

LET'S LOOK AT POLICE SHOOTINGS | WILLIAM JOHN COX  
WHAT WILL HILLARY DO WITHOUT TRUMP? | DANNY KATCH  
WE ARE WHAT WE ARE | GEORGE MONBIOT

# ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING | PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

ISSUE 126

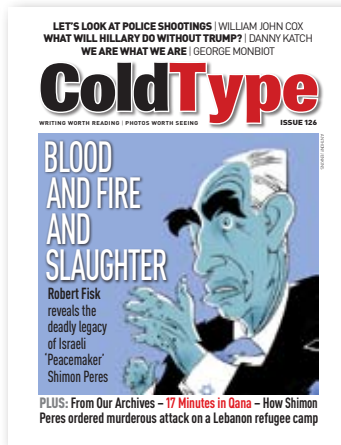
## BLOOD AND FIRE AND SLAUGHTER

Robert Fisk  
reveals the  
deadly legacy  
of Israeli  
'Peacemaker'  
Shimon Peres



ANTHONY JENKINS

PLUS: From Our Archives – **17 Minutes in Qana** – How Shimon Peres ordered murderous attack on a Lebanon refugee camp



**Cover art:**

Shimon Peres, by Anthony Jenkins  
 – www.jenkinsdraws.com  
 (See Pages 18 to 25)

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Editor: Tony Sutton – editor@coldtype.net

# The great Libyan war fraud

The corporate-owned British media is suffering from a lack of reader confidence. **David Edwards** looks at some of the reasons why

Britain's national newspapers were "unimpressed by Jeremy Corbyn's victory" in the Labour leadership election, Roy Greenslade noted in the Guardian, surprising no-one. Corbyn secured almost 62 percent of the 506,000 votes cast, up from the 59 percent share he won in 2015, "with virtually no press backing whatsoever."

In reality, of course, Corbyn did not just lack press backing. He won in the face of more than one year of relentless corporate media campaigning to politically, ethically, professionally, psychologically and even sartorially discredit him. That Corbyn survived is impressive. That he won again, increased his vote-share, and took Labour Party membership from 200,000 to more than 500,000, is astonishing.

None of this moves journalists like the BBC's political editor, Laura Kuenssberg, who commented: "There's been no big new idea or vision this week that Labour can suddenly rally round."

Polly Toynbee explained: "I and many Guardian colleagues can't just get behind Corbyn." Why? "Because Corbyn and McDonnell, burdened by their history, will never ever earn the trust of enough voters to make any plans happen."

Toynbee fails to recognise the nature and scale of the problem. In supporting Corbyn, the public is attempting to shape

a genuinely democratic choice out of the sham choices of corporate-owned politics. This awesome task begins with the public waking up to the anti-democratic role of the corporate media in defending, of course, corporate-owned politics. So-called "mainstream media" are primarily conduits for power rather than information; they are political enforcers, not political communicators. To the extent that the public understands this, change is possible.

Supported by non-corporate, web-based media activism, Corbyn has already smoked out these media to an extent that is without precedent. Many people can see that he is a reasonable, compassionate, decent individual generating immense grass-roots support. And they can see that all "mainstream" media oppose him. It could hardly be more obvious that the corporate media speak as a single biased, elitist voice.

## The Benghazi massacre – no real evidence

The smearing of Corbyn fits well with the similarly uniform propaganda campaign taking the "threat" of Iraqi WMD seriously in 2002 and 2003. Then, also, the entire corporate media system assailed the public with a long litany of fraudulent claims. And then there was Libya.

Coming so soon after the incomplete

**The smearing of Corbyn fits well with the similarly uniform propaganda campaign taking the "threat" of Iraqi WMD seriously in 2002 and 2003**

# WAR MACHINE

**The UK government's relentless insistence on the need to support freedom-loving rebels against a genocidal tyranny were invented "facts" fixed around policy**

but still damning exposure of the Iraq deception – with the bloodbath still warm – the media's deep conformity and willful gullibility on the 2011 Libyan war left even jaundiced observers aghast. It was clear that we were faced with a pathological system of propaganda on Perpetual War autopilot.

The pathology has been starkly exposed by a September 9 report into the war from the foreign affairs committee of the House of Commons. As with Iraq, this was no mere common-or-garden disaster; we are again discussing the destruction of an entire country. The report summarised:

“The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL in North Africa.”

The rationale for intervention, of course, was the alleged threat of a massacre by Gaddafi's forces in Benghazi. The report commented:

**“The evidence base: our assessment**

“Despite his rhetoric, the proposition that Muammar Gaddafi would have ordered the massacre of civilians in Benghazi was not supported by the available evidence . . . Gaddafi regime forces targeted male combatants in a civil war and did not indiscriminately attack civilians. More widely, Muammar Gaddafi's 40-year record of appalling human rights abuses **did not** include large-scale attacks on Libyan civilians.’ (Our emphasis)

And:

“Professor Joffé [Visiting Professor at King's College London] told us that ‘the rhetoric that was used was quite blood-curdling, but again there were past examples of the way in which Gaddafi would actually behave. . . The evidence is that he was well aware of the insecurity of parts of the country and of the unlikelihood that he could control them through sheer

violence. Therefore, he would have been very careful in the actual response . . . the fear of the massacre of civilians was vastly overstated.’ ”

Analyst and author Alison Pargeter agreed with Professor Joffé, concluding that there was no “real evidence at that time that Gaddafi was preparing to launch a massacre against his own civilians.” Related claims, that Gaddafi used African mercenaries, launched air strikes on civilians in Benghazi, and employed Viagra-fuelled mass rape as a weapon of war, were also invented.

These are astonishing comments. But according to the Lexis-Nexis media database, neither Professor Joffé nor Pargeter has been quoted by name in the press, with only the Express and Independent reporting that “available evidence” had shown Gaddafi had no record of massacres; a different, less damning, point.

As disturbingly, the report noted: “We have seen no evidence that the UK Government carried out a proper analysis of the nature of the rebellion in Libya . . . It could not verify the actual threat to civilians posed by the Gaddafi regime. . . .”

In other words, the UK government's relentless insistence on the need to support freedom-loving rebels against a genocidal tyranny were invented “facts” fixed around policy.

That the war was a crime is hardly in doubt. Lord Richards (Baron Richards of Herstmonceux), chief of the defence staff at the time of the conflict, told the BBC that Cameron asked him “how long it might take to depose, regime change, get rid of Gaddafi.” British historian Mark Curtis describes the significance: “Three weeks after Cameron assured parliament in March 2011 that the object of the intervention was not regime change, he signed a joint letter with President Obama and French President Sarkozy committing to “a future without Gaddafi.”

“That these were policies were illegal is

confirmed by Cameron himself. He told Parliament on March 21, 2011, that the UN resolution ‘explicitly does not provide legal authority for action to bring about Gaddafi’s removal from power by military means.’”

Cameron, then, like Blair, is a war criminal.

### The ‘moral glow’ from ‘a triumphant end’

The foreign affairs committee’s report is awesomely embarrassing for the disciplined murmuration of corporate journalists who promoted war.

At a crucial time in February and March 2011, the Guardian published a long list of news reports boosting government propaganda and opinion pieces advocating intervention on the basis of the West’s supposed “responsibility to protect,” or R2P. Guardian columnist, later comment editor (2014-2016), Jonathan Freedland, wrote an article titled: “Though the risks are very real, the case for intervention remains strong.”

Brian Whitaker, the Guardian’s former Middle East editor, wrote: “The scale and nature of the Gaddafi regime’s actions have impelled the UN’s ‘responsibility to protect.’”

Menzies Campbell, former leader of the Liberal Democrats, and Philippe Sands, professor of law at University College London, wrote in the Guardian: “International law does not require the world to stand by and do nothing as civilians are massacred on the orders of Colonel Gaddafi . . .”

An Observer leader agreed: “The west can’t let Gaddafi destroy his people.” And thus: “this particular tyranny will not be allowed to stand.”

No doubt with tongue firmly in Wodehousian cheek, as usual, Boris Johnson wrote in the Telegraph: “The cause is noble and right, and we are surely bound by our common humanity to help the people of Benghazi.”

David Aaronovitch, already haunted by

his warmongering on Iraq, wrote an article for the Times titled: “Go for a no-fly zone over Libya or regret it.” He commented: “If Colonel Gaddafi is permitted to murder hundreds or thousands of his citizens from the air, and we stand by and let it happen, then our inaction will return to haunt us . . . We have a side here, let’s be on it.”

Later, a Guardian leader quietly celebrated: “But it can now reasonably be said that in narrow military terms it worked, and that politically there was some retrospective justification for its advocates as the crowds poured into the streets of Tripoli to welcome the rebel convoys earlier this week.”

Simon Tisdall commented in the same newspaper: “The risky western intervention had worked. And Libya was liberated at last.”

An Observer editorial declared: “An honourable intervention. A hopeful future.”

The BBC’s Nick Robinson observed that Downing Street “will see this, I’m sure, as a triumphant end.” (BBC, News at Six, October 20, 2011) Robinson appeared to channel Churchill: “Libya was David Cameron’s first war. Col. Gaddafi his first foe. Today, his first real taste of military victory.”

The BBC’s chief political correspondent, Norman Smith, declared that Cameron “must surely feel vindicated.” (BBC News online, October 21, 2011) In Washington, the BBC’s Ian Pannell surmised that Obama “is feeling that his foreign policy strategy has been vindicated – that his critics have been proven wrong.” (BBC News online, October 21, 2011)

The BBC’s John Humphrys asked: “What apart from a sort of moral glow . . . have we got out of it?” (BBC Radio 4 Today, October 21, 2011)

Andrew Grice, political editor of the Independent, declared that Cameron had “proved the doubters wrong.: Bitterly ironic then, even more so now, Grice added: “By calling Libya right, Mr Cameron in-

**The foreign affairs committee’s report is awesomely embarrassing for the disciplined murmuration of corporate journalists who promoted war**

# WAR MACHINE

**The preferred media focus was, as usual, so-called “mistakes,” lack of planning; rather than the fact that both wars were launched on outrageous lies, ended in the destruction of entire countries, and were driven by greed for resources**

vites a neat contrast with Tony Blair.”

An editorial in the Telegraph argued that Gaddafi’s death “vindicates the swift action of David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy in halting the attack on Benghazi.” Telegraph columnist Matthew d’Ancona (now writing for the Guardian) agreed: “It is surely a matter for quiet national pride that an Arab Srebrenica was prevented by a coalition in which Britain played an important part . . .”

An Independent leader observed: “Concern was real enough that a Srebrenica-style massacre could unfold in Benghazi, and the UK Government was right to insist that we would not allow this.”

The Times of course joined the corporate herd in affirming that without intervention, there “would have been a massacre in Benghazi on the scale of Srebrenica.”

But even voices to the left of the “mainstream” got Libya badly wrong. Most cringe-makingly, Professor Juan Cole declared: “The Libya intervention is legal and was necessary to prevent further massacres. . . . If NATO needs me, I’m there.”

Robert Fisk commented in the Independent that, had “Messrs Cameron, Sarkozy and Obama stopped short after they saved Benghazi,” disaster could have been avoided.

Ironically, in an article ostensibly challenging the warmongers’ hysterical claims, Mehdi Hasan wrote in the New Statesman: “The innocent people of Benghazi deserve protection from Gaddafi’s murderous wrath.”

Even Noam Chomsky observed: “The no-fly zone prevented a likely massacre . . .”

To his credit, then Guardian columnist Seumas Milne (now Corbyn’s director of communications and strategy) was more sceptical. He wrote in October 2011: “But there is in fact no evidence – including from other rebel-held towns Gaddafi recaptured – to suggest he had either the capability or even the intention to carry out

such an atrocity against an armed city of 700,000.”

We at Medialens were labelled “useful idiots” for challenging these and other atrocity claims in a June 2011 media alert.

## **Media reaction to the report**

The media reaction to the MPs’ demolition of their case for war made just five years earlier inevitably included some ugly evasions. A Guardian editorial commented of Libya: “It is easy in retrospect to lump it in with Iraq as a foreign folly. . . .”

It is indeed easy “to lump it in,” it is near-identical in key respects. But as a major war crime, not a “folly.”

“ . . . and there are important parallels – not least the failure to plan for stabilisation and reconstruction.”

The preferred media focus being, as usual, so-called “mistakes,” lack of planning; rather than the fact that both wars were launched on outrageous lies, ended in the destruction of entire countries, and were driven by greed for resources. With impressive audacity, the Guardian preferred to cling to deceptions exposed by the very report under review: “But it is also important to note differences between a gratuitous, proactive invasion and a response to a direct threat to the citizens of Benghazi, triggered by the spontaneous uprising of the Libyan people. Memories of Srebrenica spurred on decision-makers.”

In fact, propagandistic use of Srebrenica from sources like the Guardian “spurred on decision-makers.” The whole point of the MPs’ report is that it found no “real evidence” for a massacre in Benghazi. Similarly, the Guardian’s “spontaneous uprising” is a debunked version of events peddled by government officials and media allies in 2011, despite the fact that there is “no evidence that the UK Government carried out a proper analysis of the nature of the rebellion in Libya.” In fact the MPs’ report makes a nonsense of the Guardian’s claims for a humanitarian motive, noting:

“On 2 April 2011, Sidney Blumenthal, adviser and unofficial intelligence analyst to the then United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, reported this conversation with French intelligence officers to the Secretary of State:

‘According to these individuals Sarkozy’s plans are driven by the following issues:

‘a. A desire to gain a greater share of Libya oil production,

‘b. Increase French influence in North Africa,

‘c. Improve his internal political situation in France,

‘d. Provide the French military with an opportunity to reassert its position in the world,

‘e. Address the concern of his advisors over Qaddafi’s long term plans to supplant France as the dominant power in Franco-phone Africa.”

The Guardian apologetic continued: “Perhaps most critically, western intervention – fronted by France and the UK, but powered by the US – came under a United Nations security council resolution for the protection of civilians, after the Arab League called for a no-fly zone.”

But this, again, is absurd because the resolution, UNSCR 1973, “neither explicitly authorised the deployment of ground forces nor addressed the questions of regime change,” as the MPs’ report noted. Nato had no more right to overthrow the Libyan government than the American and British governments had the right to invade Iraq.

In 2011, it was deeply disturbing that the

barrage of political and media propaganda on Libya received far less challenge even than the earlier propaganda on Iraq. With Guardian and BBC “humanitarian interventionists” leading the way, many people were misled on the need for action. In a House of Commons vote on March 21, 2011, 557 MPs voted for war with just 13 opposing. Two names stand out among the 13 opponents: Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

Predictably, last month’s exposure of the great Libya war fraud has done nothing to prompt corporate journalists to rethink their case for war in Syria – arguments based on similar claims from similar sources promoting similar “humanitarian intervention.” Indeed, as this alert was being completed, the Guardian published an opinion piece by former Labour foreign secretary David Owen, calling for “a no-fly zone (NFZ), with protected land corridors for humanitarian aid” in Syria, because: “The humanitarian imperative is for the region to act and the world to help.”

In February 2003, the Guardian published a piece by the same David Owen titled: “Wage war in Iraq for the sake of peace in the Middle East.” In 2011, Owen published an article in the Telegraph, titled: “We have proved in Libya that intervention can still work.” He had himself “called for . . . intervention” that February.

The Perpetual War machine rolls on. **CT**

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*David Edwards is co-editor of Medialens, the British media watchdog. Its website is [www.medialens.org](http://www.medialens.org)*

**In a House of Commons vote on March 21, 2011, 557 MPs voted for war with just 13 opposing. Two names stand out among the 13 opponents: Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell**

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# We are what we are

Democracy cannot work as it is meant to; human nature does not allow it, writes **George Monbiot**

**We seek out the political parties that seem to correspond best to our culture, with little regard to whether their policies support our interests**

What if democracy doesn't work? What if it never has and never will? What if government of the people, by the people, for the people is a fairytale? What if it functions as a justifying myth for liars and charlatans?

There are plenty of reasons to raise these questions. The lies, exaggerations and fearmongering on both sides of the Brexit non-debate; the xenophobic fables that informed the Hungarian referendum; Donald Trump's ability to shake off almost any scandal and exposure; the election of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, who gleefully compares himself to Hitler: are these isolated instances or do they reveal a systemic problem?

Democracy for Realists, published earlier this year by the social science professors Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels, argues that the "folk theory of democracy" – the idea that citizens make coherent and intelligible policy decisions, on which governments then act – bears no relationship to how it really works. Or could ever work.

Voters, they contend, can't possibly live up to these expectations. Most are too busy with jobs and families and troubles of their own. When we do have time off, not many of us choose to spend it sifting competing claims about the fiscal implications of quantitative easing. Even when we do, we

don't behave as the theory suggests.

Our folk theory of democracy is grounded in an Enlightenment notion of rational choice. This proposes that we make political decisions by seeking information, weighing the evidence and using it to choose good policies, then attempting to elect a government that will champion those policies. In doing so, we compete with other rational voters, and seek to reach the unpersuaded through reasoned debate.

In reality, the research summarised by Achen and Bartels suggests, most people possess almost no useful information about policies and their implications, have little desire to improve their state of knowledge, and have a deep aversion to political disagreement. We base our political decisions on who we are rather than what we think. In other words, we act politically – not as individual, rational beings but as members of social groups, expressing a social identity. We seek out the political parties that seem to correspond best to our culture, with little regard to whether their policies support our interests. We remain loyal to political parties long after they have ceased to serve us.

Of course, shifts do happen, sometimes as a result of extreme circumstances, sometimes because another party positions itself as a better guardian of a particular cultural identity. But they seldom involve a rational



assessment of policy.

The idea that parties are guided by policy decisions made by voters also seems to be a myth; in reality, the parties make the policies and we fall into line. To minimise cognitive dissonance – the gulf between what we perceive and what we believe – we either adjust our views to those of our favoured party or avoid discovering what the party really stands for. This is how people end up voting against their interests.

We are suckers for language. When surveys asked Americans whether the federal government was spending too little on “assistance to the poor,” 65 percent agreed. But only 25 percent agreed that it was spending too little on “welfare.” In the approach to the 1991 Gulf war, nearly two-thirds of Americans said they were willing to “use military force;” less than 30 percent were willing to “go to war.”

Even the less ambitious notion of democracy – that it’s a means by which people punish or reward governments – turns out to be divorced from reality. We remember only the past few months of a government’s performance (a bias known as “duration neglect”) and are hopeless at correctly attributing blame. A great white shark that killed five people in July 1916 caused a 10 percent swing against Woodrow Wilson in the beach communities of New Jersey. In 2000, according to analysis by the authors 2.8 million voters punished the Democrats for the floods and droughts that struck that year. Al Gore, they say, lost Arizona, Louisiana, Nevada, Florida, New Hampshire, Tennessee and Missouri as a result – which is ironic given his position on climate change.

The obvious answer is better information and civic education. But this doesn’t work either. Moderately informed Republicans were more inclined than Republicans with the least information to believe that Bill Clinton oversaw an increase in the budget deficit (it declined massively). Why? Because, unlike the worst informed, they

knew he was a Democrat. The tiny number of people with a very high level of political information tend to use it not to challenge their own opinions but to rationalise them. Political knowledge, Achen and Bartels argue, “enhances bias”.

Direct democracy – referendums and citizens’ initiatives – seems to produce even worse results. In the US initiatives are repeatedly used by multimillion-dollar lobby groups to achieve results that state legislatures won’t grant them. They tend to replace taxes with user fees, stymie the redistribution of wealth and degrade public services. Whether representative or direct, democracy comes to be owned by the elites.

This is not to suggest that it has no virtues; just that those it does have are not those we principally ascribe to it. It allows governments to be changed without bloodshed, limits terms in office, and ensures that the results of elections are widely accepted. Sometimes public attribution of blame will coincide with reality, which is why you don’t get famines in democracies.

In these respects it beats dictatorship. But is this all it has to offer? A weakness of Democracy for Realists is that most of its examples are drawn from the US, and most of those are old. Had the authors examined popular education groups in Latin America, participatory budgets in Brazil and New York, the fragmentation of traditional parties in Europe and the movement that culminated in Bernie Sanders’ near miss, they might have discerned more room for hope. This is not to suggest that the folk theory of democracy comes close to reality anywhere, but that the situation is not as hopeless as they propose.

Persistent, determined, well-organised groups can bring neglected issues to the fore and change political outcomes. But in doing so they cannot rely on what democracy ought to be. We must see it for what it is. And that means understanding what we are.

**Even the less ambitious notion of democracy – that it’s a means by which people punish or reward governments – turns out to be divorced from reality**

.....  
**George Monbiot’s**  
*new book, How Did We Get Into This Mess?, is published by Verso. His web site is [www.monbiot.com](http://www.monbiot.com)*

**CT**

## IN THE PICTURE



**GREEDY BASTARDS:** Front page of New York Post on a wall in the Philadelphia Inquirer newsroom in 2011.

# Journey's end . . .

How one of the best newspapers in the US became a victim of corporate greed and fast-changing technology. Photos: **Will Steacy**. Text: **Tony Sutton**

**N**ewspapers have been hit by a precipitous decline in fortune during the past decade after enjoying a gilded age in which they were stock market darlings, making eye-popping 30 to 40 percent returns on turnover. However, the bottom began to fall out of their world during the 2009 financial crisis, when newspapers were hit by the double whammy of a collapse in display

advertising and the gutting of highly profitable classified advertising by brand-new internet rivals such as Craigslist. The industry was well aware of the threat but, eyes fixed on the bottom line, they had ignored the warnings.

During this time, I was a newspaper consultant, employed by international clients to help with redesigns and advise on ways to combat future threats. Much of it was

## IN THE PICTURE



GOING: Dan Sapatkin, deputy science & medicine editor, 2009



GOING . . . Dan Sapatkin, 2011



GOING . . . Dan Sapatkin, July 11, 2012



GONE . . . View from Sapatkin's desk, day after move, July 12, 2012

bizarre: publishers saw design as a way to attract new – especially young – readers, but were even more concerned with finding novel ways to maintain profitability, and that included slashing editorial budgets and decimating editorial staffs. Yes, the CEOs understood that a good-looking paper helped attract readers, but they couldn't quite grasp the logic that circulation could only be maintained if the words on those fine-looking pages were worth reading.

However, there were other, more forward-looking, papers such as the Philadelphia Inquirer, which had operated since 1925 from a magnificent Art Deco pile – the Tower of Truth – in Broad Street, the heart of the city. The Inquirer was the Pulitzer Prize-winning flagship of the Knight Ridder group, hailed as the most innovative of the newspaper chains, and the most aware of the threat posed by changing technology.

Indeed, the company's Information Design Lab at Boulder, Colorado, was so advanced that a tablet news-reader was developed there by its director Roger Fidler 10 years before Apple's Steve Jobs turned that same concept into the iPad. In a 1994 video, *The Tablet Newspaper: A Vision for the Future*, Fidler warned, "Many people believe newspapers are dinosaurs, road kill on the information highway," adding, "We believe exactly the opposite, that newspapers can evolve that blend the old familiar aspects with new technologies that are emerging."

He might have believed that, but his then-radical views weren't shared by his bosses: Knight Ridder closed the lab, and the much-coveted 18- to 35-year-old-market was ceded to electronic rivals. (Now, ironically, the "new" media is being threatened by its young customers' use of ad blocking technology on their phones and tablets.)

## IN THE PICTURE



**WARNING IGNORED:** Cartoon on a wall of the Inquirer's old newsroom.

### Photographic documentary

The industry's rapid disintegration over the past decade is graphically represented in Will Steacy's *Deadline*, a large-format five-year photographic documentary that takes a nostalgic look at the precipitous decline of the Philadelphia daily. From a daily circulation of 700,000 and with 20 Pulitzer Prizes under its belt, the paper was savaged by a devastating plunge in advertising revenue, falling circulation, bankruptcy, five changes of ownership and massive staff cuts.

The book highlights the shattering impact of staff-slashing and cost-cutting, as a miniscule editorial team prepared to leave the Tower of Truth, which was to be



**BARBED HUMOUR:** Headlines are juxtaposed on the newroom wall.



**FINAL FAREWELL:** After 87 years, the Philadelphia Inquirer moves home to a space in an old department store.

turned into a casino, in July 2012, for a less-dignified home on the third floor of a former department store on the edge of downtown Philadelphia.

Stacy, whose father was an editor at the *Inquirer* for 29 years until he was laid off while recovering from heart surgery in 2011, obviously believes in the adage that pictures are worth more than words – the book's text is limited to a brief piece from him, and a longer opening essay by Gene Roberts, the paper's much-feted editor from 1972 to 1990, who bemoans a corporate culture of greed: "maximising profits without offering more to readers."

The vibrant photographs mark the sad decline of a once-mighty newspaper, archival shots of a bursting newsroom contrasting with views of a now-cavernous space as staff are laid off and desks cleared. Most revealing of all, however, are the candid images of posters and

artwork pasted to the walls by angry staff, which display the grim humour that barely masks the contempt most journalists have for those who roam the executive suites.

Towards the end of his essay, Gene Roberts shares his own industry-saving vision: "How different the future might have been if newspapers had developed a way to print themselves from computers in the home on cloth that could be chemically washed and used again and again and again. Papers could have rid themselves of costly presses, newsprint and delivery systems, and still kept profits high."

Hmm. Editors as visionaries? No, thanks. But I wonder what might have happened had Knight Ridder paid more attention to its Information Design Lab, which had the future of the media in its hands until the mon-

## IN THE PICTURE



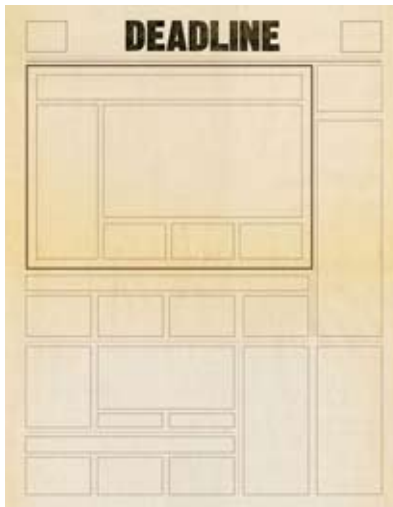
**GOODBYE TO ALL THAT:** The Inquirer's cavernous newsroom is deserted the day after the paper's move.

ey men pulled the plug. If Knight Ridder and the Philadelphia Inquirer had followed the prescient advice of Fidler, there might have been a more certain future. But it wasn't to be – the corporation, along with the rest of industry, continued its lemming-like march to the edge of the cliff, peered into the abyss, and then leapt in . . .

The moral of the sad tale, understood by all, it seems, but the bosses, is clearly articulated by Steacy: “Without the human investment to provide news content, it becomes a zero sum game on the information highway to nowhere. The fibres of the paper and the clicks of the mouse are worthless unless the words they are presented on have value.”

Amen to that.

**CT**



### **DEADLINE**

Will Steacy  
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**€45** from publisher

# What will Hillary do without Trump?

If you think Hillary Clinton's tactic of being the not-Donald-Trump candidate will be obsolete in a month's time, **Danny Katch** advises you to think again

The latest NBC/Wall Street Journal poll has Hillary Clinton with a nine percentage point lead over Donald Trump. Less publicised was the news that the same poll showed Clinton's favourability rating shooting up from 37 percent to . . . 38 percent.

The presidential race looks like it's going to end in the only way a contest between the two most unpopular major party candidates in recent history could – by default. It's like a basketball game with two teams so horrible that you know whichever one has the ball last is the one that's going to lose. . . by dunking on their own basket.

After the party conventions in July, Clinton surged ahead by appearing in public as little as possible, while Trump kept burying himself deeper with his attacks on the family of a Muslim soldier killed in Iraq. Trump made a comeback later when his new campaign team muzzled him (a little) and let the media focus shift to Clinton's dishonest history with her e-mail server and her husband's Clinton Foundation.

But now, Trump is back in the spotlight – drowning in it, actually – with his unhinged debate performances and leaks to the media of, first, a small selection of his federal tax returns, and second and more devastatingly, a video of him boasting about being a sexual predator.

This is great news for Clinton, who in an



**WHAT A CHOICE:** US voters have to decide between Trump and Clinton, the two most unpopular candidates in recent history. Art: Anthonj Jenkins

election against a less ghoulish opponent would be feeling the heat over the revelations that WikiLeaks is providing about her and her inner circle – which confirmed, in the words of the New York Times, exactly what young skeptical voters already suspected:

“The private discussions among her advisers about policy – on trade, on the Black Lives Matter movement, on Wall Street regulation – often revolved around the political advantages and pitfalls of different positions, while there was little or no discussion about what Mrs. Clinton actually believed. Mrs. Clinton's team at times seemed consumed with positioning and optics.”

Oh well – at least in a month, this will all be over, right?

Sorry, but I have some bad news for

If Clinton becomes president, she'll take office with some of the lowest initial approval ratings in history and no plan to address the growing economic and racial inequality that has driven voter discontent in this election

## NOVEMBER REIGN

**Clinton supporters in unions and liberal advocacy groups are sending out red alerts that we have to do everything in our power to prevent a President Trump from ushering in fascism**

you.

If Clinton becomes president – as now seems certain barring something totally unexpected – she’ll take office with some of the lowest initial approval ratings in history and no plan to address the growing economic and racial inequality that has driven voter discontent in this election.

On the other side will be a maniacal Republican Party, perhaps being driven to unprecedented heights of frenzy by a planned media company run by Trump and the Breitbart gang that will compete with Fox News from the right.

In these conditions, how long should we expect it to take after Clinton’s inauguration for mainstream US politics to be dominated by next version of the Tea Party, preparing for a sweep in the 2018 mid-term elections? I’d put the over-under at three-and-a-half months.

Starting the countdown for the next election also suits Clinton, who’d much prefer to be seen as our protector from the bigoted barbarians at the White House gate than to have to deal with the actual grievances and aspirations of ordinary people.

That’s why her campaign team rooted for Trump to win the Republican nomination, something that Wikileaks recently confirmed to the surprise of pretty much nobody. When Republicans incite hatred, Democratic voters shudder in fear while their leaders rub their hands with glee, knowing that they’ve just “won” further support without having to do anything to challenge their corporate backers.

We’ve seen this ironic disconnect play out already over the past few months. Clinton supporters in unions and liberal advocacy groups are sending out red alerts that we have to do everything in our power to prevent a President Trump from ushering in fascism – while Clinton herself is calculating how little she actually has to do or say in order to slip into the White House.

This dynamic won’t change once she’s in office – something that goes unac-

knowledged by the many leftists who are reluctantly supporting Clinton because they think her victory would “create better conditions” for social movements and the left.

None of us should be in the prognostication business given how unpredictable world events have been in recent years. The only factor the left can control is the left. Individual leftists and their organisations can build strong and independent movements that can break free from what Jane Hamsher, formerly of Firedoglake, famously called the “veal pen” – where nice, polite activists get their daily marching orders from Democratic Party leaders.

The task of building that left can’t wait until after the election, because every day that activists support the Democrats makes our side less prepared to face a presidency under either Clinton or Trump.

For an object example of the problem, let’s look at Bernie Sanders.

The former candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination should be all over the news now that Wikileaks has confirmed everything he was saying about the Clinton campaign during the primaries – that she says different things to voters than she does to donors; that she wants to be a centrist politician with no intention of changing the status quo, regardless of what she says in her speeches.

Sure, Sanders is backing Clinton now. But that doesn’t physically prevent him from hitting the media to talk about how these leaks show the importance of building strong protest movements, regardless of who’s in power – something that would lay the basis for a stronger left under a Democratic president, which Sanders says he agrees with.

But Sanders can’t go in this direction – because his version of a political revolution involves keeping his connections to Democratic Party leaders who will freeze him out if he does anything but praise Clinton for the next month.



Then there's MoveOn.org and SEIU. Anyone remember the announcement back in March of the coalition they were starting, in order to challenge Trump in the streets?:

"Today we are calling for a massive non-violent mobilisation of working people, students, immigrants, children of immigrants, great-great-grandchildren of immigrants, people of colour and white people, the unemployed and under-employed, people of faith, retirees, veterans, women, and men – anyone who opposes bigotry and hate and loves freedom and justice – to stand up to Trump's bullying and bigotry."

The announcement came in the heady days after thousands of people mobilised to protest a Trump rally in Chicago, leading the big orange bully to slink away and cancel the event. But rather than build on this momentum, liberal groups didn't follow through on their promises of protests.

Perhaps that was the advice of the Clinton campaign, whose agenda is to keep expectations low and activism even lower.

Trump has continued to face protests organized from the grassroots – most recently, dozens of women shouting, "Pussy grabs back!" outside Trump Tower in New York City – but not the kind of large demonstrations that not only might make some of his supporters think harder about what he stands for, but would also develop

thousands of new activists heading into a Clinton or Trump presidency.

Instead of helping organise young people to directly confront Trump, Democratic-aligned organisations have chosen to lecture them for not feeling sufficiently inspired by the candidate who thinks America's doing just great.

This liberal condescension reached a low point a few weeks ago when New York Times columnist Charles Blow told young African Americans unhappy with Clinton's long dismal record supporting the racist criminal justice system to "grow up."

These conflicts might die down a bit now that Trump has fallen far behind in the polls. But expect them to flare up early and often in a Clinton presidency – when we're told first that we have to give her a chance, and then that we have to close ranks against the Republicans winning Congress, and on and on and on.

The task of building a left strong enough to resist this dead end starts now by breaking with the Democratic Party, voting for the Green Party's Jill Stein, and building grassroots protest movements and radical organisations.

**CT**

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*Danny Katch is the author of Socialism . . . Seriously: A Brief Guide to Human Liberation. This article first appeared at [www.socialistworker.org](http://www.socialistworker.org)*

**Trump has continued to face protests organized from the grassroots, but not the kind of large demonstrations that not only might make some of his supporters think harder about what he stands for, but would also develop thousands of new activists heading into a Clinton or Trump presidency**

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# Blood and Fire and Slaughter

The world's major politicians and elite media lauded Shimon Peres as a peacemaker after his death on September 28, but **Robert Fisk**, of London's Independent newspaper, found other words to describe the former Israeli leader

When the world heard that Shimon Peres had died, it shouted "Peacemaker!" But when I heard that Peres was dead, I thought of blood and fire and slaughter. I saw the results: babies torn apart, shrieking refugees, smouldering bodies. It was a place called Qana and most of the 106 bodies – half of them children – now lie beneath the UN camp where they were torn to pieces by Israeli shells in 1996. I had been on a UN aid convoy just outside the south Lebanese village. Those shells swished right over our heads and into the refugees packed below us. It lasted for 17 minutes.

Shimon Peres, standing for election as Israel's prime minister – a post he inherited when his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated – decided to increase his military credentials before polling day by assaulting Lebanon. The joint Nobel Peace Prize holder used as an excuse the firing of Katyusha rockets over the Lebanese border by the Hezbollah. In fact, their rockets were retaliation for the killing of a small Lebanese boy by a booby-trap bomb they suspected had been left by an Israeli patrol. It mattered not.

A few days later, Israeli troops inside Lebanon came under attack close to Qana and retaliated by

opening fire into the village. Their first shells hit a cemetery used by Hezbollah; the rest flew directly into the UN Fijian army camp where hundreds of civilians were sheltering. Peres announced that "we did not know that several hundred people were concentrated in that camp. It came to us as a bitter surprise." It was a lie. The Israelis had occupied Qana for years after their 1982 invasion, they had video film of the camp, they were even flying a drone over the camp during the 1996 massacre – a fact they denied until a UN soldier gave me his video of the drone, frames from which we published in the Independent. The UN had repeatedly told Israel that the camp was packed with refugees.

This was Peres's contribution to Lebanese peace. He lost the election and probably never thought much more about Qana. But I never forgot it.

When I reached the UN gates, blood was pouring through them in torrents. I could smell it. It washed over our shoes and stuck to them like glue. There were legs and arms, babies without heads, old men's heads without bodies. A man's body was hanging in two pieces in a burning tree. What was left of him was on fire.

On the steps of the barracks, a girl sat holding a man with grey hair, her arm round his shoulder,

## COVER STORY

rocking the corpse back and forth in her arms. His eyes were staring at her. She was keening and weeping and crying, over and over: “My father, my father.” If she is still alive – and there was to be another Qana massacre in the years to come, this time from the Israeli air force – I doubt if the word “peacemaker” will be crossing her lips.

There was a UN enquiry which stated in its bland way that it did not believe the slaughter was an accident. The UN report was accused of being anti-Semitic. Much later, a brave Israeli magazine published an interview with the artillery soldiers who fired at Qana. An officer had referred to the villagers as “just a bunch of Arabs” (‘arabushim’ in Hebrew). “A few Arabushim die, there is no harm in that,” he was quoted as saying. Peres’s chief of staff was almost equally carefree: “I don’t know any other rules of the game, either for the [Israeli] army or for civilians...”

Peres called his Lebanese invasion “Operation Grapes of Wrath”, which – if it wasn’t inspired by John Steinbeck – must have come from the Book of Deuteronomy. “The sword without and terror within,” it says in Chapter 32, “shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of grey hairs.” Could there be a better description of those 17 minutes at Qana?

Yes, of course, Peres changed in later years. They claimed that Ariel Sharon – whose soldiers watched the massacre at Sabra and Chatila camps in 1982 by their Lebanese Christian allies – was also a “peacemaker” when he died. At least he didn’t receive the Nobel Prize. Peres later became an advocate of a “two state solution”, even as the Jewish colonies on Palestinian land – which he once so fervently supported – continued to grow. Now we must call him a “peacemaker”. And count, if you can, how often the word “peace” is used in the Peres obituaries over the next few days. Then count how many times the word Qana appears. **CT**

*Robert Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for the Independent. This article first appeared at the paper’s web site – [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)*

### **FOLLOWING SIX PAGES**

From the ColdType archive –  
**Seventeen Minutes at Qana** – Read  
Robert Fisk’s account of the  
massacre from our Fall 1996 issue

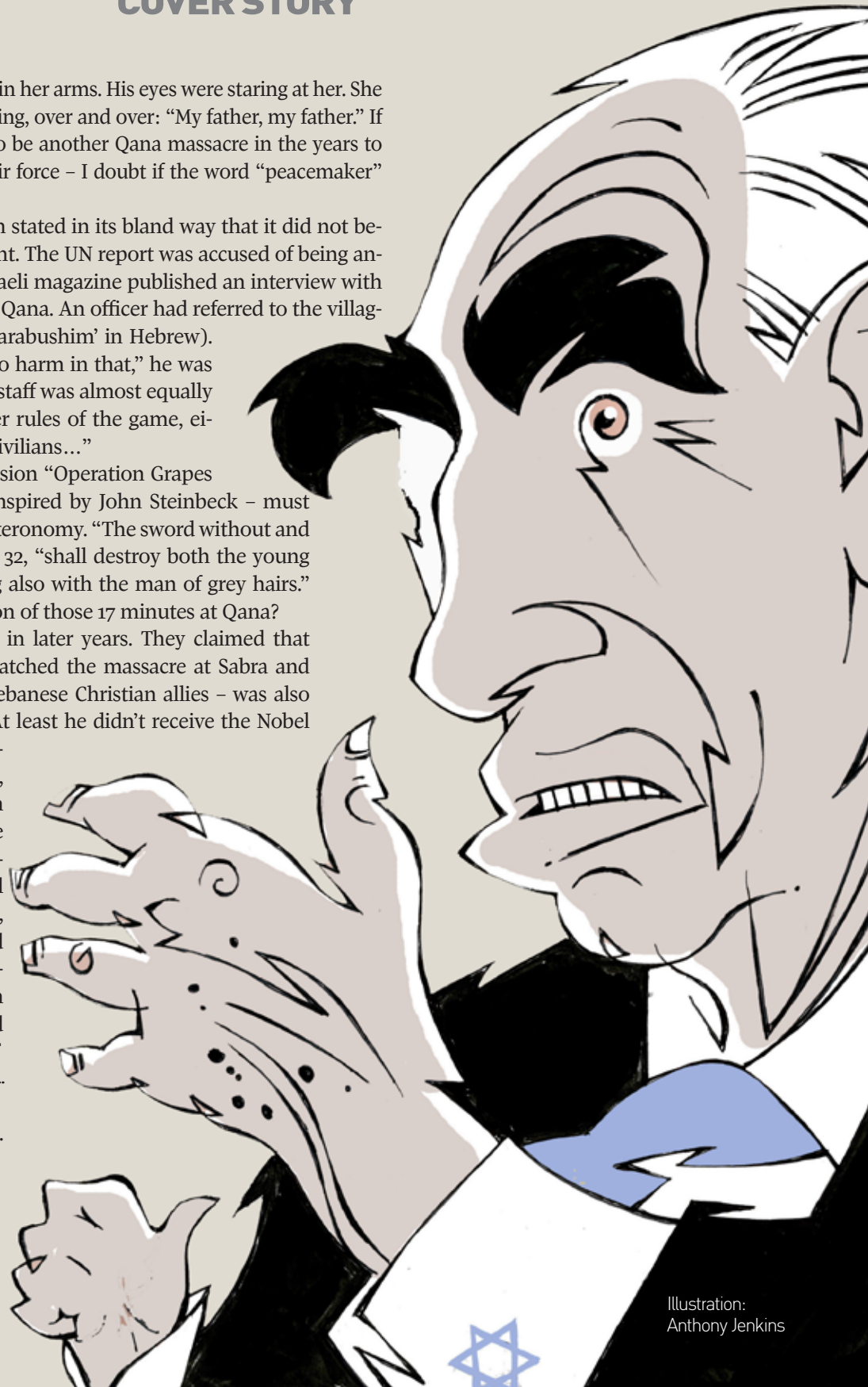


Illustration:  
Anthony Jenkins

# Seventeen minutes in Qana

The massacre in April, 1996, of refugees in a UN base in the Lebanon shook the Middle East. This, the first full account of what happened, was told by survivors to **Robert Fisk**, and appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of the original, tabloid, version of ColdType

Most of the people in Qana remember seeing “Um Ka’amel” above them that morning. It had rained earlier, but Haj Qassem Azam, who had brought his family down from the hill village of Siddiqin to seek safety in the Fijian UN base eight days earlier, clearly saw “the Mother of Ka’amel” over the town at mid-morning. The 70-year-old ex-foundry worker was to recall that it trailed a thin stream of gray smoke from its propellers. Kamel Saad, a 16-year-old schoolboy, saw it too. Colonel Wame Waqanivalagi, commanding officer of the UN’s Fijian battalion (Fijibatt), whose 150 soldiers at Qana were caring for 560 Lebanese refugees under the United Nations flag, was told by two of his soldiers that the Israeli MK pilotless reconnaissance aircraft was flying over his base. A mile away, at UN post I-15, next to the headquarters of the UN’s Force Mobile Reserve, a Norwegian soldier also noticed the MK moving over the valley towards Qana.

MK is the technical name for the drone that artillery men use for spotting targets. But the hill villagers of southern Lebanon, many of them illiterate sheep farmers and agricultural workers, had humanised the sinister presence of Israel’s

state-of-the-art spy-in-the-sky in order to reduce the children’s fears. M sounds like “Um” – Arabic for “mother” – and the K – the letter kaaf in Arabic – was extended to make a boy’s name, Ka’amel. Saadallah Balhas had taught his 20 children and grandchildren that they had nothing to fear from the “Mother of Ka’amel” as it buzzed above them. “It was around all that morning,” he remembers. “There was a helicopter, too, to the west of the village and, very high, a bigger plane, making a mist behind it.” UN observers noted that a high-altitude AWACS aircraft circled southern Lebanon during the morning, its contrails streaming across the sky.

Hours before the massacre of April 18, a unit of Fijian soldiers noticed another sinister presence: three bearded Hizbollah men firing two Katyusha rockets from the old cemetery 350 meters from the UN base. Captain Pio of the Fijian Battalion noticed later, close to the main road east of Qana, four more Hizbollah men. “I could see them firing mortars,” he says. “They had flak jackets and steel helmets. I watched them through my binoculars.” They were perhaps 600 meters from the UN compound. Captain Ronnie, the UN’s communications officer, received

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no “shell warning” from Israel – the usual practice when the Israelis planned to fire artillery in a UN battalion’s area of operations – but the Fijians were worried enough after the Hizbollah mortar fire to make an announcement over the Tannoy system, ordering all their soldiers to put on flak jackets and prepare to move the refugees into the bunkers.

It was just after 2 p.m. “Because Fijian soldiers have been in Qana for 18 years, many of the villagers have picked up the Fijian language, and they understood the words on the Tannoy,” Kamel Saad says. “We all went to the rooms where our families were living.” Saadallah Balhas thinks that they had about five minutes. A Fijian soldier was to recall with shock that many mothers could not find their children – they were playing in other parts of the five-acre compound – and refused to go into the bunkers. “We were pushing them into our own bunkers, squeezing them in until there was no room for us,” the soldier said. “There was crying and we were telling the others to go into the places where they were living.” The refugees were crammed shoulder-to-shoulder in the hot interiors. “Our bunkers were for 150 soldiers and we had pushed 400 into them, maybe more,” Colonel Wame says. “There was no more room.” In the two minutes that followed the Fijian warning, up to 300 more people who had remained in the village around the UN base ran in panic through the gates for shelter, along with – so another soldier recalled – at least one of the three Hizbollah Katyusha men. There were now around 850 civilians in the UN base at Qana.

All who survived the coming horror would remember where they were in the following seconds. Haj Azam sat on the floor of a UN officer’s room near the back gate, along with his wife, Rdiyeh, his son Mohsin and Mohsin’s wife, Leila. Kamel Saad took refuge with his 50-year-old



### READ MORE

This essay was first published by ColdType in 1996 a part of a special issue, **Words Against War**. Download the pdf – and all of the original tabloid editions of ColdType at – [www.coldtype.net/old.html](http://www.coldtype.net/old.html)

mother, Fawzieh, and one of his cousins in a neighbouring room along with 20 others. Sulieman Khalil, a 23-year-old labourer from the much-bombed village of Jebel al-Butm had just received his lunch packet and returned to the UN soldier’s billet in which he was living. Saadallah Balhas was still recovering from a bone implant operation that followed wounds he had sustained in Israel’s 1993 bombardment of southern Lebanon and had to be carried by his children – his right leg in a plaster cast – into the Fijian battalion’s conference room, a rectangular building of corrugated iron with a wooden roof.

His extended family all squeezed into the same room and sat around him; his wife Zeinab, his sons Ghalib, Ali, Fayadl, Merhij, Khalil, Mohamed, Ibrahim and Mahmoud and his daughters Najibi, Nayla, Fatmi, Zohra, Amal, Khadijeh. Many of the children were still young – Fatmi was 16, Amal 12, and Mahmoud was only five. Ali’s wife Zohra was also crammed into the room along with their children seven-year-old Zeinab, six-year-old Abbas, five-year-old Fatmi, three-year-old Saadallah. Their youngest child, Hassan, was only four months old. Also in the room were Saadallah’s brothers Mohamed and Rahamatalahu and the latter’s wife and five children and a granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Some of the children were crying. Most sat in silence.

Nayla Berji’s family was in the same tiny room as Balhas and his children – her 90-year-old father, Abbas, her mother, Khairiyeh, her two brothers, Hussein and Mustapha, Hussein’s wife, Fatmi, and their three children – Manal, aged 15, Mariam, 11, and Ibrahim, just six. Also there were Nayla’s 20-year-old sister Ghada and her two children and a 30-year-old niece, Skayneh, along with four cousins. Nayla was standing at the door of one of the bunkers.

At 2.08 p.m. – Colonel Wame, the CO, is cer-

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tain of the time – the first Israeli shell exploded near the UN’s water tower, 10 meters from where Captain Pio, the soldier who had seen the Hizbollah through his binoculars, was standing behind the battalion’s outdoor food refrigerator near the main gate. “I found big slivers of shrapnel in my jacket three days later,” he said. “But it didn’t touch me. I ran round the building and told the other Fijian soldiers to stand close to the walls. There were two Lebanese refugees there, too, and I told them to get under cover – they ran to the conference room. When I reached the bomb shelter, it was packed. I tried to push more people in. Then the shells poured in.”

In the conference room Saadallah Balhas sat with his family, almost 40 strong, clustered tightly around him. The wooden roof above him could not even withstand a bullet, let alone a shell. Several of the women were praying in Arabic for God’s protection. The second Israeli shell was fitted with a proximity fuse; the round would burst seven meters above the ground and amputate the limbs of any humans beneath it. It exploded directly above the conference room.

“There was a terrible explosion, and the first thing I felt was hot, wet liquid all over the right side of my face,” Saadallah Balhas was to remember. “I couldn’t see out of my right eye. There was a great flash of fire and I felt myself burning. I was deaf. There were more shells – there was no space between the sound of the explosions. I was still conscious and I felt blood, so much blood running down my face. I pushed the blood away with my hand and wiped my hand on the mattress. Everyone was shrieking and crying.”

In the Fijian radio room, the windows broken and pieces of shrapnel hissing above them, a lone Fijian officer crouching on the floor blurted out a plea for help. “Our headquarters are under fire,” he shouted to the UN operations office near the Israeli border. “One of our headquarters buildings has been demolished.”

An Irish UN officer at the UN’s command

headquarters 15 miles away tried to calm him, then a Lebanese army liaison officer attached to the Fijian battalion cut into the radio channel from a building opposite the UN’s Qana compound. “People are dying here,” he said. “I hear the voice of death.”

The senior Lebanese army officer in Qana, who was standing beside him, saw the rear gates of the UN compound burst open and a mass of wounded people storm like cattle out of the base, without arms, several without feet, running on the open stumps of legs, leaving behind them “rivers of blood.” In Sulieman Khalil’s room, his friend Ibrahim Taki was catapulted to the floor with his throat cut open. “I didn’t know he was already dead and wanted to help him,” Khalil remembered. “I ran into the open, across to the UN clinic, but no one would come to the door. I threw stones at the windows and broke them but there were only civilians there and no one would come and help.”

Khalil decided to run back to his room. “But as I turned, a shell fell near me, maybe only 3 feet away. I fell over. I looked up and couldn’t see my left leg. I realised it had been blown off. I was stunned and tried to stand on it – tried to stand on the leg that wasn’t there – but I couldn’t so I started crawling away in case a second shell hit me. I crawled as far as a container and sat in its shade and the moment I sat down, three shells exploded where I had been hit. The moment I saw that, I became unconscious.” At that moment, the Fijian assistant medical officer, Warrant Officer Apirneleki, was in the bomb shelter of the first aid post close to the conference room. “After the first shell hit the room, I heard terrible screams from inside – animal screams,” he said

“There were people inside who had been cut to bits but were still alive. Then a second shell hit the building and that stopped the screaming. There was quiet after that.” The second shell had smashed the roof off the conference room, torn off most of the steel walls and set fire to what was left. Inside this charnel house Saadallah Balhas was still alive. “The second shell exploded very near me,” he said. “I looked around me with my left eye. The place was swirling in

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smoke. The second shell – how do you say it? – had ‘completed the job.’ I looked at my children to see who was still alive. They were all round me, little people, and I shook each one – Khadijeh, Ibrahim, Amal, Mohamed ... I was crying so much and each one I shook, they didn’t move. I started turning them over and they were all dead on top of each other. They lay there in front of me like dead sheep, my whole family.”

Fawzieh Saad, schoolboy Kamel’s 50-year-old mother, ran out of the neighbouring building. “It was a horrible sight,” she said. “A man was lying in two pieces. There was a woman who was pregnant and I could see the arm and leg of her unborn baby poking out of her stomach. There was a man who had shrapnel in his head. He was not dead but you could see a piece of metal in his neck, like he’d had his throat cut. He told his daughter to come to help him and lift him up. And I heard her say: ‘Wait a minute, I’m trying to put my brother together – he’s in two pieces.’ There was another brother holding a child in his arms. The child had no head. The brother was dead, too.”

The woman trying to assemble her dead brother was 35-year-old Nayla Berji who had been at the door of the bunker when the two shells smashed into the conference room. “I tried to pull my mother out of the fire but I couldn’t because she had no arm and I couldn’t lift her up,” she was to recall days later. “It was then that I saw my father, Abbas, on the ground and two of my brothers. I tried to rescue my sister-in-law Leila but her face was completely cut away and burnt. She had been hit by the shell. I wanted to see if there was anyone else but there was fire all around and I couldn’t get any closer. Even the trees were burning, their leaves all on fire. The shells were still landing.”

Across the valley in the base of the UN’s Force Mobile Reserve, a Norwegian soldier had begun to make an amateur videotape of the Israeli attack on the Qana compound, his camera catching “Um Ka’amel” as it buzzed low over the sky

above the camp – evidence that would later be used by the UN’s inquiry team to refute repeated Israeli denials that there was a “spotter” drone over the scene of the massacre. A mile away, at UN position 1-15, a Norwegian soldier could hear human shrieks of pain after a shell exploded above the flimsy wooden battalion restaurant in which another 50 refugees were sheltering. “It may seem unreal,” he said, “but we actually saw with our own eyes what seemed to be an animal thrown into the sky – 50 feet, probably more – right out of the UN base. But then we realised it was coloured blue and that it was a human.”

There was nothing unreal about it. Nayla Berji was only yards away. “I saw this man go up into the air,” she said. “The blast of the explosion just made him fly. He went up and up and up, and his head came off and caught in the burning tree and the rest of him fell to the ground. My elder brother was telling me to find his wife, Manal, and Fatmi, their daughter. They were both dead, their bodies burnt black. I found my niece Mariam but couldn’t recognize her and shouted: ‘Are you Mariam?’ When I found my father, I tried to lift him up but his intestines spilled out over me. When I found my brother, I tried to lift him up but all I lifted was his lower half. There was no head, no arms. My brother was lying there and his guts were coming out of his stomach.”

Nayla Berji gave this terrible witness to her family’s catastrophe as she talked to me, heavily sedated, in the Jebel Amal hospital. “I don’t see where I got the strength to see these things,” she said, her voice rising to a wail. “Those people were very, very dear to me and when I saw them like that, I cannot tell you what I suffered. What I have seen and what I experienced – I tell you, it has ruined the rest of my life.”

Dozens of terribly wounded civilians were now crowding into Warrant Officer Apimeleki’s small medical center. “One of our Fijian soldiers came in with his left arm hanging on by a piece of skin – the bones had been torn out,” he said. “Then people just flooded in, there was blood all over the floor and the walls. There were children, babies, old women. There were such screams. And people kept shouting: ‘Fiji why?’

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Fiji why? Help us.' They couldn't understand why the UN base was being targeted. Eventually we reached the restaurant to look for wounded, but there were just corpses. We never thought they would all be killed in there."

Haj Azam, who had seen the Israeli drone earlier in the day, lay on the floor of the Fijian officer's room where he was billeted, but pieces of shrapnel began to cut through the walls and roof. "A woman was hit in the head and part of it was sliced away. Her husband lay down beside her and held her. He was shouting for help and crying. Their two-year-old son was with them. She died later in the Hammoud hospital in Sidon." A Fijian soldier fought his way into the smoking embers of the conference room and dragged Saadallah Balhas out of what had been the door. "I saw my nephew wounded and told the Fijian to help him first - he died later," Balhas said later. "Then I found my old crutches by the door and hobbled out on my own. And what I saw - even if you have a strong heart, you would collapse at what I saw."

Balhas could see with only his left eye - he did not yet realize that his right eye had been blasted out of its socket into the fires by the second shell. "There were pieces of meat, bodies without arms, corpses without heads. I tried to get to the clinic and I found my son Ali alive. He took me by the arm and started to show me the corpses, to identify them. He would say, 'this is your son Ghalib, he is dead.' Then he would point to a girl and say, 'this is little Khadijeh, she is dead, too, and 'this is your wife, Zeinab, she is dead.' We found little Mahmoud alive and Merhij and Ali's son, three-year-old Saadallah, alive; they had been protected by their brothers and sisters, heaped on top of them, all dead."

Inside the Fijian base, the shells had cut off all electricity and damaged the UN's radio network. Colonel Wame was using his back-up radio, his messages relayed through the officer com-

manding a UN convoy passing through a valley five miles away. On the UN's Channel 6 radio, Commandant Eamon Smyth of the Irish Army was recording that "Fijibatt headquarters is still under fire." At UN headquarters, another Irish voice tried to comfort the desperate Fijian soldiers at Qana. "Help is on its way," it said. An appeal had been sent to the Israelis to stop firing. But the shells continued to fall.

Inside the Qana compound, the Fijian soldiers who ran to help the wounded found themselves slipping on pieces of flesh. Wounded men and women were crying, "ya Allah, ya Allah" - "oh God, oh God." Several of the Fijians, recognizing the bodies of babies whom they had cradled in their own arms over the previous week - the Fijians liked to help the mothers by rocking the younger children to sleep each evening - broke down in tears and wept in front of the refugees they could no longer protect. Like the south Lebanese, the Fijians are primarily subsistence farmers, whose families form the center of their lives.

In his room inside the compound - along with 20 other people - the 16-year-old schoolboy Kamel Saad was one of the last to be hit. "I heard a lot of screaming, people shouting 'Help me!' and 'My children!'" he said. "There was a father who came into our room to see his son. As he came in, a shell burst and his leg was blown off, just like that. I was hiding as best I could, lying flat on the ground, but a piece of a shell cut through my thigh. I was screaming myself now and my father bandaged my leg with a towel. He carried me out of the room, and outside there were people crying 'Come and help us, please help us.'" Lying on the ground, Kamel Saad could see the burning conference room.

"There were people carrying their children who didn't seem to understand that the children were dead, that they had no heads or arms. I didn't know who was dead or wounded. There was blood everywhere and people were shouting, 'God help us, please help us.' But no help came right away because people were looking after their own families."

The last Israeli shell fell at 2.25 p.m. The bodies still in the conference room were now on fire,



## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

cremated by the burning roof that had crashed upon them. In the restaurant – once an ornate Fijian-style barn with a sloping roof – heaps of dead lay piled together, their arms wrapped around each other. Colonel Wame wept openly. One of the Hizbollah men who fired the mortars was later seen by a Fijian soldier running into the Qana camp to find his whole family dead. “These are my people,” he kept shouting. When the first UN soldiers arrived to help, they found more dead than wounded; the Israeli proximity shells had seen to that. Several of the soldiers just sat down and put their heads in their hands.

The news agencies would later say that at least 100 died. The United Nations sent 75 body bags out of Qana but many were filled with the corpses of three, even four babies. The Lebanese army compiled a list of 84 names of dead, including those of two children, Aboudi and Hadi, from the Bitar family, who had arrived in Lebanon from their American home only days earlier. Their 90-year-old grandmother had pleaded with their Lebanese-born parents in Detroit to send them to Qana so that she could see them before she died. She lost an arm in the Israeli massacre but survived. The children died. A list of missing people – and a body found outside the camp more than two weeks later – suggests that up to 140 civilians may have been massacred by the Israeli shellfire.

Haj Azam from Siddiqin lost his granddaughter and her husband and their 20-day-old baby and two brothers. Nayla Berji lost 16 members of her family: they included her father, Abbas, her sister-in-law Fatmi, her brother Hussein, his daughter, Manal, her other brother, Mustapha, his wife, Leila, her sister Ghada, and her nine-month-old son, Hassan, along with Nayla’s niece Skayneh and four cousins. In all, Saadallah Balhas lost 31 members of his family. When he talked for the first time about the massacre, he asked only that as many as possible of their names should be published, as a memorial to them: they include his wife, Zeinab, his sons Ghalib, Fayad Mohamed, Ibrahim and five-year-old Mahmoud, and his daughters Nayla, Fatmi, Zohra, Amal and six-year-old Khadijeh. His son Ali’s wife, Zohra, died. So

did their six-year-old son Abbas, five-year-old Fatmi and four-month-old Hassan. Saadallah’s brother Mohamed was killed, as was his brother Rahamatallah and his wife and all his five children, along with the daughter and son of one of his children.

The Israelis blamed the Hizbollah for the slaughter, claiming their artillery had fired into the camp owing to technical malfunctions while shooting at the source of the Katyushas, and insisted that there was no “mother of Ka’amel” over Qana during the day. The UN videotape proved conclusively that the Israelis did use pilotless aircraft over Qana on April 18 – the Israelis changed their story when they learned of the tape. UN investigators stated that 13 Israeli shells had hit the Qana compound, eight of them fitted with the deadly proximity fuses. It was “unlikely,” their report concluded, that the massacre was an “error.” The Hizbollah denied that any of its members had fired Katyushas or mortars from the area of the UN camp. The United States refused to condemn Israel or the slaughter; the State Department spokesmen said, “You don’t lecture your friends” and Washington continued to support Israel’s military operation in Lebanon.

Its name, Operation Grapes of Wrath, was taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, which is filled with blood, Biblical ire and promises of God’s vengeance. Chapter 32, the song of Moses before he dies leading his Jewish people towards the promised land, speaks of those who will be destroyed by the wrath of God. “The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs,” says Verse 25.

Could there be a better description of those 17 minutes at Qana? **CT**

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*Robert Fisk is chief Middle East reporter for the Independent newspaper, where this essay was originally published in 1996.*

# Cold War: Every day until the end of the world

Here we go again! **William Blum** tells how Russia managed to become the greatest threat to Western civilisation – again

**It's not hacking per se that bothers the establishment; it's the revelations of their lies that drives them up the wall**

*"Russia suspected of election scheme. US probes plan to sow voter distrust"*

That's the Washington Post page-one lead headline of September 6. Think about it: the election that Americans are suffering through, cringing in embarrassment, making them think of moving abroad, renouncing their citizenship; an election causing the Founding Fathers to throw up as they turn in their graves . . . this is because the Russian Devils are sowing voter distrust! Who knew?

But of course, that's the way commies are – Oh wait, I forgot, they're no longer Commies. So what are they? Ah yes, they still have that awful old hang-up so worthy of condemnation by decent people everywhere – they want to stand in the way of American world domination. The nerve!

The first Cold War performed a lobotomy on Americans, replacing brain matter with anti-communist viral matter, producing more than 70 years of functional national stupidity.

For all of you who missed this fun event there's good news: Cold War Two is here, as big and as stupid as ever. Russia and Vladimir Putin are repeatedly, and automatically, blamed for all manner of bad things. The story which follows the above Washington Post headline does not even bother to make up something that could

pass for evidence of the claim. The newspaper just makes the claim, at the same time pointing out that "the intelligence community is not saying it has 'definitive proof' of such tampering, or any Russian plans to do so." But the page-one headline has already served its purpose.

Hillary Clinton, in her debate with Donald Trump, likewise accused Russia of all kinds of computer hacking. Even Trump, not usually a stickler for accuracy, challenged her to offer something along the lines of evidence. She had nothing to offer.

In any event, this is all a diversion. It's not hacking per se that bothers the establishment; it's the revelations of their lies that drives them up the wall. The hack of the Democratic National Committee on the eve of the party's convention disclosed a number of embarrassing internal emails, forcing the resignation of DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

On September 12 we could read in the Post that a well-known physician had called for Clinton to be checked for possible poisons after her collapse in New York. Said the good doctor: "I do not trust Mr Putin and Mr. Trump. With those two all things are possible."

Numerous other examples could be given here of the Post's near-juvenile anti-Russian bias. One of the most common subjects has been Crimea. Moscow's "inva-

sion” of the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine in February 2014 is repeatedly cited as proof of Moscow’s belligerent and expansionist foreign policy and the need for Washington to once again feed the defence-budget monster. But we’re never reminded that Russia was reacting to a US-supported coup that overthrew the democratically-elected government of Ukraine on Russia’s border and replaced it with a regime in which neo-Nazis, complete with swastikas, feel very much at home. Russia “invaded” to assist Eastern Ukrainians in their resistance to this government, and did not even cross the border inasmuch as Russia already had a military base in Ukraine.

NATO (= USA) has been surrounding Russia for decades. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov captured the exquisite shamelessness of this with his remark of September 27, 2014: “Excuse us for our existence in the middle of your bases.”

By contrast, here is US Secretary of State, John Kerry: “NATO is not a threat to anyone. It is a defensive alliance. It is simply meant to provide security. It is not focused on Russia or anyone else.”

NATO war games in these areas are frequent, almost constant. The encirclement of Russia is about complete, except for Georgia and Ukraine. In June, Germany’s foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, shockingly accused NATO of “war-mongering” against Russia. How would the United States react to a Russian coup in Mexico or Canada followed by Russian military exercises in the same area?

Since the end of Cold War One, NATO has been feverishly searching for a reason to justify its existence. Their problem can be summed up with this question: If NATO had never existed what argument could be given now to create it?

The unmitigated arrogance of US policy in Ukraine was best epitomized by the now-famous remark of Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary at the State Department, reacting to possible European Union objec-

tion to Washington’s role in Ukraine: “Fuck the EU,” she charmingly declared.

Unlike the United States, Russia does not seek world domination, nor even domination of Ukraine, which Moscow could easily accomplish if it wished. Neither did the Soviet Union set out to dominate Eastern Europe post-World War II. It must be remembered that Eastern Europe became communist because Hitler, with the approval of the West, used it as a highway to reach the Soviet Union to wipe out Bolshevism forever; and that the Russians in World Wars I and II lost about 40 million people because the West had twice used this highway to invade Russia. It should not be surprising that after World War II the Soviets were determined to close down the highway.

The Washington Post’s campaign to depict Russia as the enemy is unrelenting. Again, on the 19th, we could read in the paper the following: “US intelligence and law enforcement agencies are investigating what they see as a broad covert Russian operation in the United States to sow public distrust in the upcoming presidential election and in US political institutions, intelligence and congressional officials said.”

Nothing, however, compares with President Obama’s speech to the UN General Assembly (September 24, 2014) where he classified Russia to be one of the three threats to the world along with the Islamic State and ebola.

A war between nuclear-powered United States and nuclear-powered Russia is “unthinkable.” Except that American military men think about it, like Cold-War US General Thomas Power, speaking about nuclear war or a first strike by the US: “The whole idea is to kill the bastards! At the end of the war, if there are two Americans and one Russian, we win!” The response from one of those present was: “Well, you’d better make sure The response from one of those present was: “Well, you’d better make sure that they’re a man and a woman.”

**How would the United States react to a Russian coup in Mexico or Canada followed by Russian military exercises in the same area?**

.....  
**William Blum**

*is the author of Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II, Rogue State: a guide to the World’s Only Super Power, West-Bloc Dissident: a Cold War Political Memoir, and America’s Deadliest Export – Democracy: The Truth About US Foreign Policy and Everything Else*

**CT**

# Why shouldn't we mock the Queen?

David Francis Taylor wonders when the British became so uptight about jokes against the monarchy

TV panelist was axed by BBC after an episode was broadcast on the Queen's 90th birthday that included jokes about her sex life



Taking physick – or – the news of shooting the King of Sweden!, by James Gillray (died 1815), published 1792. Art: Wikimedia Commons

When did crude jokes about a reigning monarch become a no-go area for satirists and comedians? The BBC recently announced that it had axed David Baddiel's Radio 4 panel show *Don't Make Me Laugh*. This after an episode broadcast on the Queen's 90th birthday that included jokes about her sex life. Apparently

it's not the done thing to go there.

But jump back some 200 years and satirists did go there. Regularly. The above cartoon of 1792, by James Gillray, shows King George III and Queen Charlotte on the loo. Both are in the middle of evacuating their bowels – a process accelerated by the entrance of then PM, Pitt the Younger, who bears news of the

King of Sweden's assassination. This is an image of the royal runs and of royal rumps, royally exposed.

The BBC received around 120 complaints about Baddiel's show and its trust, rapping the comedian and writer over the knuckles, found his panelists' remarks to be "personal, intrusive and demeaning." I teach and write about satire and, for me, the BBC Trust's words offer a pretty good working definition of it. Isn't satire supposed to be personal? Isn't it meant to demean? Why are these qualities necessarily bad or wrong?

Back in the 18th-century the monarchy still had, and exercised, some power. George III was involved in cabinet appointments. On at least one occasion, he actively brought a government down. He was also highly respected by many people. But there was general acceptance that room had to be made for irreverence and mockery alongside (perhaps because of) this respect. Gillray's cartoons took aim at the King and Queen again and again. They mocked George's poor eyesight and frugality. They imagined him on the chopping block. In one nasty cartoon Gillray even went so far as to caricature Queen Charlotte naked from the waist up.

George III's son, later George IV, came in for a still harder time. A notorious player with the ladies, he has good claim to be the most mercilessly lampooned monarch in British history. And his sex life was fair game. Cartoonists showed him thoroughly enjoying himself under his mistress's skirt, spanking a lady in public, and even having sex with his secret Catholic wife.

These cartoons caused offence, of course. That was the whole point. But we know that they were looked at and bought by lords and ladies, members of parliament and the well-to-do. And also by the royals themselves. Gillray was even granted a government pension (though, at this point, the mockery of the monarch did come to a halt).

The Georgians are sometimes regarded as having invented the idea of "polite" society. But their sense of humour was unashamedly

crude and decidedly vicious. For them, the body was grotesquely but also joyously comic and they were utterly obsessed with its urges, fluids, and processes. The body's functions were seen as a social leveller. Whether a king or a beggar in the street, we all eat, we all crap, we all have sexual desires.

The decision to axe Baddiel's show suggests how precarious the BBC feels its own position to be as it navigates the choppy waters of charter renewal. But it also shows just how much resistance there is in 2016 to treating the Queen like everyone else. To laughing at her. This isn't because satire or comedy have stopped being cruel or crude. The truth is that British society takes monarchy far more seriously than it did two centuries ago. In the 18th century the fact that the king suffered at the hands of satirists reflected the degree to which the idea of monarchy – what it meant, how it made sense for a "modern" Britain – was genuinely up for debate.

But in the 21st century this debate is no longer being had, at least not publicly. The monarchy has arguably never been more popular. The Queen is held in a reverence that's driven and carefully policed by the very media that should be asking meaningful questions about the monarchy. Imagine that, tomorrow, a cartoonist chose to follow in Gillray's footsteps and show Elizabeth II on her porcelain throne, clutching her bowels in discomfort? He or she would face a digital lynching.

In the 18th century Britons saw such satire as a healthy sign of the freedoms they enjoyed (and this in an age that was, in many ways, very far from free). For them, irreverence was the necessary flip side of reverence. They recognised the real danger that comes when we place anyone, even the monarch, beyond personal mockery. Shouldn't we too?

**CT**

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*David Francis Taylor is associate professor of English, at the University of Warwick in England. This article was originally published at [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)*

**Whether a king or a beggar in the street, we all eat, we all crap, we all have sexual desires**

# Cop killings, law, policy and accountability

**William John Cox** looks for the reasons behind the spate of recent shootings of unarmed black men in the United States

**It is essential that police administrators learn from these encounters and formulate more effective policy and training to guide their officers and to hold them accountable**

The people of the United States have empowered some of their members to enforce their laws and to police their society, but things have gone terribly awry. The police are killing those they are sworn to protect and they themselves are becoming the target of public anger over racial inequality and discrimination. Video images of recent police shootings in Louisiana and Minnesota were followed by the murder of police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge, apparently in response to these shootings

The killing of an unarmed mentally-disturbed man September 27 by El Cajon, California, police officers – and the resulting civil unrest – once again raises the question of the use of deadly force by the police. The question involves complicated issues of law and policy, but the decision to shoot must often be made in a nanosecond. With the widespread availability of video cameras and social media, however, the justification for the use of deadly force is being increasingly scrutinised, and the quality of law enforcement policy, training, and discretion is frequently found wanting.

The reasonableness of a police shooting decision is determined by what was known to the officer at the moment of the shooting, and whether that decision complied with policy and law. The decision to pull the trigger is made by an individual officer, but the responsibility for its consequences is

shared by the policing agency.

Based on experience, professional standards, statutory and constitutional law, and public expectations, police policy and training seeks to minimise the risk of harm to the public while ensuring the right of self defence. There are no easy answers, but it is essential that police administrators learn from these encounters and formulate more effective policy and training to guide their officers and to hold them accountable.

## **Background**

My 45-year career in the justice system began in 1962 when I became a police officer in El Cajon. The new chief of police was intent on improving the level of professionalism in the department. Proud to be a part of the “New Breed,” I achieved top honours in the San Diego police academy and quickly became president of the Police Officer’s Association and later president of the San Diego County organisation representing all of its law enforcement officers. Although El Cajon was a quiet suburb, police work was not without its risk. One of my supervisors, Sgt Fred Wilson – at that time the only El Cajon police officer ever killed in the line of duty – died of head injuries he sustained breaking up a fight.

Transferring to Los Angeles in 1968, I was assigned to South Central LA, where policing was more dangerous. My partner and I were



Cellphone video shows police shooting Alfred Olango, in El Cajon, California, on September 27.

once dispatched to a “man with a gun” call from only a block away, and as we turned the corner, we saw the man directly in front of us in the street. He was holding a woman by her hair in one hand and a gun in the other. He shot her in the abdomen, looked up, saw us, and began to run between the houses. I drew my revolver and chased after him. He jumped up on a wall and threw his weapon to the other side, but drew another handgun from his waistband as he came back down. Crouched in a firing stance, I yelled at him to drop the second gun and he did. We arrested him, and his girlfriend was transported to the hospital. Later, my tactics were criticised for not having shot the man. In cop terms, it would have been a “good,” or justifiable, shooting, but in my mind he was just trying to get rid of his guns, and I had no cause to shoot him.

I was fortunate that day, but two of my friends were not so lucky. Jerry Maddox, with whom I had carpooled to the Police Academy, was shot to death in 1969 by a gang member in East LA, and Jack Coler was

one of the FBI agents ambushed and murdered at Wounded Knee in 1975.

#### Drafting Policy

Upon completion of my probation, I was transferred to LA police headquarters where I spent two years researching and writing the department policy manual. Subsequently, while attending night law school, I was assigned to work on the Police Task Force of the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. My job was to write about the role of the police in America and law enforcement policy making. As the author of the LAPD shooting policy, I later testified at the hearing into the shooting of Eulia May Love in 1979. When the city attempted to turn off her gas for nonpayment, the recent widow had the payment in her purse as she waved a knife to keep the gas man at bay. Two officers responded and shot her eight times.

The drafting of shooting policy began with the law of justifiable homicide. A police officer can legally kill in three circum-

**Crouched in a firing stance, I yelled at him to drop the second gun and he did. We arrested him, and his girlfriend was transported to the hospital**

## GUN LAW

**Olango suddenly withdrew his hand holding an electronic smoking device from his pocket and extended it towards Officer Gonsalves. He was immediately shot four times by Gonsalves and tased by the other officer**

stances: self defence, defence of others, and to prevent the escape of a fleeing felon. Although there have been some minor revisions, the Los Angeles police department shooting policy remains as originally written. The policy does not limit the right of an officer to shoot in self defence. It does, however, require that “Justification for the use of deadly force must be limited to what reasonably appear to be the facts known or perceived by an officer at the time he decides to shoot.” Moreover, policy states that a “reverence for the value of human life shall guide officers in considering the use of deadly force,” and it imposes a duty on officers to minimise “the risk of death.” The shooting of fleeing felons is limited to those who have caused “serious bodily injury or the use of deadly force where there is a substantial risk” that the felon will “cause death or serious bodily injury to others. . . .”

In a section titled “Minimum Use of Force,” LAPD officers are told they “should use only the reasonable amount of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.”

These Los Angeles police use-of-force policies generally follow California law, and it may be helpful to consider the known facts of the recent El Cajon police shooting in light of these basic principles. Unlike the Los Angeles police department manual – which is generally available in public libraries – the policies of the El Cajon police are not published. It appears, however, that El Cajon’s policies may be based on those of Los Angeles. The ECPD website states that “The department serves the people of El Cajon by performing in a professional manner; and it is to the people of this community that the department is ultimately responsible.” Except for the city’s name, this mission statement is identical to the definition of the LAPD motto, “To Protect and To Serve” that I originally wrote in the policy manual.

### **El Cajon shooting facts**

On September 27, 2016, the sister of Alfred

Olango, a 30-year-old refugee from Uganda, called El Cajon police seeking help with her brother – who was having an emotional breakdown over the death of his best friend. Two other calls to the department reported that a shirtless man was walking in traffic and acting erratically at the same location. Although located less than two miles from police headquarters, it took officers more than an hour to respond.

Richard Gonsalves, a 21-year veteran – who had been recently demoted from sergeant for sexually harassing a female officer – was the first to arrive on the scene in the parking lot of a small strip mall. A surveillance camera shows that he immediately drew his weapon and closely confronted Olango, who continued to pace back and forth, with his right hand in his pocket. According to the officer, Olango did not obey repeated orders to remove his hand from his pocket. A second officer arrived and drew his taser instead of his firearm. As Olango’s sister approached the scene, Olango suddenly withdrew his hand holding an electronic smoking device from his pocket and extended it towards Officer Gonsalves. He was immediately shot four times by Gonsalves and tased by the other officer. The entire encounter lasted less than a minute.

### **Tactics**

Although the El Cajon police department has released the surveillance video and another contemporaneous video made with a bystander’s cellphone, the calls to the police and the radio dispatch have not been released. It is essential to know exactly what Olango’s sister and other callers told the police dispatcher and what the responding officers were told. One standard question asked of most complainants is whether a person is armed. Although a vape pipe might appear to be a small gun, it matters whether the police were originally informed that the person was waving a gun or smoking a vape pipe. There is also a great difference if the responding officers were



told that they were dealing with a mental case – or a serious crime such as an armed robbery. Inasmuch as it took more than an hour for the officers to arrive, and the matter was dispatched as a “5150” call regarding a mentally disturbed individual, there is no evidence that a crime of violence was under consideration.

Depending on the information available to Officer Gonsalves, it is questionable whether he should have drawn his gun in the first place. The LAPD shooting policy tells officers they cannot “draw or exhibit a firearm unless the circumstances surrounding the incident create a reasonable belief that it may be necessary to use the firearm” in conformance with written policy. Nor are officers allowed to use deadly force “to protect themselves from assaults which are not likely to have serious results.”

Officers are trained to demonstrate “command presence” and to quickly take control of situations. They must deliver firm and unambiguous directions – which may in some cases require a loud voice and even profanity. If, however, Officer Gonsalves believed he was dealing with a mental case, he should have been trained as a professional to de-escalate and defuse the situation by speaking in a calm voice and by asking questions, rather than shouting commands. Asking Olango what he had in his pocket, or if he would show his empty hand, is different than a loud order to remove his hand (along with the pocket contents).

It is reasonable to believe that Officer Gonsalves thought he saw a gun in Olango’s hand when Olango followed directions and removed his hand and the vape pipe from his pocket. Since the officer already had his gun pointed at Olango, he may have fired instinctively. We will never know, however, what Olango was thinking. It is not unreasonable to believe he was simply showing the officer what he had in his pocket and handing it over. Or, more unlikely, he may have been pretending it was a gun and was trying to commit “suicide by cop.”

The video shows that Gonsalves approached to within a few feet of Olango and shifted his position several times to maintain close contact as Olango moved about. To de-escalate, rather than inflame, situations involving mentally disturbed people, professional officers are trained to maintain a distance or to speak from behind their police vehicle for self protection – as they defuse confrontations and consider alternatives. The videos show that Olango’s sister had approached to within a few feet of Gonsalves when he fired four bullets into her brother. Had the officer maintained his distance and emotional reserve, she might have helped resolve the situation. Instead, she plaintively cried, “I called for help. I didn’t call you to kill him.”

#### **Lessons learned**

Following major police actions, professional administrators engage in an “after action” process. Lessons learned from the analysis are then used to enhance the training of officers to avoid repeating mistakes in the future, and to formulate more effective policies to guide their actions. If the El Cajon police department already has similar policies to Los Angeles about when to draw a firearm or to minimise the risk of death or serious injury, and if the officer had received de-escalation training, then the officer should be accountable for his failure to follow policy and training. If found to be unjustified, the killing might also warrant criminal prosecution. If, however, police administrators have failed to promulgate appropriate policies and to provide professional training, they themselves should be accountable.

El Cajon has changed from the white, middle-class bedroom community it was when I patrolled there in the early 60s. The population has doubled and it has become a gritty, multi-ethnic, working-class community. It is likely that police culture has changed as well, as the department has had six other police shootings in the past five years, including the killing of two women.

**If Officer Gonsalves believed he was dealing with a mental case, he should have been trained as a professional to de-escalate and defuse the situation by speaking in a calm voice and by asking questions, rather than shouting commands**

# GUN LAW

Had the officer maintained his distance and emotional reserve, she might have helped resolve the situation. Instead, she plaintively cried, "I called for help. I didn't call you to kill him"

The present culture may also be indicated by the demotion of Officer Gonsalves – instead of firing him – for sexually harassing a subordinate.

Independent of policy and law, police officers among themselves categorise shootings as good or bad in terms of the risk to their own safety and their demonstrated heroism. This was not a "good" shooting of an armed robbery suspect or murderer. To the contrary, it appears to have been an entirely avoidable killing of a mentally disturbed person, whom the officers were sworn to protect.

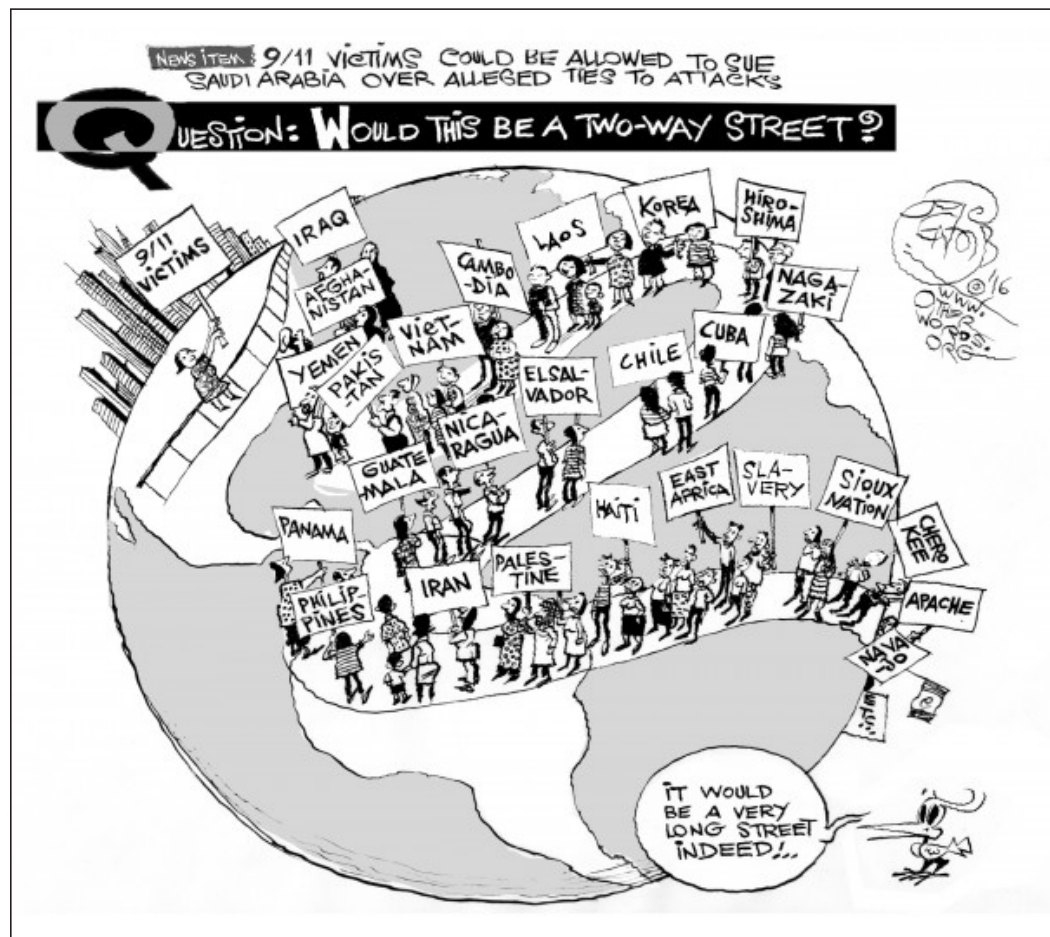
More complete answers to the complicated questions of why police killings are taking place and what can be done to pre-

vent them require a deeper consideration of contributing causes than is available in this brief article. These matters include poverty, a punitive society, the war on drugs, federalisation and militarisation of the police, regulation of guns, and the professionalisation of law enforcement. **CT**

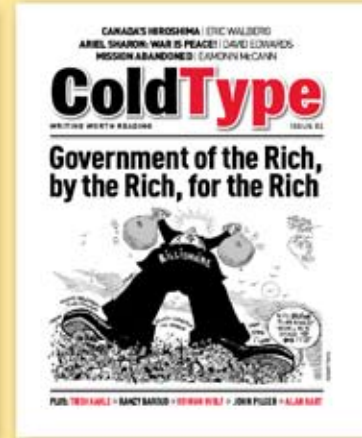
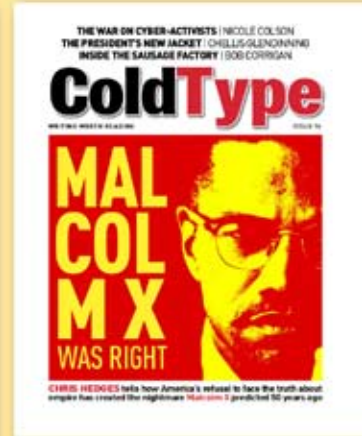
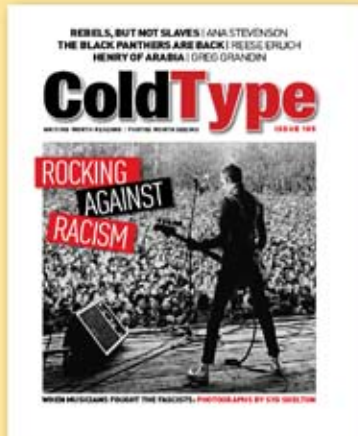
*William John Cox is a retired police officer, prosecutor, and public interest lawyer who writes about public policy and political matters. He was the author of the Los Angeles Police Department Policy Manual and the Role of the Police in America for the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. His most recent book is Transforming America: A Voters' Bill of Rights.*

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## IN THE PICTURE

**Richard Erlich** tried to capture an “intense and profound depth of feeling and emotion” when he photographed 42 leading musicians listening to their favourite works

# LOOKING FOR EMOTION

For his latest book, **Face The Music**, Richard Erlich wanted to find out if it is possible to capture in photographic portraiture the intense and profound inner depth of feeling and emotion that is aroused while listening to one’s favourite music? To find the answer, the photographer asked 41 renowned musicians to select between one and four of their favourite pieces of music while being photographed. “It is fascinating to note,” Erlich writes in his introduction to the resulting book, *Face The Music*, “that, with few exceptions, they chose music of other musicians rather than their own, with the three exceptions perfectly comprehensible.”

However, he adds, “the selections of many artists were also fascinating and surprising: Witness Roger Daltrey choosing Edith Piaf’s, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien; Esperanza Spalding, Shostakovich; Sir Graham Nash, Be-Bop-A-Lula; Rosanne Cash, The Decemberists’ This is Why We Fight; Herb Alpert, Pavarotti’s Nessun Dorma.”

Erlich’s says, “Music, painting, photography – as art forms – share a common nexus for experiencing feeling, and are inextricably linked in contextualising human emotion. This project helped redefine the profound and transcendent influence music has on human emotion. Its transformative sublimity is conveyed in an elegant synthesis of facial expression.”

Did his experiment work? Do the pictures capture any inner depth of feeling and emotion? Hard to say, but they certainly capture exuberance and energy – perhaps that’s the same thing. Turn on your hi-fi and play your favourite song, while checking out the photographs here and on the following pages, then you can make up your own minds.

– **Tony Sutton**





ROGER DALTREY, at Center Staging, Burbank, California, August 9, 2013. Song choice: Edith Piaf, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien.

## IN THE PICTURE



**SIR GRAHAM NASH**, at home, Manhattan Beach, California, February 14, 2011. Song choices: The Beatles, A Day in the Life; Jerry Lee Lewis, Great Balls of Fire; Gene Vincent, Be-Bop-A-Lula.



**HERB ALPERT**, at home, Malibu, California, May 31, 2011. Song choice: Giacomo Puccini, Nessun Dorma (from Tosca), sung by Luciano Pavarotti.



**JOHN LYDON (Johnny Rotten)**, Malibu, California, May 17, 2013. Song choices: The Congos, Heart of the Congos; Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band, Trout Mask Replica; Kate Bush, This Woman's Work; Led Zeppelin, Physical Graffiti, Public Image Ltd, This is PIL.

## IN THE PICTURE



**EMMYLOU HARRIS**, at Wiltern Theater, Los Angeles, California, April 10, 2014. Song choices: Sinéad O'Connor, In This Heart; Kate and Anna McGarrigle, Matapédia; Sweet Honey in the Rock, We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder.



**QUINCY JONES**, at home, Los Angeles, California, August 30, 2012. Song choice: James Ingram and Patti Austin, How Do You Keep the Music Playing.



**ESPERANZA SPALDING**, at The Fonda Theater, Los Angeles, April 27, 2012. Song choices: Nina Simone, Wild Is the Wind; Nina Simone, Lilac Wine; Dmitri Shostakovich, Piano Trio No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 67

## IN THE PICTURE



**HERBIE HANCOCK**, at home, Los Angeles, California, October 17, 2011. Song choices: Miles Davis, *The Meaning of the Blues*; Miles Davis *Lament*; Miles Davis, *Springsville*.



**SHERYL CROW**, at Milk Studio, Los Angeles, California, May 14, 2014: Song choices: Stevie Wonder, *Love's in Need of Love Today*; Fleetwood Mac, *Landslide*.



**DAVE BRUBECK**, at home, Sharon, Connecticut, September 15, 2011. Song choices: Darius Brubeck & Afro Cool Concept, *Tugela Rail*; Brubeck Brothers Quartet, *Vignettes for Nonet, Mvt. III*; David Braid & Matt Brubeck, *Improvisation 17.04.2006*.



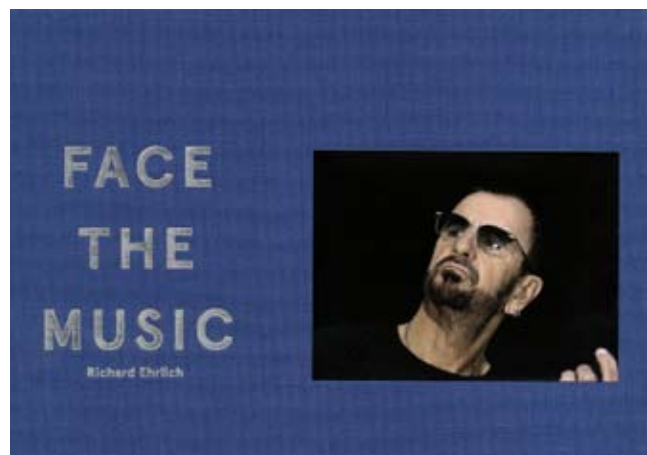
## IN THE PICTURE



**LARS ULRICH**, at Metallica Studio, San Rafael, California, November 18, 2013. Song choices: Rage Against the Machine, Killing in the Name; Oasis, Supersonic; Diamond Head, Streets of Gold.



**ROSANNE CASH**, at home, New York City, August 10, 2014. Song Choices: The Beatles, You've Got to Hide Your Love Away; Arvo Pärt, Spiegel im Spiegel; The Decemberists, This Is Why We Fight.



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# A dangerous diplomatic proposal

**Conn Hallinan** on America's UN ambassador Samantha Power and the misguided ideals behind her 'responsibility to protect' advocacy

**Samantha Power is proposing something different than humanitarian intervention. She is suggesting that the US elevate R2P to the level of national security, which sounds uncomfortably like an argument for US intervention in any place that doesn't emulate the American system**

While the mainstream media focuses on losers and winners in the race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, there is a largely unreported debate going on over the future course of US diplomacy. Its outcome will have a profound effect on how Washington projects power – both diplomatic and military – in the coming decade.

The issues at stake are hardly abstract. The US is currently engaged in active wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, Yemen and Somalia. It has deployed troops on the Russian border, played push and shove with China in Asia, and greatly extended its military footprint on the African continent. It would not be an exaggeration to say – as former US Secretary of Defense William Perry has recently done – that the world is a more dangerous place today than it was during darkest times of the Cold War.

Tracking the outlines of this argument is not easy, in part because the participants are not always forthcoming about what they are proposing, in part because the media oversimplifies the issues. In its broadest framework, it is “realists,” represented by former National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Harvard's Steven Walt, and University of Chicago's John Mearsheimer, versus “humanitarian interventionists” such as current UN Ambassador Sa-

mantha Power. Given that Power is a key advisor to the Obama administration on foreign policy and is likely to play a similar role if Clinton is elected, her views carry weight.

In a recent essay in the *New York Review of Books*, Power asks, “How is a statesman to advance his nation's interests?” She begins by hijacking the realist position that US diplomacy must reflect “national interests,” arguing they are indistinguishable from “moral values” – what happens to people in other countries is in our “national security.”

Power – along with Clinton and former President Bill Clinton – has been a long-time advocate of “responsibility to protect,” or R2P, behind which the US intervened in the Yugoslav civil war and overthrew the Muammar Gaddafi regime in Libya. Hillary Clinton has argued forcibly for applying R2P to Syria by setting up “no fly zones” to block Syrian and Russian planes from bombing insurgents and the civilians under their control.

But Power is proposing something different than humanitarian intervention. She is suggesting that the US elevate R2P to the level of national security, which sounds uncomfortably like an argument for US intervention in any place that doesn't emulate the American system.

What is most telling about where all

this leads is her choice of examples: Russia, China, and Venezuela, all currently in Washington's crosshairs. Of these, she spends the most time on Moscow and the current crisis in Ukraine, where she accuses the Russians of weakening a "core independent norm" by supporting insurgents in Ukraine's east, "lopping off part of a neighbouring country" by seizing the Crimea, and suppressing the news of Russian intervention from its own people. Were the Russian media to report on the situation in Ukraine, she writes, "many Russians might well oppose" the conflict.

Power presents no evidence for this statement because none exists. Regardless of what one thinks of Moscow's role in Ukraine, the vast majority of Russians are not only aware of it, but overwhelmingly support President Vladimir Putin on the issue. From the average Russian's point of view, NATO has been steadily marching eastwards since the end of the Yugoslav war. It is Americans who are deployed in the Baltic and Poland, not Russians gathering on the borders of Canada and Mexico. Russians are a tad sensitive about their borders, given the tens of millions they lost in World War II, something that Power seems oblivious of.

What Power seems incapable of doing is seeing how countries like China and Russia view the US. That point of view is an essential skill in international diplomacy, because it is how one determines whether or not an opponent poses a serious threat to one's national security.

Is Russia – as President Obama recently told the UN – really "attempting to recover lost glory through force," or is Moscow reacting to what it perceives as a threat to its own national security? Russia did not intervene in Ukraine until the US and its NATO allies supported the coup against the President Viktor Yanukovich government and ditched an agreement that had been hammered out among the European Union, Moscow, and the US to peacefully

resolve the crisis.

Power argues that there was no coup, but US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the US Ambassador to the Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt were caught on tape talking about how to "mid-wife" the takeover and choosing the person they wanted to put in place.

As for "lopping off" Crimea, Power had no problem with the US and NATO "lopping off" Kosovo from Serbia in the Yugoslav War. In both cases local populations – in Crimea by 96 percent – supported the takeovers.

Understanding how other countries see the world does not mean one need agree with them, but there is nothing in Moscow's actions that suggests it is trying to re-establish an "empire," as Obama characterised its behaviour in his recent speech to the UN. When Hillary Clinton compared Putin to Hitler, she equated Russia with Nazi Germany, which certainly posed an existential threat to our national security. But does anyone think that comparison is valid? In 1939, Germany was the most powerful country in Europe with a massive military. Russia has the eleventh largest economy in the world, trailing even France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and Brazil. Turkey has a larger army.

Power's view of what is good for the Russian people is a case in point. While one can hardly admire the oligarchy that dominates Russia – and the last election would seem to indicate considerable voter apathy in the country's urban centres – the "liberals" Power is so enamoured with were the people who instituted that so-called economic "shock therapy" in the 1990s that impoverished tens of millions of people and brought about a calamitous drop in life expectancy. That track record is unlikely to get one elected. In any case, Americans are hardly in a position these days to lecture people about the role oligarchic wealth plays in manipulating elections.

**Russia did not intervene in Ukraine until the US and its NATO allies supported the coup against the President Viktor Yanukovich government and ditched an agreement that had been hammered out among the European Union, Moscow, and the US to peacefully resolve the crisis**

## WAR AND INSTABILITY

**While Power is quick to call the Russians in Syria “barbarous,” she is conspicuously silent on the US’s support for Saudi Arabia’s air war in Yemen, which has targeted hospitals, markets and civilians**

The Chinese are intolerant of internal dissent, but the Washington’s argument with Beijing is over sea-lanes, not voter rolls.

China is acting the bully in the South China Sea, but it was President Bill Clinton who sparked the current tensions in the region when he deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups in the Taiwan Straits in 1995-96 during a tense standoff between Taipei and the mainland. China did not then – and does not now – have the capacity to invade Taiwan, so Beijing’s threats were not real. But the aircraft carriers were very real, and they humiliated – and scared – China in its home waters. It was that incident that directly led to China’s current accelerated military spending and its heavy-handed actions in the South China Sea.

Again, there is a long history here. Starting with the Opium Wars of 1839 and 1860, followed by the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and Tokyo’s invasion of China in World War II, the Chinese have been invaded and humiliated time and again. Beijing’s view of the Obama administration’s “Asia pivot” is that it is aimed at surrounding China with US allies.

While that might be an over simplification – the Pacific has long been America’s largest market – it is a perfectly rational conclusion to draw from the deployment of US Marines to Australia, the positioning of nuclear-capable forces in Guam and Wake, the siting of anti-ballistic missile systems in South Korea and Japan, and the attempt to tighten military ties with India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

“If you are a strategic thinker in China, you don’t have to be a paranoid conspiracy theorist to think that the US is trying to bandwagon Asia against China,” says Simon Tay, chair of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

As for Venezuela, the US supported the 2002 coup against Hugo Chavez and has led a campaign of hostility against the government ever since. For all its prob-

lems, the Chavez government cut poverty rates from 70 percent of the population to 21 percent, and extreme poverty from 40 percent to 7.3 percent. Infant mortality fell from 25 per 1,000 to 13 per 1,000, the same as for Black Americans.

And the concern for the democratic rights of Venezuelans apparently doesn’t extend to the people of Honduras. When a military coup overthrew a progressive government in 2009, the US pressed other Latin American countries to recognize the illegal government that took over in its wake. While opposition forces in Venezuela get tear-gassed and a handful jailed, in Honduras they are murdered by death squads.

Power’s view that the US stands for virtue instead of simply pursuing its own interests is a uniquely American delusion. “This is an image that Americans have of themselves,” says Jeremy Shapiro, research director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, “but is not shared, even by their allies.”

The “division” between “realists” and R2P is an illusion. Both end up in the same place: confronting our supposed competitors and supporting our allies, regardless of how they treat their people. While she is quick to call the Russians in Syria “barbarous,” she is conspicuously silent on the US’s support for Saudi Arabia’s air war in Yemen, which has targeted hospitals, markets and civilians.

The argument that another country’s internal politics is a national security issue for the US elevates R2P to a new level, sets the bar for military intervention a good deal lower than it is today, and lays the groundwork for an interventionist foreign policy that will make the Obama administration look positively pacifist.

It is impossible to separate this debate from the current race for the White House. Clinton has been hawkish on most international issues, and she is not shy about military intervention.

She has also surrounded herself with some of the same people who designed the Iraq war, including founders of the Project for a New American Century. It is rumoured that if she wins she will appoint former Defense Department official Michele Flourney Secretary of Defense. Flourney has called for bombing Assad's forces in Syria.

On the other hand, Trump has been less than coherent. He has made some reasonable statements about cooperating with the Russians and some distinctly scary ones about China. He says he is opposed to military interventions, although he supported the war in Iraq (and now lies about it). He is alarmingly casual about the use of nuclear weapons.

In Foreign Affairs, Stephen Walt, a leading "realist," says Trump's willingness to consider breaking the nuclear taboo makes him someone who "has no business being commander-in-chief." Other countries, writes Walt, "are already worried about American power and the ways it gets used.

The last thing we need is an American equivalent of the impetuous and bombastic Kaiser Wilhelm II." The Kaiser was a major force behind World War I, a conflict that inflicted 38 million casualties.

Whoever wins in November will face a world in which Washington can't call all the shots. As Middle East expert Patrick Cockburn points out, "The US remains a superpower, but is no longer as powerful as it once was." While it can overthrow regimes it doesn't like, "It can't replace what has been destroyed."

Power's framework for diplomacy is a formula for a never-ending cycle of war and instability. **CT**

**Power's framework for diplomacy is a formula for a never-ending cycle of war and instability**

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**Conn M. Hallinan** is a columnist for *Foreign Policy In Focus*. He has a PhD in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley and oversaw the journalism program at the University of California at Santa Cruz for 23 years. and lives in Berkeley, California

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# The Empire strikes back in South America

South America saw a surge in left-wing governments breaking free from US influence. Why are they falling? asks **Chris Hedges**

**The movements and governments in Latin America have fallen prey to the dark forces of US imperialism and the wrath of corporate power**

A decade ago left-wing governments, defying Washington and global corporations, took power in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador. It seemed as if the tide in Latin America was turning. The interference by Washington and exploitation by international corporations might finally be defeated. Latin American governments, headed by charismatic leaders such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador, won huge electoral victories. They instituted socialist reforms that benefited the poor and the working class. They refused to be puppets of the United States. They took control of their nations' own resources and destinies. They mounted the first successful revolt against neoliberalism and corporate domination. It was a revolt many in the United States hoped to emulate here.

But the movements and governments in Latin America have fallen prey to the dark forces of US imperialism and the wrath of corporate power. The tricks long practiced by Washington and its corporate allies have returned – the black propaganda; the manipulation of the media; the bribery and corruption of politicians, generals, police, labor leaders and journalists; the legislative coups d'état; the economic strangulation; the discrediting of democratically elected

leaders; the criminalisation of the left; and the use of death squads to silence and disappear those fighting on behalf of the poor. It is an old, dirty game.

President Correa, who earned enmity from Washington for granting political asylum to Julian Assange four years ago and for closing the United States' Manta military air base in 2009, warned recently that a new version of Operation Condor is under way in Latin America. Operation Condor, which operated in the 1970s and '80s, saw thousands of labour union organisers, community leaders, students, activists, politicians, diplomats, religious leaders, journalists and artists tortured, assassinated and 'disappeared.' The intelligence chiefs from right-wing regimes in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and, later, Brazil had overseen the campaigns of terror. They received funds from the United States and logistical support and training from the Central Intelligence Agency. Press freedom, union organising, all forms of artistic dissent and political opposition were abolished. In a coordinated effort these regimes brutally dismembered radical and leftist movements across Latin America. In Argentina alone 30,000 people disappeared.

Latin America looks set to be plunged once again into a period of dictatorial control and naked corporate exploitation. The governments of Ecuador, Bolivia and Vene-

zuela, which is on the brink of collapse, have had to fight off right-wing coup attempts and are enduring economic sabotage. The Brazilian Senate impeached the democratically elected President Dilma Rousseff. Argentina's new right-wing president, Mauricio Macri, bankrolled by US hedge funds, promptly repaid his benefactors by handing \$4.65-billion to four hedge funds, including Elliott Management, run by billionaire Paul Singer. The payout to hedge funds that had bought Argentine debt for pennies on the dollar meant that Singer's firm made \$2.4-billion, an amount that was 10 to 15 times the original investment. The previous Argentine government, under Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, had refused to pay the debt acquired by the hedge funds and acidly referred to them as "vulture funds."

I interviewed Guillaume Long, Ecuador's minister of foreign affairs and human mobility, for my show "On Contact" at the beginning of this month. Long, who earned a doctorate from the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the University of London, called at the United Nations for the creation of a global tax regulatory agency. He said such an agency should force tax-dodging corporations, which the International Monetary Fund estimates costs developing countries more than \$200-billion a year in lost revenue, to pay the countries for the natural resources they extract and for national losses stemming from often secret corporate deals. He has also demanded an abolition of overseas tax havens.

Long said the neoliberal economic policies of the 1980s and '90s were profoundly destructive in Latin America. Already weak economic controls were abandoned in the name of free trade and deregulation. International corporations and banks were given a license to exploit. "This deregulation in an already deregulated environment" resulted in anarchy, Long said. "The powerful people had even less checks and balances on their powers," he said.

"Neoliberalism is bad in most contexts,"

Long said when we spoke in New York. "It's been bad in Europe. It's been bad in other parts of the world. It has dismantled the welfare state. In the context where we already have a weak state, where institutions are not consolidated, where there are strong feudal remnants, such as in Latin America, where you don't really have a strong social contract with institutions, with modernity, neoliberalism just shatters any kind of social pact. It meant more poverty, more inequality, huge waves of instability."

Countries saw basic services, many already inadequate, curtailed or eliminated in the name of austerity. The elites amassed fortunes while almost everyone else fell into economic misery. The political and economic landscape became unstable. Ecuador had seven presidents between 1996 and 2006, the year in which Correa was elected. It suffered a massive banking crisis in 1999. It switched the country's currency to the US dollar in desperation. The chaos in Ecuador was mirrored in countries such as Bolivia and Argentina. Argentina fell into a depression in 1998 that saw the economy shrink by 28 percent. Over 50 percent of Argentines were thrust into poverty. "Latin America," Long said, "hit rock bottom."

It was out of this neoliberal morass that the left regrouped and took power.

"People came to terms with that moment of their history," Long said. "They decided to rebuild their societies and fight foreign interventionism and I'd even say imperialism. To this day in Latin America, the main issue is inequality. Latin America is not necessarily the poorest continent in the world. But it's certainly the most unequal continent in the world."

"Ecuador is an oil producer," Long said. "We produce about 530,000 barrels of oil a day. We were getting 20 percent royalties on multinationals extracting oil. Now it's the other way around. We pay multinationals a fee for extractions. We had to renegotiate all of our oil contracts in 2008 and 2009. Some multinationals refused to abide by the new

**Countries saw basic services, many already inadequate, curtailed or eliminated in the name of austerity. The elites amassed fortunes while almost everyone else fell into economic misery**

## WHITHER SOCIALISM?

**Long conceded that his government had made powerful enemies, not only by granting political asylum to Assange in its embassy in London but by taking Chevron Texaco to court to try to make it pay for the ecological damage its massive oil spills caused in the Amazon**

rules of the game and left the country. So our state oil company moved in and occupied the wells. But most multinationals said OK, we'll do it, it's still profitable. So now it's the other way around. We pay private companies to extract the oil, but the oil is ours."

Long admitted that there have been serious setbacks, but he insisted that the left is not broken. "It depends on how you measure success," he said. "If you're going to measure it in terms of longevity, and how long these governments were in power – in our case we're still in power, of course, and we're going to win in February next year – then you're looking at, more or less in Venezuela 17 years [that leftist governments have been in power], in Ecuador now 10, and in Argentina and Brazil it's 13."

"One of the critiques aimed at the left is they're well-meaning, great people with good ideas but don't let them govern because the country will go bust," he said. "But in Ecuador we had really healthy growth rates, five to 10 percent a year. We had lots of good economics. We diversified our economy. We moved away from importing 80 percent of energy to [being] net exporters of electricity. We've had big reforms in education, in higher education. Lots of things that are economically successful. Whereas neoliberal, orthodox economics was not successful in the previous decade."

Long conceded that his government had made powerful enemies, not only by granting political asylum to Assange in its embassy in London but by taking Chevron Texaco to court to try to make it pay for the ecological damage its massive oil spills caused in the Amazon, where the company drilled from the early 1960s until it pulled out in 1992. It left behind some 1,000 toxic waste pits. The oil spills collectively were 85 times the size of the British Petroleum spill in the Gulf of Mexico and 18 times the size of the spill from the Exxon Valdez. An Ecuadorean court ordered Chevron Texaco to pay \$18.2-billion in damages, an amount later reduced to \$9.5-billion. The oil giant,

however, has refused to pay. Ecuador has turned to international courts in an attempt to extract the money from the company.

Long said that the difference between the massive oil spills elsewhere and the Ecuadorean spills was that the latter were not accidental. "[They were done] on purpose in order to cut costs. They were in the middle of the Amazon. Normally what you'd do is extract the oil and you'd have these membranes so that it doesn't filter through into the ground. They didn't put in these membranes. The oil filtered into the water systems. It polluted all of the Amazon River system. It created a huge sanitary and public health issue. There were lots of cancers detected."

Long said his government was acutely aware that Chevron Texaco has "a lot of lobbying power in the United States, in Wall Street, in Washington."

"There are a lot of things we don't see," he said of the campaign to destabilise his government and other left-wing governments. "Benefits we could reap, investments we don't get because we've been sovereign. In the case of [Ecuador's closing of the US] Manta air base, we'd like to think the American government understood and it was fine. But it was a bold move. We said 'no more.' We declared it in our constitution. We had a new constitution in 2008. It was a very vibrant moment of our history. We created new rules of the game. It's one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. It actually declares the rights of nature. It's the only constitution that declares the rights of nature, not just the rights of man. We made Ecuadorean territory free of foreign military bases. There was no other way. But there are consequences to your actions."

One of those consequences was an abortive coup in September 2010 by members of the Ecuadorean National Police. It was put down by force. Long charged that many of the Western NGO's in Ecuador and throughout the region are conduits for money to right-wing parties. Military and police offi-



## WHITHER SOCIALISM?

cials, along with some politicians, have long been on the CIA's payroll in Latin America. President Correa in 2008 dismissed his defence minister, army chief of intelligence, commanders of the army and air force, and the military joint chiefs, saying that Ecuador's intelligence systems were "totally infiltrated and subjugated to the CIA."

"There is an international conspiracy right now, certainly against progressive governments," he said. "There's been a few electoral setbacks in Argentina, and Venezuela is in a difficult situation. The media frames it in a certain way, but, yes, sure, Venezuela is facing serious trouble. There's an attempt to make the most of the fall of prices of certain commodities and overthrow [governments]. We just saw a parliamentary coup in Brazil. [President Rousseff had been] elected with 54 million votes. The Labor Party in Brazil [had] been in power for 13 years. The only way they [the rightists] managed to get rid of it was through a coup. They couldn't do it through universal suffrage."

Long said that even with the political reverses suffered by the left it will be difficult for the rightists to reinstate strict neoliberal policies.

"You have a strong, disputed political

ground between a traditional right and a radical left," he said. "A radical left, which has proved it can reduce poverty, it can reduce inequality, it can run the economy, well, it's got young cadres that have been [government] ministers and so on. I reckon that sooner or later it will be back in power."

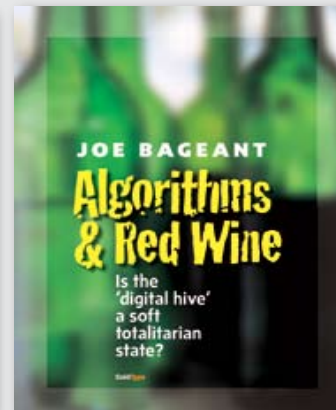
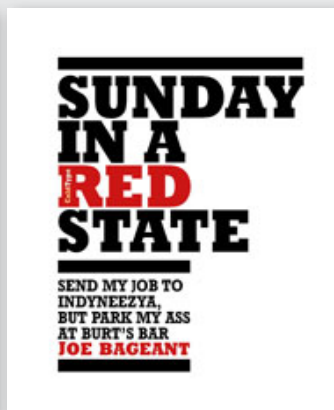
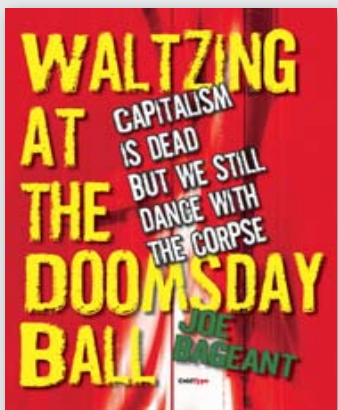
Corporate leviathans and the imperialist agencies that work on their behalf are once again reshaping Latin America into havens for corporate exploitation. It is the eternal story of the struggle by the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich, the powerless against the powerful, and those who would be free against the forces of imperialism.

"There are no boundaries in this struggle to the death," Ernesto "Che" Guevara said. "We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, for a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory; just as any country's defeat is a defeat for all of us." **CT**

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*Chris Hedges has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for The Christian Science Monitor and The New York Times, for which he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years. This essay was first published at [www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com)*

**Long charged that many of the Western NGO's in Ecuador and throughout the region are conduits for money to right-wing parties. Military and police officials, along with some politicians, have long been on the CIA's payroll in Latin America**

## Read the best of Joe Bageant



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# 80 years on, marchers still have a message

In 1936 200 unemployed British workers made a 300-mile trek for social justice. Their fight is still being waged, writes **Matt Perry**

**The threats to steel manufacturing in Redcar, also in north-East England, and Port Talbot in Wales, are eerily reminiscent of a 1939 warning by Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson**

**O**n October 5, 1936, 200 unemployed men from Jarrow, in north-east England, set out for London carrying a petition asking for work to be brought to their town. Their march, which took just under a month, has become a historic landmark that symbolises the depression of the 1930s, the human suffering it induced, and England's north-south divide.

Medical students volunteered to tend to the marchers' blistered feet and fragile bodies that had been enfeebled by a diet on the borderline of malnutrition. The crusade exposed the longer-term effects of impoverished diets: One marcher, William Cameron had all his teeth removed during the trek, others were hospitalised or sent home, and heavily-indebted 45-year-old Thomas Dobson had heart failure, dying eight weeks after the crusade's return to Jarrow.

The route graphically illustrated England's inequalities. Jarrow had the dubious honour of being the nation's capital of infant mortality at the time. You were twice as likely to see your child die before the age of one in the town than in the country as a whole, and three times as likely as in Market Harborough, the Leicestershire town that the march passed through after 18 days on the road.

When the marchers arrived in Hyde Park, London, on October 31, much of the capital was thriving with new industry and booming

construction. The contrasts are powerfully illustrated in Thomas Dugdale's 1936 painting, *The Arrival of the Jarrow Marchers*.

Rebuffed by the government, the march did not bring work to Jarrow. It was World War II, beginning three years later, that revived employment in the town, and the post-war settlement that ended overcrowding. However, from the mid-1970s, Jarrow once again became a site of high unemployment and the forgotten march began to re-emerge from the historical oblivion into which it had slipped.

There are a dwindling number of people alive who can remind us of the stigma of the means test that was required to qualify for unemployment benefit, or what health provision was like before the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948. The decade of the 1930s widened inequalities just as the current age of austerity has done today.

That's why the ghosts of the crusade still hang over austerity Britain. Since the 2008 financial crash, workplaces have closed and household names such as Woolworths and British Home Stores have gone into administration. The threats to steel manufacturing in Redcar, also in north-East England, and Port Talbot in Wales, are eerily reminiscent of a 1939 warning by Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson in *The Town That was Murdered*, a book about Jarrow. Recession has strewn the world with murdered towns and cities

## PROTEST REMEMBERED



**WE WANT WORK:** The 200 men of the Jarrow crusade on their march to London in 1936.

To put a human face to the suffering inflicted during global crises helps us to pose great questions of our age about unemployment, inequality, homelessness and de-industrialisation

– ports transformed by containerisation, closed steel works, as well as mining centres and factory towns that have lost their principal reason for existence. In the 1930s, there were an estimated 50 million unemployed globally, today it's more than 200 million.

When viewing the images of the Jarrow crusade today, there is a danger of falling into a nostalgic trap of discriminating between the apparently deserving poor of the past and the undeserving poor of the present. In this view, the honest men of the crusade with their heads held high were not like undeserving single mums and “scroungers” on “benefits street” today.

However, we shouldn't forget that the unemployed of the 1930s also faced a press that depicted them as dole cheats and dole brides (who married while on benefits), and a burden on public finance. The great triumph of the Jarrow crusade was that it humanised the victims of austerity. The marchers' public meetings held in the evenings after their day's marching relayed the experiences of the depression and of long-term unemployment.

Time has anonymised the marchers as it anonymises the current victims of neo-liberal austerity. For this reason, the commemorations of the march in 2016 have asked “Who were the marchers?” Each marcher has a name, and a life story beyond the march. All

the marchers deserve to be recovered from this anonymity in order to discover their overcrowded living conditions, the waste of their talents, the ill health and hardships that they and their families endured.

During the project to commemorate the 80th anniversary, children at Jarrow's schools have discovered crusader forebears. Great grandsons and daughters discovered Philip McGhee, a crane operator and keen footballer at St Bede's Football Club; Robert Maughan and John Mogie, of the mouth organ band; Joe Symonds, later a Labour MP for Whitehaven; Jimmy Hobbs who was 20 at the time of the march and went on to join the navy during World War II.

To put a human face to the suffering inflicted during global crises helps us to pose great questions of our age about unemployment, inequality, homelessness and de-industrialisation.

To challenge the Jarrow marchers' anonymity is to challenge the fatalism of the age. The crusaders provide a potent lesson for trade unions and social movements today: their battle against injustice and inequality can be an inspiration for those who despair. Although the government denied their immediate demands, the Jarrow marchers contributed to a sea change in the political consensus that brought the post-war welfare state to the UK.

**CT**

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