the gravedigger of our state, the man who sets the course towards catastrophe, the man who obstructs any chance for peace. Just a few weeks ago, he proudly told his party colleagues that he will "never" agree to conduct negotiations based on the Arab 2002 peace initiative, which includes the end of the occupation, the setting up of the State of Palestine and the evacuation of settlements. Many people believe that this refusal is fatal.

Facing these calamities, why get excited about some little corruption? Then I remember the case of Al Capone, the gangster who was responsible for huge crimes, including the cold-blooded murder of many people, but who was finally convicted and sent to prison for income tax evasion.

If Netanyahu can be convicted of petty corruption and compelled to resign – isn't that just what the country needs? **CT**

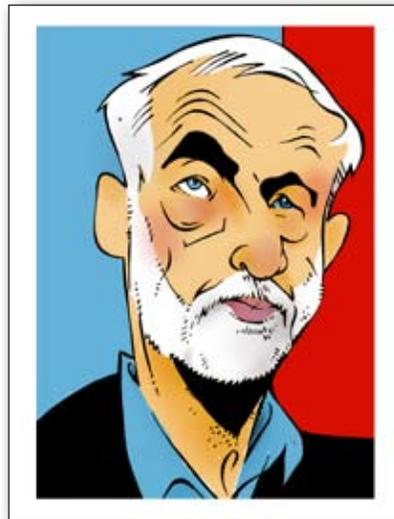
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Uri Avnery is an Israeli writer and founder of the Gush Shalom peace movement. He sat in the Knesset from 1965 to 1974 and from 1979 to 1981

A COLDTYPE SPECIAL 19-PAGE SECTION

**David
Cameron**
Illustration:
Tony Jenkins



**Jeremy
Corbyn**
Illustration:
Tony Jenkins



BREXIT

BRITAIN'S JUNE SURPRISE

When British Prime Minister David Cameron promised a referendum on the UK's continuing membership of the European Union, a decision designed to quell unrest in his own party during last year's election campaign, he didn't realise the degrees of political and financial unrest his action would cause a year later.

It was always assumed that the referendum – held on June 24 – would be a victory for those who wanted the UK to stay in Europe, a win that would silence radical right-wing dissenters – such as UKIP leader Nigel Farage – who demanded 'independence' for the British people who, they claimed, were sick of foreign rule, and immigrant workers stealing their jobs, their benefits and their futures.

The result, as we know, went the 'wrong' way. The Brexiters won by a narrow margin – creating panic on world stock markets, derision in the international media, and a sudden discovery

that the nation was comprised of a majority of racists who really shouldn't be trusted with such a concept as democracy.

Cameron, of course, saw the mess he'd created and quit – sort of: he's hanging around for the summer, but will be gone by October. The press and politicians, we assumed, would soon be baying for his blood, along with that of his Brexit chums, the gang that caused the chaos. Hah, that was all too obvious: it soon became apparent that the man to blame was actually Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, who "hadn't campaigned hard enough to stay in Europe," even though his party's voters had voted predominantly in favour of staying put. The mind can only boggle at the intellectual gymnastics that brought about this conclusion, which is more worthy of a Monty Python sketch than a supposedly civilised media.

Tony Sutton, editor



● JONATHAN COOK

BREXIT AND THE DISEASED LIBERAL MIND

They're the 'useful idiots' of modern western societies

The enraged liberal reaction to the Brexit vote is in full flood. The anger is pathological – and helps to shed light on why a majority of Britons voted for leaving the European Union, just as earlier a majority of Labour party members voted for Jeremy Corbyn as leader.

A few years ago the American writer Chris Hedges wrote a book, *The Death of the Liberal Class*. His argument was not so much that liberals had disappeared, but that they had become so coopted by the right wing and its goals – from the subversion of progressive economic

and social ideals by neoliberalism, to the enthusiastic embrace of neoconservative doctrine in prosecuting aggressive and expansionist wars overseas in the guise of “humanitarian intervention” – that liberalism had been hollowed out of all substance. Liberal pundits sensitively agonise over, but invariably end up backing, policies designed to benefit the bankers and arms manufacturers, and ones that wreak havoc domestically and abroad. They are the “useful idiots” of modern western societies.

The liberal British media is current awash with articles by pundits

on the Brexit vote I could select to illustrate my point, but one, titled *Jeremy Corbyn Has Made His Point. Now It's Time For Labour To Move On* published on June 26, by Guardian columnist Zoe Williams, I think, isolates this liberal pathology in all its sordid glory. Here is a revealing section, written by a mind so befuddled by decades of neoliberal orthodoxy that it has lost all sense of the values it claims to espouse: “There is a reason why, when Marine le Pen and Donald Trump congratulated us on our decision, it was like being punched in the face – because they are racists, authoritarian, small-minded and backward-looking. They embody the energy of hatred. The principles that underpin internationalism – cooperation, solidarity, unity, empathy, openness – these are all just elements of love.”

One wonders where in the corridors of the EU bureaucracy Williams identifies that “love” she so admires. Did she see it when the Greeks were being crushed into submission after they rebelled against austerity poli-

cies that were themselves a legacy of European economic policies that had required Greece to sell off the last of its family silver?

Is she enamoured of this internationalism when the World Bank and IMF go into Africa and force developing nations into debt-slavery, typically after a dictator has trashed the country decades after being installed and propped up with arms and military advisers from the US and European nations?

What about the love-filled internationalism of Nato, which has relied on the EU to help spread its military tentacles across Europe close to the throat of the Russian bear? Is that the kind of cooperation, solidarity and unity she was thinking of?

Williams then does what a lot of British liberals are doing at the moment. She subtly calls for subversion of the democratic will: “The anger of the progressive remain side, however, has somewhere to go: always suckers for optimism, we now have the impetus to put aside ambiguity in the service of clarity, put aside differences in the service of creativity. Out of embarrassment or ironic detachment, we’ve backed away from this fight for too long.”

That includes seeking the ousting of Jeremy Corbyn, of course. “Progressive” Remainers, it seems, have had enough of him. His crime is that he hails from “leftwing aristocracy” – his parents were lefties too, apparently, and even had such strong internationalist principles that they first met in a committee on the Spanish civil war.

But Corbyn’s greater crime, according to Williams, is that “he is not in favour of the EU.” It would be too much trouble for her to try

and untangle the knotty problem of how a supreme internationalist like Corbyn, or Tony Benn before him, could be so against the love-filled EU. So she doesn’t bother.

We will never know from Williams how a leader who supports oppressed and under-privileged people around the world is cut from the same cloth as racists like Le Pen and Trump. That would require the kind of “agile thinking” she accuses Corbyn of being incapable of. It might hint that there is a leftwing case quite separate from the racist one – even if Corbyn was not allowed by his party to advocate it – for abandoning the EU.

But no, Williams assures us, Labour needs someone with much more recent leftwing heritage, someone who can tailor his or her sails to the prevailing winds of orthodoxy. And what’s even better, there is a Labour party stuffed full of Blairites to choose from. After all, their international credentials have been proven repeatedly, including in the killing fields of Iraq and Libya.

And here, wrapped into a single paragraph, is a golden nugget of liberal pathology from Williams. Her furious liberal plea is to rip up the foundations of democracy: get rid of the democratically elected Corbyn and find a way, any way, to block the wrong referendum outcome. No love, solidarity, unity or empathy for those who betrayed her and her class.

“There hasn’t been a more fertile time for a Labour leader since the 1990s. The case for a snap general election, already strong, will only intensify over the coming weeks. As the sheer mendacity of the leave argument becomes clear – it nev-

er intended to curb immigration, there will be no extra money for the NHS, there was no plan for making up EU spending in deprived areas – there will be a powerful argument for framing the general election as a rematch. Not another referendum, but a brake on article 50 and the next move determined by the new government. If you still want to leave the EU, vote Conservative. If you’ve realised or knew already what an act of vandalism that was, vote Labour.”

Williams and the rest of the media, of course, are not making these arguments in a vacuum. Much of the Labour shadow cabinet has just resigned and the rest of the parliamentary party are trying to defy the overwhelming democratic will of their membership and oust Corbyn. His crime is not that he supported Brexit (he didn’t dare, given the inevitable reaction of his MPs) but that he is not a true believer in the current neoliberal order, which very much includes the EU.

Here is what one of the organisers (probably a shadow cabinet minister) of this coup-in-the-making says: “The plan is to make Corbyn’s job as leader extremely difficult in the hope of pushing him to resign, with most MPs refusing to serve as shadow ministers, show up on the frontbench in the House of Commons, support him at PMQs or formulate policy under his leadership.”

This was presumably said with a straight face, as though Corbyn has not been undermined by these same Blairite MPs since day one of his leadership. This is not a new campaign – it has simply been forced to go more public by the Brexit vote.

Labour MPs do not just want to

oust a leader with massive support among party members. They have hamstrung him from the outset so that he could not lead the political revolution members elected him to begin. And now he is being made to pay the price because he privately backs a position that, as the referendum has shown, has majority support.

The Brexit vote is a huge challenge to the left to face facts. We want to believe we are free but the truth is that we have long been in a prison called neoliberalism. The Conservative and Labour parties are tied umbilically to this neoliberal order. The EU is one key institution in a transnational neoliberal club. Our economy is structured to enforce neoliberalism whoever ostensibly runs the country.

That is why the debate about Brexit was never about values or principles – it was about money. It still is. The Remainers are talking only about the threat to their pensions. The Brexiters are talking

only about the role of immigrants in driving down wages. And there is good reason: because the EU is part of the walls of the economic prison that has been constructed all around us. Our lives are now only about money, as the gargantuan bail-outs of the too-big-to-fail banks should have shown us.

There is a key difference between the two sides. Most Remainers want to pretend that the prison does not exist because they still get privileges to visit the living areas. The Brexiters cannot forget it exists because they are never allowed to leave their small cells. The left cannot call itself 'left' and keep whingeing about its lost privileges while denouncing those trapped inside their cells as "racists." Change requires that we first recognise our situation – and then have the will to struggle for something better. **CT**

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Jonathan Cook won the *Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism*. His website is www.jonathan-cook.net

Britain," comfortable in the knowledge that, "at no point did I think it could really happen." You get the impression even Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage never expected to win.

Nobody expected this to happen – least of all the Guardian . . . and the reactions? They have been hysterical, in every sense of the word. The sheer volume of opinion is evidence of an institutional panic. Columnist Polly Toynbee's reaction, always the paragon of understatement: "Catastrophe. Britain has broken apart. An uprising of resentment by the left-behind has torn us in two, a country wrecked by a yawning class divide stretched wider by recession and austerity."

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the referendum had been for turning off the sun, banning talking, or killing the first-born son of every family in Britain . . . rather than a return to a state of affairs that has existed for all but the last 40 years of human history. Such is the level of the destruction.

The climate is ruined. The FTSE 100 plummeted to levels not seen for a week. The pound is now worth seven cents less than it was last week. British science is already nearly destroyed. The arts world will regress, and collapse. British stocks crashed . . . less than half as much as European stocks. The FTSE 100 actually ended the week on a small gain . . . but ARRGHH! Panic! But, of course, the (as yet totally overwhelming and mostly imaginary) financial costs are nothing compared to the spiritual, moral costs.

"We woke up in a different country," says the Guardian's Jonathan Freedland, absolutely shocked that 52% of the country should "reject authority" after only a generation

● KIT KNIGHTLY

INSULTS FLY IN POST-BREXIT HYSTERIA

Was elite media panicked by elderly voters?

The world is still reeling from the referendum results – there is uncertainty in the air, real uncertainty, a rare creature in the modern era of controlled media consensus and care-

fully directed narrative. Again and again the thoughts are echoed: nobody expected this to happen. David Cameron was positive his side had won. Oliver Imhof wrote a Guardian article threatening to leave "Brexit

or so of being exploited, lied to and suffering a general decline in living standards. “Who knows, perhaps the worst effects can be avoided altogether. But we should not be under any illusions. This is not the country it was yesterday. That place has gone for ever.”

An assertion that would, perhaps, be greeted with more than a few smiles in many of the places we have recently bombed in the name of protecting “European values.”

I was not aware, until the result was announced, that more than half of the people of Britain were racists. For all of Britain’s various social problems, I have never observed much in the way of strong racism. Far-right parties like the BNP get almost no traction in elections. There aren’t neo-Nazi marches in London that compare to the ones in Lviv or Berlin. Nevertheless . . . apparently, we are now totally controlled by xenophobia. The country is now cruel and racist. Joseph Harker’s Guardian column declares: “In the wake of the EU referendum people across the UK are fearful of the intolerance that has been unleashed.”

Bear in mind this piece was published at 1.37 pm the next day, less than 12 hours after the result was announced. We’ll do Joseph some credit and assume he spent more than 40 minutes writing this up – let’s say he started writing at exactly noon. That gives him eight hours to survey these “people across the UK,” who, one can only assume, were merely the people on his bus route that morning. He “understands” that the vote wasn’t about race, that people want economic control of their country back . . . but actually it WAS about race, and we’re all racists.

The initial, panic-stricken, meltdown could not last, of course. What quickly became more important was BLAME. And you know who the Guardian, a notionally liberal and inclusive paper, have chosen to blame? The old, the poor, the uneducated . . . oh, and Jeremy Corbyn, who, I suppose, some would argue is all three.

Soon after the results were announced, YouGov released their pretty graphs demonstrating that Leave won because old, stupid, poor people voted for them. I am unclear how exactly the YouGov figures were collated, but given that, right up to the wire, YouGov were predicting Remain would win, I see no reason to trust any of their information. In fact they predicted a 52-48 result for staying the EU . . . so as far as we know all of their figures are totally ass-backwards.

But let’s put that aside – let us generously assume that YouGov have even the faintest notion of what they are talking about. Do we demand a re-vote because the wrong people won? Is this how democracy works? According to Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, the most forgettable of the Guardian’s feminist-clickbait typing pool, yes. Yes it is: “If you’re young and angry about the EU referendum, you’re right to be” . . . declares her headline. It is just one article, of many that have appeared all over the media, citing the reported age demographics of the two voting camps. Claiming that “old people” have ruined the futures of the young . . . because they are old, stupid and racist.

The general inversion in western society, compared to other global societies, where we prize youth and inexperience over the merits of el-

der wisdom, is an ongoing problem. A bigger discussion for a different time. Talking only in the specific – only about this vote – this is still a ridiculous and insulting position to take up.

The “old people” being discussed would have been young in the 1960s and ’70s – old hippies and baby-boomers. The idea of “grandma being a bit racist in an old-fashioned way,” does not work when today’s grandmas were listening to the Beatles and marching against Vietnam. These “old people” are the generation that voted FOR the EU last time, and now have 40+ years of experience of living with their decision. Do we do them credit, and assume they have changed their minds based on their life experience? Should we respect that 40 years of living and working in this country means people have EARNED their right to be heard? No, we are encouraged to dismiss them and insult their motives.

Young people, and I speak as one myself, tend to think selfishly. Teenagers are, for the most part, egomaniacal monsters – certain of their own brilliance, positive they are thinking original thoughts, and dismissive of authority and experience. It’s a phase, you grow out of it. Slowly. The young people complaining about old voters, and the authors encouraging and enabling this attitude, are assuming that older voters, likewise, think first of themselves. This is an insult, voters in their 60s and 70s would more likely be voting for the future of their children and grandchildren. To ignore that facet of their vote is unfair and immoral.

Of course, even if they were voting selfishly . . . so what? Everyone

has that right. It does not matter – the narrative is now set. The vote wasn't fair, because the wrong people voted. That will be the battle cry.

In hedging their bets, should Leave win, the Guardian took up an odd position pre-referendum. Its editorial line became that, perhaps, voting isn't that democratic. First there was David Mitchell (sensible shirt and neat beard, every inch the Guardianista caricature) arguing that Parliament should decide this issue, not us, because we are too stupid and underqualified.

Then there was Natalie Nougayrède, former senior editor of French newspaper Le Monde, always a source of prime neo-liberal insanity, declaring that "the mob" had too much influence, and that democracy should be about our

"elite institutions" telling us what to do. Yes, seriously.

In keeping with this theme, a fresh column disparages the very idea of referenda: "After what we have experienced in the past month, we need political reform more than ever. But the verdict on referendums should be a ruthless one. Never again."

To back up his opinion he cites the European Council on Foreign Relations, a pan-European "think-tank" staffed by Blairites and funded by George Soros, who say that there are too many referenda and it isn't fair. No one expected this to happen, and they will go out of their way to make sure it never happens again.

CT

Kit Knightly is co-editor of Off-Guardian - <http://offguardian.org>

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, the embodiment of both Britain's ancient regime and the banking mafia in Europe, threatened to cut £30-billion from public services if people voted the wrong way; it was blackmail on a shocking scale.

Immigration was exploited in the campaign with consummate cynicism, not only by populist politicians from the lunar right, but by Labour politicians drawing on their own venerable tradition of promoting and nurturing racism, a symptom of corruption not at the bottom but at the top. The reason millions of refugees have fled the Middle East – first Iraq, now Syria – are the invasions and imperial mayhem of Britain, the United States, France, the European Union and Nato. Before that, there was the wilful destruction of Yugoslavia. Before that, there was the theft of Palestine and the imposition of Israel.

The pith helmets may have long gone, but the blood has never dried. A 19th-century contempt for countries and peoples, depending on their degree of colonial usefulness, remains a centrepiece of modern "globalisation," with its perverse socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor: its freedom for capital and denial of freedom to labour; its perfidious politicians and politicised civil servants.

All this has now come home to Europe, enriching the likes of Tony Blair and impoverishing and disempowering millions. On 23 June, the British said no more.

The most effective propagandists of the "European ideal" have not been the far right, but an insufferably patrician class for whom metropolitan London is the United

● JOHN PILGER

WHY THE BRITS SAID NO TO EUROPE

Peace, democracy and capitalist extremism . . .

The majority vote by Britons to leave the European Union was an act of raw democracy. Millions of ordinary people refused to be bullied, intimidated and dismissed with open contempt by their presumed betters in the major parties, the leaders of the business and banking oligarchy and the media.

This was, in great part, a vote by

those angered and demoralised by the sheer arrogance of the apologists for the "remain" campaign and the dismemberment of a socially just civil life in Britain. The last bastion of the historic reforms of 1945, the National Health Service, has been so subverted by Tory and Labour-supported privateers it is fighting for its life.

A forewarning came when

Kingdom. Its leading members see themselves as liberal, enlightened, cultivated tribunes of the 21st century zeitgeist, even “cool.” What they really are is a bourgeoisie with insatiable consumerist tastes and ancient instincts of their own superiority. In their house paper, the Guardian, they have gloated, day after day, at those who would even consider the EU profoundly undemocratic, a source of social injustice and a virulent extremism known as “neoliberalism.”

The aim of this extremism is to install a permanent, capitalist theocracy that ensures a two-thirds society, with the majority divided and indebted, managed by a corporate class, and a permanent working poor. In Britain today, 63 per cent of poor children grow up in families where one member is working. For them, the trap has closed. More than 600,000 residents of Britain’s second city, Greater Manchester, are, reports a study, “experiencing the effects of extreme poverty” and 1.6 million are slipping into penury.

Little of this social catastrophe is acknowledged in the bourgeois controlled media, notably the Oxbridge-dominated BBC. During the referendum campaign, almost no insightful analysis was allowed to intrude upon the clichéd hysteria about “leaving Europe,” as if Britain was about to be towed in hostile currents somewhere north of Iceland.

On the morning after the vote, a BBC radio reporter welcomed politicians to his studio as old chums. “Well,” he said to “Lord” Peter Mandelson, the disgraced architect of Blairism, “why do these people want it so badly?” The “these people” are the majority of Britons.

The wealthy war criminal Tony Blair remains a hero of the Mandelson “European” class, though few will say so these days. The Guardian once described Blair as “mystical” and has been true to his “project” of rapacious war. The day after the vote, the columnist Martin Kettle offered a Brechtian solution to the misuse of democracy by the masses. “Now surely we can agree referendums are bad for Britain,” said the headline over his full-page piece. The “we” was unexplained but understood – just as “these people” is understood. “The referendum has conferred less legitimacy on politics, not more,” wrote Kettle. “. . . the verdict on referendums should be a ruthless one. Never again.”

The kind of ruthlessness Kettle longs for is found in Greece, a country now airbrushed. There, they had a referendum and the result was ignored. Like the Labour Party in Britain, the leaders of the Syriza government in Athens are the products of an affluent, highly privileged, educated middle class, groomed in the fakery and political treachery of post-modernism. The Greek people courageously used the referendum to demand their government sought “better terms” with a venal status quo in Brussels that was crushing the life out of their country. They were betrayed, as the British would have been betrayed.

The day after the vote, the Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, was asked by the BBC if he would pay tribute to the departed Tory leader, David Cameron, his comrade in the “remain” campaign. Corbyn fulsomely praised Cameron’s “dignity” and noted his backing for gay marriage and his apol-

ogy to the Irish families of the dead of Bloody Sunday. He said nothing about Cameron’s divisiveness, his brutal austerity policies, his lies about “protecting” the Health Service. Neither did he remind people of the warmongering of the Cameron government: the dispatch of British special forces to Libya and British bomb aimers to Saudi Arabia and, above all, the beckoning of world war three.

In the week of the referendum vote, no British politician and, to my knowledge, no journalist referred to Vladimir Putin’s speech in St. Petersburg commemorating the 75th anniversary of Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June, 1941. The Soviet victory – at a cost of 27 million Soviet lives and the majority of all German forces – won the Second World War.

Putin likened the current frenzied build up of Nato troops and war material on Russia’s western borders to the Third Reich’s Operation Barbarossa. Nato’s exercises in Poland were the biggest since the Nazi invasion; Operation Anaconda had simulated an attack on Russia, presumably with nuclear weapons.

On the eve of the referendum, the quivering secretary-general of Nato, Jens Stoltenberg, warned Britons they would be endangering “peace and security” if they voted to leave the EU. The millions who ignored him and Cameron, Osborne, Corbyn, Obama and the man who runs the Bank of England may, just may, have struck a blow for real peace and democracy in Europe. **CT**

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● CONN M. HALLINAN

A VERY BRITISH AFFAIR

Where rightwing ideology and leftwing sensibilities meet

In the end, the Brexit – the vote on whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union (EU) or be the first in the 29-member trade group to bail out – was a close fought matter, but for all the sturm und drang about a pivotal moment for the EU, the June 23 referendum that saw the Brexit pass was a very British affair.

While the European Union is clearly in a crisis – countries weighed down with unpayable debt, economies virtually dead in the water, double digit unemployment, and a rising chorus of opposition to the austerity policies of the EU authorities in Brussels – those were not the issues that brought the British people to the polls.

Indeed, the whole affair started as an entirely homegrown matter, an internal split in the ruling Conservative Party. Back in 2013, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron cut a deal with the euro skeptic part of his party that if they would close ranks until after the 2015 general election, he would hold a referendum on the EU.

At the time, Cameron was also looking over his shoulder at the rise of the extreme right wing, racist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which had begun using anti-immigrant issues to poach Conservatives. It is likely that Cam-

eron never really intended to follow through on the 2013 pledge, but once he let slip the dogs of war he had little control over the havoc that followed.

When the Conservatives defeated the Labour Party last year, the “out” faction demanded their due, and what emerged was a deeply disturbing campaign that focused on race, religion and “sovereignty,” the latter a code-word for a particularly nasty brand of nationalism that is on the rise all over Europe.

Brexiteers conjured up hordes of Turks pouring into Britain, even though Turkey is not a EU member – or likely to become one. In any case, the UK is not part of the Schengen countries, those members of the EU that allow visa less travel.

“Vote Leave” ran posters depicting crowds of Syrians and endless ads on Turkish birthrates. “None of this needs decoding,” wrote Philip Stephens of the Financial Times, “The dog whistle has made way for the Klaxon. EU membership talks with Turkey, we are to understand, will soon see Britain overrun by millions of (Muslim) Turks – most of them thugs or welfare scroungers.”

Last year Britain did process some 330,000 immigrants, but the overwhelming majority of them hailed from Spain, Poland, the Baltic countries, and Greece. The UK has accepted very few Syrian

refugees and Turks, certainly not enough to “overrun” the place.

The openly racist and xenophobic character of the “Leave” campaign put the UK left in a difficult spot. While the left, including the Labour Party, has profound differences with current policies and structures of the EU, these are not over immigration and religion. How to express those critiques without bedding down with the likes of UKIP or the euro skeptic Conservatives was a tricky business.

Labour Party head Jeremy Corbyn chose to endorse the “remain” campaign, but also to point out that the EU is an undemocratic organisation whose financial policies have spread poverty and unemployment throughout the continent. However, because the trade groups have a progressive stance on climate change, equal pay, work hours, vacations, and maternity leave, Corbyn argued – if somewhat tepidly – that all in all, it was best to stay in and try to reform the organisation.

Part of the “leave” vote sprang from one of Britain’s most pernicious ideologies – nostalgia. Run through a few verses of “Rule Britannia” and a considerable portion of older Britons go misty-eyed with the mythology of Trafalgar, Waterloo, and Omdurman. Polls indicate that support for the EU among people over 60 was just 33 percent. It was only 10 percent more among Conservative Party members of all ages.

In contrast, young Britons, Labour Party members, the Scots and Northern Irish supported remaining, though in the end they were not enough. The fallout? There will almost certainly be another refer-

endum for Scottish independence. Will Northern Ireland do the same?

Is this the beginning of end for the EU? It is hard to imagine how the organization can continue as it is since the second largest economy in the trade group has debarked. But the European Union's troubles have only just begun, and a far more important measure of the future of the organization will come when Spanish voters go to the polls June 26.

In that election the austerity policies of the "troika" – the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Commission – will be directly confronted by a spanking new left formation, Unidos Podemos (United We Can). UP comes out of an alliance of Izquierda Unida (United Left) and Podemos. It is currently running number #2 in the polls and nipping at the heels of the ruling rightwing Popular Party.

The UP calls for rolling back the austerity policies of the troika, a public works program to create 300,000 jobs, and economic stimulation to tackle Spain's horrendous unemployment problem. Joblessness is over 22 percent nationwide and 48.5 percent among young Spaniards.

A recent manifesto by more than 200 leading Spanish economists charges that the austerity policies of the EU have created an "economic crisis" that "has had devastating consequences for our country, as well as the euro zone as a whole" and "unnecessarily prolonged the recession across the continent and generated deep social fractures by increasing economic and social inequalities."

The euro zone is the 19 members

of the EU that use the common currency, the euro.

UP plans to link up with similar minded forces in Greece, Portugal, Italy and Ireland to demand that Brussels adopt fiscal stimulation as a strategy against the economic malaise plaguing most of the EU.

United Left leader and Communist Alberto Garzon, probably the most popular politician in the country, says "Brussels has to understand that if they continue to apply austerity politics in Spain our social emergency will get worse, which only helps the rise of fascism

– as we have already seen in Austria and other EU countries."

The Brexit vote was a British affair (and promises to be a messy one). The Spanish election is a continental affair that will have reverberations worldwide. **CT**

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● SEAN LANG

CAPITAL vs. COUNTRY, YOUNG vs. OLD

People divided along a different faultline

Is Brexit Britain David Cameron's famous "broken Britain?" The bitterness of the referendum campaign and the divides it has revealed within the Conservative Party and between the Labour Party and its core supporters might certainly suggest so. Deep rifts now run between old and young, London and England, England and Scotland. The prospect of a second referendum on Scottish independence is now firmly in play.

The Remain camp argued for a Britain playing its full part in Europe and accused Brexit of wanting a "little England." Is that what we all woke up on the morning after the referendum?

"Little Englander" is a rather contemptuous term originally used by Victorian supporters of the Empire. It was used especially with reference to Britain's role in the Boer War to denigrate their opponents and critics, who they accused of wanting to keep Britain small and ineffectual in a world of global European empires.

More recently it has been used by pro-Europeans to accuse Brexiters of much the same thing in a world of regional unions. Are they right? Has the electorate's decision to back Brexit revealed Britain as a little country, a small island, inward-looking and parochial?

It depends firstly on what we mean by Britain. Modern little Englanderism hardly applies in Scotland. England and Wales may have turned their backs on Europe but Scotland, true to its continental links dating back to the Declaration of Arbroath (1320) emphatically did not. But the fear of Scottish independence made not a jot of difference to voting intentions in England or Wales. Did those English and Welsh voters realise they were clearly turning their backs on Edinburgh as well as on Brussels? Perhaps they hate the EU even more than they value the Union.

Disraeli spoke of England as “two nations” – the rich and the poor. Modern England is just as divided but along a different fault line. This referendum was a revolt of the provinces against the domination of the capital. Not since London rallied to the side of parliament and drove out Charles I have capital and country been so much at odds.

For all the talk of immigration – and this was par excellence a vote about immigration – there is a certain irony that the most immigrant-rich part of the whole country voted overwhelmingly to remain.

Young people, unhindered by memories of World War II or the immediate post-war period, are much more European in outlook than the older generation, who voted for a nostalgic “golden age” when, they assume, Britain was Great. The Brexit campaign’s “take back control” slogan was a canny exercise in nostalgia politics. It suggested that there was a time before 1973 when Britain was fully in control of its destiny.

But was there? Britain had twice sought entry to the EEC before 1973 precisely because it felt so economically and politically powerless in its post-imperial role. Is it now about to return to that state of impotence?

Two years after Edward Heath took Britain into the EEC he was thrown out of office in a general election fought on the question “Who Rules Britain?” David Cameron has now been brought down

by a referendum fought on much the same question. As we survey the ravaged political landscape that has resulted, the question must now be: what sort of Britain has Brexit left his successor to govern?

CT

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● PEPE ESCOBAR

WHY THE UK SAID GOODBYE TO EUROPE

Cameron’s gamble, Europe’s earthquake

So what started as a gamble by David Cameron on an outlet for domestic British discontent, to be used as a lever to bargain with Brussels for a few more favors, has metastasised into an astonishing political earthquake about the disintegration of the European Union.

The irrepressibly mediocre Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, posing as a “historian,” had warned that Brexit, “could be the beginning of the destruction of not only the EU but Western political civilization in its entirety.”

That’s foolish. Brexit proved that it’s immigration, stupid. And once again, it’s the economy, stupid (although the British neoliberal establishment never paid attention). But serious bets can be made the EU

system in Brussels won’t learn anything from the shock therapy – and won’t reform itself. There will be rationalisations that after all the UK was always classically whiny, obtrusive and demanding special privileges when dealing with the EU. As for “Western political civilisation”, what will end – and this is a big thing – is the special transatlantic relationship between the US and the EU with Britain as an American Trojan Horse.

So, of course, this all goes monumentally beyond a mere match between a hopelessly miscalculating Cameron, now fallen on his sword, and the recklessly ambitious court jester Boris Johnson – a Donald Trump with better vocabulary and speech patterns.

Scotland, predictably, voted Re-

main, and may probably hold a new referendum – and leave the UK – rather than be dragged out by working class English votes. Sinn Fein already wants a vote on united Ireland. Denmark, the Netherlands and even Poland and Hungary will want special status inside the EU, or else. Across Europe, the extreme right stampede is on. Marine Le Pen wants a French referendum. Geert Wilders wants a Dutch referendum. As for the majority of British under-25s who voted Remain, they may be contemplating one-way tickets not to the continent, but beyond.

Anglo-French historian Robert Tombs has remarked that when Europeans talk about history they refer to the Roman Empire, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Great Britain is somewhat overlooked. In reciprocity, quite a few Britons still consider Europe an entity that should be kept at a safe distance.

To compound the problem, this is not a “Europe of peoples.” Brussels absolutely detests European public opinion, and the system exhibits an iron resistance to reform. This current EU project that ultimately aims at a federation, modeled on the US, does not cut it in most of Britain. Arguably this is one of the key reasons behind Brexit – which for its part has already disunited the kingdom and may eventually downgrade it into a tiny trading post on the edge of Europe.

Lacking a “European people,” the Brussels system could not but be articulated as a Kafkaesque, unelected bureaucracy. Moreover, the representatives of this people-deprived Europe in Brussels actually defend what they consider to be their national interest, and not the “European” interest.

Brexit though does not mean Britain will be free from the dictates of the European Commission (EC). The EC does propose policy, but nothing can be followed through without decisions from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, which group representatives of all elected governments of member states.

Arguably Remain, in the best possible case, would have led to some soul-searching in Brussels, and a wake-up call, translating into a more flexible monetary policy; a push to contain immigration inside African borders; and more opening towards Russia. The UK would remain in Europe giving more weight to countries outside the eurozone while Germany would concentrate on the 19-member eurozone nations.

So Remain would have led to the UK increasing its politico-economic weight in Brussels while Germany would be more open to moderate growth (instead of austerity). Although Britain arguably would win at the notion of a future eurozone Treasury Minister, a European FBI and a European Minister of the Interior, in fact the whole notion of a complete economic and monetary union.

That’s all water under the bridge now. Additionally, don’t forget the mighty single market drama. The UK not only will lose duty-free access to the EU’s single market of 500 million people; it will have to renegotiate every single trade deal with the rest of the world since all of them have been EU-negotiated. French economy minister and presidential hopeful Emmanuel Macron has already warned that, “if the UK wants a commercial access treaty

to the European market, the British must contribute to the European budget like the Norwegians and the Swiss do. If London doesn’t want that, then it must be a total exit.” Britain will be locked out of the single market – to which over 50% of its exports go – unless it pays almost all that it currently pays. Moreover, London must still accept freedom of movement, as in European immigration.

Brexit defeated an array of what Zygmunt Bauman defined as the global elites of liquid modernity; the City of London, Wall Street, the IMF, the Fed, the European Central Bank (ECB), major hedge/investment funds, the whole interconnected global banking system.

The City of London, predictably, voted Remain by over 75%. An overwhelming \$2.7 trillion is traded every day in the “square mile”, which employs almost 400,000 people. And it’s not only the square mile, as the City now also includes Canary Wharf (HQ of quite a few big banks) and Mayfair (privileged hang out of hedge funds).

The City of London – the undisputed financial capital of Europe – also manages a whopping \$1.65 trillion of client assets, wealth literally from all over the planet. In Treasury Islands, Nicholas Shaxson argues, “financial services companies have flocked to London because it lets them do what they cannot do at home”.

Unbridled deregulation coupled with unrivalled influence on the global economic system amount to a toxic mix. So Brexit may also be interpreted as a vote against corruption permeating England’s most lucrative industry.

Things will change. Drastically.

There will be no more “passporting”, by which banks can sell products for all 28 EU members, accessing a \$19 trillion integrated economy. All it takes is a HQ in London and a few satellite mini-offices. Passporting will be up for fierce negotiation, as well as what happens to London’s euro-denominated trading floors.

I followed Brexit out of Hong Kong – which 19 years ago said bye bye to the British Empire to join China. Beijing is worried that Brexit will translate into capital outflows, “depreciation pressure” on the yuan, and disturbance of the Bank of China’s management of monetary policy.

Brexit could even seriously affect China-EU relations, as Beijing in thesis might lose influence in Brussels without British support. It’s crucial to remember that Britain backed an investment pact between China and the EU and a joint feasibility study on a China-EU free trade agreement.

He Weiwen, co-director of the China-US-EU Study Centre under the China Association of International Trade, part of the Ministry of Commerce, is blunt; “The European Union is likely to adopt a more protectionist approach when dealing with China. For Chinese companies which have set up headquarters or branches in the UK, they may not be able to enjoy tariff-free access to the wider European market after Britain leave the EU.”

That applies, for instance, to leading Chinese high-tech companies like Huawei and Tencent. Between 2000 and 2015, Britain was the top European destination for Chinese direct investment, and was the second-largest trading partner with China inside the EU.

Still, it may all revert into a win-win for China. Germany, France and Luxembourg – all of them competing with London for the juicy offshore yuan business – will increase their role.

So will Britain become the new Norway? It’s possible. Norway did very well after rejecting EU membership in a 1995 referendum. It will be a long and winding road before Article

50 is invoked and a two-year UK-EU negotiation in uncharted territory starts. Former UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling summed it all up; “Nobody has a clue what ‘Out’ looks like.”

CT

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● GEORGE MONBIOT

BREXIT A DISASTER, BUT WE CAN BUILD ON RUINS

After the crisis comes opportunity for change

Let’s sack the electorate and appoint a new one: this is the demand made by MPs, lawyers and the 4 million people who have signed the petition calling for a second referendum. It’s a cry of pain, and therefore understandable, but it’s also bad politics and bad democracy. Reduced to its essence, it amounts to graduates telling non-graduates: “We reject your democratic choice.”

Were this vote to be annulled (it won’t be), the result would be a full-scale class and culture war, riots and perhaps worse, pitching middle-class progressives against those on whose behalf they have claimed to speak, and permanently alienating people who have spent their lives feeling voiceless and powerless.

Yes, the Brexit vote has empowered the most gruesome collection of schemers, misfits, liars, extrem-

ists and puppets that British politics has produced in the modern era. It threatens to invoke a new age of demagoguery, a threat sharpened by the thought that if this can happen, so can Donald Trump.

It has provoked a resurgence of racism and an economic crisis whose dimensions remain unknown. It jeopardises the living world, the NHS, peace in Ireland and the rest of the European Union. It promotes what the billionaire Peter Hargreaves gleefully anticipated as “fantastic insecurity”.

But we’re stuck with it. There isn’t another option, unless you favour the years of limbo and chaos that would ensue from a continued failure to trigger article 50. It’s not just that we have no choice but to accept the result; we should embrace it and make of it what we can.

It's not as if the system that's now crashing around us was functioning. The vote could be seen as a self-inflicted wound, or it could be seen as the eruption of an internal wound inflicted over many years by an economic oligarchy on the poor and the forgotten. The bogus theories on which our politics and economics are founded were going to collide with reality one day. The only questions were how and when.

Yes, the Brexit campaign was led by a political elite, funded by an economic elite and fuelled by a media elite. Yes, popular anger was channelled towards undeserving targets – migrants.

But the vote was also a howl of rage against exclusion, alienation and remote authority. That is why the slogan “take back control” resonated. If the left can't work with this, what are we for?

So here is where we find ourselves. The economic system is not working, except for the likes of Philip Green. Neoliberalism has not delivered the meritocratic nirvana its theorists promised, but a rentiers' paradise, offering staggering returns to whoever grabs the castle first while leaving productive workers on the wrong side of the moat.

The age of enterprise has become the age of unearned income, the age of the market the age of market failure, the age of opportunity a steel cage of zero-hours contracts, precarity and surveillance.

The political system is not working. Whoever you vote for, the same people win, because where power claims to be is not where power is.

Parliaments and councils embody paralysed force, gesture with-

out motion, as the real decisions are taken elsewhere: by the money, for the money. Governments have actively conspired in this shift, negotiating fake trade treaties behind their voters' backs to prevent democracy from controlling corporate capital.

Unreformed political funding ensures that parties have to listen to the rustle of notes before the bustle of votes. In Britain these problems are compounded by an electoral system that ensures most votes don't count. This is why a referendum is almost the only means by which people can be heard, and why attempting to override it is a terrible idea.

Culture is not working. A worldview that insists both people and place are fungible is inherently hostile to the need for belonging. For years now we have been told that we do not belong, that we should shift out without complaint while others are shifted in to take our place.

When the peculiarities of community and place are swept away by the tides of capital, all that's left is a globalised shopping culture, in which we engage with glazed passivity. Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chainstores.

In all these crises are opportunities – opportunities to reject, connect and erect, to build from these ruins a system that works for the people of this country rather than for an offshore elite that preys on insecurity.

If it is true that Britain will have to renegotiate its trade treaties, is this not the best chance we've had in decades to contain corporate power – of insisting that companies that operate here must offer proper contracts, share their profits, cut

their emissions and pay their taxes? Is it not a chance to regain control of the public services slipping from our grasp?

How will politics in this sclerotic nation change without a maelstrom? In this chaos we can, if we are quick and clever, find a chance to strike a new contract: proportional representation, real devolution and a radical reform of campaign finance to ensure that millionaires can never again own our politics.

Remote authority has been rejected, so let's use this moment to root our politics in a common celebration of place, to fight the epidemic of loneliness and rekindle common purpose, transcending the tensions between recent and less recent migrants (which means everyone else). In doing so, we might find a language in which liberal graduates can talk with the alienated people of Britain, rather than at them.

But most importantly, let's address the task that the left and the centre have catastrophically neglected: developing a political and economic philosophy fit for the 21st century, rather than repeatedly microwaving the leftovers of the 20th (neoliberalism and Keynesianism). If the history of the last 80 years tells us anything, it's that little changes without a new and ferocious framework of thought.

So yes, despair and rage and curse at what has happened: there are reasons enough to do so. But then raise your eyes to where hope lies. **CT**

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George Monbiot's new book, *How Did We Get into This Mess?*, is published by Verso. His web site is www.monbiot.com

● DAVID CROMWELL & DAVID EDWARDS

KILLING CORBYN

The nervous establishment strikes back

The 'Brexit' referendum vote, split 52% to 48% in favour of leaving the European Union, has been exploited by the 'mainstream' media to launch yet another assault on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. 'Impartial' BBC News, directed by former Murdoch editor James Harding, has been one of the worst culprits.

Consider the wave of resignations of Labour shadow ministers which was heavily promoted in advance on the front page of the BBC News website: ' "Half" of Labour top team set to resign . . . the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg understands'. When the Labour resignations started to roll in, Kuenssberg could be heard virtually gloating over Corbyn's predicament: "A bad day at the office. A very bad day." (BBC Weekend News, BBC1, June 26, 2016)

She wrote on the BBC website, "here have been concerns about Jeremy Corbyn's performance for months and months. But it was his role, or lack of role, in the campaign to keep the UK in the EU, and his sacking of Hilary Benn in the middle of the night, that has given members of the shadow cabinet the final reasons to quit."

The laughably biased reference to "months and months" and "final reasons to quit" were intended

to portray Labour MPs as exasperated and understandably at the end of their tether. Clearly reaching for some kind of 'smoking gun' to finish Corbyn, Kuenssberg added: "Documents passed to the BBC suggest Jeremy Corbyn's office sought to delay and water down the Labour Remain campaign. Sources suggest that they are evidence of 'deliberate sabotage'."

But, as Carlyn Harvey wrote on The Canary website, the evidence – a sparse selection of leaked emails that the BBC deigned not to show to the public – was bogus: "The emails themselves are not sent from Corbyn's office and are not published in the BBC article. The broadcaster merely handpicks a few select quotes from them, and allows Kuenssberg to let rip in her analysis of the cache."

Harvey summarised: "Is this the level of analysis we should tolerate from the BBC?"

Kuenssberg concluded her attempted hit piece by observing that Corbyn "has had persuasive and vehement backing from the party's members . . . But as the Labour Party reels from Thursday's result, it is not clear that support will be as solid as it was. MPs report that some of their members are contacting them to say they've changed their minds about Mr Corbyn. We'll see. It's possible that within days, both of our

two main political parties will be looking for a new leader."

These anonymous MPs were the same Blairite coup plotters, of course. No balance was included in the original article, no response to the damning allegations, no recognition that these were indeed cynical Blairite plotters seeking any excuse to be rid of Corbyn. Indeed the word Blairite does not appear in Kuenssberg's piece, just as it didn't in a supposedly impartial Observer analysis. Honest commentators, of course, understand that the word Blairite is crucial for anyone trying to make sense of the relentless attacks on Corbyn. Thus, former Guardian journalist Jonathan Cook: "Corbyn and his supporters want to revive Labour as a party of social justice. . . . This is nothing more than a class war to pave the way for a return of the Blairites to lead Labour."

The BBC later added balancing comments, after receiving complaints.

The following morning, BBC News misinformed the public that Tom Watson, deputy leader of the Labour Party, had told Corbyn that he must resign. This was false. BBC News quietly retracted the claim without admitting their error. Indeed, as captured by a Labour activist, BBC News had three significantly different headlines in just twenty minutes.

"Labour's Watson tells Corbyn to quit"

became:

"Tom Watson tells Jeremy Corbyn to consider his position"

which became:

"Tom Watson tells Jeremy Corbyn he faces leadership challenge"

It looked as though the BBC's desire to be rid of Corbyn had raced ahead of the facts.

A couple of days earlier, in common with other corporate news media, the BBC pushed a manufactured story about Corbyn being heckled at Gay Pride. The staged incident was also given significant coverage on ITN and Sky News, and even front-page treatment in the Guardian. In fact, as Craig Murray observed, the heckler turned out to be Tom Mauchline who works for the public relations firm Portland Communications. Mauchline had also previously worked on the Liz Kendall campaign for the Labour leadership. Portland's "strategic counsel" is the notorious Alastair Campbell, Blair's former media chief who helped to sell the illegal invasion-occupation of Iraq. None of this was spelled out in the Guardian report by Heather Stewart, the paper's political editor. Instead, there was a single cryptic line that concealed more than it delivered: "Allies of the Labour leader said the confrontation at Pride had been staged by anti-Corbyn activists who were attempting to undermine the leader's position."

There was no further explanation or context. When challenged on Twitter, Stewart responded: "Story makes clear it was regarded as staged by Corbyn backers; but if part of plot to destabilise him it's news."

This was a facile reply. Craig Murray then asked her: "1) why does it not make clear that Mauchline is a PR man for Portland Comms? 2) How did you become aware of the story?"

As far as we can see, the Guard-

ian's political editor simply ignored the awkward questions.

Meanwhile, BBC News ran a live feed on their home page with the headline, Corbyn Crisis And Brexit. Brexit was almost an afterthought; it certainly seemed to be playing second fiddle to the Corbyn crisis. Anyone seeing this could be forgiven for asking about the BBC News editorial agenda and its setting of priorities. It was as though we were to forget that Prime Minister David Cameron had announced his resignation three days earlier; and that Cameron and the Tory party had led the country into a referendum that had resulted in the FTSE 100 index falling more than eight percent, and the pound falling against the dollar by 10 percent; and that a number of Tories were scrambling to become the new leader, including the warmongering, climate-denying Boris Johnson. But, true to form, BBC News was happy to hammer on about the Corbyn crisis; this despite the fact that "Labour persuaded two-thirds of its supporters to vote remain."

It was surreal to read a post-Brexit BBC article on June 28, Conservative Leader: Who Might Succeed David Cameron?, reminding readers of Johnson's "unique brand of charisma making him a household name. . . . he is regarded as being an electoral asset," while Michael Gove was "reforming, if controversial," and "is still respected on both the Remain and Leave wings of the party." No serious criticism of either politician was included, despite their deep responsibility for the Brexit crisis. By contrast, as we saw above, the BBC was only too happy to include damning judgments of Corbyn.

Perhaps the worst example of an anti-Corbyn attack, post-Brexit, was in the Mail on Sunday. A piece by Dan Hodges was illustrated by a Photoshopped image of a malevolent vampiric Corbyn in a coffin with the despicable headline, Labour MUST Kill Vampire Jezza. That this should appear just 10 days after Labour MP Jo Cox was brutally murdered is almost beyond belief.

When challenged by readers, Hodges responded with the standard cop-out: "Sorry, but I don't write the headlines."

It is true that sub-editors write newspaper headlines. But Hodges could still have indicated that he recognised the callousness and irresponsibility of the headline and photo.

One reader fired off this rational follow-up challenge: "But are you condoning the headline? Do you agree with it? Or is just no comment from you?"

Hodges did not reply; understandably enough. In March, a tragi-comic announcement was issued: "Britain's best political columnist DAN HODGES joins the Mail on Sunday." A lucrative contract for Hodges, to be sure, and one he would be reluctant to jeopardise by criticising his paymasters. "It's hard to make the sums add up when you are kicking the people who write the cheques," as the BBC's Andrew Marr once observed. (Andrew Marr, *My Trade - A Short History Of British Journalism*, Macmillan, 2004, p.112)

In a blog piece, Craig Murray rightly noted: "The demonstrable public contempt of the public for the political class has been mirrored these last few days by the demonstrable contempt of the

political class for the public. This has been obvious in the response to the Brexit vote, and in the Labour parliamentary party's move against Corbyn. Both are evidence that the political class feel that they should not be directed by a wider public."

This explains why the corporate media have avoided mentioning that Corbyn won last year's leadership election by a landslide, winning 60 percent of the vote, more than the rest of the candidates combined. Despite noting that Angela Eagle is the likely leadership contender, the media have also ignored a February YouGov poll that found that 60 percent of Labour members would vote for Corbyn in a new leadership race, with 15 percent supporting Hilary Benn and just six percent supporting Angela Eagle.

Murray continued: "Everybody knows that the Labour parliamentary party is well to the right of both the membership and the trade unions, and has been itching to get rid of Corbyn from day one. For those who have constantly stabbed him in the back for a year to criticise his effectiveness in fighting their opponents is ridiculous."

Investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed points out that: "The latest coup attempt against Jeremy Corbyn within the Labour Party is being led by an elitist Blairite network who have always seen his sudden rise to leadership as a threat to their waning control of the party."

Attempts to unseat Corbyn have been supported by Left Foot Forward Ltd, a company set up by Will Straw, which runs the country's

"No. 1 left-wing blog" of the same name. Straw is the son of Jack Straw who served as Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary under Tony Blair. Ahmed notes that Will Straw is: "among a network of longtime Blairite stalwarts trying to 're-found' the Labour Party – a project demolished by Jeremy Corbyn's landslide victory in the Labour leadership elections in September 2015."

The independent journalist Steve Topple highlights the links between coordinated attacks on Corbyn and a network of Labour figures with direct links to the PR company, Portland Communications (mentioned above). The PR firm was set up in 2001 by a former adviser to Blair. Its clients include the World Economic Forum, the EU, the UK government, Barclays Bank and large companies, including Morrisons and Nestle.

Two weeks ago, the Daily Telegraph reported that: "Labour rebels hope to topple Jeremy Corbyn in 24-hour blitz after EU referendum."

The article continued: "By fanning the flames with front bench resignations and public criticism they think the signatures needed to trigger a leadership race can be gathered within a day."

BBC News – in particular, its political editor Laura Kuenssberg – continues to play a disreputable role in fanning these flames. In a BBC News article on Tuesday, Kuenssberg pointed to two more Labour figures who have called on Corbyn to resign as "signs that his backing away from Parliament could be starting to fray." Extrapolating wildly, she concluded: "The wave of enthusiasm he built outside Parliament may be starting to

recede."

This is all part of a bigger picture of how the BBC has put "its full weight behind the Corbyn coup," as Carlyn Harvey notes. Readers may recall that Kuenssberg helped to orchestrate the on-air resignation of a shadow Labour minister earlier this year: another attempt to undermine Corbyn's leadership.

The "Guardian view" is that the "Corbyn experiment is effectively over at Westminster." This casual dismissal comes from the "liberal" paper which opposed Corbyn from the start, and which makes no mention of the relentless media wrecking campaign against him, including its own ugly role. The "Corbyn experiment" is an experiment in real democracy; something which the Guardian has sought to destroy. A responsible newspaper would relentlessly expose the truth about society; namely, that "politics is the shadow cast on society by big business," as the American philosopher John Dewey said.

Nobody should be surprised at the shameful performance of the corporate media, especially BBC News. Any threat to the 'natural order' of power brings the schism between private interests and public interests into sharp focus. The heightened, almost farcical, attacks on Corbyn are thus entirely predictable. Rather than feeling anguished at this state of affairs, we can regard it as a sign of how nervous and vulnerable the establishment is when an awakened public challenges elite power.

CT

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David Cromwell and David

Edwards are co-editors of *Medialens*, the British press watchdog – www.medialens.org

● WILLIAM BOWLES

SEVEN DAYS IN JUNE

Why blame Cameron when there's a handy scapegoat?

It's rare that you see the ruling elite totally at a loss for words: but they were. Gobsnacked and stunned are accurate descriptions of the look on the political/media class's faces on the morning of June 24, 2016.

It's the corporate/state media that effectively calls the shots when it comes to national decision-making in the UK these days, so most people assumed that the Remainers would win the previous day's vote on whether or not the country should remain in Europe. The pre-voting propaganda was so solidly devoted to the "immigration problem," that nobody considered the implications of actually exiting from the EU should the Brexiters win the vote.

However, almost a week later the voter, economist Richard Wolff spelled out the reasons for the result during an interview with the Real News Network: "It's perfectly clear that the mass of people wanted to send a message to the old, established, austerity-committed government of David Cameron, that they don't want him, they don't want what he does, they don't believe in any of this. They believe that the leadership of the European Union, what is crushing Greece, et-cetera, is not something they want to be part of. They feel victimised by all of that. And the Brexit vote

gave them a chance to say no, we don't want it. Sure, there were racist elements and anti-immigration elements. That's part of the British political scene. Of course it's going to play its role, seeking its objectives as part of this."

The BBC's propaganda campaign in favour of remaining had been as relentless as its attacks on Jeremy Corbyn since being elected leader of the Labour Party almost a year ago. So it seemed almost logical that, in a bizarre inversion of reality, that he, not Cameron, would be the one they, and the rest of the media, would blame for Brexit.

The media watchdog Medialens highlighted what turned out to be one of the meanest media attacks on Corbyn during the days that followed: "Perhaps the worst example of an anti-Corbyn attack, post-Brexit, was in the Mail on Sunday. A piece by Dan Hodges was illustrated by a Photoshopped image of a malevolent vampiric Corbyn in a coffin with the despicable headline, 'Labour MUST kill vampire Jezza.' That this should appear just ten days after Labour MP Jo Cox was brutally murdered is almost beyond belief."

Reading what passed for news this past seven days, you'd never know that the real cause of the upset was the Tory Party, which, aside from Cameron's resignation, has

barely been mentioned; for the reality is that it was an internal spat in the Tory Party that started the whole Brexit ball rolling.

Instead, the Remain camp feels they've been cheated out of victory by their opponents – wrongly labelled as a bunch of Nazis and xenophobes. No surprise there: this is exactly how the BBC has been portraying events, with images of angry Remainers demonstrating outside Parliament contrasted with interviews of penitent Brexiters, who've belatedly seen the "error of their ways" and wished they'd voted with their internationalist brothers and sisters. So no problem taking in the refugees then?

A convenient scapegoat

Initially, this essay was going to be a kind of blow-by-blow diary of the vote and its dramatic outcome, but it has become two stories: one about the UK as a broken capitalist state and its relationship to the EU; the other, much more important, story is of the attack on Jeremy Corbyn by his enemies inside and outside the Parliamentary Labour Party – a relentless conspiracy to remove him as leader of the party.

Medialens reports: "Attempts to unseat Corbyn have been supported by Left Foot Forward Ltd, a company set up by Will Straw, which runs the country's 'No. 1 left-wing blog' of the same name. Straw is the son of Jack Straw, who served as Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary under Tony Blair. . . . Will Straw is 'among a network of longtime Blairite stalwarts trying to re-found the Labour Party – a project demolished by Jeremy Corbyn's landslide victory in the Labour leadership elections in September 2015.'

“The independent journalist Steve Topple highlights the links between coordinated attacks on Corbyn and a network of Labour figures with direct links to the PR company, Portland Communications.... The PR firm was set up in 2001 by a former adviser to Blair. Its clients include the World Economic Forum, the EU, the UK government, Barclays Bank and large companies, including Morrisons and Nestle.”

All this is reminiscent of the dirty tricks the Establishment used against a previous Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in 1976, as Medialens reminds us: “For a large part of his career and throughout his time as prime minister from 1964 to 1970 and again in 1974-76 Wilson was the object of a smear campaign that emanated from the British security services and the CIA. They fed material to the press that appeared to substantiate the view that he was a Soviet agent who had been put in place after the KGB had supposedly murdered Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell. . . . the Daily Express defence correspondent Chapman Pincher unapologetically admitted his part in spreading those rumours.”

The political class sees Corbyn as a danger, although we are constantly told that socialism is so passé, so 20th-century? So what’s the panic? Why the demonisation of this old man, if he is so ineffectual, and seemingly from another era, with his scruffy clothes and his vaguely subversive ideas about not wanting to drop atomic bombs on people? Just what is it that the elite are so afraid of that such venomous dirty tricks should be used against the man?

The truth is that Corbyn’s election woke up a sleeping giant – not just those few percent who tipped the balance in favour of Brexit, but the millions of working people who have had enough of Tory-imposed austerity while the richest one percent get even richer.

Their votes were not so much about leaving the EU as in giving the government a black eye in the only way they could (what does this tell us about the current state of the Labour Party?).

In any case, given the nonsense both the government and media have been talking about for the past couple of months, how could anyone come to the right conclusion based on so much disinformation and outright lies?

What should Corbyn do? Or is he just going to turn the other cheek to the vicious attacks being made on him? Writing on the World Socialist Web Site, on June 29, Julie Hyland said: “The extraordinary scale of the right-wing coup, which had already seen Corbyn lose most of his shadow cabinet in a series of timed resignations, was intended to force the Labour leader to resign. But in a statement put out moments after the result, Corbyn said that he had been elected ‘by 60 percent of Labour members and supporters’” only last September, and ‘I will not betray them by resigning.’”

The second assault on Corbyn (after the carefully timed shadow cabinet resignations), a vote of no confidence passed by 170 Labour MPs (with 40 in his favour), has no legal basis, but is merely an opinion. The only way to attempt to remove him is to call for an election which, I believe, requires the signatures of 50 Labour MPs. Fine, let

them run a new election, they have the numbers. But it’s an election, that, according to a YouGov poll, Corbyn will win all over again, and by much the same margin.

As I write, Angela Eagles, one of his former shadow cabinet colleagues, has been persuaded to stand against him. But she was roundly trounced in the election that made Corbyn head of the Labour Party last year, collecting just 17 percent of the votes against Corbyn’s 60 percent. In fact, Corbyn was so popular with rank-and-file Labour supporters that he got more votes than all the other contenders combined. Now he has to live up to the faith those voters put in him, but it’s an uphill struggle with the combined weight of the Establishment, the media and his own colleagues in Parliament out for his blood.

Corbyn has a monumental struggle in front of him, one that only has a chance of success if he steps outside the straightjacket of Parliament and works directly with his supporters.

The issues go to the heart of a broken economic and political system, and our not just about Britain’s place in Europe. The next few weeks are critical. But, I wonder, does Jeremy Corbyn have what it takes to win victory? **CT**

William Bowles is a London-based writer and political activist. His web site is investigatingimperialism.wordpress.com

The End? Not quite. Next week – July 6 – sees the release of the long-awaited Chilcot Inquiry’s report into the UK involvement in the Iraq war, expected to be highly critical of former British prime minister Tony Blair



END OF THE ROAD: Prime Minister David Cameron, the man who split the nation with his disastrous Brexit referendum, steps back into No 10 Downing Street with his wife Samantha, after announcing his resignation. Photo: 10 Downing Street, Flickr.com

'Thanks for your service, but don't tell the kids ...'

Emily Yates was persuaded by a recruiter to join the US army. Now she's telling schoolkids the truth about the recruiters' tactics

"I thought you were here to tell students about corporate jobs they could get after the military," she snapped, glaring at our display of colourful pamphlets and flyers, including one titled Questions to Ask Your Military Recruiter. "I think you need to leave."

Excuse me, are you saying negative things about the military?"

The question came over my right shoulder, from a well-dressed woman whose name tag proclaimed her to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce in Pittsburg, California. We were in the Pittsburg High School gymnasium, the location of an end-of-year career fair for graduating seniors. Two other veterans and I, along with a civilian friend, were there with the Full Picture Coalition, a network of individuals dedicated to bringing students the truth about military recruitment, and we'd been conversing with students for nearly two hours before the woman interrupted us to demand, with eyes narrowed, what kind of negativity we might be spreading. Alex, one of the veterans in our group (and a former Army recruiter himself), smiled at her.

"We're just telling the students about our experience, ma'am," he said. "We're veterans."

Another woman, also from the Pittsburg Chamber, approached. I recognised her as the one who'd shown us where to set up our table that morning.

"I thought you were here to tell students about corporate jobs they could get after the military," she snapped, glaring at our display of colourful pamphlets and flyers, including one titled Questions to Ask

Your Military Recruiter. "I think you need to leave."

How the army recruited me

Three months after September 11, 2001, an army recruiter called me at home. I was 19, about to finish my first semester of community college in upstate New York, and Sergeant Brown caught me at the right time: I had just found out my federal financial aid application had been denied. When Sergeant Brown asked me what I was studying in school, I sighed and told him, "Journalism . . . eventually." His enthusiastic response: "I can get you a journalism job in the army!"

I was one of the lucky ones – my recruiter didn't promised me I wouldn't see combat. Yet that was a common tactic, as others I met would tell me.

It wasn't a direct lie, per se. The job he got me in the army was indeed titled Print Journalist, and it would entail constructing content that looked, to the untrained eye, exactly like news. But the job also had a second title, and although it didn't seem strange to my 19-year-old mind at the time, over the course of my six years in the military, I would come to scorn the idea that a journalist and a public affairs specialist could be one and the same. Far from being a conveyor of factual information, I was trained to be a spinner of truthy tales,

moulding command information into the reassuring shape of news articles and photo essays, leaving out any bits that could reflect poorly on the army and its mission.

Whether or not my recruiter could define the difference between journalism and public affairs, he could easily assess that his ability to successfully recruit me depended on getting me the job I wanted – or at least, the job I thought I wanted. It didn't matter to his quota whether I realised, once enlisted, that I'd signed up for a job that would profoundly abuse my mind. Once I had shipped off to basic training, all the things he'd told me would vanish into the ether, along with any sense of personal responsibility on his part. He had carte blanche to say whatever he needed to say to keep me committed to joining the military, and after I was in, his work was done.

I was one of the lucky ones – my recruiter never promised me I wouldn't see combat, or that I could be stationed anywhere I wanted, or that I could get out of my contract any time if I didn't like what I'd signed up for. He did promise I'd get to go to airborne school and jump out of planes, and that it would be added to my contract after basic training – a line that got some laughs from the drill sergeants when I told them about it – but that's nothing compared to guaranteeing a soldier they'll stay out of war. Yet that was a common tactic, as others I met would tell me.

Warning high school students about recruiters' lies

The deceptive claims made by my recruiter were part of my motivation to visit high schools in lower-income towns and help educate students about the particular ways they might be misled by the recruiters in their schools' hallways. These students in particular are heavily relied upon to feed the military all the "volunteers" it needs – as many recruiters attest, it's much easier to enlist young people who really need all the benefits the military offers them. All ser-

vices require recruiters to meet a monthly quota of new enlistees. In order to meet their quotas, recruiters use all the resources at their disposal (to include an annual recruitment budget upward of \$1-billion) to make the military look like the most attractive option available to high schoolers. In schools where most students are unlikely to be able to afford college, the promise of free tuition often does the trick.

My initial active-duty contract was for five years – the amount of time my recruiter said I needed to enlist for in order to get the journalism job he'd promised.

But is the tuition really free? Are any of the benefits of military service truly free? Well, in order to receive the benefits offered, a person must serve in the military until their contract is completed, and leave the service with either an honourable or medical discharge. If they get out early, they need to have served at least two-thirds of their contract in order to access education benefits. Seems simple – until it isn't.

When we enlist, we're given the option of choosing how long we'd like our initial contract to be – usually three to five years. This gives us the impression that after those three to five years are done, our contract will be completed. But in the contract's fine print, if we read it carefully and understand it (which most of us don't), it specifies that every service member is obligated to serve the needs of the military for a minimum of eight years. The three to five years we sign up for are the active service years, and the rest of the eight are spent in the Inactive Ready Reserve, meaning that any time within those eight years, even if service members have been discharged, they can be called back to serve on active duty if needed. Recruiters never seem to bring this up.

My initial active-duty contract was for five years – the amount of time my recruiter said I needed to enlist for in order to get the journalism job he'd promised. After four-and-a-half years, with one year-

The three to five years we sign up for are the active service years, and the rest of the eight are spent in the Inactive Ready Reserve, meaning that any time within those eight years, even if service members have been discharged, they can be called back to serve on active duty if needed

FIGHTING BACK

By the time I finally got out of the military, six years after enlisting, I hardly had a clue which way was up. To make matters worse, I'd only had three weeks to get all my out-processing done after getting back from Iraq

long Iraq deployment under my belt, I was more than ready to get out. The problem was, the US was still at war – and the army was understaffed. To help mitigate the problem, a policy called stop-loss had gone into effect. This allowed the military to indefinitely extend the contract of anyone it deemed necessary to the mission, and that, to my dismay, included me. So, instead of getting off active duty in June 2007, as planned, I was kept in, and deployed again to Iraq in March 2007, this time for “12 to 18 months.”

The danger of post-traumatic stress

The first deployment had been challenging, but expected – even embraced, as I felt I was finally going to get to report on the war. But after a year of churning out one positive story after another while surrounded by nothing resembling positivity, my disillusionment was at an all-time high, and all I wanted – desperately – was to get out and move on with my life, which was a mess after a year in Baghdad and less than a year back home.

The second deployment was unexpected, and those 14 months I spent in Baghdad were some of the most challenging. The constantly incoming rockets and mortars that kept exploding on our base were the least of my worries – physically, I was in decent shape, but mentally, I came undone. My marriage (to a fellow soldier I'd met in our shared barracks), which had barely remained intact after my first deployment, fell apart entirely. My supervisors were deceptive, my job was to deceive and my chosen methods of coping (secretly acquiring alcohol and consuming it in vast quantities while engaging in ill-advised affairs) were destructive. A few weeks before going home, I was sexually assaulted by two fellow soldiers I'd thought of as friends, but I kept it quiet because I knew there was no way to prove it. I became dependent on Ambien, generously prescribed by the headquarters doctor, to help me sleep. I trusted no one.

By the time I finally got out of the military, six years after enlisting, I hardly had a clue which way was up. To make matters worse, I'd only had three weeks to get all my out-processing done after getting back from Iraq, due to the stop-loss policy's having extended my contract so long that it threatened to overlap with my accrued days of leave.

That meant less than a month after returning from Baghdad, I was entirely on my own, for the first time in my adult life. It would be three years before my post-traumatic stress was diagnosed, but in the interim, its symptoms ruled my life. I drove around the country alone and aimlessly, feeling isolated with my battle buddies few and far between, and drank excessively in an attempt to feel comfortable with my new civilian friends, who had no idea what was going on in Iraq. Far from being proud of my military service, I felt ashamed of it – it had been my job to help make it look like we were winning the war, an act I felt was neither noble nor honourable, despite what my discharge paperwork said.

I felt like my youth had been misspent, my mind broken and my good intentions abused. I was angry at the military and angry with myself for getting sucked into it. I was angry with my civilian friends for being so far removed from the wars that they didn't ask about my experience and seemed to expect me to be fine – but I wasn't fine. I'd been trained as a soldier, but hated mindless aggression. I'd been trained in the technical skills of journalism, but I no longer wanted to be a journalist, as I'd become convinced that to do so was to be forcibly biased. I'd been trained in the technical skills of public relations, but was in no shape to work a job that required tact. I swung back and forth between disgruntled and depressed, distracting myself with as much festive debauchery as I could find.

It wasn't until I was introduced to a group called Iraq Veterans Against the War

that I found a community of other veterans who felt as angry as I did, and through them, found a way to channel my anger into action. With Iraq Veterans Against the War and its civilian allies, I began working to inform others about the inhumane wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to organise against them.

To help myself heal from this moral injury and trauma, I was compelled to go to the youth and tell them what their recruiters never would – that the benefits of military service are never free.

Eventually, I did access my education benefits – I went back to school to study the Middle East, and the history of US involvement there. I earned my bachelor’s degree, 12 years after enlisting on a five-year contract that lasted six years, during which I was physically and psychologically abused by those I was told to trust. I got my “free” college, after two deployments to a country that should never have been invaded, after years of volunteer work to overcome the shame of my job: intentionally misleading my fellow soldiers about the nature of the war.

The benefits of military service are never free

To help myself heal from this moral injury and trauma, I committed to helping young people understand just what they were getting into when they joined the military for all those “free” benefits – because I’d been one of the lucky ones, who made it home alive, with all my limbs and many of my faculties intact.

I felt I owed this service to those who didn’t have the same luck, who couldn’t come back and tell anyone about what they’d been through because they were dead or drunk or disabled or struggling to survive. For those whose post-traumatic stress led to behavior that got them kicked out of the military rather than treated for their trauma; who ended up with dishonorable or bad-conduct discharges that led to the revocation of their benefits; who killed

themselves rather than face a lifetime of pain and alienation, I was compelled to go to the youth and tell them what their recruiters never would – that the benefits of military service are never free. We pay the price for the rest of our lives.

The women from the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce couldn’t know that, though, and they didn’t want to know. They stood over us with arms crossed as we packed up our table. One of them repeatedly insisted that her husband had been in the military, and he’d been fine, and now her daughter had just enlisted.

“I hope she doesn’t get raped,” I replied with too much anger, the indignant anger I’d been struggling to overcome for years, but which still surfaced when prodded by willful ignorance such as this. It was clear they were uninterested in hearing anything negative about the military, no matter how appreciative the students were of our efforts to bring them a few morsels of truth. Their denial was deep and untouchable. As we left the building, I looked back at the military recruiters standing at their tables in the front, and I saw them smirk. They would meet their quota. I felt the rage bubble up in my chest, and with it, the understanding that my work would never be done. But I was one of the lucky ones. **CT**

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Emily Yates is a writer in many modes, from songs and poetry to essays and articles. She began writing professionally in 2002, when she enlisted in the US army as a journalist (public affairs specialist), and has been trying to make up for this error in judgment since getting out of the military in 2008. In an effort to use her powers for good rather than evil, she now performs as a comedic/political singer-songwriter and volunteers with Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans For Peace. This article was first published at www.truthout.org

The women stood over us with arms crossed as we packed up our table. One of them repeatedly insisted that her husband had been in the military, and he’d been fine, and now her daughter had just enlisted



Detailed view of the Monument Moslavina in Podgaric, Croatia.

IN THE PICTURE

Memorials are made of this . . .

Nate Robert rejoices in the Spomenik – the brutal architecture of Eastern Europe’s Communist past

Articles about the land formerly known as Yugoslavia often stray towards themes of war, economic struggle, decaying infrastructure, and brutal grey “communist architecture.” It seems almost too easy, slipping into hackneyed motifs when writing about Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, or Slovenia. And, of course, any contemporary allegory of the former Yugoslavia wouldn’t be complete without contrasting mentions of splendid natural beauty, along with trite (albeit true) tales of the charming locals.

However, these are the Spomenik. They





**Kosmaj Monument, in
Serbia, best visited on a
foggy morning.**

IN THE PICTURE



Three Fists Monument at Bubanj Memorial Park, Niš, Serbia, designed by Ivan Saboli, 1963. Located in Bubanj Park, site of the execution of more than 10,000 Serbian citizens. The clenched fists represent the men, women, and children defying the enemy.

it's impossible to talk about these Spomenik, without tip-toeing very closely to some of the more well-trodden Yugoslavian tropes



Inside the Ilinden (Makedonium) Monument, Krusevo, Macedonia.

are indeed Yugoslavian monuments and memorials to war, tragedy, hope, unity, and resistance. And, yes, they are actually located in a formerly socialist land, commissioned by a man usually referred to as

“the benevolent dictator of a Communist nation,” and, well, they’re mostly grey, concrete, and in a state of beautiful crumbling decay.

Yes, they often exist in spectacular surroundings. And you’ll usually find a charming local on hand to guide you there. So, really it’s impossible to talk about these Spomenik, without tip-toeing very closely to some of the more well-trodden Yugoslavian tropes.

These Spomenik (literally, monuments) represent the ironic contradictions of the former Yugoslavia. They’re reminders of an unspeakably painful past, and of an uncertain future. Physically, they’re bold, concrete and heavy. Conceptually, they’re even heavier.



Yugoslavian monument dedicated to the World War II revolution in Moslavina. Located in Podgaric, Croatia. Constructed in 1967, and designed by Dušan Džamonja.

Built at locations of immense tragedy, representing death, victory, unity, and peace, these edifices recall deep pain and the absolute worst that humanity can offer.

Located all over the former Yugoslavia, the monuments are reminders of a past that some people believe should be forgotten, while for others, it is cherished and yearned-for. They're rough, but sculptured and beautiful. And sure, the usual throwaway media descriptions such as "alien" and "futuristic," are equally accurate.

Yugoslavia, during this time these monuments were built was led by Josip Broz Tito, a revolutionary who dominated the nation for decades before his death in

1980. The memorials were built to remember the tragedy and valour of war, with frequent relevance to the Partisans – Europe's most effective anti-Nazi resistance group that Tito led during World War II. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Spomenik were placed all over the country.

Internationally-acclaimed architects and sculptors were employed to conceptualise the monuments, designed to forge a purpose of national unity. The results are simply breath-taking.

I've learned the historical events behind the Spomenik – wars, battles, concentration camps, resistance, hope, mass-murder – and the contemporary reasons that explain why some Spomenik are vandalised, left to decay, or even de-

The memorials were built to remember the tragedy and valour of war, with frequent relevance to the Partisans – Europe's most effective anti-Nazi resistance group that Tito led during World War II

IN THE PICTURE



Jasenovac Flower Monument, Bogdan Bogdanovi, 1966. Built at the site of the Jasenovac concentration camp – an extermination camp established by the Croatian Ustaše regime during World War II. In 1946 the Croatian State Commission estimated that 500,000 – 600,000 murders had occurred here, at one of the largest concentration camps in Europe.

I came for the concrete, and walked away with another lesson of the region

stroyed, while others are maintained and preserved.

I came for the concrete, and walked away with another lesson of the region: the architecture of the monuments may be unique, but tumultuous history is common with every region of the planet.

As a long-time fan of brutalism, the architecture is what initially attracted me to these monuments. However, most of the Spomenik are ignored by international tourists and locals alike, the fascinating mid-century Yugoslavian monuments usually deserted, mainly because of their remote locations, However, with their spectacular natural settings, set along winding mountain roads – these monuments make a great set of pin-points for an incredible road-trip. **CT**



Detail of the Jasenovac Flower Monument,

Nate Robert specializes in travel photography. Since July 2012, he has been traveling the world full time, through 54 countries. His website is www.yomadic.com

Legs like Angie Dickinson's

Dell Franklin has trouble steering his cab when a beautiful passenger squeezes her thighs around his neck . . .

I'm going to get in a wreck if I don't keep my eyes off these nubile drinking-age Cal Poly coeds parading up and down the main drag. Tonight, because it's Farmer's Market, the street was closed early, the bars are packed and, despite the cold weather, these girls dress unlike girls of any previous generation – skirts short and tight, shorts short and tight, blouses skimpy and exposing cleavage. It's enough to make a senior citizen like me weak at the knees.

At about 10 a.m., I drove four of them to current hotspot Mother's, and as they giggled and made senseless small talk, the redhead beside me flirted, "Were you a hottie when you were young, Mr. Cab Driver?"

"Maybe."

She pursed her lips. "I . . . like . . . you."

"Sure you do." Then, "Look, Red, tell me, how come you girls run around in skimpy outfits with no jackets when it's 40 out?"

"Because we LOSE them!" squeals a girl in the back. "We dance, and we party, and..."

"It gets HOT in those bars."

"So," I said. "Tie 'em around your waists."

A chorus of groans. "No way. You kidding?"

"So out. Ugh."

When I dropped them off at Mother's, where a band was playing, there was a line. The shotgun dish paid and tipped very well and then chucked me under her chin, delivering her most winsome smile.

"Happy hunting," I said.

"Uh-uh. WE'RE the hunted."

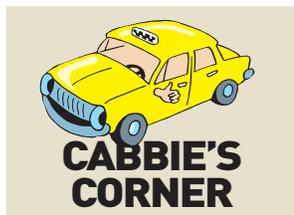
Later well after midnight, I pull into Bull's Tavern, where the kids like to get down and dirty in a looser jukebox environment. An

lady named Emily has called a cab. A big crowd congregates outside – smokers, cell phone yappers, hanger-outers. It's very loud. Amid the crowd, I spot a pair of legs and thighs that have me near to gasping.

These legs are long, slender, shapely, and sleekly tanned, just muscular enough, thighs bare, her splendid middle-quarters encased in hip-and-crotch-hugging black Spandex shorts. She might as well have been wearing a bikini bottom. And above the shorts is a brown, sinewy belly.

Several kids are hitting on her when a chunky blond steps out of the frenzied mob of hard-breathing Toms and signals for me. I wave back. She seems flustered as she steps into the mob and pulls the girl with the legs toward my cab while the Toms groan and hoot. She is loaded, giggling, almost stag-

Amid the crowd, I spot a pair of legs and thighs that have me near to gasping



Angie Dickinson caught me staring at her, and gave me a suggestive smile, and, as I stepped into the dugout not five feet from her, she continued smiling at me

gering. The blond pushes her into the back seat and then sits beside her, behind the shotgun seat.

I turn around to get a good look at the one with the legs as the blond gives me an address in a neighbourhood of apartment buildings occupied by students. The girl with the legs watches me stare at her.

“Hi,” she says. “How’s yer night goin’?”

“Just fine. Listen,” I say. “You ever see Angie Dickinson in the movie, *Rio Bravo*?”

“Unh-uh.” She’s vague, glassy-eyed.

“Well, Angie Dickinson, in that movie, had the most beautiful legs I’ve ever seen on a woman. So honey, I gotta tell you, you’ve got the most beautiful legs I’ve seen since Angie Dickinson in *Rio Bravo*.”

“Well thank you, honey yerself.” She sits up, grinning at me through the rearview mirror. I keep an eye on her as we move out. We go a block before I remember to click on the meter. There’s a slow way to where we’re going, and I take it.

I’m thinking about the time in May, 1961, when the LA Angel baseball team asked me to work out before a game with the Yankees. I was 17, a prospect, and I got to hobnob with the professionals, but the highlight of the evening, along with watching legendary Mickey Mantle hit batting practice, was trotting off the field and spotting Angie Dickinson, who was evidently dating one of the Angel players, sitting in the box seat closest to the dugout. She caught me staring at her, and gave me a suggestive smile, and, as I stepped into the dugout not five feet from her, she continued smiling at me. I blushed, too paralysed with awe to say a damn thing, though I stayed in the dugout and continued to pop up to peer at her as she conversed with nearby adorers.

Now, as I keep an eye on the doll in the back seat, her grin drips with ardour as a pair of sneakers tickle my ears. She’s leaning back luxuriously as her calves move and brush up against my ears.

“Emily! Stop it!” cries the blond.

Emily’s calves are like satin. Gradually her legs, like snakes, slither up and wrap themselves around my neck. I’m having trouble steering the cab as she squeezes her thighs with athletic force around my neck. Her sneakers dangle before me, blocking my view as I drive 10 miles per hour down an obscure side street.

“You like my legs, honey?” Emily coos.

“Yes I do, Emily. I love your beautiful legs.”

“Emily, stop it!”

“Oh relax, Jen! We’re just havin’ fun, aren’t we, honey?” She increases the force with which she squeezes her thighs around my neck.

“Yes we are, Emily.”

“Aren’t they smooth, honey?”

“Very smooth.”

“You think my legs are as beautiful as . . . what’s her name, Angie . . .?”

“More beautiful. I’m 62, and you have the most beautiful legs I’ve ever seen, Emily.”

She’s practically sitting on top of me when the blond begins pulling her off. Emily giggles and continues to straddle my head and neck. I feel I should grab an ankle or shin to hold her there, and it becomes a bit of a tug-of-war with me and the blond and Emily, who finally slides off me and ends up in the blond’s lap. As they get sorted out, the blond yells at me:

“I know what you’re up to, you dirty old man, taking this dark street! You get us home right now!”

We are almost there. I pull up to their apartment and Emily is again trying to get her legs hoisted around my neck as the blond pulls her out of the cab, dragging her splendid bottom over the back seat and out onto the street, as I pop out to offer my help. Emily, now out of the blonds’ grip, comes over and falls against me and we hug. I’m trying to clamp a kiss on her when the blond, now furious, pulls and drags her away and shouts, “You oughta be ashamed of yourself, asshole!”

She tosses some singles at me and drags Emily up the stairway leading to their apartment, Emily turning to grin at me all the way. I pick up the singles, add them to my wad, and get into the cab. The phone rings, the dispatcher sending me back to Mother's. When I get there, the redhead whom I picked up earlier is with her same three pals and flags me down. They hustle inside, the redhead next to me. "It's our friend!" she announces, grinning at me. "Thank God you came, we were freezin'." She chucks me under the chin. "So how's your night been?"

"Better than good. Almost great," I tell her. From the back seat a chorus of voices cuts off the redhead: "We're goin' to Jamaica! Can you take us to Jamaica? Ha ha ha!"

"Yeah, Jamaica . . . here we come!"

"We want real men. These college nerds are such . . ."

"Dweebs."

"Yeah! Dweebs!"

"Beggars," I tell them.

"Beggars! Right on, Mr. Cab Driver!"

"Begging dweebs!"

This kind of chatter continues until I drop them off at a house in a 1960s neigh-

borhood a couple miles from campus. They throw money at me – alms for the poor. The redhead chucks me under the chin. "Too bad you're not a young gun," she says. "Cuz you'd be mine."

They parade out, wiggling their fingers and backsides at me. I watch them go into their house.

Something is not right. I do not realise what it is until I get to the airport for the late flights and am shivering in the cold with the graveyard cabbie and realise my fleecy, hooded sweatshirt is missing from my shotgun seat. It was a prized purchase for which I'd paid \$10 at a thrift store, specifically for nights like this when the temperature dives to the 30s.

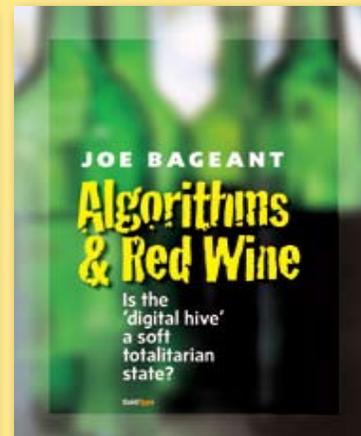
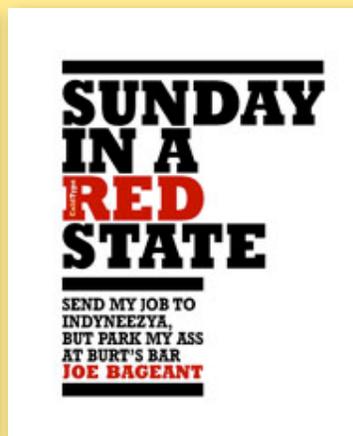
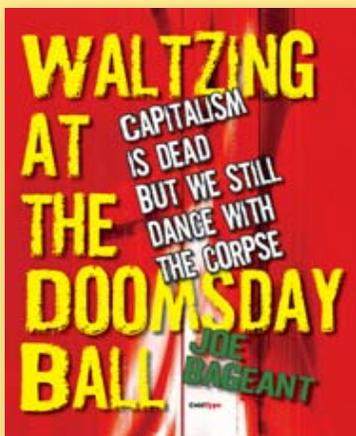
Now I remember – the voluptuous redhead who chucked me under the chin was blowing me kisses as she wrapped my hooded sweatshirt around her neck, as if it were a mink stole.

Ha, ha, ha. I sit in my cab with the engine running and the heat on. **CT**

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Dell Franklin is a long-time journalist and founder of the Rogue Voice literary magazine. He blogs at www.dellfranklin.com

Something is not right. I do not realise what it is until I get to the airport for the late flights and am shivering in the cold with the graveyard cabbie

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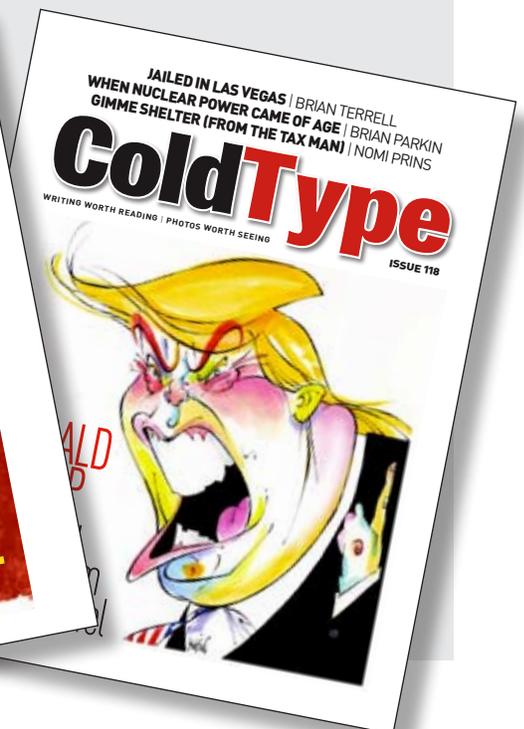
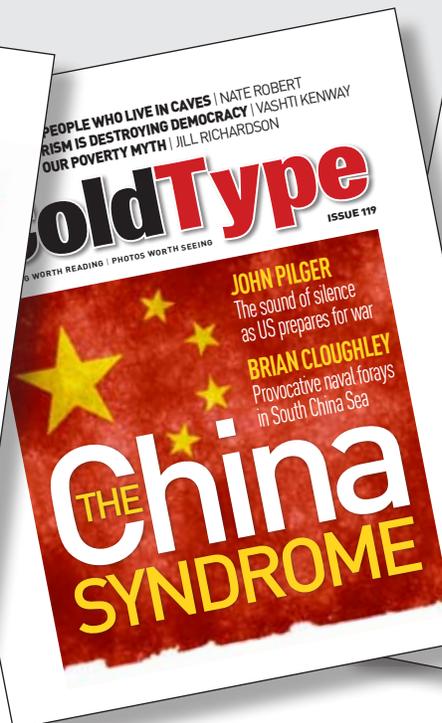
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The Orlando massacre can't be reduced to guns

The instinctive response to get rid of the guns is understandable – but, as **Danny Katch** explains, there's more to a mass murder spree than access to guns

After the massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, there was no time to process and grieve over this monumental loss of beautiful life. The struggle began immediately to define the meaning of this latest atrocity.

Was the killer Muslim? At one level, this question should matter as much as whether a devastating hurricane was named Jake or Jalil. But the more common mass murders become, the more inherently political they become – and the more intense becomes the public autopsy of each broken shard of thought inside the minds of those who carry them out.

Who were the victims? Were they immigrants? Queer? Muslim? If they are members of groups that are oppressed in the United States, we fight for those collective identities to be recognised. We know these labels can't come close to describing the 49 people who were individual, and who are now uniformly dead – but we also know that we can't let opportunistic bigots to reduce them to simply American victims of terror.

How horrible that some people can only accept immigrants and LGBTQ people as American in death. It's a grim continuation of that old genocidal chestnut, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."

Cynics can dismiss both sides for attempting to use the Pulse massacre to advance an

agenda. And they would be correct in the sense that, yes, some of us want to use this rampage to try to prevent future violence against LGBTQ people – while others hope it will be a springboard for yet more war on the Muslim world. But the cynics' underlying assumption of a moral equivalence between left and right is wrong. The fight for the meaning of the Pulse massacre matters, as does the larger fight to diagnose the societal sickness leading to escalating numbers of massacres.

If Omar Mateen is deemed to have been driven primarily by the rhetoric of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and if the endless war on terror is further escalated in response, this will ramp up two of the factors that seem to have had more to do with Mateen's rampage – and certainly have played a larger role in the vast majority of American mass shootings: militarism and violent masculinity.

Very few of the hundreds of mass shootings in the US in recent years have been carried out by Muslims. But almost all of them have been carried out by men. One in every six of these killers had prior arrests for domestic violence, and that proportion is surely misleading because of how many domestic violence victims – such as Omar Mateen's first wife – never call the cops on abusive partners.

As for militarism, it's simply absurd – and yet practically universal, at least in main-

How horrible that some people can only accept immigrants and LGBTQ people as American in death

AFTER ORLANDO

Most proposed gun control measures – from stricter background checks to barring people with certain criminal records from buying guns – wouldn't impact the vast majority of mass shootings that have taken place

stream politics and the media – to pretend that this era of mass shootings has nothing to do with the longest period of continuous war in US history, and the corresponding militarisation of police who now routinely don Kevlar and carry assault rifles across the country.

An endless war on terror leads to an endless glorification of heavily armed snipers, Navy SEALs and SWAT teams – and inevitable blowback from those who identify with the victims of the wars and desire to get revenge.

In the case of Mateen, it seems to have produced both at the same time. For years, he admired the NYPD, and he worked for G4S, a leading security company. And he apparently pledged allegiance to ISIS and its war on the West – as well as Hezbollah and the al-Nusra Front, Islamist forces that are locked in deadly combat with ISIS.

In the face of a right-wing campaign that will turn a hate-filled massacre of LGBTQ Latins into future hate-filled violence directed at Muslims, there's a crying need to build awareness about the terrible toll of war, and of racial and gender violence – and to build movements to confront them.

Instead, the supposed 'left' side of the national discussion in the aftermath of Orlando was dominated by leading voices of the Democratic Party. At worst, they were indistinguishable from Republicans in their bloodthirsty cries for vengeance against innocent people in the Middle East. At best, they tried to deflect the discussion away from the roots of these spasms of violence – more often than not onto the issue of guns and gun control.

It's understandable why many people would wish for some form of gun control in times like these. The massive number of guns in the US is a clear symptom of a culture of violence – and talking about that can seem like a healthy way to counter right-wing efforts to whip up Islamophobia. It seems like an eminently practical solution to violence –

if people didn't have guns, there wouldn't be gun violence – and more realistic than taking on militarism and misogyny.

But, while focusing on the how of American violence rather than the why might seem pragmatic, it actually leads our side to abdicate from the fight over the meaning of the Pulse massacre, ceding the ground to reactionary explanations such as Islamophobia.

Moreover, most proposed gun control measures – from stricter background checks to barring people with certain criminal records from buying guns – wouldn't impact the vast majority of mass shootings that have taken place. As much as gun control advocates mock the National Rifle Association's rhetoric about good guys with guns stopping bad guys with guns, their own proposals are premised on the idea of keeping guns out of the hands of bad guys.

Mass shootings, however, are usually committed by people with no obvious red flags – until after the fact, of course. They are people who have been radicalised – to use the term that the US media and political establishment have applied exclusively to Muslims who commit violent acts – by something sick in American society.

Even worse, gun control inherently means turning to the US government – which Martin Luther King famously called “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” – to reduce violence.

After the massacre, Senate Democrats used a filibuster to hold up other business “until we get some signal, some sign that we can come together,” said Connecticut's Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, in support of bipartisan legislation to disallow people on federal terrorism watch lists from buying guns.

Set aside for a moment the injustice of heaping another stigma on top of the many innocent people, overwhelmingly Arab and Muslim, who end up on the government's no-fly list for no other reason than a clerical error, refusing to work for the Feds as an informant, or having a name similar to

someone else on the list. The larger point is that the U.S. government has spent the past 15 years conducting an anti-terror witchhunt directed at untold numbers of Arabs and Muslims. The terrible consequence is the increase in attacks on Muslims and their houses of worship – while Islamophobia runs even more rampant among law enforcement officers who are supposed to protect them, but don't.

The grim fact is that this “reasonable” gun control proposal would discriminate against some of the Americans with most justification in wanting to be armed for their self-defense.

There seem to be no limits to the double standards and rank hypocrisy of government officials who preach about getting guns off the streets while recklessly adding to the massive arsenals of various forces of the state. Eman Abdelhadi described the scene at a New York City vigil for the victims in Orlando outside the historic Stonewall Inn: “Politician after politician took the stage and talked, not about homophobia, but about gun control. In the same breath, they lauded the NYPD for ‘protecting New Yorkers.’ Indeed, the police seemed at home in front of Stonewall, carrying the same assault rifles that had been used two days earlier to kill the people we had come to mourn.”

This wasn't just an unfortunate visual irony. As Alex Gourevitch pointed out in Salon, the police forces entrusted to enforce gun control do so with the same biases held by Mateen and many other gunmen: “There is no reason to expect fair enforcement of gun control laws, or even that they will mainly be used to someone prevent these massacres. That is because how our society polices depends not on the laws themselves, but on how the police – and prosecutors and courts – decide to enforce the law. Especially given how many guns there are in the US, gun law enforcement will be selective. That is to say, they will be unfairly enforced, only deepening the injustices daily committed against

poor minorities in the name of law and order.”

As for Abdelhadi, a queer Muslim activist, she probably didn't feel better two days later when the cover of the New York Daily News featured a photo of a dashing Marine holding a machine gun in Iraq with the headline: No Civilian Should Own This Gun.

That headline was probably intended as a liberal challenge to the conservative fanatics who care about no part of the Constitution so much as the right to bear arms. But it also embodied a logic, embraced by conservatives as well, that has been promoted by every imperial power since Rome: Violence is meant to be used over there on them, not here on us.

But it never turns out to be quite so simple, especially for those and their families who call “over there” home, or did once.

Every mass shooting in the US that reaches the headlines – and keep in mind that so many of them aren't major news outside the area where they occur – produces sentiment in favor of gun control. It's a natural response, especially considering the behavior of the right-wing fanatics who think the solution to violence is more guns.

But the gun control advocates in some position of responsibility for the state machine at various levels – such as those NYPD-loving politicians outside the Stonewall, or Chris Murphy in the Senate, or Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton presiding over the US war machine – aren't just reacting instinctively when they put gun control in the spotlight after a horror like Orlando.

Whether they are fully conscious of it or not, they are using their position and prominence to prevent the spotlight from shining on the real causes of violence and bigotry in US society.

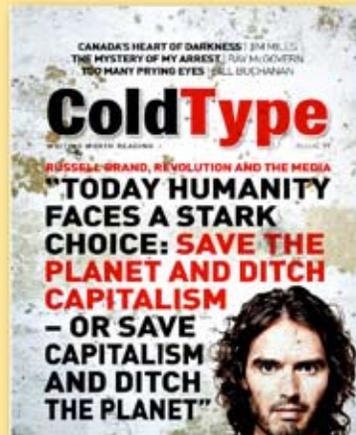
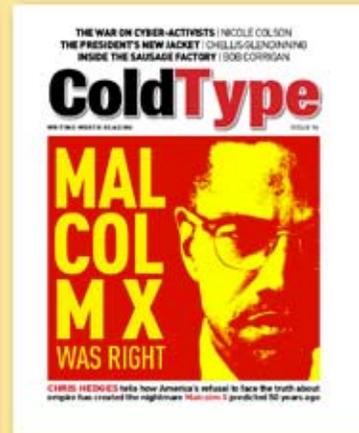
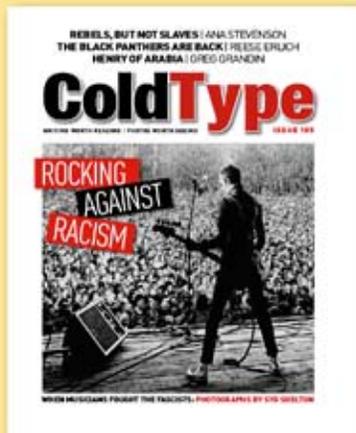
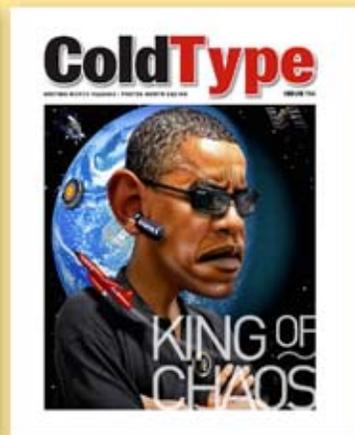
We on the left need to do all we can to draw attention back to those root causes. Otherwise, we will be set back in our struggle to stop future mass shootings and violence, whether they take place over there or over here.

CT

There seem to be no limits to the double standards and rank hypocrisy of government officials who preach about getting guns off the streets while recklessly adding to the massive arsenals of various forces of the state

Danny Katch is a Queens, New York, based activist, journalist, and comedian. The author of *America's Got Democracy! The Making of the World's Longest Running Reality Show*, he is a columnist for *Socialist Worker* – <http://socialistworker.org> – where this was first published.

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