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First Brexit . . . Now Trump! WHATEVER NEXT?

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BLOOD AND FIRE AND SLAUGHTER

PLUS
From Our Archives:
17 Minutes in Gana
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Martin McGuinness: Hero, leader, comrade, father

Sinn Féin president **Gerry Adams** pays tribute to the former IRA guerrilla whose peacemaking was instrumental in ending the Troubles in Northern Ireland

Martin remained committed to the same ideals that led to his becoming a republican activist in the first instance – the pursuit of Irish unification, freedom, equality and respect for all

Martin McGuinness, Irish republican and Sinn Féin politician, who was deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland from May 2007 until January 2017. Died March 21, 2017, aged 66

On March 21, Ireland lost a hero. Derry lost a son. Sinn Féin lost a leader, and I lost a dear friend and a comrade. Martin' McGuinness's family have suffered the biggest loss of all. They have lost a loving, caring, dedicated husband, father and grandfather, a brother and an uncle. Above all else, Martin loved his family, and my heart goes out to his wife Bernie, his sons Fiachra and Emmet, his daughters Fionnuala and Gráinne, Martin's grandchildren, his sister Geraldine, brothers Paul, William, Declan, Tom and John and the extended McGuinness family.

Martin was a formidable person of the rarest kind – one who did extraordinary things in extraordinary times, but he was also a man who was, in many ways, very ordinary: particularly in his habits and personal lifestyle.

He was a true man of the people, a personification of Derry – the city he loved with all his heart and the city that moulded the humility and warmth that defined him.

Like many other Derry “wans,” Martin grew up in a city in which Catholics were victims of widespread political and economic discrimination. Poverty was endemic. The Orange state's violent suppression of the civ-

il rights campaign, the Battle of the Bogside and the emerging conflict propelled Martin into a life less ordinary.

We first met, 45 years ago, behind the barricades of Free Derry. We have been friends and comrades ever since. From time spent on the run, to imprisonment in the Curragh and Portlaoise in the 1970s, through his time as Northern education minister and later deputy first minister, Martin made an unparalleled journey. Throughout that journey, Martin remained committed to the same ideals that led to his becoming a republican activist in the first instance – the pursuit of Irish unification, freedom, equality and respect for all. It was a desire to see the domination and discrimination that he experienced on the streets of his native Derry as a young man ended.

Thanks to Martin, we now live in a very different Ireland, which has been changed irrevocably. Without him, I don't think there could have been the type of peace process we've had, and much of the change we now take for granted could not have been achieved. His contribution to the evolution of republican thinking was enormous, as was his popularising of republican ideals.

Over many years of working together, Martin and I both learned that advances in struggle require creativity and imagination and a willingness to take initiatives. Martin embraced that challenge and he didn't just



Photo: Thomas McMullan/BMG - www.belfastpix.com



Photo: Aaron McCracken/Harrisons

Above: Martin McGuinness, Irish republican activist who helped change the face of Northern Ireland.

Below, left: With former adversary Ian Paisley, after they became partners in the post-Good Friday Agreement government.

Below, right: All smiles as McGuinness meets Queen Elizabeth.

talk about change, he delivered it. He once said: “When change begins, and we have the confidence to embrace it as an opportunity and a friend, and show honest and positive leadership, then so much is possible.”

It was a source of great pride for me following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to nominate Martin as the North of Ireland minister for education. It was a position he embraced; putting equality and fairness into practice in the Department of Education, seeking to end the 11-plus exam and improve

outcomes for every child.

In 2007, he became deputy first minister and an equal partner to Ian Paisley in government. They forged not only a working relationship, but a friendship that illustrated to all the progress we have made on the island of Ireland. His reconciliation and outreach work, and his work on behalf of victims and for peace, in Ireland and internationally, have been justifiably widely applauded.

As part of that work, Martin met the Queen of England several times. He did so while



LAST RESPECTS: Several thousand people paid tribute to Martin McGuinness at the former Andersonstown army barracks site in West Belfast hours after the announcement of the death of the former Deputy First Minister.

He was guided by the principles of mutual respect, equality and parity of esteem that underpinned the Good Friday Agreement, and the republican values of liberty, equality and solidarity

very conscious of the criticism this might provoke. He would be the first to acknowledge that some republicans and nationalists were discommoded at times by his efforts to reach out the hand of friendship, and some unionist leaders were discommoded also. That is the real test of leadership – to reach out beyond your base.

It is a test that Martin passed every time.

He was guided by the principles of mutual respect, equality and parity of esteem that underpinned the Good Friday Agreement, and the republican values of liberty, equality and solidarity. The consequence of straying from those principles of the Good Friday Agreement has in recent months led to the regrettable collapse of the North's political

institution, but his legacy will be to show that in the face of adversity, we can overcome. That is a legacy we must build on.

While he had a passion for politics, Martin was not one-dimensional. He enjoyed storytelling and he was a decent poet, with a special place in his heart for Seamus Heaney and Patrick Kavanagh. He enjoyed cooking, growing herbs, sports of all kinds and fly fishing, but especially the space to have time with Bernie and their family. That's what grounded Martin McGuinness.

I am thankful to him – for his strength, for his vision and for being the Martin so many of us knew and loved. You will be sorely and dearly missed my friend. *Go raibh maith agat agus go dté tú slán a chara.* **CT**



REMEMBERING A HERO: Thousands of mourners follow the coffin of McGuinness at his funeral in his home city of Derry.

A tribute to Martin McGuinness by **Máirtín Ó Muilleoir**

The man who faced down the powerful on the streets of Derry was also a fearless peacemaker

The 19th-century Donegal poet Séamus Ó Domhnaill's lament for his drowned son comes closest to capturing our devastation at the news that Martin McGuinness is gone.

*An chéad Mháirt de fhómhair ba brónach
tuirseach mo scéal.*

*Lámh thapa a bhí cróga ag gabháil rohmam ar
leaba na n-éag.*

*(On the First Tuesday of autumn, sorry and
tired was my news*

*A fast hand which was brave going before me
to the bed of the dead)*

For in McGuinness, we had a hero and a champion who stood always by our side.

While the commentariat assess his life's journey in parts, we see only the whole of the moon.

The Martin McGuinness who faced down the powerful on the streets of his native Derry was also the Martin McGuinness we revered as a fearless peacemaker.

His was a life spent in selfless service. A life of patriotic and selfless endeavour. A life of endurance, resolve and unstoppable commitment. Until early in the morning of March 21. He was our North Star.

No matter, how great the challenge or how intimidating the task, he rose again and again. And on every

occasion, his integrity and nobility brought his people with him.

His every action inspired confidence and courage in others. His humour and big heart got us through the trials of politics.

His compassion and kindness emboldened us to reach further and higher.

We admired him as a comrade and leader, of course. But that wasn't even the half of it. We loved him.

In turn, he believed that love would conquer all. Indeed, he went on to prove that as the pre-eminent peacemaker of his time, befriending in particular those who knew what it was like to have been in the trenches.

And while his astonishing ability to build bridges did indeed win over many hearts, it also meant that when he called time on efforts to turn back the clock, his people rallied like never before.

Today is filled with sorry but in time to come, wherever people gather to seek justice, they will take great strength and succour from his memory. And every time his name is spoken he will live again. And his name will be spoken for a thousand years. **CT**

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir is CEO of the Belfast Media Group and Sinn Féin member of the Northern Ireland Assembly

Twisted logic

British troops in Estonia: Good. Russian soldiers in Russia: Bad . . .

Bryan MacDonald on the strange inversion of reality in the Western media

The failure to heed George Bernard Shaw's warning created the conditions for the rise of Adolf Hitler and an even more dreadful conflict a quarter of a century later

Supporters of NATO believe American, British and German soldiers being sent to Russia's borders is "defensive." But the Kremlin's counter moves are aggressive. This delusion could be dangerous.

George Bernard Shaw was probably second only to William Shakespeare among English-language dramatists. In 1914, he was one of the most famous people in Europe. The Irishman's play, *Pygmalion*, had been a massive success in Berlin, London, and Vienna. As a result, newspapers, and magazines were lining up to publish his journalism. Until he started to reject the conventional wisdom which presented the nascent war between Britain and Germany as a noble cause, that is.

In an interview with the American journalist, Mary Boyle O'Reilly he held the two sides were equally culpable for the conflict, and suggested how "the soldiers should shoot their officers and go home." Suddenly, work dried up, and he found himself blacklisted in the mainstream media. Thus, he used the *New Statesman*, a new journal in which he held a substantial shareholding, to publish his now legendary "Common Sense about the War."

His thoughts were mostly prescient. Especially when pointing out how "France and England have to live with Germany after the war, and to cripple Germany by exactions and humiliations would be a serious

mistake." Of course, the failure to heed this warning created the conditions for the rise of Adolf Hitler and an even more dreadful conflict a quarter of a century later.

The establishment reaction to his polemic was startling in its venom. Herbert Asquith, the Prime Minister's son, called for Shaw to be shot. Meanwhile, his rival, J.C. Squire wanted him "tarred and feathered." And H.G. Wells and G.K. Chesterton publicly shunned him.

Continuing silence

The reason for this preamble is to outline how "group think" can lead to the blackballing of even great minds and the famous. It makes people afraid to stick their head above the parapet, even when they know their conviction to be true. We are seeing it today in Western hysteria about Russia and continuing silence as NATO marches ever close to the country's frontiers.

Especially last month, as cheerleaders for the Western military club celebrated the deployment of British soldiers to Estonia, far from their homeland. The move follows a German placement to Lithuania and America stationing troops in Latvia.

The London media greeted the move with suitably aggressive headlines. The *Independent* went: "First of 800 UK troops arrive in Estonia to face off against Putin as part of NATO show of strength." The *Mirror*

splashed: “British troops join showdown against Vladimir Putin as they travel to the frontline in Russia.”

Yet, despite this jingoism, the US-led club describes all this as a defensive move. Which Moscow, given that it employs consular staff who study the UK press reaction and rhetoric of its political class, increasingly finds hard to believe. So, the mood in the Kremlin has, somewhat justifiably, shifted to sense a provocation.

Thus, it was hardly a huge surprise when the German spy chief, Bruno Kahl, announced that Russia had apparently doubled its military presence on its Western border. Students of Russian history were especially aware of its people’s paranoia about attacks from that direction. Information surely known to Western governments, unless their diplomats are fast asleep in Moscow.

But what was astonishing was NATO’s response. Der Spiegel reported how Kahl suggested that Russia’s alleged move “can’t be seen as defensive.”

So, let’s get this straight. According to NATO logic, Russia’s reinforcement of its frontiers, following an American-British-German deployment right up against them is construed to be an act of pugnacity. However, the original stationing of these foreign troops is supposed to be entirely benign? It seems this is a classic example of what happens when propaganda goes too far.

Moscow let the Baltics go more than 25 years ago, and, since then, has acquiesced to their assimilation into both the European Union and NATO. Indeed, there were no attempts at all to scupper their plans by military means. Furthermore, the Kremlin has given repeated assurances of how it has no interest in invading these states.

Nevertheless, Western media – and the think tank racket – have conducted a relentless messaging offensive in recent years, suggesting that Putin covets these territories. But nobody is ever able to give a convincing reason why Moscow would risk nuclear annihilation to acquire three countries which

have defensive guarantees from the United States. And for what? There are no valuable resources to exploit, just a small, and ever dwindling, population – the majority of which is extremely hostile to Russia.

Talk the talk

The current situation seems to be a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. Constant media promotion of the “Russia will invade the Baltics” line has forced politicians – most of whom have very little knowledge of the region – to be seen to do something. At the same time, local leaders benefit electorally by using the “Russian threat” to distract from their own ineptitude as the Baltic economies struggle and corruption remains rife.

For its part, Moscow has publicly voiced its concern, especially given it “has no information about how and when the build-up will end,” according to Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Meshkov. “And who said that it will end with this? . . . for the first time since World War Two we see German soldiers along our borders.” That last line is worth repeating a few times because Berlin sending troops to Russia’s frontier is like a red rag to a bull.

Relentless agitprop has led us to this point where Western soldiers are right up against Russia, and Moscow has been forced to answer the challenge, even if only to placate domestic opinion, which is understandably concerned.

The whole affair is nonsensical. And of no benefit to either side. Indeed, you can be pretty confident that if Shaw were around now, he’d call for the Western soldiers involved to shoot their officers and go home. Additionally, you can be equally sure of how the Herbert Asquith’s and J.C. Squire’s of today, would insist he be “ostracised.” After all, we’ve already heard that sort of toxic language directed at this very network. **CT**

.....
Bryan MacDonald is an Irish journalist, who is based in Russia. This article first appeared at www.rt.com

If Shaw were around now, he’d call for the Western soldiers involved to shoot their officers and go home

The United States of cogitive dissonance

The latest round of official propaganda proclaiming Donald Trump to be a Putin-Nazi puppet distinctly reeks of desperation, writes **CJ Hopkins**

When you accuse the President of treason, you have to prove it at some point. The ruling classes cannot do this, and thus they need to adjust expectations

It's always extremely sad and confusing when a massive propaganda campaign, like the one we've been subjected to for about the last year, comes to a sudden and ignominious end. You wake up one morning, and the billionaire ass-hat that more or less every "respected" organ of the corporatist media has been telling you was Hitler, or a Russian agent (and possibly both), as it turns out, is, well, just a billionaire ass-hat. An extremely repulsive billionaire ass-hat, but nonetheless just a billionaire ass-hat.

This is extremely disorienting . . . because here you were, prepped for the End of Everything, or at least for the death camps, the Riefenstahlian rallies, and the Russian invasion of Martha's Vineyard, and then all that stuff gets abruptly cancelled like season four of David Milch's *Deadwood*.

We haven't quite reached that stage of things yet, but it feels like we are inching up to it. I know this sounds a little nuts, given the amount of Russia hysteria the media is pumping out during as KremlinGate hearings get underway, but this latest round of official propaganda distinctly reeks of desperation.

The simple fact of the matter is, despite whatever got "hacked" by whom, Donald Trump, ass-hat that he is, is not a Russian sleeper agent or otherwise collaborating with Vladimir Putin, and anyone with half a brain knows this. Thus, it is going to be

impossible to prove the blatantly ridiculous accusations the ruling classes and their media stooges have been making in order to delegitimise him. This is going to present a problem, because the way it works, when you accuse the President of treason (which is a capital offence), is that you kind of have to prove it at some point. The ruling classes cannot do this, and thus they need to adjust expectations, which is what they appear to be doing at the moment.

Deep state disinformation specialists such as Michael Morrell and James R. Clapper are making the rounds of the talk shows and forums, preparing us for the official narrative changeover. (You remember Michael Morrell . . . the ex-CIA chief who, last August, wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* declaring that "Putin had recruited Trump as an unwitting agent of the Russian Federation.")

Oracles of doom

And it is not only spooks like Morrell and Clapper. Suddenly, the oracles we've come to rely on for the latest evidence that Putin-Nazis have taken over the executive branch are adopting a distinctly less hysterical tone. Although they haven't kicked the Russia paranoia cold turkey (as that might cause mass seizures or something), they have obviously begun to wean their followers off the groundless neo-McCarthyite non-

sense they've been peddling straight-faced for more than a year.

Paul "It's the 1930s Again" Krugman has turned his attention back to budgets and taxes and has toned down both the "Return of Fascism" and the "We're Being Governed by Moscow" schtick. The Washington Post, the paper that brought us not only the "Putin Hacks Vermont" story, but the "Anyone who Criticises Hillary Clinton is a Russian Propagandist" story, is also going lighter on the blatant smear jobs, and focusing on stuff like how much Trump-Hitler's vacations are costing the taxpayer.

Protracted battle

Even a shameless rag like The Guardian is doing its part to dampen expectations. With notable exceptions (such as Rachel Maddow, Louise Mensch, and other bull goose loonies), the Arbiters of Reality seem to be settling in for a protracted battle, as opposed to the impeachment proceedings or deep state coup they've been openly pining for. The overriding message is . . . "Don't expect any proof of Trump's collusion with Russia, but that doesn't mean he didn't do it, and it doesn't really matter if we can't prove it, because even if we can't officially impeach him, he's still a fascist, Putin-loving traitor, and since we're stuck with him for the next four years, we're going to move on to other things."

All of which is understandably jarring for the neoliberals, neoconservatives, and

garden variety authoritarians who've been dutifully swallowing the preposterous swill the corporate media has been pouring down their throats (and who have been looking forward to Trump's removal from office). And more so, given that, in the course of a year, they have:



a. had to pretend to believe that Donald Trump is a modern-day Hitler who is going to exterminate millions of people and transform America into a new Fourth Reich; and then . . .

b. once that tactic didn't work, immediately forget the Hitler hooey, and pretend to believe that Donald Trump is a secret agent working for Putin, who they . . .

c. suddenly had to believe is an evil James Bond-villain-type menace intent on annihilating Western democracy, all of which has been hard to swallow, given that, just before all this started, they . . .

d. were just getting used to believing that the official enemy was not Pu-

tin, or fascists, but rather, those scary self-radicalised terrorists. Can you remember back to when *they* were the enemy? It was actually less than a year ago. The media was

The Arbiters of Reality seem to be settling in for a protracted battle, as opposed to the impeachment proceedings or deep state coup they've been openly pining for

Donald Putin and Vladimir Putin caricatures by DonkeyHotey at www.flickr.com

Propaganda Swamp / 2

One day, Trump is a modern-day Hitler, the next day he's a Russian agent, the day after that he's something else

calling it “The Summer of Fear.” Back then, Trump was just becoming Hitler – they had started with the Hitler stuff back in May – but Putin wasn’t controlling him yet, as no one thought he had a chance of defeating Clinton in the general election, so the terrorists were still the reigning bogeymen, and George W. Bush was still a war criminal and not smooching it up with Ellen DeGeneres.

If all that sounds impossible to follow, and totally insane, that’s because it is . . . and is how Americans, and not just Americans, but mostly Americans, are being conditioned to think. Or, rather, to react to a disjunctive series of totally nonsensical emotional stimuli, like the subject of some sick psychological experiment. Let’s take a moment and visualise this . . .

Imagine the subject strapped in a chair as Alex was in *Clockwork Orange*, barraged with images of frightening terrorists until his mind accepts them as “the enemy,” at which point “the enemy” is immediately switched; and now it’s Hitler that is coming to get him, which, after a time, he comes to accept (and forgets the former terrorist “enemy”); at which point “the enemy” is switched once again, and now it’s Putin and the Russians who are after him. And so on, until his mind just snaps and surrenders to whatever official “reality” is being fed into it any given day. At which point you have rendered the subject a totally compliant, scramble-headed, functionally psychotic member of society, whose attention span is about 20 seconds, and whose brain you can fill full of fancy pharmaceuticals to keep it from completely melting down in response to the stress of the cognitive dissonance that it has to deal with on a daily basis.

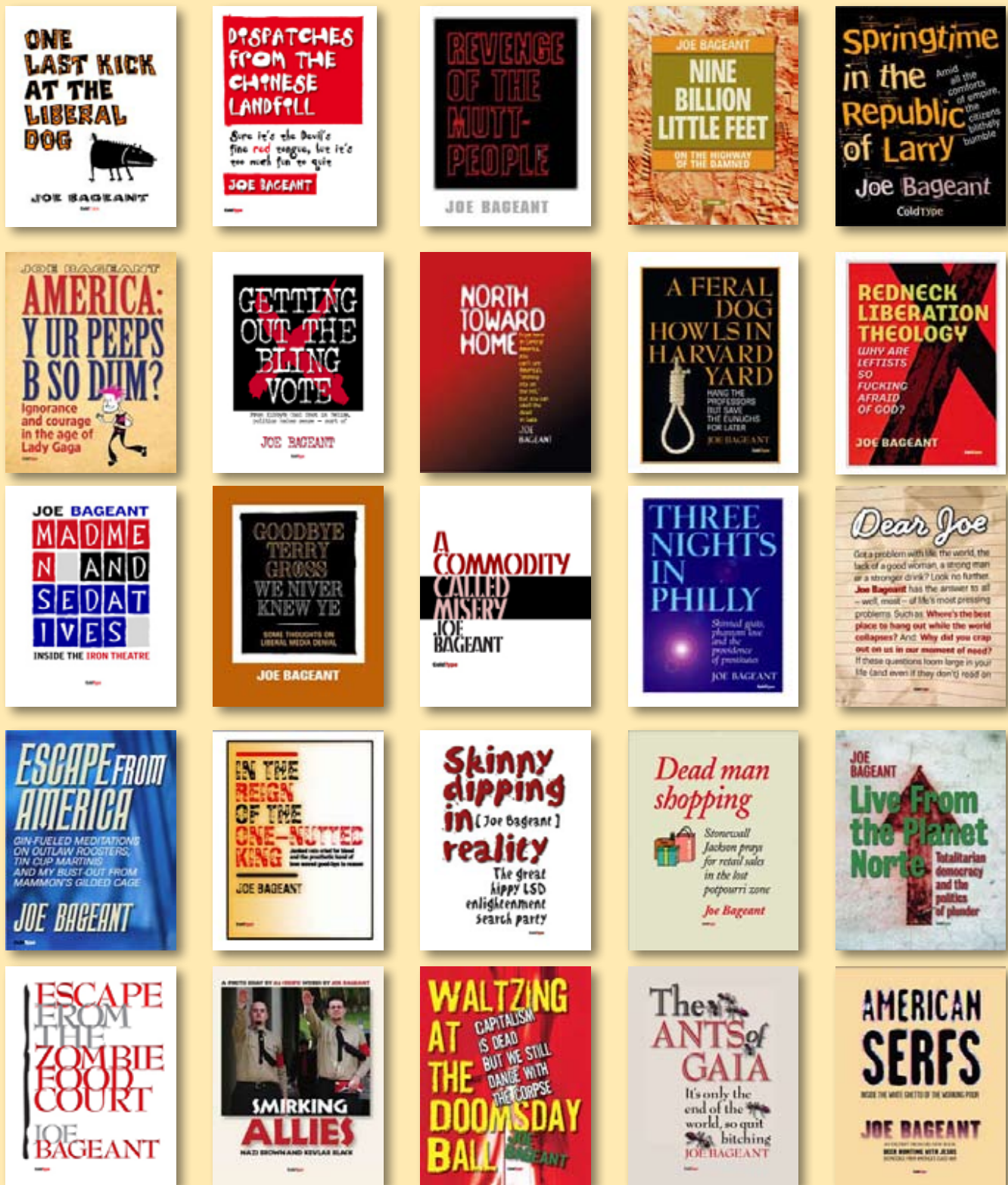
Beyond Orwell

Orwell captured this cognitive dissonance in the part of 1984 where the Party executes the sudden switch from war with Eurasia to war with Eastasia, and Party members adjust

their thinking accordingly. Unfortunately, we are way past Orwell. The neoliberal ruling classes are not simply switching official enemies, they’re switching the nature of the same official enemy. One day, Trump is a modern-day Hitler, the next day he’s a Russian agent, the day after that he’s something else. To achieve the fully psychotic effect, it’s the same so-called “respectable journalists” who are one day assuring us he’s literally Hitler, and the next day, no, he isn’t Hitler, but he’s absolutely a Russian agent, and the next, OK, maybe not, but at least he’s a liar, or a tax cheat, or something.

In case you were wondering, this is also how, if you’re running some sort of Manson-like cult, you twist the minds of your fledgling cult members until they don’t know what to believe anymore. It’s pretty much Mind Control 101. You bombard folks with conflicting realities and contradictory information until they’re rendered incapable of thinking critically. Then you fill their heads with whatever brand of psycho nonsense your cult is peddling. I’m not kidding . . . check this out. There’s all kind of literature that explains how this works. Or, if you don’t have time to do that, just call someone at the New York Times, the Guardian, or the Washington Post, or CNN, or MSNBC. I’m sure they’ll be more than happy to explain the whole antisemitic, staunchly-Zionist, Wall Street-friendly, anti-Wall Street, moronically-cunning, inarticulately-mesmerising, blackmailed-by-and-profitting-from-Russia, Putin-Nazi puppet-thing to you. But you may want to drop some acid first in order to get the full effect. **CT**

C.J. Hopkins is an award-winning American playwright and satirist based in Berlin. His plays are published by Bloomsbury Publishing (UK) and Broadway Play Publishing (US). His debut novel, ZONE 23, will be published in April by Snoggsworthy, Swaine & Cormorant. He can be reached at cwww.jhopkins.com, or at www.consentfactory.org - This article was first published at www.counterpunch.org



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Rule of thieves

John W. Whitehead describes a week in the life of the American kleptocracy

In refusing to hear a challenge to Texas's asset forfeiture law, the US Supreme Court allowed Texas police to keep \$201,000 in ill-gotten cash primarily on the basis that the seized cash – the proceeds of a home sale – was being transported on a highway associated with illegal drug trade

The American kleptocracy – a government ruled by thieves – continues to suck the American people down a rabbit hole into a parallel universe in which the constitution is meaningless, the government is all-powerful, and the citizenry is powerless to defend itself against government agents who steal, spy, lie, plunder, kill, abuse, and generally inflict mayhem and sew madness on everyone and everything in their sphere.

Case in point: In the week that Wikileaks dropped its bombshell about the CIA's use of spy tools to subject law-abiding Americans to all manner of government surveillance and hacking – a revelation that caused barely a ripple of concern among the citizenry – the government quietly and with little fanfare continued to wage its devastating, stomach-churning, debilitating war on the American people.

Incredibly, hardly anyone noticed.

This begs the question: If the government is overstepping its authority, abusing its power, and disregarding the rule of law but no one seems to notice – and no one seems to care – does it matter if the government has become a tyrant?

Here's my short answer: When government wrongdoing ceases to matter, America will have ceased to be.

Just consider the devastation wrought

in one week in the life of our American kleptocracy:

Monday, March 6: *Police were given the go-ahead to keep stealing from Americans who were innocent of any wrongdoing.*

In refusing to hear a challenge to Texas's asset forfeiture law, the US Supreme Court allowed Texas police to keep \$201,000 in ill-gotten cash primarily on the basis that the seized cash – the proceeds of a home sale – was being transported on a highway associated with illegal drug trade, despite any proof of illegal activity by the owner. Asset forfeiture laws, which have come under intense scrutiny and criticism in recent years, allow the police to seize property "suspected" of being connected to criminal activity without having to prove the owner of the property is guilty of a criminal offence.

On April 1, 2013, James Leonard was driving with a companion, Nicosia Kane, on US Highway 59 in Texas when the vehicle was stopped by a state police officer for allegedly speeding and following another vehicle too closely. A subsequent search of the vehicle disclosed a safe in the trunk, which Leonard explained belonged to his mother, Lisa Leonard, and contained cash. When the police officer contacted Lisa Leonard, she confirmed that the safe's contents belonged to her, that the contents

constituted personal business, and that she would not consent to allowing the officer to open the safe. After police secured a search warrant, the safe was opened and found to contain \$201,000 and a bill of sale for a home in Pennsylvania.

Neither the Leonards nor Kane were found to be in possession of illegal drugs. However, the state initiated civil forfeiture proceedings against the \$201,100 on the ground that it was substantially connected to criminal activity because Highway 59 is reputed to be a drug corridor. At trial, Lisa Leonard testified that the money was being sent to Texas so that she could use it to purchase a home for her son and Kane. Both the trial and appeals courts affirmed the authority of state officials to seize and keep Leonard's funds under the state's asset forfeiture law, basing their ruling on wholly circumstantial evidence and the reputation of Highway 59. Leonard then asked the US Supreme Court to compel Texas to return her money, given that she was innocent of any crime. In refusing to hear the case on a technicality, the Supreme Court turned its back on justice and allowed the practice of policing for profit to continue.

Tuesday, March 7: *Hacked information about the surveillance state was met with a collective shrug by the public, a sign of how indifferent the citizenry has become to living in an electronic concentration camp.*

Wikileaks confirmed what we've suspected all along: the government's ability to spy on law-abiding Americans is far more invasive than what we've been told. According to the Wikileaks' Vault 7 data dump, government agencies such as the CIA and the NSA have been spying on the citizenry through our smart TVs, listening in on our phone calls, hacking into our computerised devices (including our cars), and compromising our security systems through the use of Trojan horses, spyware and malware.

As this Wikileaks revelation confirms,

we now have a fourth branch of government. This fourth branch came into being without any electoral mandate or constitutional referendum, and yet it possesses superpowers, above and beyond those of any other government agency save the military. It is all-knowing, all-seeing and all-powerful. It operates beyond the reach of the president, Congress and the courts, and it marches in lockstep with the corporate elite who really call the shots in Washington, DC.

You might know this branch of government as surveillance, but I prefer "techno-tyranny," a term coined by investigative journalist James Bamford to refer to an age of technological tyranny made possible by government secrets, government lies, government spies and their corporate ties. Beware of what you say, what you read, what you write, where you go, and with whom you communicate, because it will all be recorded, stored and used against you eventually, at a time and place of the government's choosing.

Privacy, as we have known it, is dead.

Wednesday, March 8: *Police were given further incentives to use the "fear for my life" rationale as an excuse for shooting unarmed individuals.*

Upon arriving on the scene of a nighttime traffic accident, an Alabama police officer shot a driver exiting his car, mistakenly believing the wallet in his hand to be a gun. From the time the driver stumbled out of his car, waving his wallet in the air, to the time he was shot in the abdomen, only six seconds had elapsed. Although the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals concluded "that a reasonable officer in Hancock's position would have feared for his life," the video footage makes clear that the courts continue to march in lockstep with the police, because no reasonable person would shoot first and ask questions later.

A report by the Justice Department on police shootings in Philadelphia, which

You might know this fourth branch of government as surveillance, but I prefer "techno-tyranny," a term that refers to an age of technological tyranny made possible by government secrets, lies, spies and their corporate ties

Corrupted State

Members of several branches of the US military, including the Marines, have been using online bulletin boards to either share or solicit nude or explicit photos and videos of women in the military

boasts the fourth largest police department in the country, found that half of the unarmed people shot by police over a seven-year span were “shot because the officer saw something (like a cellphone) or some action (like a person pulling at the waist of their pants) and misidentified it as a threat.”

What exactly are we teaching these young officers in the police academy when the slightest thing, whether it be a hand in a pocket, a man running towards them, a flashlight on a keychain, a wallet waved in a hand, or a dehumanising stare can ignite a strong enough “fear for their safety” to justify doing whatever is deemed necessary to neutralise the threat, even if it means firing on an unarmed person?

Thursday, March 9: *Police were given even more leeway in how much damage they can inflict on those they serve and the extent to which they can disregard the Constitution.*

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favour of a police officer who allowed a police dog to maul a homeless man innocent of any wrongdoing. The case arose in 2010 after a police dog attacked a homeless man near an abandoned house where police were tracking a robbery suspect. The cop refused to call off the dog immediately, despite the man’s pleading and the fact that he did not match the description of the robbery suspect. The homeless man suffered deep bites on his hand, arm and thigh, that required a nearly 16-inch skin graft, as well as severe bleeding, bruising, swelling and an arterial blood clot. Incredibly, not only did the court declare that the police officer was protected by qualified immunity, which incentivises government officials to violate constitutional rights without fear of repercussion, but it had the nerve to suggest that being mauled by a police dog is the equivalent of a lawful Terry Stop in which police may stop and hold a person for questioning on the basis of “reason-

able suspicion.”

Also on March 9, government officials assured the Michigan Supreme Court that there was nothing unlawful, unreasonable or threatening about the prospect of armed police dressed in SWAT gear knocking on doors at 4 a.m. and “asking” homeowners to engage in warrantless “knock-and-talk” sessions. Although government lawyers insist citizens can choose to say no to such heavy-handed requests by police to conduct unwarranted interrogations, if such coercive tactics are allowed, it would give SWAT teams further incentive to further terrorise anyone even remotely – or mistakenly – suspected of wrongdoing without fear of repercussion.

Friday, March 10: *The military industrial complex continued to wage war abroad, while government agencies, including members of the military, remained embroiled in controversies over sexual misconduct.*

A day after military brass defended the US-led raid in Yemen that killed 10 children and at least six women, Gen. Joseph Votel, the head of US Central Command, informed members of Congress that even more US troops were needed in Afghanistan to combat the Taliban. Some 8,400 American troops have been stationed in Afghanistan since the US invaded the country post 9/11. Approximately 400 more Marines are being sent to Syria to aid US forces in their fight against ISIS.

That same day, news reports indicated that members of several branches of the US military, including the Marines, have been using online bulletin boards to either share or solicit nude or explicit photos and videos of women in the military. One Facebook page for Marines, which has nearly 30,000 followers, contained graphic language about how the women photographed, some without their knowledge or consent, should be treated. As the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) revealed, “One member of the Facebook

group suggested that the service member sneaking the photos should ‘take her out back and pound her out.’ Others suggested more than vaginal sex: ‘And buttock. And throat. And ears. Both of them. Video it though . . . for science.’” According to CIR, the photo sharing began less than a month after the first Marine infantry unit was assigned women.

The FBI has also been getting in on the photo-sharing gig, only its agents have been distributing child porn, allegedly in an effort to catch consumers of child porn. Curiously, the Department of Justice has opted to drop its case against a man accused of child pornography rather than be forced to disclose the FBI’s tactics for spying on suspected child porn consumers and entrapping them as part of its Operation Pacifier sting. What the case revealed was that for a little while, in its single-minded pursuit of lawbreakers, the FBI became a lawbreaker itself as the largest distributor of child pornography. All told, the FBI uploaded tens of thousands of images of child pornography to the “dark web.”

As reporter Bryan Clark points out: “At the intersection of technology and law, we’ve proven two things as the result of Operation Pacifier: 1. Government bodies have proven their willingness to circumvent – or even break – the law to capture suspected criminals it’s not even willing to prosecute. 2. We’re living in an age where – to agencies like the FBI – criminals and their victims are less important than the tools used to track them down. It’s hard to argue on the side of an alleged pedophile. But in this case, the FBI was the pedophile’s equal. It was the agency, you’ll recall, that disseminated these images to some 150,000 registered members... this means the FBI perpetrated the same heinous crime it attempted to charge others with, all while securing what could result in zero convictions.”

This was just one week of shootings, deg-

radation, excessive force, abuse of power and complicity in the American police state. Magnify the impact of these events 52 times over, because they are taking place every week in this country, and you will find yourself weak at the knees.

Somewhere over the course of the past 240-plus years, democracy has given way to kleptocracy, and representative government has been rejected in favor of rule by career politicians, corporations and thieves – individuals and entities with little regard for the rights of American citizens.

This dissolution of that sacred covenant between the citizenry and the government – establishing “we the people” as the masters and the government as the servant – didn’t happen overnight. It didn’t happen because of one particular incident or one particular president. It is a process, one that began long ago and continues in the present day, aided and abetted by politicians who have mastered the polarising art of how to “divide and conquer.”

Unfortunately, there is no magic spell to transport us back to a place and time where “we the people” weren’t merely fodder for a corporate gristmill, operated by government hired hands, whose priorities are money and power.

Our freedoms have become casualties in an all-out war on the American people.

How do we stop the hemorrhaging?

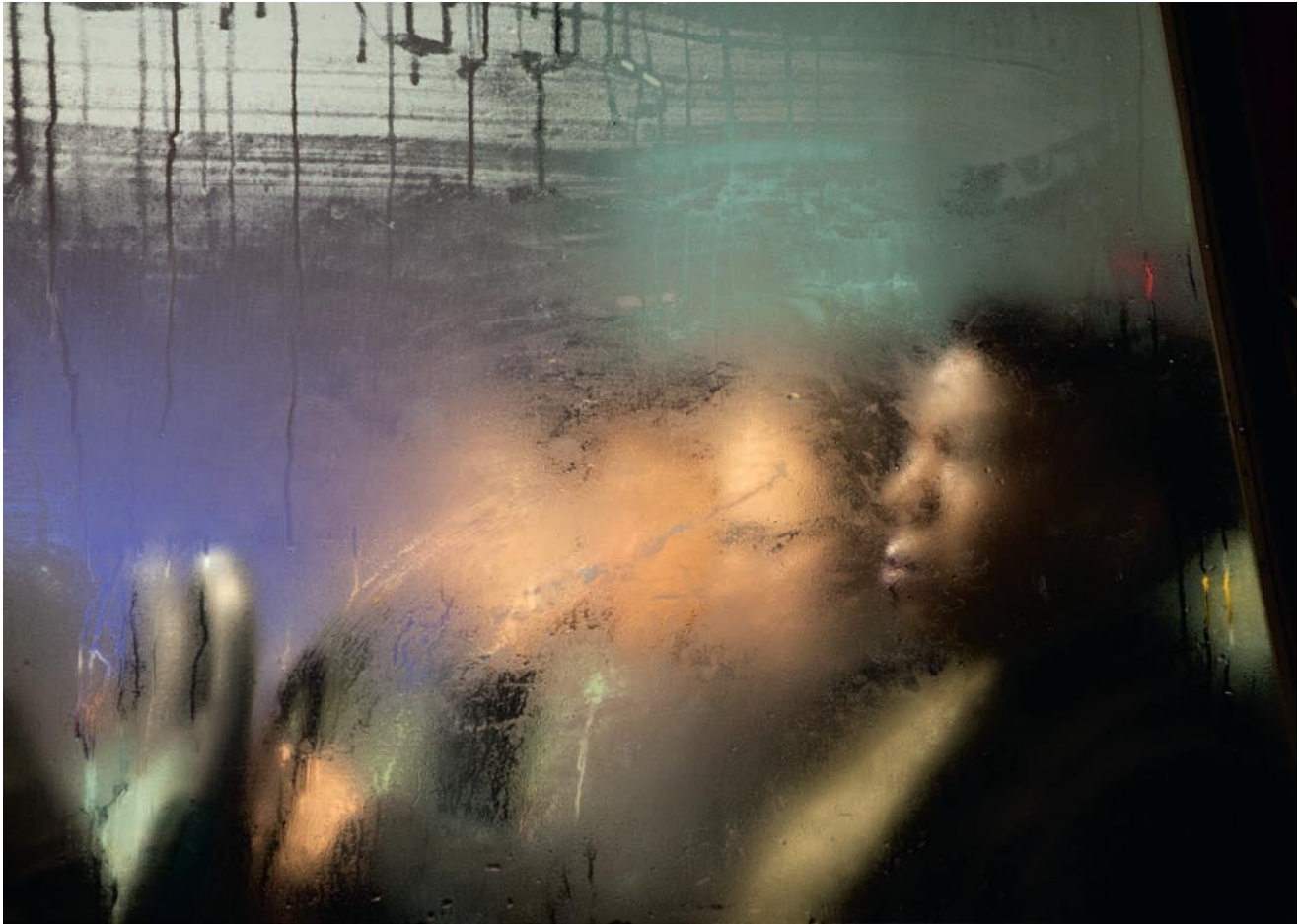
Start by waking up. Pay attention to what’s going on around you. Most of all, think for yourself.

As H. L. Mencken observed: “The most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are.”

There is no magic spell to transport us back to a place and time where “we the people” weren’t merely fodder for a corporate gristmill, operated by government hired hands, whose priorities are money and power

John W. Whitehead is a constitutional attorney and founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest book, *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, is available at www.amazon.com

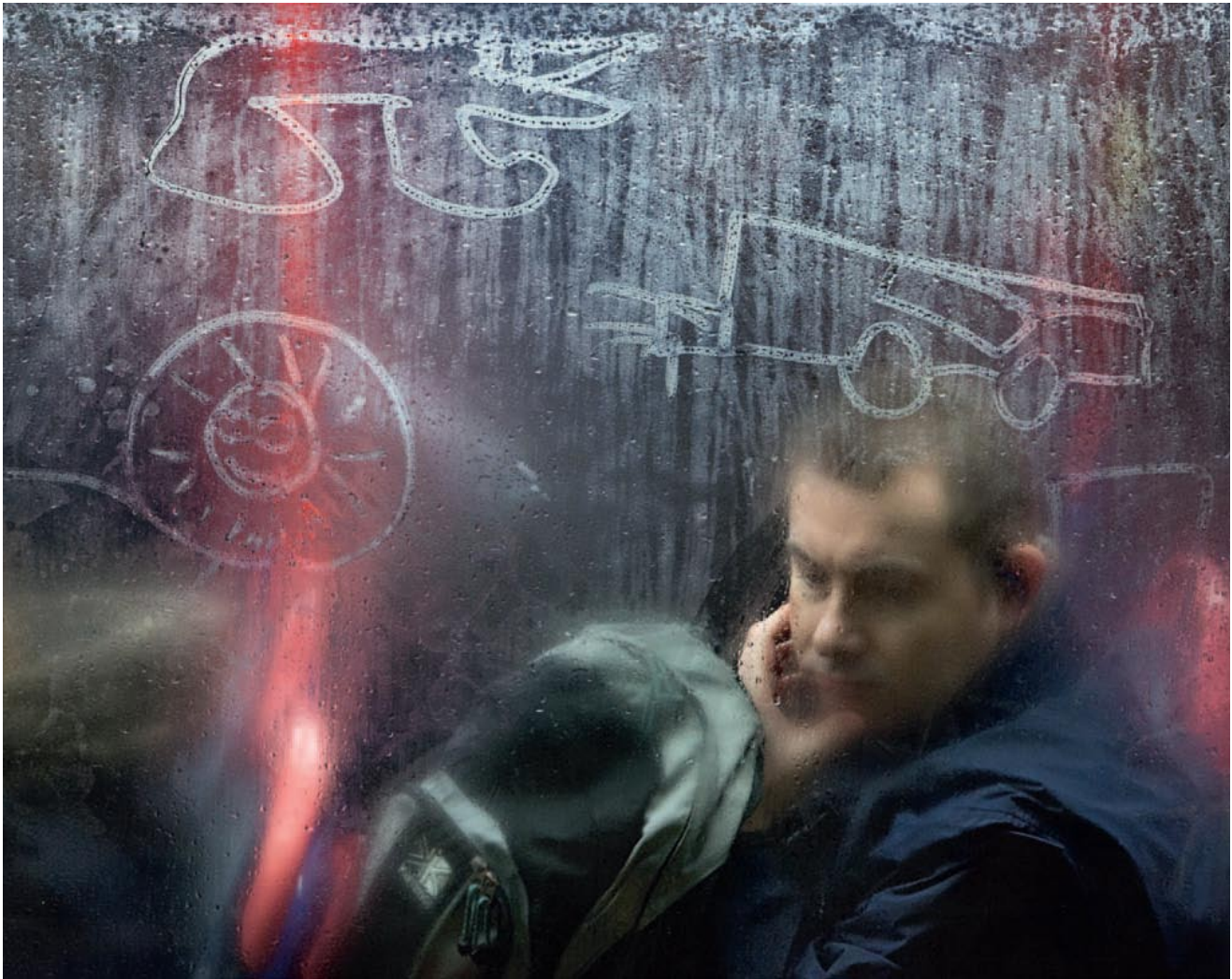
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Ghosts of the night bus

Nick Turpin's ghostly images shot through steamed-up windows of London buses are hauntingly beautiful. They also raise questions about the role of photography in today's society, writes **Tony Sutton**





The photographs of homebound commuters on London's iconic big red buses that fill Nick Turpin's book, **On The Night Bus**, are hauntingly beautiful; his inquisitive telephoto lens snatching images as passengers chat, sleep, and lose themselves in a silent dreamland behind cold, wintery windows.

"Standing outside in the dark shooting into the lit and humid interior of the bus . . . I became aware that their commute was an odd period of anonymous 'no-man's-land' between work and home, a transition from the person known by their colleagues to the person known by their families and friends," writes Turpin, in a brief note accompanying the stunning photographs.

The steamed-up bus windows give each image a unique, canvas-like texture



its images, and limited text, invite viewers to contemplate the role of photography in contemporary society

that softens and blurs the faces of the subjects. However, while their ghost-like beauty is undeniable – I cannot imagine one of the subjects of the book refusing a framed print – the photographs raise nagging questions about acceptable limits of voyeurism, and the invasion of what has traditionally been regarded as private, personal, space.

Shot over three winters at London's Elephant and Castle traffic roundabout, Turpin's vantage point is a raised platform at a nearby shopping centre, his lens peering through a virtual one-way mirror, as his unwary subjects sit inside the confines of their buses. In choosing this method of operation, the photographer has stepped away from classical street photography techniques, in which the photographer works close to his or her subjects, towards

the shadowy and detached voyeurism of the ubiquitous CCTV cameras that blight the streets of 21st-century Britain.

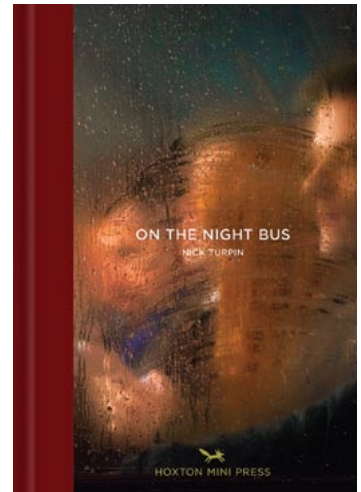
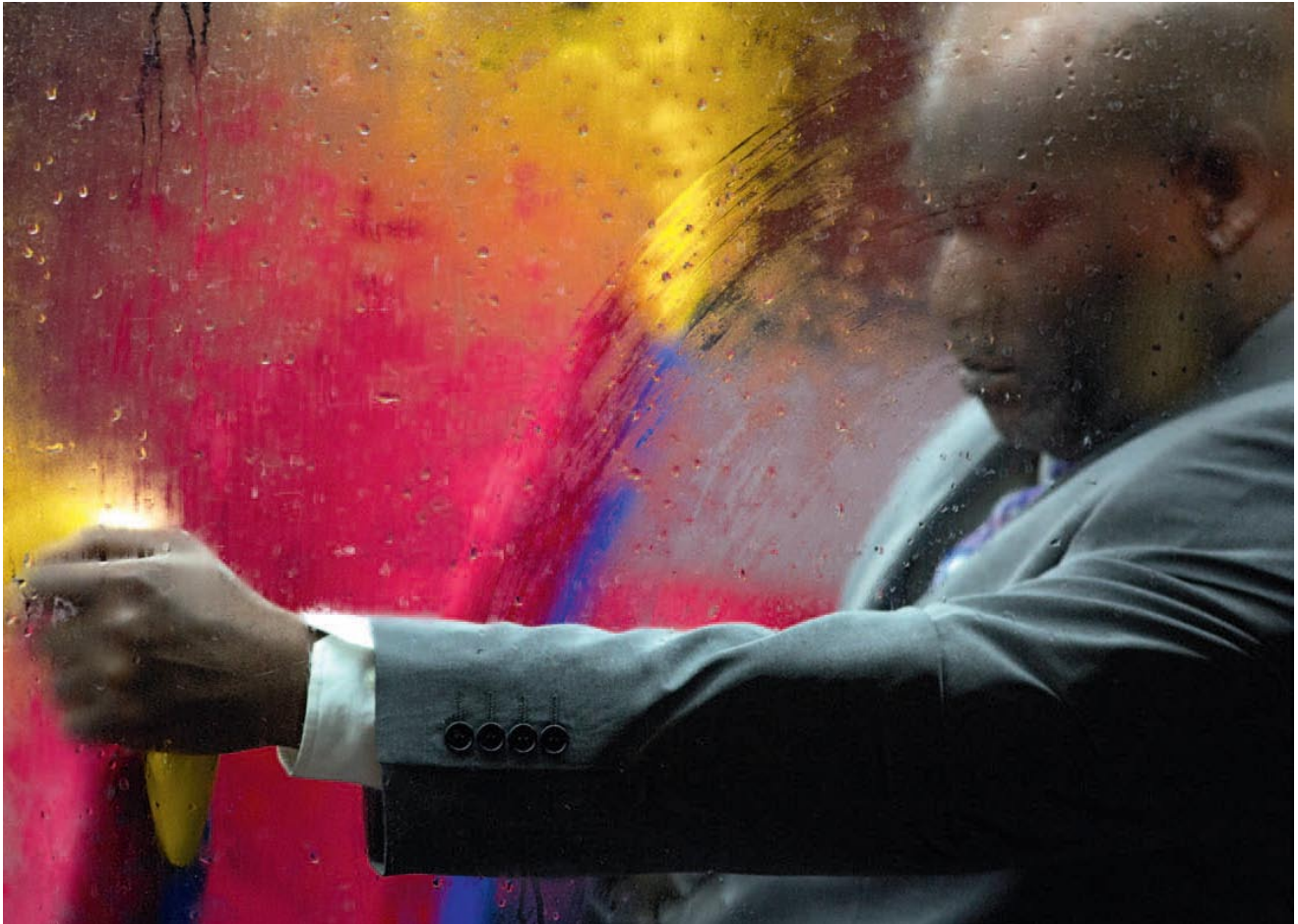
While *On The Night Bus* is a beautiful publication, its greatest value is that its images, and limited text, invite viewers to contemplate the role of photography in contemporary society: from the brainless, and essentially harmless, explosion of 'selfies,' the petty irritation of the street photographer, to the stealthy intrusion of Big Brother's CCTV spyware. Turpin's work highlights the problem, while offering no answers. We are left to figure those out for ourselves.

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Nick Turpin is a London photographer, who formerly worked for the Independent newspaper. His web site is www.nickturpin.com

In The Picture

Photographs © Nick Turpin



ON THE NIGHT BUS

Nick Turpin

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Scotland must break free of London rule

Britain is politically dead from the neck down. Scotland's desire to leave the union may be risky, but staying is worse, writes **George Monbiot**

In admonishing Scotland for seeking to protect itself from this chaos, the government applies a simple rule: whatever you say about Britain's relationship with Europe, say the opposite about Scotland's relationship with Britain

Here is the question the people of Scotland will face in the next independence referendum: when England falls out of the boat like a block of concrete, do you want your foot tied to it?

It would be foolish to deny that there are risks in leaving the United Kingdom. Scotland's economy is weak, not least because it has failed to wean itself off North Sea oil. There are major questions, not yet resolved, about the currency it would use, its trading relationship with the rump of the UK, and its association with the European Union, – which it's likely to try to rejoin.

But the risks of staying are as great or greater. Ministers are already trying to reconcile us to the possibility of falling out of the EU without a deal. If this happens, Britain would be the only one of the G20 nations without special access to EU trade – “a very destructive outcome leading to mutually assured damage for the EU and the UK,” according to the Commons foreign affairs committee. As the government has a weak hand, an obsession with past glories and an apparent yearning for a heroic gesture of self-destruction, this is not an unlikely result.

On the eve of the first independence referendum, in September 2014, David Cameron exhorted the people of Scotland to ask themselves: “Will my family and I truly be better off by going it alone? Will we really be

more safe and secure?” Thanks to his machinations, the probable answer is now: yes.

In admonishing Scotland for seeking to protect itself from this chaos, the government applies a simple rule: whatever you say about Britain's relationship with Europe, say the opposite about Scotland's relationship with Britain.

May ignores her own logic

In her speech to the Scottish Conservatives' spring conference, Theresa May observed that “one of the driving forces behind the union's creation was the remorseless logic that greater economic strength and security come from being united.” She was talking about the UK, but the same remorseless logic applies to the EU. In this case, however, she believes that our strength and security will be enhanced by leaving. “Politics is not a game, and government is not a platform from which to pursue constitutional obsessions,” she stormed – to which you can only assent.

A Conservative member of the Scottish parliament, Jamie Greene, complains that a new referendum “would force people to vote blind on the biggest political decision a country could face. That is utterly irresponsible.” This reminds me of something, but I can't quite put my finger on it.

Before the last Scottish referendum, when the polls suggested that Scotland

might choose independence, Boris Johnson, then London mayor, warned that “we are on the verge of an utter catastrophe for this country . . . No one has thought any of this through.” Now, as foreign secretary, he assures us that “we would be perfectly OK” if Britain leaves the EU without a deal.

The frantic attempts by government and press to delegitimise the decision by the Scottish first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, to call for a second independence vote fall flat. Her party’s manifesto for the last Scottish election gives her an evident mandate: it would hold another referendum “if there is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014, such as Scotland being taken out of the EU against our will.”

Contrast this with May’s position. She has no mandate, from either the general election or the referendum, for leaving the single market and the European customs union. Her intransigence over these issues bends the Conservative manifesto’s pledge to “strengthen and improve devolution for each part of our United Kingdom.”

Her failure to consult the governments of Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland before unilaterally deciding that the UK would leave the single market, and her refusal to respond to the paper the Scottish government produced exploring possible options for a continued engagement with the EU after Brexit testify to a relationship characterised by paternalism and contempt.

You can see the same attitude in the London-based newspapers. As the last referendum approached, they treated Scotland like an ungrateful servant. “What spoilt, selfish, childlike fools those Scots are . . . They simply don’t have a clue how lucky they are,” Melanie Reid sniffed in the Times. Now the charge is scheming opportunism. “We hope the Scottish people call Sturgeon out for her cynical, self-interested game-playing,” rages the Sun’s English edition. If you want to know what cynical, self-interested game-playing looks like, read the Sun’s Scottish

edition. It says the opposite, contrasting the risks of independence with “the stick-on certainty of decades of Tory rule with nothing to soften it,” if Scotland remains within the UK.

Whenever I visit Scotland, I’m reminded that Britain is politically dead from the neck down. South of the border, we tolerate repeated assaults on the commonweal. As the self-hating state destroys its own power to distribute wealth, support public services and protect the NHS from ruin; as it rips up the rules protecting workers, the living world, our food, water and the very air we breathe; as disabled people are pushed off a cliff and poor people are evicted from their homes, we stand and stare. As the trade minister colludes with the dark money network on both sides of the Atlantic, threatening much that remains, we shake our heads then turn away.

Hope, anger, and desire for change

Sure, there are some protests. There is plenty of dissent on social media; but our response is pathetic in comparison with the scale of what we face. The Labour opposition is divided, directionless and currently completely useless. But north of the border politics is everywhere, charged with hope, anger and a fierce desire for change. Again and again, this change is thwarted by the dead weight of Westminster. Who would remain tethered to this block, especially as the boat begins to list?

Scotland could wait to find out what happens after Brexit, though it is hard to see any likely outcome other than more of this and worse. Or it could cut the rope, pull itself back into the boat, and sail towards a hopeful if uncertain future. I know which option I would take.

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

Unlike Nicola Sturgeon, Theresa has no mandate, from either the general election or the referendum, for leaving the single market and the European customs union

President Blowback

Tom Engelhardt tells how the invasion of Iraq came home to haunt America

If I were to pick the genesis of Donald Trump's presidency, however, I think I would choose an even earlier moment – at a Pentagon partially in ruins thanks to hijacked American Airlines flight 77

If you want to know where President Donald Trump came from, if you want to trace the long winding road (or escalator) that brought him to the Oval Office, don't look to reality TV or Twitter or even the rise of the alt-right. Look someplace far more improbable: Iraq.

Donald Trump may have been born in New York City. He may have grown to manhood amid his hometown's real estate wars. He may have gone no further than Atlantic City, New Jersey, to casino-ise the world and create those magical golden letters that would become the essence of his brand. He may have made an even more magical leap to television without leaving home, turning "You're fired!" into a household phrase. Still, his presidency is another matter entirely. It's an immigrant. It arrived, fully radicalised, with its bouffant over-comb and eternal tan, from Iraq.

Despite his denials that he was ever in favour of the 2003 invasion of that country, Donald Trump is a president made by war. His elevation to the highest office in the land is inconceivable without that invasion, which began in glory and ended (if ended it ever did) in infamy. He's the president of a land remade by war in ways its people have yet to absorb. Admittedly, he avoided war in his personal life entirely. He was, after all, a Vietnam no-show. And yet he's the president that war brought home. Think of him

not as President Blowhard but as President Blowback.

"Go Massive. Sweep It All Up"

To grasp this, a little escalator ride down memory lane is necessary – all the way back to 9/11; to, that is, the grimmest day in our recent history. There's no other way to recall just how gloriously it all began than amid the rubble. You could, if you wanted, choose the moment three days after the World Trade Center towers collapsed when, bullhorn in hand, President George W. Bush ascended part of that rubble pile in downtown Manhattan, put his arm around a firefighter, and shouted into a bullhorn, "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you! . . . And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon."

If I were to pick the genesis of Donald Trump's presidency, however, I think I would choose an even earlier moment – at a Pentagon partially in ruins thanks to hijacked American Airlines flight 77. There, only five hours after the attack, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, already aware that the destruction around him was probably Osama bin Laden's responsibility, ordered his aides (according to notes one of them took) to begin planning for a retaliatory strike against. . . . yes, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. His exact words: "Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not."



PHOTO-OP: Standing atop rubble with retired New York City firefighter Bob Beckwith Friday, Sept. 14, 2001, President George W. Bush rallies firefighters and rescue workers.

Photo: US National Archives

And swept almost instantly into the giant dust bin of what would become the Global War on Terror (or GWOT), as ordered, would be something completely unrelated to 9/11 (not that the Bush administration ever admitted that). It was, however, intimately related to the deepest dreams of the men (and woman) who oversaw foreign policy in the Bush years: the elimination of Iraq's autocratic ruler, Saddam Hussein.

Yes, there was bin Laden to deal with and the Taliban and Afghanistan, too, but that was small change, almost instantly taken care of with some air power, CIA dollars delivered to Afghan warlords, and a modest number of American troops. Within months, Afghanistan had been "liberated," bin Laden had fled the country, the Taliban had laid down their arms, and that was that. (Who in Washington then imagined that 15 years later a new administration would be dealing with a request from

the twelfth US military commander in that country for yet more troops to shore up a failing war there?)

Within months, in other words, the decks were clear to pursue what George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and Co saw as their destiny, as the key to America's future imperial glory: the taking down of the Iraqi dictator. That, as Rumsfeld indicated at the Pentagon that day, was always where they were truly focused. It was what some of them had dreamed of since the moment, in the first Gulf War of 1990-1991, when President George H.W. Bush stopped the troops short of a march on Baghdad and left Hussein, America's former ally and later Hitlerian nemesis, in power.

The invasion of March 2003, was, they had no doubt, to be an unforgettable moment in America's history as a global power (as it would indeed turn out to be, even if not in the way they imagined). The US mili-

Yes, there was bin Laden to deal with and the Taliban and Afghanistan, too, but that was small change, almost instantly taken care of with some air power, CIA dollars delivered to Afghan warlords, and a modest number of American troops

War Without End

President Bush quickly urged citizens to show their patriotism not by sacrificing or mobilising or even joining the military, but by visiting Disney World and reestablishing patterns of pre-9/11 consumption as if nothing had happened

tary that George W. Bush would call “the greatest force for human liberation the world has ever known” was slated to liberate Iraq via a miraculous, high-tech, shock-and-awe campaign the world would never forget. This time, unlike in 1991, its troops would enter Baghdad, Saddam would go down in flames, and it would all happen without the help of the militaries of 28 other countries.

It would instead be an act of imperial loneliness befitting the last superpower on planet Earth. The Iraqis would, of course, greet us as liberators and we would set up a long-term garrison state in the oil heartlands of the Middle East. At the moment the invasion was launched, in fact, the Pentagon already had plans on the drawing boards for the building of four permanent US megabases (initially endearingly labelled “enduring camps”) in Iraq on which thousands of US troops could hunker down for an eternity. At the peak of the occupation, there would be more than 500 bases, ranging from tiny combat outposts to ones the size of small American towns – many transformed after 2011 into the ghost towns of a dream gone mad until a few were recently reoccupied by US troops in the battle against the Islamic State.

In the wake of the friendly occupation of now-democratic (and grateful) Iraq, the hostile Syria of the al-Assad family would naturally be between a hammer and an anvil (American-garrisoned Iraq and Israel), while the fundamentalist Iranian regime, after more than two decades of implacable anti-American hostility, would be done for. The neocon quip of that moment was: “Everyone wants to go to Baghdad. Real men want to go to Tehran.” Soon enough – it was inevitable – Washington would dominate the Greater Middle East from Pakistan to North Africa in a way no great power ever had. It would be the beginning of a Pax Americana moment on planet Earth that would stretch on for generations to come.

Such was the dream. You, of course, re-

member the reality, the one that led to a looted capital; Saddam’s army tossed out on the streets jobless to join the uprisings to come; a bitter set of insurgencies (Sunni and Shia); civil war (and local ethnic cleansing); a society-wide reconstruction programme overseen by American warrior corporations linked to the Pentagon that resulted in vast boondoggle projects that achieved little and reconstructed nothing; prisons from hell (including Abu Ghraib) that bred yet more insurgents; and finally, years down the line, the Islamic State and the present version of American war, now taking place in Syria as well as Iraq and slated to ramp up further in the early days of the Trump era.

Squandered trillions

Meanwhile, as our new president reminded us recently in a speech to Congress, literally trillions of dollars that might have been spent on actual American security (broadly understood) were squandered on a failed military project that left this country’s infrastructure in disarray. All in all, it was quite a record. Thought of a certain way, in return for the destruction of part of the Pentagon and a section of downtown Manhattan that was turned to rubble, the US would set off a series of wars, conflicts, insurgencies, and burgeoning terror movements that would transform significant parts of the Greater Middle East into failed or failing states, and their cities and towns, startling numbers of them, into so much rubble.

Once upon a time, all of this seemed so distant to Americans in a Global War on Terror in which President Bush quickly urged citizens to show their patriotism not by sacrificing or mobilising or even joining the military, but by visiting Disney World and reestablishing patterns of pre-9/11 consumption as if nothing had happened. (“Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed.”) And indeed, personal consumption would rise significantly that

October 2001. The other side of the glory-to-come in those years of remarkable peace in the United States was to be the passivity of a demobilised populace that (except for periodic thank-yous to its military) would have next to nothing to do with distant wars, which were to be left to the pros, even if fought to victory in their name.

That, of course, was the dream. Reality proved to be another matter entirely.

Invading America

In the end, a victoryless permanent war across the Greater Middle East did indeed come home. There was all the new hardware of war – the Stingrays, the MRAPs, the drones, and so on – that began migrating homewards, and that was the least of it. There was the militarisation of America’s police forces, not to speak of the rise of the national security state to the status of an unofficial fourth branch of government. Home, too, came the post-9/11 fears, the vague but unnerving sense that somewhere in the world strange and incomprehensible aliens practicing an eerie religion were out to get us, that some of them had near-super powers that even the world’s greatest military couldn’t crush, and that their potential acts of terror were Topeka’s greatest danger. (It mattered little that actual Islamic terror was perhaps the least of the dangers Americans faced in their daily lives.)

All of this reached its crescendo (at least thus far) in Donald Trump. Think of the Trump phenomenon, in its own strange way, as the culmination of the invasion of 2003 brought home bigly. His would be a shock-and-awe election campaign in which he would “decapitate” his rivals one by one. The New York real estate, hotel, and casino magnate, who had long swum comfortably in the waters of the liberal elite when he needed to and had next to nothing to do with America’s heartland, would be as alien to its inhabitants as the US military was to Iraqis when it invaded. And yet he would indeed launch his own invasion of that

heartland on his private jet with its gold-plated bathroom fixtures, sweeping up all the fears that had been gathering in this country since 9/11 (nurtured by both politicians and national security state officials for their own benefit). And those fears would ring a bell so loud in that heartland that it would sweep him into the White House. In November 2016, he took Baghdad, USA, in high style.

In this context, let’s think for a moment about how strangely the invasion of Iraq, in some pretzelled form, blew back on America.

Like the neocons of the Bush administration, Donald Trump had long dreamed of his moment of imperial glory, and as in Afghanistan and again in Iraq in 2001 and 2003, when it arrived on November 8, 2016, it couldn’t have seemed more glorious. We know of those dreams of his because, for one thing, only six days after Mitt Romney lost to Barack Obama in the 2012 election campaign, The Donald first tried to trademark the old Reagan-inspired slogan, “Make America great again.”

Like George W. and Dick Cheney, he was intent on invading and occupying the oil heartlands of the planet which, in 2003, had indeed been Iraq. By 2015-2016, however, the US had entered the energy heartlands sweepstakes, thanks to fracking and other advanced methods of extracting fossil fuels that seemed to be turning the country into “Saudi America.” Add to this Trump’s plans to further fossil-fuelise the continent and you certainly have a competitor to the Middle East. In a sense, you might say, adapting his description of what he would have preferred to do in Iraq, that Donald Trump wants to “keep” our oil.

Like the US military in 2003, he, too, arrived on the scene with plans to turn his country of choice into a garrison state. Almost the first words out of his mouth on riding that escalator into the presidential race in June 2015 involved a promise to protect Americans from Mexican “rapists”

Think of the Trump phenomenon, in its own strange way, as the culmination of the invasion of 2003 brought home bigly. His would be a shock-and-awe election campaign in which he would “decapitate” his rivals one by one

War Without End

Donald Trump promises a trillion-dollar infrastructure program to rebuild America's highways, tunnels, bridges, airports, and the like. If it actually comes about, count on one thing: it will be handed over to some of the same warrior corporations that reconstructed Iraq

by building an unforgettably impregnable “great wall” on the country’s southern border. From this he never varied even when, in funding terms, it became apparent that, from the Coast Guard to airport security to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as president he would be cutting into genuine security measures to build his “big, fat, beautiful wall.”

It’s clear, however, that his urge to create a garrison state went far beyond a literal wall. It included the build-up of the US military to unprecedented heights, as well as the bolstering of the regular police, and above all of the border police. Beyond that lay the urge to wall Americans off in every way possible. His fervently publicised immigration policies (less new, in reality, than they seemed) should be thought of as part of a project to construct another kind of “great wall,” a conceptual one whose message to the rest of the world was striking: You are not welcome or wanted here. Don’t come. Don’t visit.

Irrational fears

All this was, in turn, fused at the hip to the many irrational fears that had been gathering like storm clouds for so many years, and that Trump (and his alt-right companions) swept into the already looted heartland of the country. In the process, he loosed a brand of hate (including shootings, mosque burnings, a raft of bomb threats, and a rise in hate groups, especially anti-Muslim ones) that, historically speaking, was all-American, but was nonetheless striking in its intensity in our present moment.

Combined with his highly publicised “Muslim bans” and prominently publicised acts of hate, the Trump walling-in of America quickly hit home. A drop in foreigners who wanted to visit this country was almost instantly apparent as the warning signs of a tourism “Trump slump” registered, business travel bookings took an instant \$185-million hit, and the travel in-

dustry predicted worse to come.

This is evidently what “America First” actually means: a country walled off and walled in. Think of the road travelled from 2003 to 2017 as being from sole global superpower to potential super-pariah. Thought of another way, Donald Trump is giving the hubristic imperial isolation of the invasion of Iraq a new meaning here in the homeland.

And don’t forget “reconstruction,” as it was called after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In relation to the United States, the bedraggled land now in question whose infrastructure recently was given a D+ grade on a “report card” issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers, Donald Trump promises a trillion-dollar infrastructure program to rebuild America’s highways, tunnels, bridges, airports, and the like. If it actually comes about, count on one thing: it will be handed over to some of the same warrior corporations that reconstructed Iraq (and other corporate entities like them), functionally guaranteeing an American version of the budget-draining boondoggle that was Iraq.

As with that invasion in the spring of 2003, in 2017 we are still in the (relative) sunshine days of the Trump era. But as in Iraq, so here 14 years later, the first cracks are already appearing, as this country grows increasingly riven. (Think Sunni vs. Shia.)

And one more thing as you consider the future: the blowback wars out of which Donald Trump and the present fear-gripped garrison state of America arose have never ended. In fact, just as under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, so under Donald Trump, it seems they never will. Already the Trump administration is revving up American military power in Yemen, Syria, and potentially Afghanistan. So whatever the blowback may have been, you’ve only seen its beginning. It’s bound to last for years to come.

There’s just one phrase that could adequately sum all this up: Mission accomplished!

CT

Tom Engelhardt is a co-founder of the *American Empire Project*. His latest book is *Shadow Government: Surveillance, Secret Wars, and a Global Security State in a Single-Superpower World*. This essay was first published at www.tomdispatch.com



Left out for morning pick-up.

Thomas S. Harrington walks the streets of Philadelphia on a cold, winter morning

Down but not out in the City of Brotherly Love

For many of us raised in northern climes, an intense cold snap or a day of driving snow can conjure up a sense of calm, an inner tranquility derived from knowing that, for a morning, or perhaps even a full day, routines will be suspended and obligations will be pursued with a much reduced sense of urgency.



Prime space, just 50 feet from the Philadelphia Convention Center.

In The Picture

Photographs: Thomas S. Harrington



Waiting for justice at the family court.



Government subsidized housing.

Such days also remind us of the of the deep and seldom acknowledged joy of feeling sheltered, of being able to contemplate the objectively frightening onslaught of arctic winds and rushing snow with a sense of festive insouciance.

For an ever-growing cohort of other people, however, days like this promise no repose. Rather, they are the hardest moments in lives already tattooed by far too much hardness. They mean finding a grate and hoping it will be yours long enough to escape, if only for a few hours, from the hellish sentence of being cold and hungry, and belonging to no place, and having no one.



Government subsidised housing: The overflow annex.

In The Picture

Photographs: Thomas S. Harrington



Russ and Tony.

If you are Tony and Russ, that means living out a frigid version of *Waiting for Godot* in Philadelphia's Logan Square, keeping the chatter of mindless hope and desperate companionship alive as they simultaneously plumb, with greater sophistication and eloquence than you will ever hear from any expert psychologist, the deep well of hurt and shame that has led them to this moment, to this place on this particular day.

For the well-sheltered visitor to this harsh world, it involves being told by Tony, a handsome man with two of the most brilliant, Hollywood-grade, eyes you will ever see, that he will only let you take his picture in this driving blizzard with his sunglasses on, as if to remind you, and others like you, of just how long and how consistently we have been covering our eyes before the unmistakable fact of his humanity. **CT**

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Sitting it out on Friday night.

Hitting fast-forward rather than play-back

In this excerpt from the new book, *The Flame Still Burns: The Creative Power of Coal*, **Nicholas Jones** draws parallels between Arthur Scargill, leader of Britain's miners during the strike of 1984-85 and Donald Trump's media-driven rise to US president

Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, was a natural and skilled communicator, a stump orator who earlier in his career as the union's Yorkshire president had already mastered the challenges posed by radio and television

When reflecting on the lasting impact of the 1984-85 miners' strike in Britain, a struggle that has become so firmly embedded in the collective memory of political and industrial events of recent years, I am often tempted to hit fast-forward rather than press the play-back button. How would a year-long fight-to-the-finish that pitted the country's strongest trade union against an all-powerful prime minister, play out three decades later? Given the revolution there has been in communication techniques, what would the chances be of success if there was a repeat of the grassroots revolt against the decimation of the coalfields and their communities? Most national newspapers sided strongly with Margaret Thatcher during the pit dispute, and that hostility fed through into much of the broadcast coverage, but the influence of the mainstream media has been eroded, if not surpassed, by the breadth of information accessed through the internet, and the sheer scope and speed of digital communications. Increasingly activists have the power to drive the online news agenda, and influence public opinion via the vast reaches of social media.

Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, relied on his union's industrial strength, but he was a natural and skilled communicator, a stump orator who earlier in his career as the union's Yorkshire

president had already mastered the challenges posed by radio and television. My hunch is that he might so easily have transformed the miners' chances of preventing pit closures had he had the opportunity to add access to the internet to the NUM's armoury; had he been able – and had he been prepared – to direct the union's resources towards sustaining an all-encompassing assault across the media front line, rather than just the picket line.

My theorising about the NUM's prospects if the strike was re-run against the background of a modern media landscape has been re-awakened by two seismic political events: the shock defeat in the European Referendum of the twin forces of the UK's political elite and the City of London, followed by Donald Trump's triumph against the odds in the American Presidential election. The two campaigns had many common characteristics. They both cut through established democratic structures and exploited the often brutal new world of instant communications, unafraid to deploy a narrative that their establishment opponents would claim was blatant misrepresentation, and often amounted to downright lies. Trump, like the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) leader, Nigel Farage, shared an outstanding ability to talk directly to the public, in a way that excited and energised their own supporters. The same could have been said of

Scargill. He electrified strike rallies across the coalfields with speeches regularly interrupted by outbursts of cheering and applause. His status as the strikers' hero unnerved the news media.

All three challenged the established order, mounting highly personalised attacks on the political leaders they faced, deploying arguments that struck home with their target audiences. Both Farage and Trump had the benefit of being able to exploit a media free-for-all that had opened up limitless opportunities, a far cry from the narrower confines of the regulated broadcasting regime and politicised press of the mid-1980s. Just think what the NUM might have achieved had strikers and their supporters been able to go over the heads of the conventional media and post footage on YouTube of heavy-handed policing of picket lines; if Facebook had been filled with images of the plight of mining communities and widespread family hardship, mothers putting children to bed without a proper evening meal; and if Scargill and his activists had been in a position to harness the vitriol of Twitter in a scorched-earth assault on the policies of Mrs Thatcher and the National Coal Board.

Not only did Scargill, Farage and Trump connect in a language that their supporters understood, but when addressing rallies, all three succeeded in strengthening their sense of grievance, almost alienation, by personally blaming the journalists in their midst for the constant hostility shown by mainstream press, television and radio. Audiences at Trump's rallies were regularly whipped into a frenzy when he directed a tirade of abuse towards reporters, photographers and television crews corralled in media pens. Farage had used the same tactic on numerous occasions, accusing the BBC and other broadcasters of siding with the establishment in denigrating UKIP, and then of being biased against Leave's campaign to exit the European Union. But unlike Farage and Trump, who could take advantage of many other avenues to speak directly to the public with-



UNDER ARREST: Miners' leader Arthur Scargill is arrested while on the picket line during the 1984/85 miners' strike.

Photo: www.leftunity.org

out having their messages mediated by the established media, Scargill had no such leeway. If it had been possible for a trade union struggling against Mrs Thatcher to exploit the range of social media that is currently available – online platforms that were used so successfully in the Scottish and European Referendums – I think there is every possibility the NUM might well have been tempted by the summer of 1984 to rethink its tactics, once the police had gained the upper hand, and it was becoming obvious there was little likelihood of power cuts given the increased output from nuclear and oil-fired generating stations.

Notwithstanding Scargill's outright refusal to compromise on pit closures, as many in the wider labour movement might have hoped, he was a remarkable advocate for the miners' struggle. As I watched Farage campaign in the European referendum, and then saw Trump dominate news coverage in the US presidential election, I could not help revisiting the pit dispute, contemplating how events might have been so different 30

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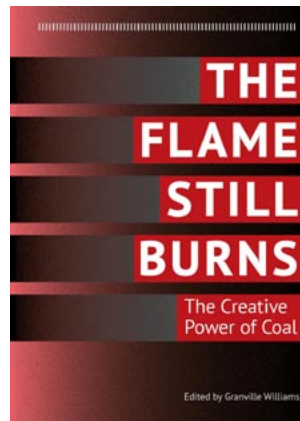
Book Excerpt

Scargill's aim was to convince miners and their families that the media were part and parcel of an establishment conspiracy, an all-too necessary step in preparing the coalfields for the confrontation that he believed was inevitable after Ian MacGregor's appointment as NCB chairman, with his mandate to close loss-making collieries

years later if a populist NUM president had ever had the chance to exploit his full personal potential as a highly-effective media manipulator.

Trump's routines on the stump were a mirror image of Scargill's repertoire in the 1980s. Whenever Scargill addressed a rally, or appeared on radio and television after his election as NUM president in 1981, he seized any and every opportunity to attack journalists, interviewers and presenters for being biased against the miners, and for always siding with Mrs Thatcher. His aim was to convince miners and their families that the media were part and parcel of an establishment conspiracy, an all-too necessary step in preparing the coalfields for the confrontation that he believed was inevitable after Ian MacGregor's appointment as NCB chairman, with his mandate to close loss-making collieries. Trump's denigration of the media's role in speeches and interviews was followed through online with tweets to his millions of followers on Twitter, who found themselves hard-pressed to keep pace with his full-frontal assault on the conduct and capabilities of individual journalists and presenters, and the ethics of two of his regular targets, the American television network CNN and the New York Times.

From the start, I had always admired Scargill's news sense and timing. Despite having already been subjected to years of media hostility, and unlike so many of his contemporaries in the union movement, he knew precisely how to command attention and dictate the agenda. He once said that he would like to have been a barrister if he had not become a union leader, and in my first book, *Strikes and the Media* (1986), I de-



THE FLAME STILL BURNS

THE CREATIVE POWER OF COAL

Edited by Granville Williams
Published by Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (North)
www.cpbf.org.uk

£9.99

scribed how he was praised by friend and foe alike for the speed with which he had become a household name. Joe Gormley, the immediate past president, marvelled at the way his successor secured publicity while “repeatedly saying how appalled he was at the media's behaviour.” Scargill's subsequent track record suggested he would have been more than a match for the challenges posed by the multiplicity of media platforms that have evolved since the strike.

He was at ease in front of camera, always dominating proceedings, having picked up many of the tricks of the trade. In November 1982, when facing criticism as newly-elected president over his first defeat in a pit head ballot, he deflected attention with a master class in

presentation. In front of him were the outstretched microphones of radio and television reporters, photographers and journalists, notebooks in hand. At the precise moment he unveiled for the first time what he claimed was a secret hit list of pit closures, he held the document in his right hand, just beside his face, ready for instant pictures for television news and the press. On the radio tape, the clicking of flashlights can be heard coming in precisely on cue.

He had attained the same mastery of the technicalities of television production. In June 1984, at the height of picketing aimed at limiting deliveries from the Orgreave coke works, he was commissioned by Channel 4 News to prepare his own filmed report outlining the case against pit closures. Scargill took full advantage of the opportunity, and to his great satisfaction his report was ready for transmission on the day of the Battle of Orgreave. After a disputed fall during that day's massive police operation, he ended up having to spend the night under obser-

vation at Rotherham Hospital. That evening Channel 4 News played out a pre-recorded bedside interview with Scargill sitting up in orange hospital pyjamas, followed by his filmed report, which the presenter Peter Sissons paid off with the ultimate accolade, “That report by Arthur Scargill”.

A week later I caught up with the NUM president, and like any broadcaster he was anxious for some feedback. “What did you think of that first miner I interviewed . . . it just clicked into place.” Writing a script for his voice-over to fit the pictures had taken him longer than expected, but he soon got used to the technique. I asked if he found it difficult to memorise what he wanted to say: “You mean my walk-in shot to camera? Oh, that was easy.” As I observed in *Strikes and the Media*, Scargill had mastered the jargon of television news production – “walk-in shot,” “voice-over” – faster than some union leaders memorised their own rule book.

Given his familiarity with the media, many of those assigned to report the strike resented his incessant attacks on journalists. But as was the case 30 years later in the US presidential election, the media pack had thick skins and sensed his wounding onslaughts were all part of a calculated act. If I closed my eyes when listening to television news footage from the Trump campaign trail, I was back reporting a miners’ rally, arm outstretched, holding my microphone, taking my punishment. Sometimes young miners in the audience threatened working journalists. There was certainly menace in the air immediately after Scargill had been accused in an infamous Sun front page of making a Nazi-style salute, a slur that prompted a fearsome rebuke: “I wanted to wave to all the union members here, had it not been for the fact that one of these vermin here might have taken a photograph of me waving my arm in the air and then written something underneath it. (Cheers)

“Throughout this dispute, day after day, television, radio and the press have consistently put over the view of the coal board and

government and even when the board and government have been exposed as being guilty of duplicity and guilty of telling lies, not only to the House of Commons but also to the British public, this bunch of piranha fish will go on supporting Mrs Thatcher.” (More cheers) – Arthur Scargill, Jubilee Gardens, London, June 7, 1984.

Trump’s demolition of mainstream media was a key feature of his warm-up routine, and the more belligerent he became about the bias of journalists, the more boos there were from the audience directed at the occupants of the media zone. Such was the febrile atmosphere, that some US reporters and television crews admitted to feeling harassed, even intimidated. CNN was cast as the real villain, as the BBC had been by Farage, and far earlier by the leadership of the NUM. Trump’s pitch that the American media was part of a conspiracy to prevent him becoming US president sounded as if it could have been delivered at a British strike rally in the 1980s: “The corporate media in our country is no longer involved in journalism. They are political, a special interest, no different than any lobbyist or other financial entity, with a total political agenda, an agenda that is not for you, it is for themselves.” – Donald Trump, Today, BBC Radio 4, November 5, 2016.

Trump followed Scargill’s example

In persistently abusing the media, Trump had seemingly made precisely the same calculation as Scargill. His 10 years as host of the American television game show, the *Apprentice*, meant he needed no lessons in manipulating the media, or in chasing the highest possible ratings. He understood only too well that high-profile attacks on journalists were taken seriously within the media community. Accusations of bias caught the attention of newsrooms, and one likely consequence was that editorial and production staff were far more likely to give his speeches a prominent position in news schedules. Whatever the backlash

Trump’s demolition of mainstream media was a key feature of his warm-up routine, and the more belligerent he became about the bias of journalists, the more boos there were from the audience directed at the occupants of the media zone

Book Excerpt

Live transmission of rabble-rousing speeches is no longer a one-off because they have another life on social media. Short clips or even lengthy extracts are uploaded on to a multitude of platforms, and often reach an audience via the internet that far exceeds that of the original live broadcast

among opinion formers, this was of little consequence to Trump, Farage or Scargill whose shared objective was the over-riding need to keep the rank and file fired up.

Several weeks after branding labour and industrial correspondents a “bunch of piranhas,” I did get the chance away from the cut-and-thrust of the pit dispute to explore Scargill’s motivation. In his opinion, reporters resembled predators, with the same sharp teeth and powerful jaws. Fleet Street was like “a giant fish tank where journalists were the piranhas going for the fleshy morsels, ready to savage each other to get to the juiciest mouthfuls.” He considered he had no alternative but to attack all reporters because there was no way he could single out individual correspondents. “Berating journalists at strike meetings invariably gets a good audience response. NUM members have had direct experience themselves of media bias, and they always applaud what I say . . . And, yes, attacking journalists does make me more interesting to the media at large.”

Trump’s strategy was so effective that it gave him massive exposure on American news channels. His speeches were so controversial, his outbursts so outlandish, they were often broadcast live, purposely timed to catch peak audiences. Much of the wall-to-wall television coverage he received over the 15 months of the presidential campaign was uncritical, and after the unexpected defeat of Hillary Clinton, the networks were blamed for not having done more to challenge and correct his wildest allegations. Nonetheless there is an inconvenient fact: as Elton John remarked, Trump was the best live performer he had seen who could not sing or play music. Scargill’s speeches at strike rallies were the same heady mixture of bombast and menace, laced with savage asides, put-downs and jokes, a music hall style routine that the activists greeted with lengthy standing ovations. As with Trump, there was an X Factor about him, and I am sure the news channels would have realised

that Scargill’s ability to shock made for compulsive viewing, and that once the networks had started a live broadcast from one of his speeches, they would have been equally reluctant to pull away.

Breakfast television had been launched by the start of the pit dispute, but in the mid-1980s there was nothing like the 24-hour news coverage of today. Bulletins were at fixed points in television and radio schedules, and except for party conferences, speeches by political and trade union leaders were almost always pre-recorded. If Scargill had been leading the strike in an era of rolling news, I am convinced that he would have exhibited Trump’s flair for the unpredictable; he knew how to grab the headlines, and given the way the pit dispute had divided the country, the news channels would have had a responsibility to maintain balanced output, an obligation that the Leave campaign exploited to the disadvantage of Remain during the European Referendum. Farage’s ability to upstage other leading Brexiteers was a pointer to what Scargill might have achieved in arguing the miners’ case had he had the opportunity to exploit live coverage and if his position had been strengthened by the requirement for equal air time that public service broadcasters have increasingly felt duty bound to observe.

Live transmission of rabble-rousing speeches is no longer a one-off because they have another life on social media. Short clips or even lengthy extracts are uploaded on to a multitude of platforms, and often reach an audience via the internet that far exceeds that of the original live broadcast. Trump’s campaign team drove the online agenda with an audacity unmatched in any previous election, backing up his rallies with a barrage of postings that more often than not paid scant attention to truth or accuracy. While a British trade union facing the full force of the state would inevitably have to come to terms with a far harsher environment than the post-truth level of communication that was apparent in the Brexit campaign, and

then re-surfaced with a vengeance in the US presidential election, there is a whole panoply of highly-inventive ways to by-pass the stranglehold of the established media of press and television.

Whenever I have spoken or written about the opportunities that have become available since the pit strike, I have suggested that the greatest safeguard for the NUM would have been the chance to circulate instant commentary and imagery about what was happening on picket lines. Photographs of police brutality captured on the mobile phones and tablets of union activists and their supporters could have been uploaded within minutes on You Tube, Facebook, Instagram and a vast array of online platforms. A constantly updated gallery of pictures showing what was really happening behind police lines, well out of the range of the cameras of broadcasters and press photographers, might well have challenged Mrs Thatcher's narrative that the pickets were to blame for the violence, and that police had no alternative but to enforce the law.

Perhaps the clearest example of the potential impact on public opinion achieved by instant, online reporting is the extent to which the US civil rights group, Black Lives Matter, has changed the perception about the behaviour of armed police in America. Activists started posting photographs of police shootings on Facebook in the summer of 2013; they created the hashtag BlackLivesMatter; and then launched their own website to increase public awareness. Here on line, from across the States, was documentary evidence that provided such a compelling narrative about the extra-judicial killings of black people by police and vigilantes that it transformed the nature of the debate. In 2014 an equally effective Twitter campaign exposed assaults by officers from the New York Police department. While there has been no repeat in the UK of the sustained confrontation between police and pickets that occurred in the 1984-85 miners' strike, and then during the Wapping dispute of

1986, there has been a fair number of demonstrations that have ended violently, and that have prompted allegations about excessive use of force by police. In sharp contrast to the pre-cameraphone days of the Battle of Orgreave, for which only limited footage exists illustrating police excesses in restraining striking miners, digital images captured by activists and bystanders can now be used, frame by frame, to back up complaints about police misconduct.

Amateur camera-phone videos and photographs provided the crucial evidence that confirmed that a police officer had struck newspaper vendor Ian Tomlinson, who died during protests over the G20 summit in the City of London in 2009. The most telling video was from the camera-phone of a New York investment fund manager who was visiting London. Six days after police reported that Tomlinson had died from a heart attack, the fund manager, as he was on his way to Heathrow, realised that he had filmed the assault, and he passed his footage to The Guardian. Tomlinson, who was not a protestor, was heading home through the police cordons when he was struck on the leg with a baton and pushed to the ground. After an inquest jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing, the officer concerned was prosecuted for manslaughter, found not guilty, but dismissed from the police service for gross misconduct.

Time and again a police version of events is being challenged by the mass uploading of images captured by protestors armed with camera phones and tablets. If today's digital technology had been freely available at the time of Stop the War's march against the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the organisers say they would have been able to prove that the turn-out was far in excess of the 750,000 estimated by the Metropolitan Police. BBC news reports suggested there had been around a million on the march, but the organisers were convinced the total was in excess of two million, even perhaps approaching three million, and easily the big-

Amateur camera-phone videos and photographs provided the crucial evidence that confirmed that a police officer had struck newspaper vendor Ian Tomlinson, who died during protests over the G20 summit in the City of London in 2009

Book Excerpt

If the strikers and their families had been able to reach an online audience to generate their own publicity, the parents who complained about having to put children to bed without a proper meal would have been able to vent their fury all over social media

gest ever demonstration seen in London. If thousands of marchers had been able to post photographs on Facebook and videos on You Tube, Stop the War says there would have been ample alternative digital imagery to challenge calculations based on police surveillance cameras.

In my imagined re-run of the pit strike, access to the internet would have been as transformative for the miners' families and the rest of their communities as it would have been for the strikers themselves. Mainstream media was accused of underplaying the hardship inflicted by the strike, and particularly the impact of the government's vindictive reduction in the level of benefits for strikers' families. Similarly, there was an under-reporting of the massive national and international effort to assist NUM members with gifts of food, clothes, toys, and especially the donations that helped finance the meals served up by the miners' wives' support groups. If the strikers and their families had been able to reach an online audience to generate their own publicity, the parents who complained about having to put children to bed without a proper meal would have been able to vent their fury all over social media. My contention is that Mrs Thatcher might well have been shamed into seeking a settlement by a never-ending cascade of pictures on Facebook telling the harrowing story of distressed mothers and children; You Tube would have been flooded with videos of vans and lorries on their way to mining communities to make emergency deliveries to strikers' families; and from across the country there would have been heart-warming stories and pictures of street collections in towns and villages. These expressions of solidarity with the miners' cause, and their dogged fight against pit closures, instead of often being suppressed or ignored, would have built up a momentum online that the newspapers and broadcasters would have found hard, if not impossible to disregard. Social media has transformed the ability of campaign groups to raise funds

for popular causes and such was the build-up in public sympathy for the miners as the strike wore on that online donations at home and abroad might easily have dwarfed the sums collected in high streets and shopping centres.

Pooling information

Social platforms encouraging discussion and comment would have provided another outlet for the voices of those living in communities isolated by the strike. Mumsnet, established in 2000 as a website designed to help parents pool information, has established a thriving online community of about 7.5-million users, precisely the kind of online army that might have been mobilised if only it had been possible for the miners' wives to highlight and explain their predicament. Given the enduring passion and ingenuity of Anne Scargill and Betty Cook, two stalwarts of Women Against Pit Closures – and the subsequent drive and determination of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign – I am convinced that with help and guidance from the wider trade union movement, the mothers of the pit villages would have been more than a match for the slick public relations of Mrs Thatcher's advisers and the NCB.

Where Trump broke new ground was in his extraordinary command of Twitter, which became a multi-purpose tool for furthering and strengthening his presidential campaign. Tweets were his very own news-feed, often fired off in the middle of the night or the early hours of the morning. Their content was so outrageous, and their timing so unpredictable, that they regularly re-set the agenda for the breakfast news bulletins and reshaped the running order of talk shows on television and radio. Without doubt Trump was a gifted newsmaker and easily won the media war. Whereas the Leave campaign exercised a degree of caution during the referendum campaign, realising that false claims such as the threat that Turkey was about to join the European Union would

gain the greatest traction by being shared and liked on Facebook and Twitter, Trump had no inhibitions about the veracity of his messages, firing off tweets about “crooked Hillary,” the “rigged” presidential election, and the failings of CNN and the New York Times. Trump’s online supremacy was awesome: his followers on Twitter increased from 12-million to 15.5-million between the start and finish of the presidential campaign; likes on his Facebook page peaked at 11.9-million; and according to the findings of the Pew Research Centre, 62 percent of US adults were turning to social media for some or all of their news. Twitter and Facebook became Trump’s megaphone, reinforcing support among an online audience that lived in a parallel world and that turned to sources they agreed with rather than the mainstream media.

I first mooted the concept of re-running the year-long miners’ strike against a background of a modern media landscape during the presentations that I gave to mark the 30th anniversary of the start of the dispute. After the political upsets of 2016, and all the

collateral damage there has been to the authority and reputation of the mainstream news media, I am more convinced than ever that the internet has helped to rewrite the rules for fighting future industrial disputes. Social media affords unparalleled opportunities for activists to organise, recruit and raise money through crowdsource funding. Above all else, new technology allows campaigners an opportunity to present and promote an alternative narrative to that of established press, television and radio. Had the NUM been able to acquire the expertise and online access that was available during the European referendum and the US presidential campaign, then the outcome of the struggle against pit closures might well have had to be re-written. **CT**

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Nicholas Jones reported the 1984-85 miners’ strike for BBC Radio and was an Industrial and Political Correspondent for the BBC from 1972-2002. His reflections on the pit dispute and commentaries on the Cabinet papers relating to the strike are at trade union reporting: www.nicholasjones.org.uk

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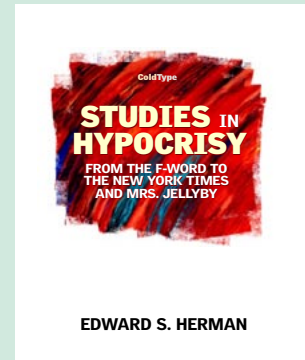
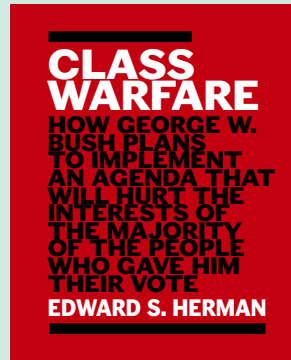
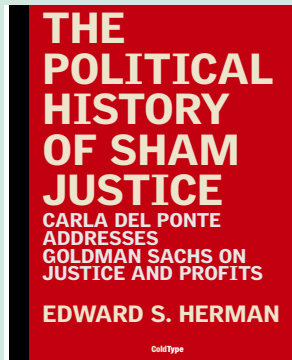
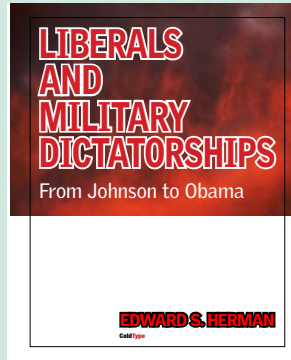
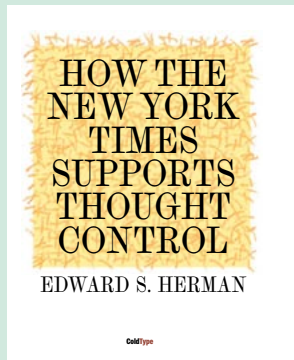
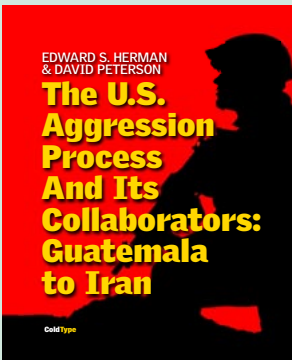
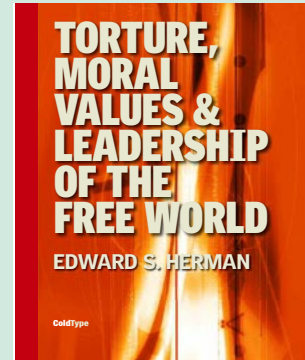
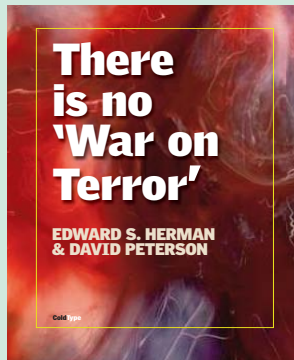
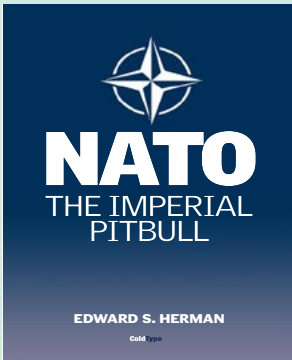
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The Creative
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ColdType Insights

Chuck Berry: founder of a musical genre

His lyricist's eye helped capture the spirit of the age and that resulted in the birth of rock 'n' roll, writes **Adam Behr**

When time travel adventure *Back to the Future* included the conceit of the white 1980s teenager, Marty McFly, inventing rock 'n' roll, there was really only one song to hang it on – Chuck Berry's Johnny B. Goode. Legendary is an over-used adjective in popular culture, but Berry's passing is a salutary reminder of what a giant in the field actually looked like.

The process by which new genres emerge from previous music forms is complex and muddy, and the boundaries between them porous. So John Lennon may have been exaggerating when he said: "If you tried to give rock and roll another name, you might call it 'Chuck Berry.'" But not by much.

In terms of contributing to the shape of popular music culture in the 20th-century and beyond, he had only a handful of peers. He was the keystone for subsequent pivotal figures in the development of rock – the Beatles, Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix all covered his songs, and his influence is writ large throughout their playing. Likewise, the Beach Boys' early career was propelled by almost note-for-note takes of his riffs and licks.



Chuck Berry

Photo: Wikipedia

In fact, both the Beach Boys and Lennon were to fall foul of plagiarism suits pertaining to their use of Berry's work, and Berry was himself sued in 2000 by longtime collaborator – pianist Johnnie Johnson – for a share in the credits to a string of hits such as *Roll Over Beethoven* and *No Particular Place to Go*. Johnson's suit, which concerned 50 songs, was dismissed due to the length of time that had elapsed since the songs were written, over which period the songs had become classics.

Although Johnson's contribution to Berry's work was significant – Berry had originally joined Johnson's band as his musical career started to take off – there's more to the development of a musical form than chord progressions and musical arrangements. Simon Frith has written that genre exists between different sets of conventions in music – how it sounds, how it is performed, how it is sold and its embodied values, or ideology.

It is at this intersection that Berry emerges as a focal point in the birth of rock 'n' roll. Musically, he was open about his debt to a range of guitar players, from a range of genres, from Muddy Waters to Carl Hogan and Charlie Christian. But his unique skill was to infuse these with a sense of urgency against a driving backbeat. From details like foregrounding the double-stop (two strings played at once) to the overarching dynamics of his playing, he produced the template for the rock guitar solo. His famous duckwalk and swinging movements also centralised the guitar solo, and took the guitar centre stage, not just as a musical instrument but also as a visual prop and performance tool.

As a writer, also, he captured the spirit of his age. His lyricist's eye allowed him to meld the world-weary, hard-living concerns of the blues with a narrative style that crystallised the experiences of the first generation growing up in the post war era of American popular cultural dominance. Replete with automobiles, Sears Roebuck sales and jukeboxes, his songs kept one foot in the history

of black American musical experience but hooked it to the pop consumption culture of the present.

Treading a tightrope between quasi-comic vignettes (the troublesome seatbelt of *No Particular Place To Go*) and emotive punchlines (the absent daughter of Memphis, Tennessee), his narratives were also innovative. In the first person, but at a knowing, often winking, remove from the action, their echoes could still be heard decades later in the storytelling of rappers.

He was keenly aware, too, of the different audiences in an America that were still deeply segregated. He drew on country as well as blues and jazz, and he had a sharp sense of how to bridge the demographic divide by deliberately modulating his vocal delivery, as he explained in his autobiography:

“Listening to my idol Nat Cole prompted me to sing sentimental songs with distinction diction. The songs of Muddy Waters impelled me to deliver the down-home blues in the language they came from. . . . When I played hillbilly songs, I stressed my diction so that it was harder and whiter. All in all it was my intention to hold both the black and the white clientele by voicing the different kinds of songs in their customary tongues.”

Neither was he beyond addressing the inequities of the racial divide in his music, although his commercial impetus and self-identification as an entertainer first and foremost meant that he did so obliquely, rather than head on. He changed, for example, the semi-autobiographical Johnny B. Goode from a “coloured” to a “country” boy to widen the song’s applicability and appeal.

Ultimately, Berry’s peak period as a recording artist was relatively short and, also blazing a trail for the moral and legal ambiguities of rock that were to follow, he was arrested in 1959 for transporting a minor across state lines. Despite a successful appeal against the initial sentence on the grounds of racist comments made by the judge to the all-white jury, he still served two years after a retrial. The break in his career saw recorded music take his pop innovations to the next level, as rock ‘n’ roll, filtered through British acts such as the Beatles, burst its creative banks to become the rock of the 1960s.

Berry maintained his appeal as a live performer, despite intermittently shaky performances due to his insistence on touring solo and playing with unrehearsed pick-up bands in every town – a legacy of his early losses on the road, and determination not to be ripped off again. But neither these, nor further legal travails in the 1990s, could undermine his status as a founding father of rock.

When the Voyager space probes were launched in the 1970s, they carried a record representing the various different sounds of human civilisation. In among Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and folk musics from around the world, sits Johnny B. Goode. It was a controversial inclusion at the time, with folklorist Alan Lomax arguing that it was “adolescent.” But adolescents grow up, and Berry’s literacy and capacity to straddle musical genres as well as adult and teenage concerns, laid down the groundwork for modern rock and pop. He became the legend that other legends referred back to.

A year after the launch of the Voyager spacecraft, Steve Martin mocked up a cover of *Time* magazine on Saturday Night Live with a response from alien civilizations: “Send more Chuck Berry.” **CT**

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Adam Behr is a lecturer in popular and contemporary music at Newcastle University in England. This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com

When Canada invaded Russia?

The mainstream media presents Russia as militaristic but ignores Canada’s invasion of that country, writes **Yves Engler**

A hundred years ago on March 14, 1917, a popular revolt ousted the Russian monarchy. Enraged at Nicholas II’s brutality and the horror of World War I, protests and strikes swept the capital of Petrograd (Saint Petersburg).

Within a week the czar abdicated. Later in the year the Bolsheviks rose to power in large part by committing to withdraw from the war.

The English, French and US responded to the Bolshevik’s rise by supporting the Russian monarchists

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(the whites) in their fight to maintain power. Six thousand Canadian troops also invaded. According to Roy Maclaren in *Canadians in Russia, 1918 – 1919*, Canadian gunners won “a vicious reputation amongst the Bolsheviks for the calm skill with which they used shrapnel as a short-range weapon against foot soldiers.”

While a Canadian naval vessel supported the White Russians, Canadian pilots stationed near the Black Sea provided air support.

The war against the Bolsheviks was initially justified as a way to reopen World War I's eastern front (the Bolsheviks signed a peace treaty with Germany). Canadian troops, however, stayed after World War I ended. In fact, 2,700 Canadian troops arrived in the eastern city of Vladivostok on January 5, 1919, two months after the war's conclusion. A total of 3,800 Canadian troops, as well as Royal Northwest Mounted Police and 697 horses, went to Siberia, which the Whites continued to control long after losing Moscow, St. Petersburg and most of the western part of the country.

Ottawa maintained its forces in Russia after the conclusion of World War One partly to persuade the British that Canada merited inclusion in the Paris peace conference that would divvy up the spoils of the war. Prime Minister Borden wrote: “We shall stand in an unfortunate position unless we proceed with Siberia

expedition. We made definite arrangements with the British government on which they have relied . . . Canada's present position and prestige would be singularly impaired by deliberate withdrawal.”

Ottawa also feared the rise of anti-capitalism. On December 1, 1918, Borden wrote in his diary that he was “struck with the progress of Bolshevism in European countries.” For their part, Canadian working class groups condemned the invasion of Russia as “for the benefit of the capitalist.” The president of the BC Federation of Labour Joseph Naylor asked, “Is it not high time that the workers of the Western world take action similar to that of the Russian Bolsheviks and dispose of their masters as those brave Russians are now doing?”

The allies invaded Russia to defend the status quo, much to the dismay of many Canadians who welcomed the czar's demise and found it difficult to understand why Canada would support Russian reactionaries. Opposition to the intervention was widespread even among soldiers. According to the *Toronto Globe*, 60-70 percent of the men sent to Siberia went unwillingly. One artillery section even refused to obey orders.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s western countries worked to isolate Moscow. Canada (and the US) opposed a treaty to guarantee Russia's pre-war frontiers, which England

had signed with Moscow. Ottawa recognised the Bolshevik government in 1924 but ties were severed after the British cut off relations in mid-1927. Full diplomatic relations with Moscow would not restart until the late 1930s.

Russophobia has once again gripped the political/media establishment. A number of prominent commentators have defended the grandfather of Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland collaborating with the Nazis on the grounds it was either them or the Russians occupying Ukraine during World War II. Freeland herself deflected questions on the matter by saying Moscow may be trying to “destabilise” Canadian democracy while Brigadier General Paul Rutherford warned of Russian cyber warfare. More dangerous, Ottawa is ramping up its military presence on Russia's doorstep (Ukraine, Poland and Latvia) to counter “aggression.”

To help clear the thick fog of propaganda it's useful to remember how Canada responded to the fall of Russia's monarchy. While Russia has never invaded Canada, we once invaded their country. **CT**

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*Yves Engler is a Montreal-based activist and author. He has published eight books, the most recent being *Canada in Africa – 300 Years of Aid and Exploitation*. His web site is www.yvesengler.com*

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Why the British media is afraid of child refugees

Rachel Pistol shows how British media ambivalence towards migrants and refugees is rooted in the 1930s

The UK government has squashed an attempt by MPs to restart a scheme that offered hope and protection to unaccompanied child refugees, which was shut down in February.

Although some local councils have said they would be willing to take in more refugee children if the government were to offer funding, the Conservatives decided to close the Dubs scheme – named after Alf Dubs whose amendment in the Lords introduced the commitment in 2016. A large number of MPs have protested the decision.

Britain has a long history of accepting child refugees – Dubs himself was brought to the country as a child refugee from Czechoslovakia before World War II. But, even in the 1930s, the press was divided on the issue of child refugees, in ways that bear similarities to some recent media coverage.

The media have always tended to agree that child refugees are the most deserving of sympathy. During the 1930s, Britain offered help to many children, either on a fixed term or permanent basis. In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, Britain agreed to offer temporary sanctuary to several thousand children from northern Spain.

It was not a straightforward decision, as the British government

was worried that helping Spanish children would compromise Britain's neutrality. It was also concerned that the children might stay permanently and cost the taxpayer money. When these fears were overcome, the Spanish liner SS Habana arrived at the docks of Southampton with just under 4,000 children on board.

On their arrival, the newspapers were quick to offer praise for the rescue of these children. The Manchester City News wrote of a "pitiful cargo of . . . fatherless, homeless, bewildered children" that was being rescued by "the merciful arm of Britain." The Daily Mail was quick to point out that the children would easily fit into Britain as many of them were "as blonde as any English children," with "bright blue eyes and lightly freckled skins." However, there were also risks associated with the large number of children arriving in Britain – and diseases such as typhoid, diphtheria, and measles were reported in the Times and the Daily Mail.

Welcomed at first

To begin with, the Basque children were reported on positively. The Manchester Guardian wrote that the children were "heartily welcomed by all sections of the community,"

and communities were proud to be associated with them. It was not long though before trouble erupted. The Daily Mail coined the alliteration of "Bad Basque Boys," which became a popular way to describe the children.

Undoubtedly, there were bad Basque boys, who caused a "riot" in Brechfa, Carmarthenshire, as well as numerous disturbances across the country. Concerns were raised by MPs, who called for the children to be returned to Spain as quickly as possible because it was feared they were endangering the British public. Reports about violent disturbances helped to end feelings of humanitarianism towards Basque children, and eventually their time in Britain came to an end. Many of the children returned to Spain in 1938, just as more European children were arriving in Britain.

From 1938, mostly Jewish children who were fleeing Nazi persecution started to arrive on the Kindertransport from Germany and Austria. While the Basque children had been seen as powerless victims of war, Jewish children were not yet considered in the same way, and there were fears spouted in the press that thousands of children would "overrun" the country.

The Basque children had mostly been able to continue their childhood in group homes for Basque children, and they were encouraged to keep their national identities. The Jewish children, though, were expected to become as British as possible, and many of the older girls were trained to work in domestic service and the boys in farming. As the Daily Mail explained in 1938: "Many of the boys will be given in-

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struction in agricultural work with a view to emigration to the colonies or to other countries offering employment.”

In another article, the Daily Mail talked about Jewish children who had survived “terror and deprivation to a new life that holds for them freedom, happiness, and careers.” The children had to become useful citizens in order to maintain positive press.

Protests about Jewish refugees

There was much protest in the 1930s about letting Jewish refugees into Britain from a variety of sources including the right-wing press, medical professionals and those living in deprived areas.

People were still more concerned about what was happening in Spain and other parts of the world, rather

than what was happening in Germany. Even after Kristallnacht in Germany in 1938, when the Nazis attacked Jews and their property, many local and national newspapers wrote about how neither politicians nor the general public should allow their emotions to cloud their vision, and reminded readers that there was a limit to how much charity could be offered to children.

For the limited number of children that the press did support coming to Britain, papers such as the Times and the Daily Mail emphasised that many of the children coming from Germany would be Christian, rather than Jewish children. This was in the hope that it would encourage people to be more charitable, even though Christian children were only ever a small proportion of those admitted via the

transports.

The government and the media were keen to support schemes that would send Jewish children to Palestine, rather than support them in Britain. Ultimately, though, many thousands of Jewish children did remain in Britain, bringing great benefits to the country.

The Basque child evacuees are seldom mentioned these days, and the Kindertransport is now celebrated for its humanitarian achievements, but if you scratch the surface, the history of how welcoming the British press has been of child refugees is much more complicated than would first appear. **CT**

Rachel Pistol is associate research fellow at the University of Exeter. This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com

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Why won't Israel let me go to Palestine?

Alison Weir writes a letter to the Israeli government after it bans foreigners who support boycotts and sanctions

Dear Israeli Government:

You've recently banned foreigners who support boycotts against Israel or Israeli settlements from being allowed to enter Israel – even Jewish foreigners, a first for the self-proclaimed Jewish state. After all, your “Law of Return” has allowed (and encouraged) Jewish foreigners to freely immigrate to Israel, even as multitudes of Palestinians have been banned from returning to their homes.

People throughout the Western world have objected in outrage to your new law, particularly Jewish Westerners who have family and connections in Israel from whom they'll be cut off in retaliation for their political positions.

Critics, even some who oppose boycotting Israel and who have had no problem with excluding Palestinians, have called out the law for diverse reasons: its quashing of free debate and political expression, its anti-democratic nature, how it will affect them and others personally.

I support these objections.

But I'm not trying to visit Israel.

I want to go to Bethlehem and Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron, Jenin and Tulkarem. I hope to return to Khan Yunis, Rafah, Gaza City, and numerous other towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza.

In other words, I want to go to Palestine – a country recognised by 136 countries around the world. But your law, astoundingly, prevents me from visiting that country. You control entry and exit to the places I want to visit, even though they're not part of your territory, or included in your exclusive democracy.

When I was born, Palestine referred to the whole of the land that your founders then ethnically cleansed and renamed. Now, it officially refers to a few segments of land, surrounded and trapped.

Unlike the residents of every other country on earth, Palestinians are not free to travel to and from their own country unless a foreign country gives them permission – a normally universal right that you routinely deny: to young and old, Muslims and Christians, professors and paupers, men and women.

Visitors are similarly obstructed. You decide whether they can get in, and whether they can get out.

When I try to visit Bethlehem, for example, I must face your armed soldiers manning the Kafkaesque, towering concrete wall you have erected on Palestinian land. These gun-toting youngsters will decree whether or not I and others – including Palestinian descendants of Bethlehem's ancient shepherds – can pass through.

In other words, Israel is essentially imprisoning more than 4-million men, women, and children (with some help from Egypt, its proxy to the south). Israeli jailers, euphemistically “border guards,” determine who may even visit this incarcerated population, and what supplies may reach them.

Over the years I've seen you prevent numerous individuals and groups, many bringing medicines and life-saving supplies, from visiting this captive population. You've blocked sons from visiting dying mothers, suffering children from receiving critical medical care, malnourished toddlers from receiving help.

It is a profound shame upon the world that this cruel and unconscionable condition has been permitted to persist year after year. There should have been massive and irresistible objections long before your recent legislation.

I remember when the United States opposed the Iron Curtain. Today, the US gives the perpetrator of this current captivity \$10-million per day.

Israel already denied me entry once 15 years ago, locking me up for 28 hours in a detention cell in Ben Gurion Airport before expelling me. I remember Israeli officials telling me I was not “allowed into Israel.” They didn't even supply a reason.

Next time, they may say it's because I endorse BDS, which I wholeheartedly do.

But I'm not trying to go to Israel. I want to go to Palestine. **CT**

Alison Weir is executive director of If Americans Knew – www.ifamericansknew.org

Education: Good, bad or evil? You decide!

Brian Mitchell delves into the history books and finds universal ambivalence towards institutionalised learning

“Universal education is the most corroding and disintegrating poison that liberalism has ever invented for its own destruction.” – *Adolf Hitler*.

“Men are born ignorant, not stupid; they are made stupid by education.” – *Bertrand Russell*.

“A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” – *James Madison*.

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.” – *Albert Einstein*.

“An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don’t.” – *Anatole France*.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – *Nelson Mandela*.

“There is nothing more dangerous than an oppressed people who first acquire the weapons of education and organisation.” – *Bernadette Devlin McAliskey*.

“Without education, you are not going anywhere in this world.” – *Malcolm X*.

“Without education, we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously.” – *G.K. Chesterton*.

“Self-education is, I firmly believe, the only kind of education there is.” – *Isaac Asimov*.

“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.” – *H.G. Wells*.

“We are in a period of considerable social change. There may be social unrest, but we can cope with the Toxteths [Liverpool riots. BM.] . . . but if we have a highly-educated and idle population, we may possibly anticipate more serious conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place.” – *From a secret British Department of Education report*.

“With politics let loose among those peoples, we may have a wave of disorder and wholesale Communism set going all over those parts of Europe.” – *South African apartheid Prime Minister Jan Smuts*.

“Better build schoolrooms for “the boy”, Than cells and gibbets for “the man”.” – *Eliza Cook*, “*A Song for the Ragged Schools*.”

“In the newspapers I often read this pitiful sentence: “The people must be taught to read,” and I say to myself, What shall they read? It is education and undesirable literature, these are our enemies.” – *Fascist dictator of Portugal Antonio Salazar*.

“The educated person is not the person who can answer all the ques-

tions, but the person who can question the answers.” – *Anonymous*.

“The people are in general inadequately educated and have little experience in philosophical and political reasoning, and so it is possible to misinform, divert, and delude them.” – *US writer Bernard Smith*.

“The greater amount of education which a part of the working class has employed for some years past, is an evil. It is dangerous because it makes them independent.” – *British glassworks owner John Geddes, 1865*.

“It is chiefly intended that the practical lesson, that they (the working classes) are destined to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow shall be inculcated.” – *Poor Law Commissioner Sir James [J.K.] Shuttleworth, 1833*.

“An educated proletariat is a constant source of disturbance and danger to any nation.” – *US educator, Nobel Prize winner Nicholas Murray Butler*.

“If my soldiers were to begin to think, not one of them would remain in the army.” – *Frederick the Great*.

“With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the developing of character in men, than any other association of men.” – *US lawyer Clarence Darrow*.

“The man who can make hard things easy is the educator.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. **CT**

Brian Mitchell is a London-based author and journalist. He is a former trade union organiser and teacher.

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