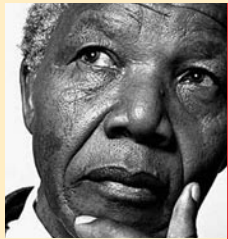


AMERICA'S OBSCENITIES | BARRY LANDO
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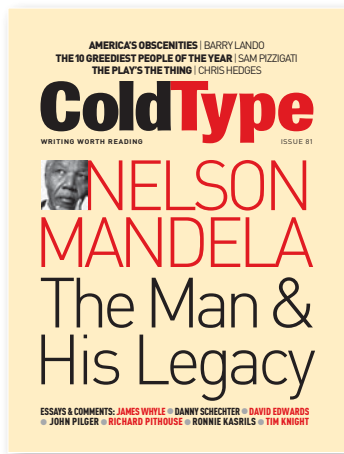
ISSUE 81



NELSON MANDELA


The Man & His Legacy

ESSAYS & COMMENTS: JAMES WHYLE ● DANNY SCHECHTER ● DAVID EDWARDS
● JOHN PILGER ● RICHARD PITHOUSE ● RONNIE KASRILS ● TIM KNIGHT



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Editor: Tony Sutton – editor@coldtype.net

The 2013 'Are You Serious?' Awards

Conn M. Hallinan highlights some of the most stupid events and people in a really messed-up year

Every year the website *Dispatches From The Edge* gives awards to news stories and newsmakers that fall under the category of “Are you serious?” Here are the awards for 2013:

Creative Solutions Award to the Third Battalion of the 41st US Infantry Division for its innovative solution on how to halt sporadic attacks by the Taliban in Afghanistan’s Zhare District: it blew up a hill that the insurgents used as cover.

This tactic could potentially be a major job creator because there are lots of hills in Afghanistan. And after the US Army blows them all up, it can take on those really big things: mountains.

Runner up in this category is Col. Thomas W. Collins, for his inventive solution on how to explain a sharp rise in Taliban attacks in 2013. The US military published a detailed bar graphs indicating insurgent attacks had declined by 7 percent, but, when the figure was challenged by the media, the Army switched to the mushroom strategy (*Mushrooms are kept in the dark and fed manure*): “We’re just not giving out statistics anymore,” Col. Collins told the Associated Press.

Independent sources indicate that attacks were up 40 percent over last year, with the battlegrounds shifting from the south of Afghanistan to the east and north.

The White Man’s Burden Award goes to retired US Gen. Stanley McChrystal, former commander of US troops in Afghanistan and an expert on counterinsurgency warfare. McChrystal told the Associated Press that the Afghans don’t really want the US to withdraw, because they are “Like a teenager, you really don’t want your parents hanging around you, but...you like to know if things go bad, they’re going to help.” The General went on to say the US needed to stay because “We have an emotional responsibility” to the Afghans.

The Don’t Bring Me No Bad News Award was split between Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Greek state television network ERT’s reporting of the widespread opposition to the current austerity policies of the center-right Samaras government apparently annoyed the Prime Minister. Samaras dismissed all of ERT’s 2,700 employees and closed down the station (the fired workers are occupying ERT’s headquarters and continue to broadcast programming). When the government restarted broadcasts a month later, it led with a 1960’s comedy, followed by documentary about a Greek surrealist poet.

Turkish PM Erdogan pressured Turkey’s 24-hour television news stations not to cov-

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er the massive June demonstrations that paralyzed much of Istanbul and, instead, to broadcast a panel of medical experts talking about schizophrenia and a documentary about penguins. There are no penguins in Turkey, although the schizophrenia program may have been an appropriate subject matter for the Prime Minister.

The Bad Hair Award to the Dublin city government for spending \$6.8 million to promote a Redhead Convention in the village of Crosshaven on Ireland's southeast coast.

Ireland is currently in a major depression triggered by a banker-instigated housing bubble. The International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission – the so-called “troika”—bailed out the banks and instituted a massive austerity program on Ireland. The cost of the bailout is approximately \$13,750 for every Irish citizen.

The salaries of government workers were cut 20 percent, and 35,000 public employees were laid off. Pensions, unemployment and welfare benefits were slashed and new taxes imposed. Unemployment is at almost 13 percent – 28 percent for young people. A survey found that 67 percent of families with young children are unable to afford basic necessities, and are in arrears on their rent, utility bills, and mortgages. Some 20 percent of Ireland's children live in houses where both parents are out of work – the highest in Europe – and in a population of 4.6 million people, more than 200,000 have emigrated, about 87,000 a year.

Alan Hayes, the convention's “king of the redheads,” told the *Financial Times* that the “Festival of ginger-loving madness” would draw Irish from all over the world. It is estimated that the Irish diaspora makes up about 100 million people.

“Ireland has one of the highest populations of redheads in the world and we will celebrate by getting together as many as

possible,” says Hayes. The competitions will include the best red hair, eyebrows, and the “most freckles per square inch.”

The Jackal Award goes to the government of France for leveraging its opposition to a settlement between Iran and the US over Teheran's nuclear program as a way to break into the lucrative Middle East arms market. France's spoiler role was praised by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes the monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan and Morocco.

“France could gain financially from the GCC's frustrations over recent US policy in the Middle East,” the global security analyst group Stratfor notes. “Significant defense contracts worth tens of billions of dollars are up for grabs in the Gulf region, ranging from aircraft to warships to missile systems. France is predominantly competing with Britain and the United States for the contracts and is seeking to position itself as a key ally of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates as it looks to strengthen its defense and industrial ties with the region.”

The French arms company Thales is negotiating to upgrade Saudi Arabia's short-range missile systems for \$3.34 billion and working on a \$2.72 billion deal to modernize the kingdom's air defense system. Paris is also negotiating an \$8 billion contract to supply the Emirates with 60 Rafale fighter-bombers and trying to sell 72 Rafales to Qatar. France is smarting over the recent collapse of a \$4 billion deal to sell Rafale aircraft to Brazil, and a big sale in the Gulf would more than make up for the loss.

Israel – which also praised the French stance vis-à-vis Iran and the US – invited French President Francois Hollande to be the “guest of honor” at last month's “France-Israel Innovation Day” in Tel Aviv. Israel's aeronautics industry had more than \$6 billion in sales from 2009 to 2010, and Israel is the fourth largest weapons ex-

porter in the world. France would like to sell its commercial Airbus to Tel Aviv, as well as get in on Israel's expanding drone industry.

C'est la vie.

The Confused Priorities Award to the Associated Press for its March 5 story titled "Little Reaction In Oil Market to Chavez Death" on the demise of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. The authors noted that Venezuela has the second-largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, but that the leftist former paratrooper had squandered that wealth:

"Chavez invested Venezuela's oil wealth into social programs including state-run food markets, cash benefits for poor families, free health clinics and education programs. But those gains were meager compared with the spectacular construction projects that oil riches spurred in glittering Middle Eastern cities, including the world's tallest building in Dubai and plans for branches of the Louvre and Guggenheim Museums in Abu Dhabi."

When Chavez won the presidency in 2001, some 70 percent of the population was considered "poor," in spite of \$30 billion in yearly oil revenues. Two percent of the population owned 60 percent of the land, and the gap between rich and poor was one of the worst in Latin America.

According to the Gini Coefficient that measures wealth, Venezuela now has the lowest rate of inequality in Latin America. Poverty has been reduced to 21 percent, and "extreme poverty" from 40 percent to 7.3 percent. Illiteracy has been virtually eliminated, and infant mortality has dropped from 25 per 1,000 to 13 per 1,000, the same as it is for Black Americans. Health clinics increased 169.6 percent, and five million Venezuelans receive free food.

But on the other hand they could have had a copy of the Victory of Samothrace or the Mona Lisa.

The Pinocchio Award to the five countries that violated international law by forcing Bolivian President Evo Morales' plane down and then lying about it.

Morales had been meeting with Russian officials in Moscow when US intelligence services became convinced the leftist president was going to spirit National Security Agency whistle blower Edward Snowden back to Bolivia. When Morales' plane left Russia, the US leaned on France, Italy, Spain and Portugal to close their airspace and deny the plane refueling rights. Morales was forced to turn back and land in Austria, where his aircraft sat for 13 hours.

When Morales protested, the French said they didn't know Morales was on the plane, the Portuguese claimed its international airport couldn't fuel the aircraft, the Spanish said his flyover permit had expired, and the Italians denied they ever closed their airspace. The US initially said it had nothing to do with the incident, but that excuse collapsed once Spain finally admitted it had received an American request to close its airspace to Morales plane.

The Organization of American States, the Union of South American Nations, and UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon all protested the actions by the five nations as a violation of international law and international commercial airlines treaties.

An angry Morales said, "The Europeans and the Americans think that we are living in an era of empires and colonies. They are wrong. We are a free people...they can no longer do this."

The Frank Norris Award to the US National Reconnaissance Office, the intelligence agency in charge of spy satellites, for its new logo: a giant, frowning octopus, its arms encircling the world, sporting the slogan "Nothing is beyond our reach." Norris wrote a famous turn of the 20th century novel called "The Octopus" about the struggle between farmers in California and the railroads that dominat-

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ed the state's politics.

The Broad Side of the Barn Award to the Obama administration for spending an extra \$1 billion to expand the \$34 billion US anti-ballistic missile system (ABM) in spite of the fact that the thing can't hit, well, the broad side of a barn. The last test of the ABM was in July, when, according to the Pentagon, "An intercept was not achieved." No surprise there. The ABM hasn't hit a target since 2008.

The \$1 billion will be used to add 14 interceptors to the 30 already deployed in Alaska and California.

Runner up in this category was Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, the maker of "Iron Dome," the Israeli ABM system designed to intercept short-range rockets. According to Rafael officials, Iron Dome was 80 percent effective in intercepting Qassem and Grad rockets fired by Palestinians from Gaza during last November's Operation Pillar of Defense.

But an independent analysis of Iron Dome's effectiveness discovered that the 80 percent figure was mostly hype. Tesla Laboratories, a US defense company, found that the interception success rate was between 30 and 40 percent, and Ted Postal – the Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor who successfully debunked the accuracy claims for Patriot missiles fired during the 1991 Gulf War – says Iron Dome has a "kill rate" of between five and 10 percent.

But a lack of success seems to be a sure fire way to open the cash spigots.

The US, which contributed more than \$200 million to build Iron Dome, will spend an additional \$680 million through 2015. The US will also throw \$173 million into Israel's high altitude Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 interceptors, part of which are made by Boeing.

ABMs tend to be destabilizing, because the easiest way to defeat them is to overwhelm them with missiles, thus spurring

an arms race. They also give their owners a false sense of security. And while they don't work, they do cost a lot, which is bad news for taxpayers and good news for Boeing – also, the prime contractor for the US ABM system – and Toys R Us. Yes, Toys R Us makes the guidance fins on the Iron Dome rocket.

The Golden Lemon Award once again goes to Lockheed Martin (with a tip of the hat to sub-contractors Northrop Grumman, BAE, L-3 Communications, United Technologies Corp., and Honeywell) for "shoddy" work on the F-35 stealth fighter, the most expensive weapons system in US history. The plane – already 10 years behind schedule and 100 percent over budget – has vacuumed up \$395.7 billion, and will eventually cost \$1.5 trillion.

A Pentagon study, according to Agence France Presse, "cited 363 problems in the design and manufacture of the costly Joint Strike Fighter, the hi-tech warplane that is supposed to serve as the backbone of the future American fleet."

The plane has difficulty performing at night or in bad weather, and is plagued with a faulty oxygen supply system, fuselage cracks and unexplained "hot spots." Its software is also a problem, in part because it is largely untested. "Without adequate product evaluation of mission system software," the Pentagon found, "Lockheed Martin cannot ensure aircraft safety requirements are met."

In the meantime, extended unemployment benefits have been cut from the federal budget. The cost? About \$25 billion, or 25 F-35Cs that don't work. **CT**

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The ten greediest people in America

You won't find any butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers in this list of America's most avaricious people. But you will find wheelers and dealers and a candy store heiress, writes **Sam Pizzigati**

The headlines haven't been particularly kind to America's most relentlessly greedy over the past year. In December alone, the world's two most visible religious leaders – Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama – have once again dramatically denounced our global concentration of income and wealth. And the world's most powerful political leader, Barack Obama, has chimed in, too.

The impact on America's super rich – and super-rich wannabees? Not much. They haven't even deigned to slow their grabbing.

At *Too Much*, the Institute for Policy Studies weekly on excess and inequality, we've been taking names. Lots of them. The greediest of them all? We think we can make a good case for the ten below. We hope you'll find some useful insights from our choices – and maybe even some new incentive to help make our world a more equal place.

10. Angela Spaccia: Pint-Sized Pilfering

We start this year's top ten with garden-variety greed, the sort that inevitably grows in the shadows of escalating grand fortunes. In that shade, people in positions of modest power and authority regularly – and clumsily – try to emulate the avaricious high and mighty they see all around them.

In Bell, a small Los Angeles County working class community, that modest power and

authority once belonged to Angela Spaccia. As Bell's assistant city manager for a seven-year span that ended in 2010, Spaccia helped stuff hundreds of thousands of dollars into the pockets of the city's top officials, including herself. Spaccia in one year alone took in \$564,000.

Prosecutors eventually caught up with Spaccia and her pals. Her boss, the Bell city manager, cut a plea deal in October to 69 corruption charges. He pulled in \$1.18 million in his most lucrative year. Spaccia chose to go to trial instead, claiming she did nothing illegal.

"Everyone's greedy," her defence attorney argued in November. "There's no crime in taking too much money."

Jurors disagreed. Last month, they found Spaccia guilty on multiple counts of criminal behavior, including one misappropriation of public funds designed to pump \$15.5 million in pension checks to Spaccia and her boss.

9. Dylan Lauren: Sweet Squeezer

They don't come more suave and sophisticated than Dylan Lauren, the only child of billionaire designer Ralph Lauren. Or more ambitious either.

Not for Dylan the empty heiress life. Over a decade ago, she opened up her own business, a luxury candy emporium on Manhattan's Upper East Side where moldings atop display cabinets mimic dripping chocolate and a

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 "There's no crime in taking too much money," said Spaccia's defence attorney

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Walmart's Duke is sitting on \$113.2 million in retirement assets, thanks to a tax loophole that lets corporate execs annually set aside unlimited sums, tax-free, into their retirement accounts
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cocktail bar offers Gummy Bear martinis.

"Dylan's Candy Bar" would go on to become wildly successful, expanding into Miami Beach, Los Angeles, and the Hamptons, all the prime watering holes for America's super rich.

Things today could hardly be peachier for the young Lauren. She has by her side a totally smitten hedge fund manager husband. Maybe even better, the 39-year-old has realized the life's dream she's had ever since she first saw Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory at the ripe old age of six.

"I just wanted," as Dylan gushed recently, "to live in a world full of candy."

Dylan's employees, meanwhile, would be satisfied with a world where they could just make ends meet. Workers at her Manhattan flagship store have been protesting their meagre \$8.50 hourly compensation and management policies that make sure employees never work enough hours to qualify for overtime pay.

The New York workers are seeking full-time weekly set schedules and a hourly wage at \$13.99, the price of a Dylan's Candy Bar pound of candy.

Earlier, in pouring rain, the workers demonstrated to make their case, carrying lollipops that read, "Dylan, we're not suckers." Their chant: "Dylan, Dylan, Candy Queen, you're filthy rich, so share your green!"

8. Michael Duke: Low Wages All the Time

This may well be Walmart CEO Michel Duke's last hurrah in America's most greedy. He'll be stepping down as CEO early in 2014, after an embarrassing final year at Walmart's summit.

The crowning embarrassment? At the company's 2013 annual meeting, a glitzy affair that management packs with "loyal" employees, one Walmart worker actually won cheers when she denounced Duke's \$20.7 million 2012 paycheck.

Researchers have calculated that Duke is essentially making \$6,898 an hour, 779 times the \$8.86 average Walmart wage.

In the nation's capital this fall, city council members tried to up that worker average. They passed a bill that would have required Walmart stores in D.C. to pay at least \$12.50 an hour. Duke reacted swiftly. He had his company threaten to pull up stakes if the bill became law.

Washington's mayor promptly panicked and vetoed the measure.

Duke took a PR pounding for that threat and still another pounding when the Demos think tank in New York revealed that the \$7.6 billion Duke had Walmart spend last year buying back company shares, if redirected to worker compensation, could have raised Walmart's lowest wages by \$5.83 an hour – and ensured all the company's workers at least \$25,000 for full-time work.

Poor Michael Duke won't have to face any more pounding come his retirement this February. He won't face any financial worries either. Duke is sitting on \$113.2 million in retirement assets, thanks to a tax loophole that lets corporate execs annually set aside unlimited sums, tax-free, into their retirement accounts. Duke's retirement stash, notes the Institute for Policy Studies, "could yield him a monthly retirement check of \$669,169." The average Walmart worker 401(k), by contrast, will generate a monthly retirement check of \$89.

7. Art Pope: A Backroom Bully Goes Public

In North Carolina these days, few people think Francis first when they hear "Pope." A different Pope has been dominating headlines here, an exceedingly deep pocket who owes his fortune to a discount store chain his daddy built.

In the run-up to the 2012 elections, this Art Pope invested over \$40 million of his personal wealth to gerrymander how North Carolinians cast their votes.

The gerrymandering worked. 2103 opened with the state sporting – for the first time ever – a conservative GOP governor, Supreme Court majority, and legislature all at the same time. The state budget director? Pope himself.

Pope's budget priorities would soon start wreaking havoc with the lives of North Carolina's most vulnerable. In a state with America's fifth-highest jobless rate, lawmakers indebted to Pope and his millions slashed top weekly jobless benefits and denied 170,000 long-term jobless special federal aid.

North Carolina's conservatives didn't stop there. They put in place, notes one Duke University analyst, an agenda that cuts education and social programs, shifts the tax burden "toward the less affluent," and restricts voting rights.

North Carolinians have responded to this rich people-friendly legislative onslaught with spirited demonstrations. The latest protest: an "educational picket campaign" outside the discount stores the Pope family owns.

Art Pope, notes state NAACP president William Barber, has brought a "cynical and sinister form of wealth and power manipulation" to North Carolina.

Pope has put his stores "deliberately and publicly in communities of low wealth," exploited people in these communities with low wages, and then employed his resulting wealth "to push and promote policies," sums up Reverend Barber, that undercut the quality of average people's lives.

6. Tim Cook: Lost Even with a Compass

The \$100 million club, researchers from the corporate watchdog GMI Ratings revealed this past October, has become a bit less exclusive. and, for the first time, America's ten highest-paid CEOs all realized over \$100 million in compensation. High on that list, at \$143.8 million: Apple CEO Tim Cook.

Cook's good fortune came as no surprise to computer industry observers. Apple retail stores, notes Forbes, "take in more money per square foot than any other United States retailer."

Yet Apple store employees only average \$25,000, and Apple can't seem to afford to compensate its 42,000 retail workers for the time they spend every day waiting to get searched – for stolen goods – before they can

leave the store premises. Two former Apple employees have filed a class-action lawsuit to recoup those unpaid wages, estimated at about \$1,500 per year.

But give Apple credit. The company remains an equal-opportunity exploiter. The company mistreats workers both at home and abroad. Workers at Apple's offshore suppliers continue to work in factories that, says the Economic Policy Institute, "reflect some of the worst practices of the industrial era."

Apple, details EPI analyst Isaac Shapiro, "has not met commitments to ensure that workers in its supply chain receive retroactive compensation for working unpaid overtime" or "ensured promised wage increases."

Apple CEO Cook's response to critiques like this? "Apple," he told reporters before US Senate testimony this past spring, "has a very strong moral compass."

5. Ron Packard: The ABCs of Avarice

Some of us look at school buildings and see students learning. Ron Packard looks at schools and sees himself becoming fabulously richer – if he could only empty the buildings.

Packard runs K12 Inc., a for-profit company that specializes in "virtual" education. K12 Inc. operates online "schools" that supply lessons to kids sitting in front of computers, a business endeavor that Packard pronounces a noble step toward "educational liberty."

"Kids have been shackled to their brick-and-mortar school down the block for too long," he has declared.

An army of corporate lobbyists has been spreading this message over the past five years, backed by the right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council, and more than three dozen states have now enacted legislation that lets companies like K12 Inc. grab students – and tax dollars.

K12 Inc. currently has nearly 130,000 students in its "virtual learning" empire, with only one problem. Compared to their traditional school peers, K12 Inc. students are not doing much learning. Critics are, understand-

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Apple remains an equal-opportunity exploiter. The company mistreats workers both at home and abroad

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Blankfein currently holds over a quarter-billion dollars worth of Goldman shares in his personal portfolio
.....

ably, blasting the K12 Inc. business model as a giant scam.

In that model, heavy K12 Inc. advertising on kid-centric media like Nickelodeon gets kids enrolled for the company's offerings. State government education officials, after their annual student "head count," then pay K12 Inc. for each kid signed up. But after the head count, many of the "virtual" students drop out. K12 Inc. doesn't mind. The company gets to keep the money.

Lots of it, enough to reward Packard over \$19 million in personal compensation the last five years. Not bad, notes the Center for Media and Democracy, for a former Goldman Sachs executive "who started K12 Inc. with a \$10 million investment from convicted junk-bond king Michael Milken."

4. Lloyd Blankfein: An Appetite for Aluminum

Five years ago, Wall Street's Goldman Sachs tottered near disaster, as did every other major US bank.

America's taxpayers came to the rescue. Goldman CEO Lloyd Blankfein soon had at his disposal \$814 billion in near zero interest loans from the Federal Reserve and \$10 billion from the Treasury Department.

Blankfein has made the most of this generous support. *Forbes* calculates his total compensation for the last five years at \$159.5 million. Blankfein currently holds over a quarter-billion dollars worth of Goldman shares in his personal portfolio.

How have Blankfein and Goldman Sachs done so nicely the past five years? We learned a good bit about that in 2013. The juiciest revelations came over the summer when the New York Times exposed a commodity speculation scheme that Goldman "intentionally created" to drive up the global price of aluminum. This scheming, the *Times* estimates, has cost consumers \$5 billion since 2010.

Blankfein has shared, at tax time, precious little of the profits from Goldman's speculative ventures, thanks in large part to Goldman's dozens of offshore tax havens. In 2010, these tax havens cut Goldman's tax bill by

\$3.32 billion.

Blankfein is putting his share of those tax savings to something less than productive social use. News reports have him down as an advance buyer in the new \$1 billion Faena Miami Beach, an 18-story oceanfront luxury tower set to open next year. The tower's 47 residences are going for up to \$50 million each.

3 Jim McNerney: Middle Class Manslaughter

The US manufacturing giant Boeing, analyst Harold Meyerson observed last week, has only one global rival in the large-scale passenger-plane market, the European conglomerate Airbus. Workers at these two aerospace giants turn out to make about the same compensation. But executives at Boeing make more.

Question: Given these realities, what should Boeing do to compete more effectively? The answer from Boeing CEO Jim McNerney: Cut Boeing worker wages, benefits, and pensions!

Earlier this fall, McNerney gave his Seattle area workers an ultimatum: Either accept a contract "extension" that would leave them paying more for health care and getting less in retirement – and force new hires to work 10 extra years at substandard wages – or Boeing would go elsewhere to manufacture its new 777x passenger jetliner.

Boeing gave Washington State's political leaders a similar ultimatum: Either fork over new subsidies and tax breaks or see your state lose jobs by the thousands. Washington lawmakers caved almost instantly. They voted Boeing the largest subsidy deal in US history, over half a billion annually for the next 16 years, over double the state's annual funding for the University of Washington.

Boeing's workers didn't cave. They rejected the Boeing ultimatum, and McNerney, who pulled in \$27.5 million in take-home last year after \$23 million the year before, is now parsing subsidy offers from half a dozen other states. How does this story end? Maybe with the "Walmartization of aerospace."

"This," as Seattle author Timothy Egan

puts it, “is how the middle class dies.”

2. David Novak: Fast-Food Glutton

At first glance, corporate CEO David Novak doesn't need a subsidy from anybody. The fast-food empire Novak oversees, Yum! Brands, amassed \$1.59 billion in profits last year. And Yum – think Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, and KFC – is doing pretty well by Novak, too. He pocketed \$94 million worth of “performance pay,” notes an Institute for Policy Studies analysis, in just 2011 and 2012 alone.

But Novak and Yum are collecting subsidies anyway – and plenty of them. One comes directly from the US tax code. Current tax law lets corporations deduct executive “performance” pay off their taxable income. This sweet subsidy saved Yum \$33 million the last two years on Novak's ample compensation.

Average Americans are actually subsidizing Novak and Yum at much higher levels than this single tax break suggests. In fact, taxpayers are subsidizing Yum's entire fast-food business.

Workers at fast food giants like Yum simply don't make enough to make ends meet for their families. So how do these workers get by? They depend on taxpayer-financed social safety net programs, from food stamps to Medicaid. Overall, researchers noted in 2013, American taxpayers “are spending nearly \$7 billion a year to supplement the wages of fast-food workers.”

And how are fast-food executives like David Novak spending the profits this generous taxpayer support makes possible? They're having their companies, for starters, buy back shares of company stock off the open market, a strategy designed solely to bump up their share prices.

Higher share prices, in the meantime, produce higher “performance pay” awards for execs like Novak.

If Novak had plowed the vast millions that Yum spent last year on share buybacks into worker pay, estimate researchers from Demos, worker wages at Pizza Hut, Taco Bell,

and KFC would have jumped by as much as \$3 per hour.

1. Larry Ellison: An Awesome Arrogance

Drum roll, please. Our 2013 greediest of them all: Larry Ellison, the longtime chief exec at business software kingpin Oracle.

Ellison currently owns a quarter of Oracle, a chunk that makes the 69-year-old the ninth richest individual in the world. His total net worth sat last week at \$38.6 billion.

Enough? Not for Ellison. In 2012, the software kingpin had Oracle award him \$96.2 million in compensation. Unhappy shareholders considered those millions a tad excessive. In a nonbinding 2012 say-on-pay vote, an Oracle shareholder majority turned thumbs-down on Ellison's pay package.

Ellison, of course, gave none of that \$96.2 million back. Last year, he had Oracle hand him another \$76.9 million. Unhappy shareholders again expressed their displeasure, making Oracle just the 12th company in US corporate history to have its shareholders go on record against their CEO's pay in consecutive years.

No frustrated shareholder better try getting any of Ellison's latest paycheck back. Oracle spends \$1.5 million a year on security personnel to protect him. And why not? Ellison, as Oracle general counsel Dorian Daley gushes, rates as Oracle's “most critical strategic visionary.”

Ellison pays dearly to surround himself with such fawning adulation. His two top executive underlings collected \$43.6 million each in compensation in Oracle's fiscal 2013.

Ellison's billions, to be sure, buy him more than office sycophants. This past year Ellison hosted global yachting's premiere race, the America's Cup, in San Francisco Bay. Each race's host sets the race's rules. Ellison's rules limited the field to ultra-expensive – and ultra-dangerous – catamarans.

One sailor died in training runs for the race.

Whose yacht eventually won? Guess. **CT**

No frustrated shareholder better try getting any of Ellison's latest paycheck back. Oracle spends \$1.5 million a year on security personnel to protect him

Sam Pizzigati
edits Too Much, the Institute for Policy Study's online weekly newsletter on excess and inequality.

Cold comfort

George Monbiot recounts a chilling and idiotic brush with death

.....
I had ceased to feel either cold or hungry. Mind over matter, I told myself: I had triumphed over discomfort
.....

It was a beautiful morning, a Saturday in October, and I was having tea with my next-door neighbour. We began talking – for this was almost 20 years ago – about the road the government was intending to build around the town of Newbury, some 30 miles away. When the machinery moved in, we planned to join the protests. People were already starting to build platforms in the trees. “Let’s go down and take a look.”

A train was due to leave in half an hour. We threw sleeping bags and warm clothes into our pannier bags, jumped on our bikes and sprinted to the station. We arrived just as the train was leaving. “Why don’t we just cycle there?”

We had missed our breakfast and had no food or water, but there were bound to be shops or pubs along the way. We would keep off the roads as much as possible, following bridleways and footpaths.

At first we sailed along, feeling buoyant and free. It was one of those autumn days in which the sky seemed cleaner and brighter than at any time during the summer. Then the paths started cutting across fields which had recently been ploughed, and our urban bikes became snarled up with mud. A pregnant grey cloud blotted out the sun and hail began pelting down. This was the point at which my friend dis-

covered that his raincoat, which had been clipped to the top of his bike rack, had fallen off. He went back to look for it. I decided to wait in the field.

The hail soon turned to rain. I was still steamed up, so it felt refreshing as it soaked into my t-shirt. After a while I began to feel a little cold. But – and this is the nail of idiocy on which the story hangs – I thought of Exmoor ponies and the way they stand with their backs to the rain until it passes. If they could do it, so could I.

By the time my friend returned I was shivering. But I was reluctant to change my clothes, as I knew we would soon get hot again crossing the fields. The rain had ceased, but now our bikes slithered across the wet path. By the time we hit firmer ground I was very hungry. I was surprised to find that I was still shivering.

We rode over the downs to a village in which, we were sure, there would be a shop. There wasn’t. The pub was shut. No matter: we would eat in Newbury. By the time we reached a long slope leading up to the Ridgeway – the Neolithic path that traverses southern England – I had ceased to feel either cold or hungry. Mind over matter, I told myself: I had triumphed over discomfort.

But there was something wrong with my bicycle. The wheels wouldn’t go round.

I turned the bike over and found to my surprise that they spun freely. I started pushing it up the hill, but again it seemed to be snagged. My friend gallantly offered to swap. But there was something wrong with his bicycle too. It felt absurdly heavy, and the wheels also seemed to be jammed.

We remounted when we reached the Ridgeway. Even on the level track I could scarcely force the pedals round. We reached the metalled road, and I sat like a pudding as we freewheeled down a shallow slope. Then I slowly toppled off the bike. I stumbled backwards into the hedge beside the road, where I lay spreadeagled.

“Are you all right?”

“I’ve never felt better. But I can’t actually move.” I felt as if I were lying in a warm bath. I could move my mouth and eyes but little else. I had never experienced such deep peace.

“Um, I think we should get some help,” my friend ventured.

“No really, I’m fine.”

“I think we ought to get help.” My friend, who is not renowned for his assertiveness, stood by the road, half raising a hand to the passing traffic: “Um, excuse me ... Would you mind ...”

I watched with amusement as the cars whizzed past. Then a big black thing stopped and a blond giant stepped out. He was dressed in black, he had a crewcut and muscles everywhere. He brushed past my friend and seized me by the shoulders.

“What’s your name?”

“George.”

“What’s your name?!”

“I just told you – George.”

“What’s your name?!!” Who was this rude man, I wondered, and why couldn’t he just leave me alone? He turned to my friend.

“What have you got in your bags?”

“Um, sleeping bags, coats.”

“You’re carrying sleeping bags and he’s – fuck, I’ve seen it all now.”

He pulled out a sleeping bag, lifted me

up as if I were a cat and dropped me into it.

“What’s your name?”

“I just told you.”

“Shut up! What’s your name?”

He walked into the road, his great hands raised to the traffic. The first car stopped. “Chocolate, sweets, whatever you’ve got.” Terrified, the woman in the car scrambled in her bag, then handed him a bar of chocolate. He returned to me.

“This is very kind of you, but I’m quite all right really.”

“Shut up! What’s your name?”

He started feeding me the chocolate. It was plainly safer to obey than to resist this madman, so I ate it. He called the ambulance.

“Really, there’s no need.”

He stopped more cars, forcing them to disgorge a pile of sweets and chocolates.

“I don’t have much of a sweet tooth to be honest.”

“Shut up! What’s your name?”

The ambulance arrived. They wrapped me in a space blanket and took my temperature. They seemed to be making a terrible fuss about nothing. The black car drove away. They put the sirens on and kept using the thermometer: my temperature had fallen, I was later told, to half a degree above the point at which they would have lost me.

In hospital the nurse told me I would need “the full treatment”. “No. What?” “Hot chocolate and toast and honey.” Half an hour after I arrived I sat up and swung my legs off the bed: suddenly fit and well and buzzing with sugar. It took me a few hours to realise that the blond giant (we guessed he was an army paramedic) had saved my life.

CT

George Monbiot’s latest book is “Feral: Rewilding The Land, The Sea and Human Life.” This essay originally appeared in The Guardian newspaper. More of his work appears at his web site <http://monbiot.com>

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Then a big black thing stopped and a blond giant stepped out. He was dressed in black, he had a crewcut and muscles everywhere. He brushed past my friend and seized me by the shoulders

America's obscenities

Children starve in New York City while unused military planes rot in the desert. There's something wrong with this picture, says **Barry Lando**

.....
She shared a cramped, dank room with seven siblings and her parents, both of whom battled – not always successfully – with drug addiction
.....

At times, outrageous juxtapositions in the news shriek for attention. Sometimes, they're actually obscene. On one hand, for instance, a recent series in the *New York Times* about the plight of 22,000 homeless children in New York City – “the highest number since the Great Depression in the most unequal metropolis in America.”

On the other hand, was a scattering of reports, all facets of another on-going outrage: The hundreds of billions of dollars that the US continues to pour into the cesspools of Central Asia, in a still undefined and ultimately futile effort to control political events thousands of miles away.

We begin with the startling five-part series about the plight of the huge “invisible tribe” of homeless children and their families in New York City, written by *Times* reporter Andrea Elliott. She eschewed mind-numbing statistics and faceless generalizations to zero in on the day-by-day plight of one 12-year-old girl, named Dasani.

“She [Dasani] wakes to the sound of breathing. The smaller children lie tangled beside her, their chests rising and falling under winter coats and wool blankets. A few feet away, their mother and father sleep near the mop bucket they use as a toilet. Two other children share a mattress by the rotting wall where the mice live, opposite the baby, whose crib is warmed by a hair dryer perched on a

milk crate.”

Dasani lived for three years in a teeming, squalid homeless shelter, the Auburn Family Residence in Brooklyn. She shared a cramped, dank room with seven siblings and her parents, both of whom battled – not always successfully – with drug addiction.

Adding to the horror, the Auburn Residence, which holds 280 children and their families, is located in Forest Greene, one of the new gentrified glories of a supposedly transformed Brooklyn. The problem is that, despite New York's spectacular resurgence over the past few years, the numbers of poor have also risen. Thousands, like Dasani and her family, have been consigned to “shelters” like the Auburn.

“It is a place where mold creeps up walls and roaches swarm, where feces and vomit plug communal toilets, where sexual predators have roamed and small children stand guard for their single mothers outside filthy showers....”

Almost half of New Yorkers live near or below the poverty line. “Their traditional anchors – affordable housing and jobs that pay a living wage – have weakened as the city reorders itself around the whims of the wealthy.”

But there were reports about another scandal at the same time, the continuing drip-drip of exposes that have been going on for so long that most of us are inured to them. Our eyes glaze over. And yet, it continues: the hemor-

rhaging of hundreds of billions of American dollars, part of a War on Terror that no one has ever clearly explained – nor convincingly justified.

One shocking case involves almost half a billion US government dollars flushed down the drain in Afghanistan. Four hundred and eighty-six million dollars, to be precise. That’s the amount the US spent to provide twenty G-222 turboprop transport planes to the Afghan Airforce. The planes are currently gathering dust on the tarmacs in Kabul and Frankfurt. Most never flew for more than a few hundred hours.

The problem? For one thing, the company running the program – Rome-based Finmessa Alenia Aermachi – never bought enough spare parts to keep the planes running. To do that, another \$200 million would be needed. Another problem: Some of those parts are no longer available. Indeed, six of the original planes have already been cannibalized for spares. The upshot: even before entering fully into service, those \$486 million dollars worth of planes are to be junked.

Back to New York: According to the *Times*, the causes of the disturbing phenomenon of huge numbers of homeless children are far from simple. They range from the recent economic crisis to wage stagnation to the rising costs of housing. They are also a direct result of Draconian cutbacks on government spending, on all levels, particularly for programs intended to help the poor: rent subsidies, special education, child care, health etc. etc. etc.

Americans, after all, have to tighten their belts, make sacrifices, get their financial house in order. A few blocks from Dasani’s shelter the more affluent kids have tutors to help boost their SAT’s and attend a private school where tuition is \$35,000 a year.

Dasani, however, attends a nearby public school in Fort Greene.

The Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts has suffered its own troubles under the Bloomberg administration: a shrinking budget and fewer teachers....

[Her teacher] Miss Hester knows that stu-

dents learn when they get excited. It bothers her that McKinney lacks the sophisticated equipment of other public schools. She shelled out more than \$1,000 of her own money, as a single mother, to give her classroom a projector and document camera.

In far-off Kabul, it seems that the major problem with the half a billion dollars worth of planes that are to be junked is the fact that, as Lt. General Charles Davis, the top acquisition officer in the US Airforce admitted, the planes themselves just weren’t up to the wear and tear, the heat and the dust, of the Afghan environment.

“Just about everything you can think of was wrong for it other than the airplane was built for the size of cargo and mission they needed,” Davis said in an interview. “Other than that, it didn’t really meet any of the requirements.”

John Sopko, the special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, who wrote a blistering report on the planes, told Fox News, “We need to know who made the decision to purchase these planes and why?”

“We intend to get to the bottom of this and hold people accountable.”

Sopko has his hands full. With the US pouring some two billion dollars a week into Afghanistan over the past few years, such scandals have been a dime a dozen.

For instance, *Washington Post* reports that the US has so far spent \$107 million dollars to build a massive five story Defense Ministry headquarters “which will include state-of-the-art bunkers and the second-largest auditorium in Kabul.”

That \$107 million is double the original estimate, but the mammoth hulk is still not completed. The US government has – temporarily – run out of money for the project.

“Nobody was watching it like they should, and it’s just been an open checkbook,” said an American official involved in the management of the project. “We failed, big time.”

That Pentagon in Kabul is only part of a huge \$9.3 billion construction spree – most of it financed by the US government – aimed

Even before entering fully into service, those \$486 million dollars worth of planes are to be junked

RIGHT & WRONG

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One of the New York Times' Public Editor's concerns was that some readers might take issue with the language used by Dasani's mother: the "vulgarity in the passage"
.....

at providing hundreds of bases, outposts and hospitals for the Afghan military.

Back to the *Times*:

"One in five American children is now living in poverty, giving the United States the highest child poverty rate of any developed nation except for Romania."

And at the Auburn shelter in Brooklyn.

City and state inspectors have repeatedly cited the shelter for deplorable conditions, including sexual misconduct by staff members, spoiled food, asbestos exposure, lead paint and vermin. Auburn has no certificate of occupancy, as required by law, and lacks an operational plan that meets state regulations. Most of the shelter's smoke detectors and alarms have been found to be inoperable...

Responses by the city's Department of Homeless Services attribute Auburn's violations to a lack of money. To the state's complaint, in 2003, that only one staff member is tending to 177 school-age children in the shelter's recreation room, the agency responds: "We lack resources for teenagers!"

The *Times* Public Editor commented on the homeless series. One of her concerns was that some readers might take issue with the language used by Dasani's mother: the "vulgarity in the passage . . . the use of the F word twice in Thursday's installment."

The editor wanted to reassure *Times*' readers. "Our basic guidelines about avoiding vulgarities and obscenities haven't changed, but we all recognize that there are cases where an exception is justified."

Members of congress were more tasteful in their choice of epithets during a recent hearing. Experts from the State Department and the Pentagon were testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the administration's plans for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan.

The problem arose when Representative Dana Rohrabacher, a California Republican, asked what he thought was a fairly simple question.

"How much are we spending annually in Afghanistan? How much is the cost to the

American taxpayer?"

According to the news report, he was met with "stone silence" from the government experts. They looked questioningly at each other with empty stares. "Anybody know?" Mr. Rohrabacker asked. "Nobody knows the total budget, what we're spending in Afghanistan. It's a hearing on Afghanistan. Can I have an estimate?"

"I'm sorry, Congressman," one of the experts said. Mr. Rohrabacker called the lack of an answer "disheartening." [The correct answer is almost \$93 billion]

"How many killed and wounded have we suffered in the last 12 months," he asked. Again, none of the three had an answer. One said he would check and get back. [The answer is 118]

"We're supposed to believe you fellows have a plan that is going to end up in a positive way in Afghanistan," the congressman said. "Holy cow."

Meanwhile, responding to the *Times* series on the "Invisible Child", New York's newly appointed deputy mayor for health and human services, said the in-coming administration would restore rental subsidies in some form to help reduce the level of the homeless.

"That's a good start," the *Times* editorialized" but more is needed, including from Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who can aid that effort by ponying up money for the subsidy program as well as for services that save poor people from eviction."

The *Times* announced that, with donations pouring in from readers moved by the series on the "Invisible Child, the newspaper has set up a trust to administer those funds on behalf of the children.

And in Kabul, as they wait for an expected \$24 million to complete the new military headquarters, American officials have dispatched a skeleton crew to install windows to protect the building from the harsh Kabul winter.

(With thanks to Jim Rissman and his invaluable monitoring of reports from the front of *The War on Terror*)

CT

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Barry Lando's new book is "The Watchman's File", which follows the attempt of an American investigative reporter to unravel Israel's most closely-guarded secret
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The play's the thing

Chris Hedges goes to prison and discovers an abundance of talent

I began teaching a class of 28 prisoners at a maximum-security prison in New Jersey during the first week of September. The course revolved around plays by August Wilson, James Baldwin, John Herbert, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Miguel Piñero, Amiri Baraka and other playwrights who examine and give expression to the realities of America's black underclass as well as the prison culture. We also read Michelle Alexander's important book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Each week the students were required to write dramatic scenes based on their experiences in and out of prison.

My class, although I did not know this when I began teaching, had the most literate and accomplished writers in the prison. And when I read the first batch of scenes it was immediately apparent that among these students was exceptional talent.

The class members had a keen eye for detail, had lived through the moral and physical struggles of prison life and had the ability to capture the patois of the urban poor and the prison underclass. They were able to portray in dramatic scenes and dialogue the horror of being locked in cages for years. And although the play they collectively wrote is fundamentally about sacrifice – the sacrifice of mothers for children, brothers for brothers, prisoners for

prisoners – the title they chose was *Caged*. They made it clear that the traps that hold them are as present in impoverished urban communities as in prison.

The mass incarceration of primarily poor people of color, people who seldom have access to adequate legal defense and who are often kept behind bars for years for nonviolent crimes or for crimes they did not commit, is one of the most shameful mass injustices committed in the United States. The 28 men in my class have cumulatively spent 515 years in prison. Some of their sentences are utterly disproportionate to the crimes of which they are accused. Most are not even close to finishing their sentences or coming before a parole board, which rarely grants first-time applicants their liberty. Many of them are in for life. One of my students was arrested at the age of 14 for a crime that strong evidence suggests he did not commit. He will not be eligible for parole until he is 70. He never had a chance in court and because he cannot afford a private attorney he has no chance now of challenging the grotesque sentence handed to him as a child.

My stacks of 28 scenes written by the students each week, the paper bearing the musty, sour smell of the prison, rose into an ungainly pile. I laboriously shaped and edited the material. It grew, line by line, scene by scene, into a powerful and deeply mov-

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BEHIND BARS

.....
In every visit I was made to stand in the enclosure for several minutes before being permitted by the guards to pass through a barred gate and then walk up blue metal stairs, through a gantlet of blue-uniformed prison guards, to my classroom
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ing dramatic vehicle. The voices and reality of those at the very bottom rung of our society – some of the 2.2 million people in prisons and jails across the country, those we as a society are permitted to demonize and hate, just as African-Americans were once demonized and hated during slavery and Jim Crow – began to flash across the pages like lightning strikes. There was more brilliance, literacy, passion, wisdom and integrity in that classroom than in any other classroom I have taught in, and I have taught at some of the most elite universities in the country. The mass incarceration of men and women like my students impoverishes not just them, their families and their communities, but the rest of us as well.

“The most valuable blacks are those in prison,” August Wilson once said, “those who have the warrior spirit, who had a sense of being African. They got for their women and children what they needed when all other avenues were closed to them.” He added: “The greatest spirit of resistance among blacks [is] found among those in prison.”

I increased the class meetings by one night a week. I read the scenes to my wife, Eunice Wong, who is a professional actor, and friends such as the cartoonist Joe Sacco and the theologian James Cone. Something unique, almost magical, was happening in the prison classroom – a place I could reach only after passing through two metal doors and a metal detector, subjecting myself to a pat-down by a guard, an X-ray inspection of my canvas bag of books and papers, getting my hand stamped and then checked under an ultraviolet light, and then passing through another metal door into a barred circular enclosure. In every visit I was made to stand in the enclosure for several minutes before being permitted by the guards to pass through a barred gate and then walk up blue metal stairs, through a gantlet of blue-uniformed prison guards, to my classroom.

The class, through the creation of the play, became an intense place of reflection, debate and self-discovery. Offhand comments, such as the one made by a student who has spent 22 years behind bars, that “just because your family doesn’t visit you doesn’t mean they don’t love you,” reflected the pain, loneliness and abandonment embedded in the lives of my students. There were moments that left the class unable to speak.

A student with 19 years behind bars read his half of a phone dialogue between himself and his mother. He was the product of rape and tells his mother that he sacrificed himself to keep his half brother – the only son his mother loves – out of prison. He read this passage in the presentation of the play in the prison chapel last month to visitors who included Cornel West and James Cone.

Terrance: You don’t understand[,] Ma.
Pause

Terrance: You’re right. Never mind.
Pause

Terrance: What you want me to say Ma?

Pause

Terrance: Ma, they were going to lock up Bruce. The chrome [the gun] was in the car. Everyone in the car would be charged with murder if no one copped to it ...

Pause

Terrance: I didn’t kill anyone Ma... Oh yeah, I forgot, whenever someone says I did, I did it.

Pause

Terrance: I told ’em what they wanted to hear. That’s what niggas supposed to do in Newark. I told them what they wanted to hear to keep Bruce out of it. Did they tell you who got killed? Did they say it was my father?

Pause

Terrance: Then you should know I didn’t do it. If I ever went to jail for any-

thing it would be killing him ... and he ain't dead yet. Rape done brought me into the world. Prison gonna take me out. An' that's the way it is Ma.

Pause

Terrance: Come on Ma, if Bruce went to jail you would'uv never forgiven me. Me, on the other hand, I wasn't ever supposed to be here.

Pause

Terrance: I'm sorry Ma ... I'm sorry. Don't be cryin'. You got Bruce. You got him home. He's your baby. Bye Ma. I call you later.

After our final reading of the play I discovered the student who wrote this passage sobbing in the bathroom, convulsed with grief.

In the play when a young prisoner contemplates killing another prisoner he is given advice on how to survive prolonged isolation in the management control unit (solitary confinement, known as MCU) by an older prisoner who has spent 30 years in prison under a sentence of double life. There are 80,000 US prisoners held in solitary confinement, which human rights organizations such as Amnesty International define as a form of torture. In this scene the older man tells the young inmate what to expect from the COs, or correction officers.

Ojore (speaking slowly and softly): When they come and get you, 'cause they are gonna get you, have your hands out in front of you with your palms showing. You want them to see you have no weapons. Don't make no sudden moves. Put your hands behind your head. Drop to your knees as soon as they begin barking out commands.

Omar: My knees?

Ojore: This ain't a debate. I'm telling you how to survive the hell you 'bout to endure. When you get to the hole you ain't gonna be allowed to have nothing

but what they give you. If you really piss them off you get a 'dry cell' where the sink and the toilet are turned on and off from outside. You gonna be isolated. No contact. No communication.

Omar: Why?

Ojore: 'Cause they don't want you sendin' messages to nobody before dey question some of da brothers on the wing. IA [internal affairs officers] gonna come and see you. They gonna want a statement. If you don't talk they gonna try and break you. They gonna open the windows and let the cold in. They gonna take ya sheets and blankets away. They gonna mess with ya food so you can't eat it. An' don't eat no food that come in trays from the Vroom Building. Nuts in Vroom be spittin', pissin' and shittin' in the trays. Now, the COs gonna wake you up every hour on the hour so you can't sleep. They gonna put a bright-ass spotlight in front of ya cell and keep it on day and night. They gonna harass you wit' all kinds of threats to get you to cooperate. They will send in the turtles in their shin guards, gloves, shank-proof vests, forearm guards and helmets with plexiglass shields on every shift to give you beat-downs.

Omar: How long this gonna go on?

Ojore: Til they break you. Or til they don't. Three days. Three weeks. You don't break, it go on like this for a long time. An' if you don't think you can take it, then don't start puttin' yerself through this hell. Just tell 'em what they wanna know from the door. You gonna be in MCU for the next two or three years. You'll get indicted for murder. You lookin' at a life bid. An' remember MCU ain't jus' 'bout isolation. It's 'bout keeping you off balance. The COs, dressed up in riot gear, wake you up at 1 a.m., force you to strip and make you grab all your things and move you to another cell just to harass you. They bring in dogs trained to go for your balls. You

In the play when a young prisoner contemplates killing another prisoner he is given advice on how to survive prolonged isolation in the management control unit by an older prisoner who has spent 30 years in prison under a sentence of double life

BEHIND BARS

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The students wanted to be true to the violence and brutality of the streets and prison yet affirm themselves as dignified and sensitive human beings
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spend 24 hours alone one day in your cell and 22 the next. They put you in the MCU and wait for you to self-destruct. An' it works. Men self-mutilate. Men get paranoid. Men have panic attacks. They start hearing voices. They talk crazy to themselves. I seen one prisoner swallow a pack of AA batteries. I seen a man shove a pencil up his dick. I seen men toss human shit around like it was a ball game. I seen men eat their own shit and rub it all over themselves like it was some kinda body lotion. Then, when you really get out of control, when you go really crazy, they got all their torture instruments ready – four- and five-point restraints, restraint hoods, restraint belts, restraint beds, stun grenades, stun guns, stun belts, spit hoods, tethers, and waist and leg chains. But the physical stuff ain't the worst. The worst is the psychological, the humiliation, sleep deprivation, sensory disorientation, extreme light or dark, extreme cold or heat and the long weeks and months of solitary. If you don't have a strong sense of purpose you don't survive. They want to defeat you mentally. An' I seen a lot of men defeated.

The various drafts of the play, made up of scenes and dialogue contributed by everyone in the class, brought to the surface the suppressed emotions and pain that the students bear with profound dignity. A prisoner who has been incarcerated for 22 years related a conversation with his wife during her final visit in 1997.

Earlier his 6-year-old son had innocently revealed that the woman was seeing another man. "I am aware of what kind of time I got," he tells his wife. "I told you when I got found guilty to move on with your life, because I knew what kind of time I was facing, but you chose to stick around. The reason I told you to move on with your life was because I didn't want to be selfish. So look, man, do what the fuck you are

going to do, just don't keep my son from me. That's all I ask." He never saw his child again. When he handed me the account he said he was emotionally unable to read it out loud.

Those with life sentences wrote about dying in prison. The prisoners are painfully aware that some of them will end their lives in the medical wing without family, friends or even former cellmates. One prisoner, who wrote about how men in prolonged isolation adopt prison mice as pets, naming them, carefully bathing them, talking to them and keeping them on string leashes, worked in the prison infirmary. He said that as some prisoners were dying they would ask him to hold their hand. Often no one comes to collect the bodies. Often, family members and relatives are dead or long estranged. The corpses are taken by the guards and dumped in unmarked graves.

A discussion of Wilson's play *Fences* became an exploration of damaged manhood and how patterns of abuse are passed down from father to son. "I spent my whole life trying not to be my father," a prisoner who has been locked up for 23 years said. "And when I got to Trenton I was put in his old cell."

The night we spoke about the brilliant play *Dutchman*, by LeRoi Jones, now known as Amira Baraka, the class grappled with whites' deeply embedded stereotypes and latent fear of black men. I had also passed out copies of Robert Crumb's savage cartoon strip *When the Niggers Take Over America!*, which portrays whites' fear of black males – as well as the legitimate black rage that is rarely understood by white society.

The students wanted to be true to the violence and brutality of the streets and prison – places where one does not usually have the luxury of being nonviolent – yet affirm themselves as dignified and sensitive human beings. They did not want to paint everyone in the prison as innocents.

But they know that transformation and redemption are real.

There are many Muslims in the prison. They have a cohesive community, sense of discipline and knowledge of their own history, which is the history of the long repression and subjugation of African-Americans. Most Muslims are very careful about their language in prison and do not curse, meaning I had to be careful when I assigned parts to the class.

There is a deep reverence in the prison for Malcolm X. When the class spoke of him one could almost feel Malcolm's presence. Malcolm articulated, in a way Martin Luther King Jr. did not, the harsh reality of poor African-Americans trapped in the internal colonies of the urban North.

The class wanted the central oracle of the play to be an observant Muslim. Faith, when you live in the totalitarian world of the prison, is important.

The conclusion of the play was the result of an intense and heated discussion about the efficacy and nature of violence and forgiveness. But by the end of a nearly hourlong discussion the class had unanimously signed off on the final scene, which I do not want to reveal here because I hope that one day it will be available to be seen or read. It was the core message the prisoners wanted most to leave with outsiders, who often view them as less than human.

The play has a visceral, raw anger and undeniable truth that only the lost and the damned can articulate. The students wrote a dedication that read: "We have been buried alive behind these walls for years, often decades.

Most of the outside world has abandoned us. But a few friends and family have never forgotten that we are human beings and worthy of life. It is to them, our saints, that we dedicate this play." And they said that if the play was ever produced, and if anyone ever bought tickets, they wanted all the money that might be earned to go to fund-

ing the educational program at the prison. This was a decision by men who make, at most, a dollar a day at prison jobs.

We read the Wilson play *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. The character Bynum Walker, a conjurer, tells shattered African-Americans emerging from the nightmare of slavery that they each have a song but they must seek it out. Once they find their song they will find their unity as a people, their inner freedom and their identity. The search for one's song in Wilson's play functions like prayer. It gives each person a purpose, strength and hope. It allows a person, even one who has been bitterly oppressed, to speak his or her truth defiantly to the world. Our song affirms us, even if we are dejected and despised, as human beings.

Prisoners are given very little time by the guards to line up in the corridor outside the classroom when the prison bell signals the end of class. If they lag behind they can get a "charge" from the guards that can restrict their already very limited privileges and freedom of movement. For this reason, my classroom emptied quickly Friday night. I was left alone in the empty space, my eyes damp, my hands trembling as I clutched their manuscript. They had all signed it for me.

I made the long and lonely walk down the prison corridors, through the four metal security doors, past the security desk to the dark, frozen parking lot. I looked back, past the coils of razor wire that topped the chain-link fencing, at the shadowy bulk of the prison. I have their song. I will make it heard. I do not know what it takes to fund and mount a theater production. I intend to learn.

CT

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter. His most recent book is "Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle." This essay originally appeared at <http://truthdig.org>

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All Shook Up . . .

Gran's in the boozier having an after-shopping drink, the Teds and Hell Cats are bopping at a rock 'n' roll revival night, Mom and Pop are taking it easy on the beach at Skegness. Meanwhile, **Alan Chapman** is taking photographs while **Tony Sutton** is pondering Einstein's theory of relativity . . .



ONE FOR THE ROAD: An old lady takes a break from shopping and contemplates a lunchtime beer in the grim surroundings of Horncastle's Red Lion Hotel, unchanged for 30 years or more when this picture was taken.

I've just been reading an article that says the most important aspect of Nobel Prize winner Albert Einstein's theory of relativity is that time – past, present and future – is nothing but an illusion. Hmm. Bet you haven't debated **that** recently. Me neither. So now's a good time to start . . .

Look at these photographs. When do you think were they taken? Should be no problem. Those of the woman nursing her beer in a pub (above) and the jiving Teddy Boy and his girl (right) must be from England in the late 1950s – almost 60 years ago – before Coronation Street changed the country's TV habits, before the Beatles redefined the world's taste in music, and before tights re-

placed stockings, instantly adjusting women's sense of fashion and men's dreams of sensuality.

If, like me, you thought that, you'd be wrong. The photos are, in fact, from the 1980s – taken 30 years ago by London photographer Alan Chapman during a return visit to his – and my – hometown, Horncastle, in rural England. The Teddy Boy and his lady were bopping at a rock 'n' roll revival night at the town's Drill Hall – so, you're looking at a 30-year-old photograph celebrating a culture that ceased to exist 30 years before it was taken. Sixty years of life distilled into a single moment.

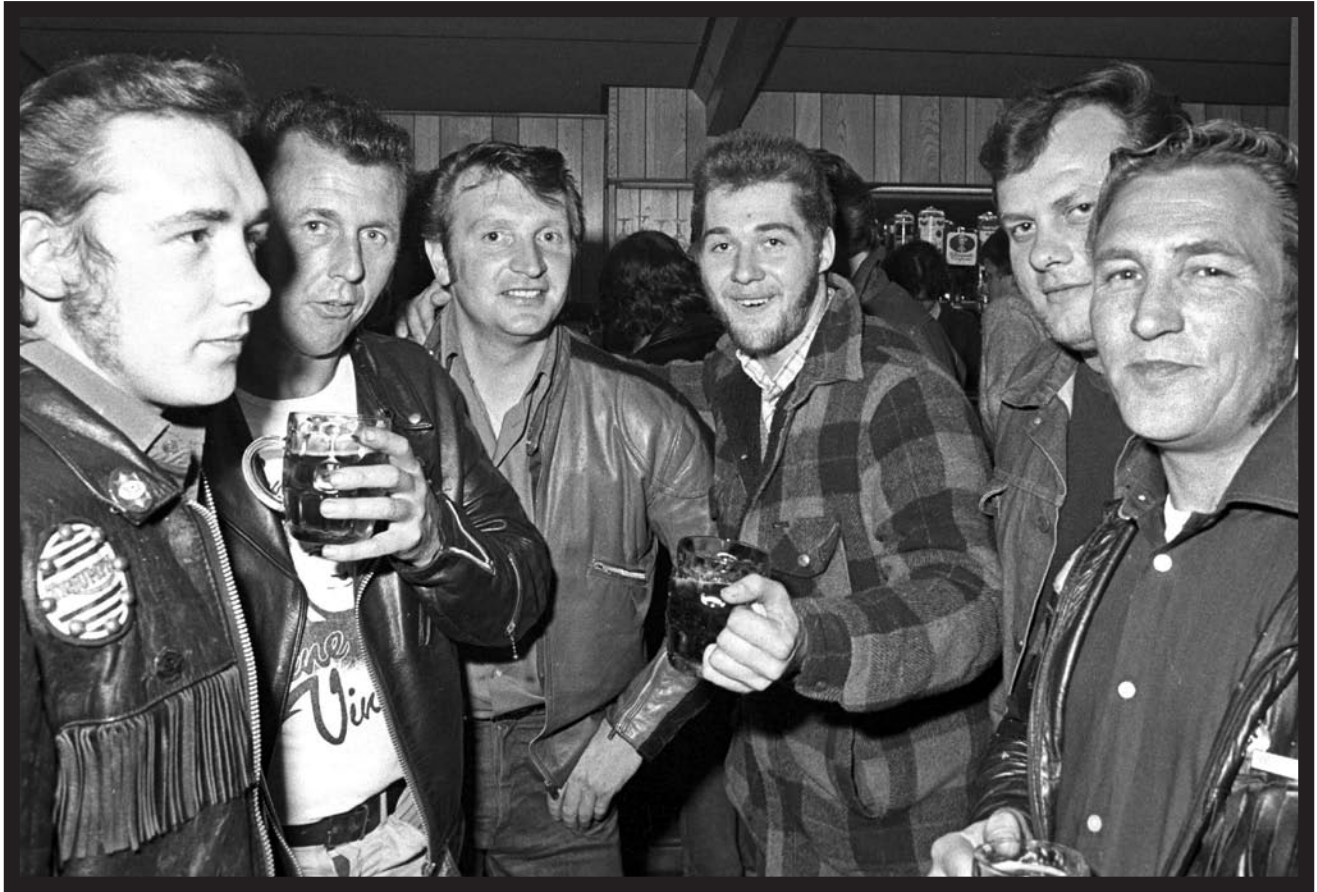
Time moves, while standing still.

The illusory, abstract, nature of time also affects



DRESSED FOR EXCESS: This couple saw the photographer prowling the dance floor at the big Friday Night Rock 'n Roll Party, and decided to flaunt their jiving skills – and her underwear.

WORDS & PICTURES



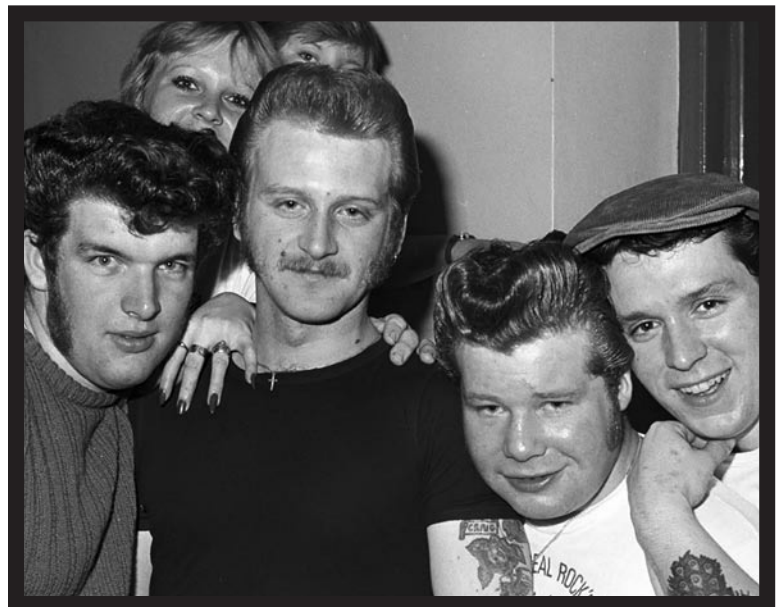
BAD BOYS: In their day, Horncastle's Hell Cats were renowned local toughies . . .

people. For example, I recognize most of the guys in the photos on this page, but I'm sure I wouldn't know them if we passed in the street tomorrow. Why? They're all young(ish) men in these images but, 30 years on, they're no longer young; they're ready to reap the rewards(!) of retirement.

But, when I next visit Horncastle and meet any of them, I know they won't have aged at all; in our minds we're still teenagers, with just the faintest touch of wisdom acquired along the road. The years zoom by, but time is held captive by a mental record needle stuck in the groove of endless youth.

Another example: It's 40 years since I lived in England, leaving Horncastle for Tyneside, on to Scotland, then London before South Africa and now Canada.

During my first 15 to 20 years' exile, going home was a curious disconnect. Physically,



A GUY THING: Quiffs carefully adjusted, the boys gather for a group shot, their girls relegated to the back. Their turn will come.



READY FOR ACTION: A pint in hand, this rocker looks for his date.

Horncastle was solid, unchanging; many of the town's buildings were hundreds of years old. And the Roman wall, upon which the first newspaper – the Horncastle News – that I and Chapman ever worked was built upon, had survived 2,000 years. However, the people in the streets were different. I looked for old pals, but the faces I scanned as I walked the streets weren't the age I was **now**, but much younger – the age I was **then**, many years earlier. And when I did meet my contemporaries it was as if I'd been aroused from a Rip Van Winkle slumber. I felt the same age as the day I'd left, while they'd become, well, their fathers.

Now, when I return to Horncastle, I know better; I seek out the white-haired gent in the corner, walk across and say 'hi' to the young man I once knew. And the words of another genius, more relevant perhaps than those of Einstein, come to mind:

"How did it get so late so soon?"

You can thank Dr Seuss for that little nugget of enlightenment. **CT**

.....
Alan Chapman is a London-based paparazzo. His new book, "Frame", will be published in the spring. Tony Sutton is editor of ColdType



ON THE BEACH: While the young 'uns are having fun, the old folks relax on an almost deserted Skegness beach – it's cold, but they're making the most of it in their overcoats. What's in the bag? Sandwiches and a flask of hot tea.

Amazon, Domino's and Big Brother

Pizza-delivering drones seem like harmless fun, writes **John W. Whitehead**, but look deeper and you'll see how they pose a huge threat to personal privacy

Needless to say, whatever you can imagine, it will not be long before there is a drone suited to every purpose under the sun

"The privacy and dignity of our citizens [are] being whittled away by sometimes imperceptible steps. Taken individually, each step may be of little consequence. But when viewed as a whole, there begins to emerge a society quite unlike any we have seen – a society in which government may intrude into the secret regions of a [person's] life."

– Justice William O. Douglas

Imagine a robot hovering overhead as you go about your day, driving to and from work, heading to the grocery store, or stopping by a friend's house. The robot records your every movement with a surveillance camera and streams the information to a government command center.

Whether you make a wrong move, or appear to be doing something suspicious, even if you don't do anything suspicious, the information of your whereabouts, including what stores and offices you visit, what political rallies you attend, and what people you meet will be recorded, saved and easily accessed at a later date.

As I document in my book, *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*, this scenario is inching ever closer to becoming our reality as corporations and government agencies alike prepare for their part in the coming drone invasion.

The online retailer Amazon is designing its own pilotless delivery drones, octocopters, which would be used to deliver products under five pounds within a 10-mile range and with a 30 minute turnaround.

The Domino's pizza chain has also been looking to unmanned drones to give it an edge on its competitors. The "Domi-Copter" is being developed to deliver two Domino's pizzas in the company's Heat-wave bags.

Not to be outdone, there's also a Taco-Copter drone – for delivering tacos – in the works.

And then, of course, there's the government, which will rely on drones for everything from border control and aerial surveillance to traffic enforcement, crowd control and fighting forest fires. Needless to say, whatever you can imagine, it will not be long before there is a drone suited to every purpose under the sun.

As Americans will soon discover firsthand, drones – unmanned aerial vehicles – come in all shapes and sizes, from nano-sized drones as small as a grain of sand that can do everything from conducting surveillance to detonating explosive charges, to middle-sized copter drones that can deliver pizzas to massive "hunter/killer" Predator warships that unleash firepower from on high.

Once used exclusively by the military

to carry out aerial surveillance and attacks on enemy insurgents abroad, these remotely piloted, semi-autonomous robots have been authorized by Congress and President Obama for widespread use in American airspace starting in 2015. It is estimated that at least 30,000 drones will be airborne by 2020, all part of an \$80 billion industry that is already creating a buzz in the atmosphere. In fact, there are already nine states “poised to dominate the drone economy,” those being California, Washington, Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Alabama.

Although 83% of Americans approve of the use of drones abroad, and 65% approve of using drones to assassinate suspected terrorists abroad, even if they are American citizens, it remains to be seen how those same Americans will feel when they are the ones in the sights of the drones, even for non-military purposes and even in light of the projected increases in job creation and economic activity.

No matter what your view of drones, you won't have to wait too long to find out, because there's no turning back from this technology. As drone technology expert Peter W. Singer recognizes in remarks to the *New York Times*, “the debate over drones is like debating the merits of computers in 1979: They are here to stay, and the boom has barely begun. ‘We are at the Wright Brothers Flier stage of this.’”

Indeed, with 56 government agencies authorized to use drones, including 22 law enforcement agencies and 24 universities, drones are about to become a permanent fixture in the American landscape. Included among the institutions authorized to fly drones are police departments in Arkansas, Utah and Florida as well as Virginia Tech and the University of North Dakota. The University of North Dakota even has a degree program in unmanned vehicle flight with 78 majors.

Technology has always been a double-edged sword. Delighted with technology's

conveniences, its ability to make our lives easier by performing an endless array of tasks faster and more efficiently, we have given it free rein in our lives, with little thought to the legal or moral ramifications of allowing surveillance technology, especially, to uncover nearly every intimate detail of our lives.

Once it outstrips our ability as humans to control it, it inevitably becomes something akin to Frankenstein's monster. So it was with GPS devices, which quickly became a method by which the government could track our movements, and with online banking and other transactions, which also gave the government the ability to track our purchases and activities.

So too will it be with drones, which while beneficial in many regards, are not to be underestimated. Many will come equipped with cameras that provide a live video feed, as well as heat sensors and radar. Some will be capable of peering at figures from 20,000 feet up and 25 miles away. They can also keep track of 65 persons of interest at once. Some drones are already capable of hijacking wi-fi networks and intercepting electronic communications such as text messages.

The Army has developed drones with facial recognition software, as well as drones that can complete a target-and-kill mission without any human instruction or interaction. These are the ultimate killing and spying machines. There will also be drones armed with “less-lethal” weaponry, including bean bag guns and tasers, flying over political demonstrations, sporting events, and concert arenas, conducting surveillance for police and sweeps in advance of major “security” events.

Drones are already being outfitted with infrared cameras and radar which will pierce through the darkness, allowing the police to keep track of anyone walking around, regardless of the nature of their business.

Police drones are equipped with ther-

.....
The Army has developed drones with facial recognition software, as well as drones that can complete a target-and-kill mission without any human instruction or interaction. These are the ultimate killing and spying machines
.....

AERIAL MONSTERS

.....
it's the commercial
drones, used
for deliveries,
to capture news
footage, to film
theatrical events
and feature
films, or just for
sport, that will
really "sell" this
technology to the
American people.
.....

mal imaging devices to see through walls. Vanguard Defense Industries has confirmed that its Shadowhawk drone, which is already being sold to law enforcement agencies throughout the country, will be outfitted with lethal weapons, including a grenade launcher or a shotgun, and weapons of compliance, such as tear gas and rubber buckshot.

Such aerial police weapons send a clear and chilling message to those attempting to exercise their First Amendment rights by taking to the streets and protesting government policies – the message: stay home.

As Congressmen Edward Markey and Joe Barton pointed out in a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):

“As technology advances and cost decreases – drones are already orders of magnitude less expensive to purchase and operate than piloted aircraft – the market for federal, state, and local government and commercial drones rapidly grows. Many drones are designed to carry surveillance equipment, including video cameras, infrared thermal imagers, radar, and wireless network “sniffers.” The surveillance power of drones is amplified when the information from onboard sensors is used in conjunction with facial recognition, behavior analysis, license plate recognition, or any other system that can identify and track individuals as they go about their daily lives.”

While the government's uses of drone technology poses the gravest threats to our privacy rights, it's the commercial drones, used for deliveries, to capture news footage, to film theatrical events and feature films, or just for sport, that will really “sell” this technology to the American people.

The problem, as I have been warning repeatedly, is that while the legislation opening American skies to drones was steamrollered into place after intense corporate lobbying by drone makers and po-

tential customers, no safeguards were put in place on either the federal or state level to establish effective safeguards for Americans' civil liberties and privacy rights.

Thus, it was at my prompting that the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, using language drafted by The Rutherford Institute, became the first city in the nation to call for limits on the use of drone technology.

The City of Seattle followed suit, with its mayor ordering the police department to abandon its plan to use drones altogether. Moreover, lawmakers in at least eleven states are considering legislation to restrict the use of drones.

The Rutherford Institute's model legislation, which was made available to the states, would prohibit the government from using data recorded via police spy drones in criminal prosecutions and prevent police agencies from utilizing drones outfitted with anti-personnel devices such as tasers and tear gas.

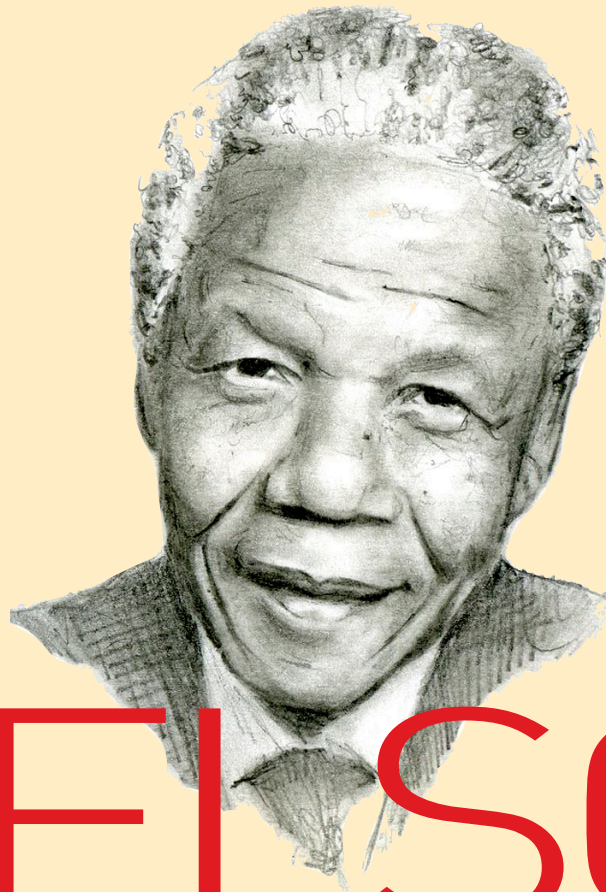
Unfortunately, short of living in a cave, there's no way to prevent your being filmed by a drone flying overhead.

All you can hope for is that your local legislature will adopt safeguards against that footage being used against you in a court of law.

Without a doubt, drones will give rise to a whole new dialogue in the courts about where to draw the line when it comes to the government's ability to monitor one's public versus private lives.

In the meantime, fasten your seatbelts and prepare for a rough take-off. In a matter of years, you'll be flying the not-so-friendly surveillance skies. **CT**

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Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute and editor of GadflyOnline.com. His latest book A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State (SelectBooks) is available online at www.amazon.com. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org.



NELSON MANDELA

The Man & His Legacy

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- 41. NELSON MANDELA AND ECONOMIC APARTHEID
- 45. NELSON MANDELA'S IMPAIRED LEGACY
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- 52. THE LONG WALK OF PRISONER #46664

JAMES WHYLE
DANNY SCHECHTER
DAVID EDWARDS
JOHN PILGER
JOHN PITHOUSE
RONNIE KASRILS
TIM KNIGHT

Image: Nelson Mandela by sibylleanna

Marching towards Nelson

James Whyte tells a tale of his own walk to freedom during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy

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Kennedy's assassination, the shooting of Verwoed, the first man on the moon, Harold Wilson; these, "grown ups" spoke about. Nelson Mandela, no
.....

This essay was first published by Playboy South Africa to coincide with President Mandela's inauguration

When I was running away from the army in Swaziland I came across Nelson Mandela's book, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*. It was a time when I had difficulty with any literature except pornography and Doris Lessing. All the devils of the military were on my tail and it was hard to concentrate. But I read some of Mandela's speech from the dock and finally realized why he was in jail and why his writings were banned. It came as a shock because it was so simple. So down-home, common-sense simple. The lies about why he was in jail were convoluted and gothic and worked on; art at its most artificial and evil. And one grew up on a gruel of those lies. Fed and fattened we were on the lies about why Nelson Mandela was in jail.

Steve Biko was my first black hero and I only found out who he was after he was murdered by the police. The front page of the *Daily Dispatch* had a headline and picture of the man. Nothing else. That took up the whole front page. And I had no idea who

he was. I had to ask my sociologist friends in the bar.

This is because I spent a happy, privileged youth getting an education in interesting and sometimes useless subjects. Or if not actually useless, irrelevant. I can still remember a snippet of Virgil. But of Nelson Mandela's first language, Xhosa, all I remember is: *Umnqundwakho njanihashi*.

(Your arse resembles that of a horse.) I grew up speaking Xhosa but when I went away to boarding school at St Andrew's College in Grahamstown they replaced it with Latin. Xhosa was not in the syllabus.

Nelson Mandela was never spoken about at home. Ian Smith, prime minister of Rhodesia, he was an issue. "A bloody fool," was my mother's comment. Kennedy's assassination, the shooting of Verwoed, the first man on the moon, Harold Wilson; these, "grown ups" spoke about. Nelson Mandela, no.

The fact is, the evil laws worked. People disappeared out of history like the politician who is airbrushed out of the photograph in the beginning of Milan Kundera's *Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. They sat incarcerated on Robben Island and luxury yachts



wheeled around them. If you were rich and liberal you could buy Nelson Mandela's book overseas, smuggle it back, and read his banned words as you wheeled round Robben Island on a yacht. You could look up from the book and reach for a Stuyvesant and survey the beautiful view of Capetown while you meditated on the meaning of Mandela's words. But for most white South Africans, Nelson Mandela just disappeared out of history.

In spite of these successful suppressions, by the time I was ready to drop out of university something had become clear to me. "The evil racist regime" was in fact just that. It was the inverted commas that were lying. Much of my last year was spent worrying about whether I should go to the army or leave the country. Eventually I chickened out. I told myself I was giving up all pretensions to morality and reported for duty in Johannesburg. On July the 4th 1979 I boarded a train and travelled out to a place called Burke's Luck in the Eastern Transvaal. It was horrible.

No 71518757 Rifleman J Whyle would lie in the bungalow reading Michael Herr's *Dispatches* and wondering what was happening to him. Burke's Luck was far from headquarters in Pretoria and the rank did what the hell they wanted. I remember a Sergeant Major telling assembled troops that he liked to "make biltong out of kaffirs." The perversion of Christianity was awesome. The corporals were brainwashed baboons regurgitating evil and misunderstood philosophies. They'd sit you down in the veld and tell you in all solemnity that the purpose of the R4 Rifle was to kill the enemy. They'd tell you that you had no rights, only privileges. They'd tell you that the enemy were black evil communist monsters coming to steal your birth right.

To add to my problems, Christian National Education had produced a poor crop, brainwise. It took my peers weeks to learn to assemble in a straight line. Every time we did it wrong we had to run up a mountain.

Our helmets bounced on our heads like a private rhythm section. Once, someone collapsed with a burst appendix. We carried him up the mountain. When we got back he wouldn't stand up straight. So we had to bounce that burst appendix to the mountain top once more. Sometimes people died. I think there was a stage when the army killed more people in training than the actual war did.

After six weeks, we were interviewed by a major who would decide what to do with us. He asked my qualifications and I lied, telling him I had a degree, but adding truthfully that I didn't like the army because it protected apartheid rather than South Africa. My lie gave him the excuse to rid himself of a potential trouble causer and he sent me to the Engineers in Kroonstad. The President of South Africa was not mentioned. No talk of Nelson Mandela.

I finished the rest of my basic training as Sapper J. Whyle of the Young Officers Squadron of the Engineers School. The squadron was made up of graduate engineers. People who could swiftly arrange themselves in a straight line. I started to relax into the pain. If I was going to spend two years fighting a bad war I might as well do it as an officer. Lieutenant James Whyle had a certain ring to. My father fought in the trenches in the first world war as Lieutenant James Whyle. Lieutenant James Whyle went over the top in France and took a German bullet in the lung when he was seventeen years old

These romantic justifications were interrupted when our corporal shot Colin Reece.

Colin Reece was a bright, young, decent, left-leaning engineer who was about to get married. He slept opposite me in the bungalow. We brewed coffee together. He was a nice guy.

The corporal took it on himself to shoot at us in the safety area of a bush lane shooting exercise. Under army regulations, you were not allowed to have a magazine in your rifle in a safety area. This baboon, who was in control of our lives down to the fine

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by the time I was ready to drop out of university something had become clear to me. "The evil racist regime" was in fact just that

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The Staff Sergeant was artistic and would decorate the bombs with tinsel and roses. We would explain to old grannies how a certain mine was activated by a trip wire. It then leaped into the air and killed everyone within fifty yards
.....

details of how we folded our underpants, started shooting at us because we were tired and falling asleep and because some baboon had shot at him when he was in basic training. He started with plastic rounds. We didn't react. We were tired and somehow that bang and the puff of dust in the bank next to us was hard to tie together with imminent death. So the corporal slotted in a live magazine and fired a few more rounds and one of them went through a tree and then through Colin's sleeping head.

I saw Colin jerking, but still didn't tie it together. I thought he was having an epileptic fit. Twenty minutes later he was dead. The corporal was charged in a civilian court and sentenced to two hundred hours served over weekends. He carried on training troops. A priest came and spoke to us.

"Look on the bright side," he said.

When the major interviewed us at the end of basic training my line was I'd rather wear dogshit on my shoulder than the State President's commission. They sent me into the base camp to get rid of me. No one mentioned Nelson Mandela, but I was starting to get the measure of the beast. Little did I know that I was to be greekly present at the conception of its offspring.

The base camp was full of recalcitrants and misfits, most of them violent. There was a young miner called Greensby who could break every bone in his body in a bike accident on Monday and have recovered enough by Friday to beat the shit out of some poor soul on the grounds that he had been in the army less days than Greensby had. Greensby's boast was that he was down underground ordering grown black men around when he was sixteen.

There was the mysterious man called Whitey who joined us on brief breaks from detention barracks. Whitey had no rank but would march outside the squad next to the corporal on the way to breakfast. When Whitey was out of DB we locked our section of the bungalow at night. We prayed

stricken prayers to the Lord as we listened to Whitey down bottles of brandy and beat on the door and howl out his intention of tearing us limb from limb. Whitey had the brain and force of a buffalo and the soul of a rabid hyena.

I ended up as a clerk in the visual aids store, cataloguing ancient films on road building and Bailey Bridges. One of the functions of the visual aids store was military shows. We loaded up a Bedford with mines and a water purification system and put on displays at agricultural shows in small Freestate towns. The Staff Sergeant was artistic and would decorate the bombs with tinsel and roses. We would explain to old grannies how a certain mine was activated by a trip wire. It then leaped into the air and killed everyone within fifty yards.

"Oulik," the grannies would inevitably respond, "oulik." The word is Afrikaans. It means "cute."

One of our team was Sapper Seamus Fijn. Fijn liked breaking things and fucking things. He'd fuck anything. A pile of pipes, a sandbag, anything. He liked to leave the big generator loose in the back of the Bedford and then brake hard at a robot [traffic light] so that the generator rumbled forward under the force of its inertia and smashed against the cab. One night at the Bloemfontein showgrounds he got drunk and disappeared. Eventually our tall, worried, ginger Lieutenant got up the courage to report the disappearance to the military police.

"Oh," said the MP Sergeant, "that guy who fucked the cow."

The beast had been procreating.

The beast was busy. It was the beast at work when Dan Hull said to Rodney Dicks:

"That's my beer."

"No, it's not."

"That's my fucking beer."

"No, it isn't."

Hull slapped Rodney hard through the face."

“Why don’t you hit me.”
 “No, I don’t want to.” Another slap.
 “Hit me, you fucking woman.”
 “No.”
 “I’ll kick your cunt, in you fucking woman.”
 “No.”
 “Hit me, you fucking woman.”
 And so on.

Eventually Rodney planted a straight right that knocked Hall straight off his feet. Rodney then danced around like an Englishman, waiting for Hull to get up. Hull was a headbutting street fighter and Rodney ended up getting his teeth kicked out of his head. He sat on the floor of the bungalow saying “no, no,” and his teeth bounced on the linoleum. I sat, English, on my bed, watching.

Middle class, fence-sitting, English, I had sat and watched this evil grow for twenty four years. It was enough. Not long afterwards, instead of returning from my yearly seven day leave, I travelled to Swaziland and bought Nelson Mandela’s book, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*.

My position in Swaziland was clarified when the UN Representative for Refugees, a Ugandan who spoke English with an American accent, told me to leave as soon as possible. The Swazi government, he said, would sooner throw me in jail and forget about me than upset South Africa. The alternative was Europe. If I was lucky, England and the dole. I went back to Kroonstad.

After all, I had BA Psychology Failed behind my name. Once I had found my way to the psychiatric ward of the Bloemfontein Military Hospital it was plain sailing.

“If I have to fight this war,” I told them, “I’d rather be on the other side.”

They showed me an ink blot.

“A spider feeds the apartheid politician,” I said.

They looked worried. They showed me a rural picture of a beautiful young mother outside a farm house. She hugged a bowl of

fruit to matronly breasts.

“The fruit is rotten. It’s the hidden decay of Afrikaaner nationalism.”

They tried to frighten me. I yelled straight back. Within a week they gave a beautiful certificate saying I was “emotionally immature with tendencies towards neurosis.”

“I suppose you want compensation,” they said sulkily.

“Huh?”

“For what we’ve done to you.”

“No thank you,” I said.

The thought had never entered my head. Relieved, they sent me home. Wherever that was.

In 1986 I drove down to the Grahamstown Festival of the Arts with my friend the painter, Carl Becker, in a 3 liter Cortina pick-up that belonged to Carl’s uncle. On the back was the world famous Aeroplane’s sound system. The Aeroplanes was a band that consisted of the nascent film director Michael Rudolf, Carl, myself, and two youngsters. Michael and Carl wrote mine dump pop songs with names like *Sally* and *Hey, Where’s the Jol* and *South African Male*. They were ironic, tuneful, dance-inspiring songs that should have been on the radio and never were because the Aeroplanes were rude about the army and the government. Between sets, Sean Taylor, Nicky Rebelo, myself and others would perform sketches like the piece about the insane Reconnaissance Commandos called Buks and Rooker:

BUKS. Remember Pyp.

ROOKER. Pyp Terreblanche! Used to drink a bottle of Tequila and smack his head against a tree!

BUKS Dead.

ROOKER. (Beat.) Is it?

BUKS Stood on a land mine in Ondongwa.

Everyone that Buks and Rooker talked about was dead:

BUKS Remember Shorty.

ROOKER. That bastard. He stole my other piece of chicken.

My position in Swaziland was clarified when the UN Representative for Refugees, a Ugandan who spoke English with an American accent, told me to leave as soon as possible.

.....
Few people were saying in public how evil the army was. Those that did it officially tended to go to jail
.....

BUKS. Dead.

ROOKER. (Beat.) Is it?

BUKS. They took him out with an AK in Katlehong.

Buks and Rooker were maniacs from the war zone that went around slaughtering black people. They referred to women in genitally specific terms:

BUKS. So what are you doing here?

ROOKER. (Beat.) Checking out the poes [Afrikaans slang word: cunt]

The sketches were funny and surreal. You weren't allowed to hear stuff like that. South African art had always been a mirror that lied. For people to suddenly see themselves was a shock. The laugh of recognition that came from black people lifted the heart.

Carl and I used the mountain route past Clocolan and Wepener. Each of those little Free State towns was divided in two: one little town for white people – one little township for blacks. And the towns where the black people lived were surrounded by lights like a soccer stadium. At night the police or the army could go in there and see what they were doing.

A state of emergency had just been declared and there were many road blocks. They were big road blocks with lots of vehicles and many army and police personnel. When they stopped you, they'd shine a torch in your face and wave you on when they saw you were white.

There was trouble as soon as we hit Grahamstown because the End Conscription Campaign had distributed leaflets at the Goodwood Hotel where we were playing. The End Conscription Campaign was banned and the Aeroplanes had become the unofficial thin end of an anti-army wedge. By distributing leaflets at Aeroplanes gigs the ECC could let their supporters know that they were still around. This was important. At that time few people were saying

in public how evil the army was. Those that did it officially tended to go to jail. The manager of the Goodwood Hotel felt that supporting banned organizations and inviting the attentions of the Grahamstown security branch might be bad for his standing in the local business community. He gave us a lot of flak. So the whole gig started on an edgy, wired, note that was the opposite of the Aeroplanes' true aims. When the Aeroplanes cooked, people smiled a lot. We created very good parties. We were the band for good whites who were staying.

It wasn't the best gig we ever did and when we'd done two or three sets for our hardcore fans we'd go up to one of the other bars and get drunk. We drank consistently and hard for eight days. By ten in the morning Carl and I would be in the Cathcart Arms having a beer to take the edge off the hang-over. At around eight in the evening we'd acknowledge that the beer wasn't working and order six tequilas.

We tended not to see many shows but some Aeroplanes and camp followers did come and see me and the writer Ryk Hattigh read our pieces of prose and poetry called *'N Gesprek Tussen Twee Cuntos in a Land of Despair*. The Afrikaans part of the title means "a discussion between two Cuntos". That last word is made up and if you need help with the last syllable there is a South African street word "ou" which means chap, bloke.

Our stories were about growing up in South Africa; about how we got where we were; about origins. The show was a litany of the lies we had been taught about history combined with our experience in armies and schools and beds that had taught us the truth. Hardly anyone saw it because it was too raw and private for any general audience of that time. Every time we did it in Grahamstown an accumulation of drink and emotion and worry about the country lead us into a cathartic relationship with our audience.

We'd meet before readings and have a

brandy and ginger ale at the bar in the 1840 Settler's Monument foyer. The bar was run by an amateur who sold his tequila for regular prices in glasses twice the size of the norm. It was irresistible. The spirit would ease its warmth into my soul and I'd feel those accumulations of anger and love that were my relationship with my tribe and country squirt into my blood stream from the love gland. That's what it felt like anyway. And every time I got to the story of Sapper Fijn and the Cow, I wept. I wept for South Africa.

Norman Mailer claims that spirits enter a man when he drinks hard liquor. I believe him. When I got back from Grahamstown, I wrote like one fueled by the anger of the ancestors. Everyday I walked into Hillbrow and sat down at the Potato Kitchen in Kozze Street in Hillbrow and ordered coffee and wrote in an exercise book with a Parker fountain pen.

"When I was running away from the army in Swaziland," I wrote, "I bought Nelson Mandela's book, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*. I realized then that Nelson Mandela is not in prison because he is a dark, ruthless, AK 47 bearing, communist monster. Nelson Mandela is in prison because he is brave, reasonable, honest man who took action."

Later in the eighties Nicky Rebello and myself and others did a show called *Out of Control at the Black Sun*, which was then Johannesburg's only truly alternative revue venue. The show consisted of seven men singing a capella versions of great rock songs like Buddy Holly's *Don't Fade Away*. In between the songs were sketches. We had stuff about smoking dope on Durban beach while bombs went off in the beach front bars and the seagulls said:

"Fuuuuuuuuuuuck!"

We did a kind of musicalised chant version of Sapper Fijn and the Cow. Nicky did a beautiful piece about a white boy whose parents taught him to be cruel to blacks and

now he was going to jail for murder and he couldn't understand why.

The show ended with a cacophony of political speeches:

"We'll fight them on the beaches..."

"I have a dream..."

"Ask not what your country can do for you..."

And Nelson Mandela. Banned, imprisoned, Nelson Mandela.

We used the last paragraph from his second statement at the Rivonia Trail in 1964. The famous bit.

"During my life time I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African People. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

I claimed the piece for my own. After all, it was against the law. And every time I spoke those words my heart filled with a patriotic pride that Christian Nationalist Education had tried to instill in me and failed. For a long time afterwards, I knew those words by heart.

When Nelson Mandela set himself free and walked proudly out of the Victor Verster prison I watched with my wife and children and friends and the rest of the world in the sitting room of our house in Johannesburg.

Some years later I stepped out the back gate and bumped into my friend Jon Maytham. Jon was dropping his son off at the play school next to the Synagogue next door. He had performed with the Aeroplanes in the old days. He did a horse race commentary where the horses had names like African Nationalism and Naked Racism and Logical Positivism (a rank outsider). The Racist Regime was still in full swing then and the audience would roar with laughter when Total Anarchy took the race

.....
Every time I spoke Mandela's words my heart filled with a patriotic pride that Christian Nationalist Education had tried to instill in me and failed

I looked up and there he was. He walked out of the play school with his grandson and two low-key bodyguards. A white mother recognized and greeted him

by a length.

Jon and I chatted for a bit and then he said:

“There’s Nelson Mandela.”

I looked up and there he was. He walked out of the play school with his grandson and two low-key bodyguards. A white mother recognized and greeted him. He chatted to her.

It occurred to me to introduce myself; tell him about Swaziland, buying his book. But the sunny Johannesburg morning was so peaceful. It seemed an unnecessary intrusion. A grandfather was picking up his daughter’s child from play school. Let it be. Mr Mandela smiled and nodded to the woman, spoke. After a couple of minutes they parted and he drove off in a black mercedes. I looked around. A domestic servant was chatting to a friend on the corner. An Hassidic man hurried into the Shul. I could hear my wife calling to the children.

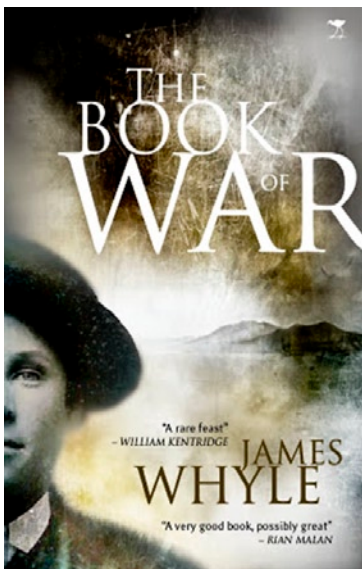
There was still evil loose in the land. But it was centreless. It had lost its state funded nucleus. That is why the violence was so

random. The strong force of the hurricane was divided into many small whirlwinds. We get them all the time in Africa. We call them dust devils. The beast’s work.

I feel at home here now. There are honest men among us. Good men who live by truths so simple that speaking them had to be paid for with twenty-seven years in jail. Simple, difficult truths: democracy, law, freedom. And the men that speak them are human. They pick up children from school. They are fathers, grandfathers, sons. They make mistakes. I have never felt more at home. **CT**

James Whyte has published poetry, short stories and journalism. Radio dramas, commissioned by the BBC, include “A Man Called Rejoice” which was published as “Rejoice Burning” in the UK. His story, “The Story”, was chosen by JM Coetzee as winner of the 2011 Pen/Studzinski competition. His book, “The Book of War” was short listed for South Africa’s Sunday Times Literary Award.

He blogs at <http://jameswhyte.blogspot.ca>



“A brilliant, unforgettable debut. Steeped in carnage. ... grips from the outset and soaks the imagination like blood in sand”

– Andrew Donaldson, The Times, Johannesburg.

THE BOOK OF WAR

By JAMES WHYLE

PUBLISHED BY JACANA MEDIA

\$19.76 AT AMAZON.COM

Blurring Mandela and neo-liberals

Danny Schechter recounts the decisions that led to Mandela choosing an economic path that left so many of his people in deep poverty

On the Monday after Nelson Mandela's death, the *New York Times*' specialist on deals, Andrew Ross Sorkin, dealt the truth a few blows by offering an incomplete and superficial story about Mandela's infatuation with the "freedom of markets" and, by extension, in *Timespeak*, a "Free Economy."

Rather than frame the story as a case of how the power of global corporations and banks threatened and pressured the new Mandela government – even before it became a government – to embrace their notions of neo-liberalism, to ensure that those who wielded economic power in the past would continue to do so in the future, the paper of record built its story of an event that is on the record: Mandela's "seeing the light" at a meeting of the World Economic Forum.

That was the tip of an iceberg.

Sorkin reports (or should I say distorts?) the event this way:

"The story of Mr. Mandela's evolving economic view is eye-opening: It happened in January 1992 during a trip to Davos, Switzerland, for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum. Mr. Mandela was persuaded to support an economic frame-

work for South Africa based on capitalism and globalization after a series of conversations with other world leaders.

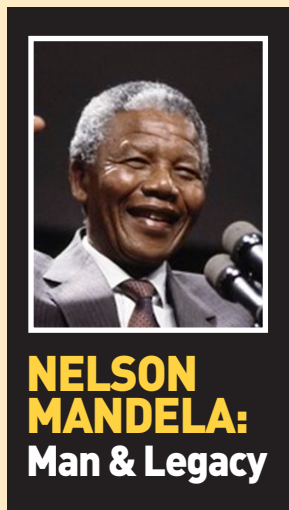
"'They changed my views altogether,' Mr. Mandela told Anthony Sampson, his friend and the author of *Mandela: The Authorized Biography*. 'I came home to say: Chaps, we have to choose. We either keep nationalization and get no investment, or we modify our own attitude and get investment.'"

Think of that: He is saying, "we have to choose." That implies Mandela perceived he had no choice. That's not evolution, it's extortion. Sorkin asks whether they were pressured, but his probe goes no further than talking with one man who supported the change, Tito Mboweni, a one-time labor leader who later became a functionary at the Reserve Bank, playing the role

of business' best friend in South Africa.

(I met Mboweni back then at the Labor Department in Washington, where he was being groomed for leadership like many South African economists and activists in the African National Congress who were given special courses in economics by Western governments, educational institutions and corporate consultants.)

.....
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.....
**Behind all of this
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pleased the West,
manna would fall
from heaven**
.....

The *Times* reports correctly that the ANC was advised by officials from socialist governments in Vietnam and China, who were then “modernizing” their economies (i.e., taking the capitalist road) not to antagonize the West.

One point to remember, biographer Sampson also wrote: “Mandela had no experience in economics, but he accepted the imperatives of the global marketplace.” In furtherance of this market logic, under pressure to please South African mine owners and bankers, he appointed Derek Keys, de Klerk’s pro-market finance minister as his own, and then, when he stepped down, replaced him with Chris Liebenberg, a banker.

He kept Chris Stals, a conservative former member of the Broederbond, on the Reserve Bank. In essence, he said, “the old guard was running what to all the world looked like a new show.”

Ronnie Kasrils, the MK commander turned government minister, looked back on this history and wondered whether compromises made then sealed the country’s fate, in effect blocking deeper social change. This tension also divided many in the ANC even as it seems to have satisfied the small group of billionaires that dominates the economy.

Behind all of this was Mandela’s hope or belief that if South Africa pleased the West, manna would fall from heaven and wealthy Western governments would follow through on implied and in many cases actual promises to generate new jobs and make substantial investments.

For the most part, that didn’t happen, and, as the *Times* reports, the new post-Davos ANC policy shift from a Reconstruction and Development Programme to GEAR, a finance strategy approach favored by banks and corporations, failed.

Poverty and unemployment remain obscenely high in today’s South Africa. International businesses did not live up to their pledges, as they rarely do.

In my book, *Madiba A to Z: The Many Faces of Nelson Mandela*, I go back to less publicized earlier encounters between the ANC and the global economy, back to 1993 when top secret negotiations took place in nighttime sessions of the then-in-charge Transitional Economic Council, made up of equal numbers of members from the old government and the expected new one to come after the elections, just six months away.

It was there that the ANC discovered that South Africa was largely broke, bankrupted by excessive military spending and corruption by the Afrikaner government – there was little money in the till after big banks and others were given major so-called life boats, loans to tide them over in the transition.

According to Sampie Terreblanche, an economist at Stellenbosch University in South Africa and a former economic adviser to the apartheid government, the International Monetary Fund agreed to make a loan, but with severe conditions that both the ANC and members of the whites only National Party had to agree to unanimously.

He tells the whole story in his book, *Lost in Transformation*, and he told me: “When they reached agreement, more or less, they decided that South Africa needed a loan of \$850 million to solve some of our foreign exchange problems. The International Monetary Fund was prepared to give us the money on one condition: that all 16 members – half representing the ANC, half representing the government – had to sign a document. If one reads that document carefully, one sees that it is nothing but the Washington Consensus. South Africa had to commit itself to fiscal austerity, to liberalization, to privatization, to all these things. So some people called it a sellout.”

“A sellout? That sounds very strong,” I said.

“Call it a sellout, an elite compromise, or the elite conspiracy, call it what you like,

it happened six months before the general election of 1994,” Terreblanche explained. “In sum, the economic philosophy that was favored by the US in Washington, in London, at the big banks, and the values behind it, were imposed on the negotiating parties. They said, ‘We’ll give you the money but you have to agree to our terms.’ ” So in short, what was lost was the transformation itself.

Also unreported by the *Times* was how several all-white Afrikaner-dominated regimes had earlier nationalized key sectors of the economy without the hostile reaction Mandela received when he announced he would uphold the pledge of the 1955 Freedom Charter to create a fairer economy.

When he was released from prison, Mandela told the South Africa Now TV program that his plans for nationalization were very few, limited mostly to the mines. He said he supported a market model for all other industries.

That was in February 1990, just a few days after Mandela’s release from prison, so he never envisioned total nationalization of the kind his adversaries suggested, and the *New York Times* implied.

He was always more pragmatic than ideological, and, in fact, it was the communists with whom the ANC had an alliance who proposed many compromises to reassure the Afrikaners they could keep their jobs.

University of KwaZulu-Natal professor Patrick Bond was working on the Reconstruction and Development Programme when it was abruptly canceled with no discussion or debate. He writes in his book, *Elite Transition*, that the ANC’s hopes for “better life for all,” its 1994 election slogan, were torpedoed by outside and insider pressure.

He wrote, “such hopes – and extensive ‘scenario planning’ efforts to draw ANC and some trade union leaders up the oft-cited ‘learning curve’ (which quickly turned out instead to be a steep forgetting curve for former shop floor or street-smart activists) – were soon to be richly rewarded. . . . Indeed,

not only were free enterprise and property rights enshrined in every major economic policy statement and the Constitution itself, full-blown neo-liberal compradorism became the dominant (if not universal) phenomenon within the ANC policy-making elite.”

Jay Naidoo, the former minister who ran the first economic reform, the RDP, told me that the macroeconomic program known as GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) was imposed abruptly. “That document was drafted in secret,” he recalled. “Not even the ANC office bearer saw it. Not even the national executive committee of the ANC saw it. We saw it on the day it was published. So there was a conspiracy in our own ranks which obviously had interacted with very powerful economic forces in the country, and felt that the RDP was too radical.”

The *New York Times* was not interested in examining how economic pressure of this kind operates in the real world, and is actually leveraged through lobbying, media editorializing and co-optation bordering on blatant corruption. (When officials are caught taking money, they take the fall, rarely the people who do the bribing.)

The ANC is up for re-election next year and it is being challenged by a red-beret-wearing group called the Economic Freedom Fighters. There is no question that these issues will be debated intensely, way beyond the antiseptic reporting by the *Times*.

There are many in the ANC who are not proud of how their lack of economic sophistication allowed them to be played by their friends. Even Thabo Mbeki, Mandela’s successor who was once partial to neo-liberalism, is now saying that a country can’t allow market needs to dominate economic policy.

He told me, in *Madiba A to Z*: “I think that the fundamental problems of South Africa have remained unchanged since that transition in 1994. The fundamental problems of poverty, of inequality. And therefore

When he was released from prison, Mandela told the South Africa Now TV series that his plans for nationalization were very few, limited mostly to the mines

MANDELA / 2

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"What is it that needs to be done to bridge these enormous gaps in terms of wealth, of income, of opportunity, and so on, between black and white, men and women, and all that?"
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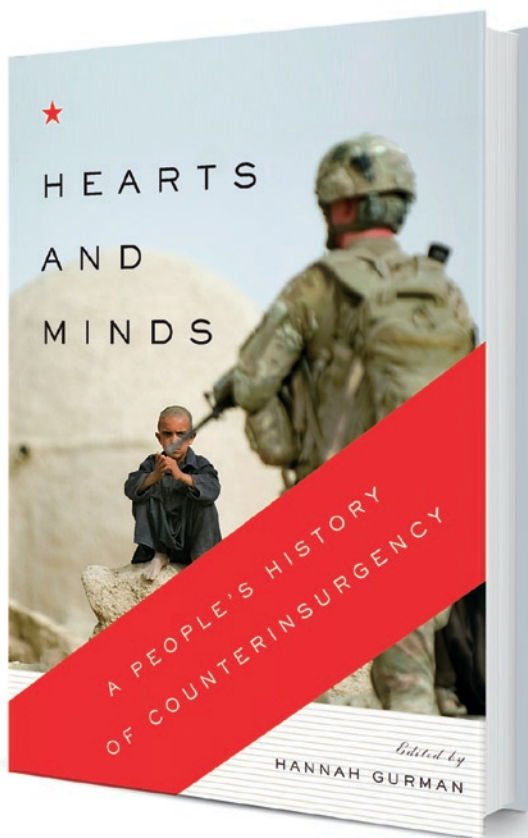
national reconciliation, national cohesion and all that, you have to address these fundamental questions. What is it that needs to be done in order to eradicate poverty? What is it that needs to be done to bridge these enormous gaps in terms of wealth, of income, of opportunity, and so on, between black and white, men and women, and all that?

"One of the problems, one of the challenges that we have never been able to solve in all of these years since our liberation, is the attitude of white capital. Even today, I promise you as we're talking now, there are large volumes of investable money that South African companies are holding in cash, and not investing in the economy. And this has been the situation ever since '94, driven by a fear that, 'It's inevitable that there will be a crisis. And because there will

be a crisis, inevitably, I must hold as much of my assets in liquid form as possible, so that if I have to run, I can't upend the factory because I can't move it, but at least the money I can run away with.' It's a persistent problem."

Problems like this are rarely explored in the *New York Times DealBook*, which prefers to personalize economic decisions. It's easier to imply in this case that it was all Mandela's doing rather than look at the forces in the shadows that influence decisions. **CT**

.....
News Dissector Danny Schechter was commissioned to write "Madiba A to Z" by the producers of the new movie "Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom." He has written and produced films on economic issues including "The Crime of Our Time" on Wall Street and financial crimes.



HEARTS AND MINDS

Edited by Hannah Gurman

FROM MALAYA AND VIETNAM TO IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, LEADING SCHOLARS AND JOURNALISTS UNRAVEL THE MYTH AND CHALLENGE THE EFFICACY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

"If you want to understand America's recent debacles in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Hearts and Minds* is essential reading."

—NICK TURSE, author of *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam*

"These stories clarify why it is so difficult for any counter-insurgent military to appear as a benevolent force."

—FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"Spend just one hour with this book and you will begin to appreciate how the counterinsurgency doctrine emerged; spend a few more hours and you will understand how it failed in every key test." —LLOYD C. GARDNER, professor of history, Rutgers University

"These sharp criticisms of the methods and consequences of counterinsurgency campaigns merit serious consideration."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS



THE NEW PRESS
Publishing in the Public Interest
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Nelson Mandela and economic apartheid

David Edwards shows how the British press ignored the real Mandela story and turned him into a political saint

What does it mean when a notoriously profit-driven, war-mongering, climate-killing media system mourns, with one impassioned voice, the death of a principled freedom fighter like Nelson Mandela?

Does it mean that the corporate system has a heart, that it cares? Or does it mean that Mandela's politics, and the mythology surrounding them, are somehow serviceable to power?

Consider, first, that this is what is supposed to be true of professional journalism:

'Gavin Hewitt, John Simpson, Andrew Marr and the rest are employed to be studiously neutral, expressing little emotion and certainly no opinion; millions of people would say that news is the conveying of fact, and nothing more.' (Andrew Marr, *My Trade – A Short History of British Journalism*, Macmillan, 2004, p.279)

Thus, Andrew Marr, then BBC political editor, offering professional journalism's version of the medical maxim, 'First, do no harm'. First, do no bias.

The reality is indicated by Peter Osborne's comment in the *Telegraph*:

'There are very few human beings who

can be compared to Jesus Christ. Nelson Mandela is one... It is hard to envisage a wiser ruler.'

Responding to 850 viewers who had complained that the BBC 'had devoted too much airtime' to Mandela's death, James Harding, the BBC's director of news, also expressed little emotion and certainly no opinion when he declared Mandela 'the most significant statesman of the last 100 years, a man who defined freedom, justice, reconciliation, forgiveness'.

In other words, the corporate media had once again abandoned its famed Hypocritical Oath in affirming a trans-spectrum consensus.

As ever, a proposition is advanced as indisputably true, the evidence so overwhelming that journalists simply have to ditch 'balance' to declare the obvious.

The motive is always said to be some pressing moral cause: national solidarity and security at home, opposition to tyranny and genocide abroad. In these moments, the state-corporate system persuades the public of its fundamental humanity, rationality and compassion. But in fact this 'compassion' is always driven by realpolitik and groupthink.

The motive is always said to be some pressing moral cause: national solidarity and security at home, opposition to tyranny and genocide abroad



In identical fashion, the media have covered themselves in reflected moral glory by hailing Nelson Mandela as a political saint

'Emotionally Potent Over-Simplifications'

Because it is an integral part of a system whose actual goals and methods would not be acceptable to the public, the corporate media cannot make sense of the world; it must deal in what US foreign affairs advisor Reinhold Niebuhr called 'emotionally potent over-simplifications'.

Thus we find the endlessly recurring theme of the archetypal Bad Guy. When bin Laden is executed, Saddam Hussein lynched and Gaddafi bombed, beaten and shot, it is the same Enemy regenerating year after year, Doctor Who-like, to be 'taken down' by the same Good Guy archetype. This is the benevolent father figure who forever sets corporate hearts aflutter with hope and devotion.

In 1997, the *Guardian* declared the election of Tony Blair 'one of the great turning-points of British political history... the moment when Britain at last gave itself the chance to construct a modern liberal socialist order'. (Leader, 'A political earthquake,' the *Guardian*, May 2, 1997)

The editors cited historian AJP Taylor's stirring words: 'Few now sang England Arise, but England had risen all the same.'

In October 2002, the *Guardian's* editors were ravished by a speech by former president Bill Clinton: 'If one were reviewing it, five stars would not be enough... What a speech. What a pro. And what a loss to the leadership of America and the world.' (Leader, 'What a pro - Clinton shows what a loss he is to the US,' the *Guardian*, October 3, 2002)

Of Barack Obama's first great triumph, the same editors gushed:

'They did it. They really did it... Today is for celebration, for happiness and for reflected human glory. Savour those words: President Barack Obama, America's hope and, in no small way, ours too.'

Impartiality? Nowhere in sight. Why? Because these are obviously good men, benign

causes of great hope. The media are so passionate because they are good men. From this we know who to support and we know that these media are fundamentally virtuous.

In identical fashion, the media have covered themselves in reflected moral glory by hailing Nelson Mandela as a political saint. The *Daily Mirror* declared: 'He was the greatest of all leaders,' (*Daily Mirror*, December 7, 2013). He 'showed a forgiveness and generosity of spirit that made him a guiding star for humanity', an 'icon', 'a colossus'.

Forgiveness was not a major theme in the title of the *Mirror's* October 21, 2011 editorial, following the torture and murder of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi: 'Mad Dog's Not A Loss.' The editors commented: 'Libya is undoubtedly better off without Mad Dog on the loose.'

Krishnan Guru-Murthy of Channel 4 News agreed that Mandela was a 'colussus [sic], hero and rare soul'. (Snowmail, December 6, 2013)

For the *Telegraph*, Mandela was 'regal'. Indeed, 'his life had a Churchillian aura of destiny'. He was 'the kind of man who comes upon this earth but rarely.'

For the equally impartial *Guardian*, Mandela was, 'A leader above all others... The secret of [his] leadership lay in the almost unique mixture of wisdom and innocence'

The paper managed to hint at a darker truth to which we will return; as president, Mandela had 'discarded his once radical views on the economy'.

For the Gandhians at the *Times*, Mandela was a near-mythological figure: 'a man of unyielding courage and breathtaking magnanimity, who defied the armed enforcers of a white supremacist state, made friends of his jailers and could wear a mask of calm on a plane that seemed about to crash'. (Leading article, 'True Valour,' the *Times*, December 6, 2013)

Although: 'Critics point to his consistent support for Fidel Castro and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi as proof that his judgment was

not infallible.’

Indeed, it ought to be surprising that the media would so readily forgive a man who had supported armed violence, and who was close to some of the West’s foremost enemies. In March 1998, as South African president, with US president Bill Clinton at his side, Mandela said: ‘I have also invited Brother Leader Gaddafi to this country [South Africa]. And I do that because our moral authority dictates that we should not abandon those who helped us in the darkest hour in the history of this country. Not only did they [Libya] support us in return, they gave us the resources for us to conduct our struggle, and to win. And those South Africans who have berated me, for being loyal to our friends, literally they can go and throw themselves into a pool.’

The capitalist, Russian oligarch-owned *Independent on Sunday* helped explain media enthusiasm for Mandela when it hailed his views on big business: ‘For all his left-wing rhetoric, he recognised that capitalism is the most important anti-poverty policy.’

As for Africa’s environmental problems, ‘Ultimately, as with human poverty, economic growth is the solution.’

It is of course profoundly impressive that Mandela could emerge from 27 years of imprisonment with apparently no desire for revenge. And as Peter Osborne commented: ‘It took just two or three years to sweep away white rule and install a new kind of government.’

Most revolutions of this sort are unbelievably violent and horrible. They feature mass executions, torture, expropriation and massacres... let’s imagine that Nelson Mandela had been a different sort of man. Let’s imagine that he emerged from his 27 years of incarceration bent on revenge against the white fascists and thugs who had locked him up for so long.’

Osborne compared the results of Mandela’s strategy with those of the West’s Official Enemies: ‘Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Milosevic, Saddam Hussein. The list

goes on and on.’ Although not so far as to include Western leaders, by doctrinal fiat.

Osborne noted that Mandela and Gandhi ‘embraced humanity, rather than excluded it. They sought moral rather than physical power’.

Unlike Osborne’s own newspaper, which wrote of Nato’s devastating and illegal assault on Libya in 2011: ‘As the net tightens round Muammar Gaddafi and his family, Nato deserves congratulations on having provided the platform for rebel success.’

In March 2003, the same paper declared: ‘Any fair-minded person who listened to yesterday’s [parliamentary] debate, having been genuinely unable to make up his mind about military action against Saddam Hussein, must surely have concluded that Mr Blair was right, and his opponents were wrong.’

Economic Apartheid

As discussed, many journalists have rightly praised Mandela’s forgiveness. But the state-corporate system also has a generous capacity for excusing torturers, dictators, terrorists, and even former enemies like Mandela – anyone who serves the deep interests of power and profit in some way.

John Pilger noted of Mandela: ‘The sheer grace and charm of the man made you feel good. He chuckled about his elevation to sainthood. “That’s not the job I applied for,” he said dryly.’

But Mandela ‘was well used to deferential interviews and I was ticked off several times – “you completely forgot what I said” and “I have already explained that matter to you”. In brooking no criticism of the African National Congress (ANC), he revealed something of why millions of South Africans will mourn his passing but not his “legacy”’.

Once in power, Pilger explained, the ANC’s official policy to end the impoverishment of most South Africans was abandoned, with one of his ministers boasting that the ANC’s politics were Thatcherite:

Once in power, Pilger explained, the ANC’s official policy to end the impoverishment of most South Africans was abandoned

.....
"Mandela was forced to become a kind of Princess Diana, someone we could be allowed to love because he rarely said anything too threatening to the interests of the corporate elite who run the planet"
.....

'Few ordinary South Africans were aware that this "process" had begun in high secrecy more than two years before Mandela's release when the ANC in exile had, in effect, done a deal with prominent members of the Afrikaaner elite at meetings in a state-ly home, Mells Park House, near Bath. The prime movers were the corporations that had underpinned apartheid...

'With democratic elections in 1994, racial apartheid was ended, and economic apartheid had a new face.' (See Pilger's 1998 film, *Apartheid Did Not Die*, for further analysis)

In 2001, George Soros told the Davos Economic Forum: 'South Africa is in the hands of international capital.'

Patrick Bond, director of the centre for civil society and a professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, commented: 'I happened to work in his office twice, '94 and '96, and saw these policies being pushed on Mandela by international finance and domestic business and a neoliberal conservative faction within his own party.'

Bond paraphrased the view of former minister of intelligence and minister of water Ronnie Kasrils, 'probably the country's greatest white revolutionary ever', who described how 'as a ruler Mandela gave in way too much to rich people. So he replaced racial apartheid with class apartheid.'

Bond argues that 'big business basically said, we will get out of our relationship with the Afrikaner rulers if you let us keep, basically, our wealth intact and indeed to take the wealth abroad.'

In the *Independent*, Andrew Buncombe reported that 'for many in Alexandra, and in countless similar places across the country, the situation in some respects is today little different' from before Mandela began his liberation struggle: 'Figures released last year following a census showed that while the incomes of black households had increased by an average of 169 per cent over the past ten years, they still represented a sixth of those of white households.'

Former *Guardian* journalist Jonathan

Cook also recognised Mandela's 'huge achievement in helping to bring down South African apartheid'. But: 'Mandela was rehabilitated into an "elder statesman" in return for South Africa being rapidly transformed into an outpost of neoliberalism, prioritising the kind of economic apartheid most of us in the west are getting a strong dose of now.'

And Mandela was used:

'After finally being allowed to join the western "club", he could be regularly paraded as proof of the club's democratic credentials and its ethical sensibility... He was forced to become a kind of Princess Diana, someone we could be allowed to love because he rarely said anything too threatening to the interests of the corporate elite who run the planet.'

This helps explain why Mandela is feted as a political saint, while late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, who profoundly challenged economic apartheid in Latin America, was a 'controversial', 'anti-American bogeyman', a 'people's hero and villain' who had 'pissed away' his country's wealth, for the BBC. Chavez was a peddler of 'strutting and narcissistic populism' for the *Guardian*. Rory Carroll, the paper's lead reporter on Venezuela between 2006-2012, commented:

'To the millions who detested him as a thug and charlatan, it will be occasion to bid, vocally or discreetly, good riddance.'

For the *Independent*, Chavez was 'egotistical, bombastic and polarising', 'no run-of-the-mill dictator'. He was 'divisive' for the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Telegraph*, and 'reckless' for the *Economist*.

Chavez's real crime was that he presented a serious threat to the state-corporate system of which these media are an integral part.

The point is a simple one. State-corporate expressions of moral outrage and approval are never – not ever – to be taken at face value. While of course there may be some truth in what is being said, the systemic motivation will always be found in the self-interested head rather than the altruistic heart.

CT

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Nelson Mandela's impaired legacy

John Pilger tells how a gracious leader handed his country into the clutches of international capital

When I reported from South Africa in the 1960s, the Nazi admirer Johannes Vorster occupied the prime minister's residence in Cape Town. Thirty years later, as I waited at the gates, it was as if the guards had not changed. White Afrikaners checked my ID with the confidence of men in secure work. One carried a copy of *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela's autobiography. "It's very *eenspirational*," he said.

Mandela had just had his afternoon nap and looked sleepy; his shoelaces were untied. Wearing a bright gold shirt, he meandered into the room. "Welcome back," said the first president of a democratic South Africa, beaming. "You must understand that to have been banned from my country is a great honour." The sheer grace and charm of the man made you feel good. He chuckled about his elevation to sainthood. "That's not the job I applied for," he said drily.

Still, he was well used to deferential interviews and I was ticked off several times – "you completely forgot what I said" and "I have already explained that matter to you". In brooking no criticism of the African Na-

tional Congress (ANC), he revealed something of why millions of South Africans will mourn his passing but not his "legacy".

I had asked him why the pledges he and the ANC had given on his release from prison in 1990 had not been kept. The liberation government, Mandela had promised, would take over the apartheid economy, including the banks – and "a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable".

Once in power, the party's official policy to end the impoverishment of most South Africans, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), was abandoned, with one of his ministers boasting that the ANC's politics were Thatcherite.

"You can put any label on it if you like," he replied. "...but, for this country, privatisation is the fundamental policy."

"That's the opposite of what you said in 1994."

"You have to appreciate that every process incorporates a change."

Few ordinary South Africans were aware that this "process" had begun in high secrecy more than two years before Mandela's release when the ANC in exile had, in effect, done a deal with prominent members of the Afrikaaner elite at meetings in a stately

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In brooking no criticism of the African National Congress (ANC), Mandela revealed something of why millions of South Africans will mourn his passing but not his "legacy"



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The familiar refrain that the new wealth would “trickle down” and “create jobs” was lost in dodgy merger deals and “restructuring” that cost jobs
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home, Mells Park House, near Bath. The prime movers were the corporations that had underpinned apartheid.

Around the same time, Mandela was conducting his own secret negotiations. In 1982, he had been moved from Robben Island to Pollsmoor Prison, where he could receive and entertain people. The apartheid regime’s aim was to split the ANC between the “moderates” they could “do business with” (Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Oliver Tambo) and those in the frontline townships who led the United Democratic Front (UDF). On 5 July, 1989, Mandela was spirited out of prison to meet P.W. Botha, the white minority president known as the ‘Groot Krokodil’ (‘Big Crocodile’). Mandela was delighted that Botha poured the tea.

With democratic elections in 1994, racial apartheid was ended, and economic apartheid had a new face. During the 1980s, the Botha regime had offered black businessmen generous loans, allowing them set up companies outside the Bantustans. A new black bourgeoisie emerged quickly, along with a rampant cronyism. ANC chieftains moved into mansions in “golf and country estates”. As disparities between white and black narrowed, they widened between black and black.

The familiar refrain that the new wealth would “trickle down” and “create jobs” was lost in dodgy merger deals and “restructuring” that cost jobs. For foreign companies, a black face on the board often ensured that nothing had changed. In 2001, George Soros told the Davos Economic Forum, “South Africa is in the hands of international capital.”

In the townships, people felt little change and were subjected to apartheid-era evictions; some expressed nostalgia for the “order” of the old regime. The post-apartheid achievements in de-segregating daily life in South Africa, including schools, were undercut by the extremes and corruption of a “neoliberalism” to which the ANC devoted itself. This led directly to state crimes such

as the massacre of 34 miners at Marikana in 2012, which evoked the infamous Sharpeville massacre more than half a century earlier. Both had been protests about injustice.

Mandela, too, fostered crony relationships with wealthy whites from the corporate world, including those who had profited from apartheid. He saw this as part of “reconciliation”. Perhaps he and his beloved ANC had been in struggle and exile for so long they were willing to accept and collude with the forces that had been the people’s enemy. There were those who genuinely wanted radical change, including a few in the South African Communist Party, but it was the powerful influence of mission Christianity that may have left the most indelible mark. White liberals at home and abroad warmed to this, often ignoring or welcoming Mandela’s reluctance to spell out a coherent vision, as Amilcar Cabral and Pandit Nehru had done.

Ironically, Mandela seemed to change in retirement, alerting the world to the post 9/11 dangers of George W. Bush and Tony Blair. His description of Blair as “Bush’s foreign minister” was mischievously timed; Thabo Mbeki, his successor, was about to arrive in London to meet Blair. I wonder what he would make of the recent “pilgrimage” to his cell on Robben Island by Barack Obama, the unrelenting jailer of Guantanamo.

Mandela seemed unfailingly gracious. When my interview with him was over, he patted me on the arm as if to say I was forgiven for contradicting him. We walked to his silver Mercedes, which consumed his small grey head among a bevy of white men with huge arms and wires in their ears. One of them gave an order in Afrikaans and he was gone.

CT

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John Pilger’s new film, “Utopia”, opened in cinemas in the UK in November and will be launched in Australia this month. This article was first published in New Statesman magazine

Nelson Mandela: The Crossing

South Africa is still far from Mandela's idea of "revolutionary democracy, in which poverty, want and insecurity' are no more," writes Richard Pithouse

[D]eath is always close by, and what's important is not to know if you can avoid it, but to know that you have done the most possible to realize your ideas.

- Frantz Fanon, 1961.

As a boy without a father of his own and living as a ward of the Thembu Regent, Jongintaba Dalindyebo, at his Great Place at Mqekezweni in the green hills of the Transkei, Rolihlahla Mandela heard stories about people like Nongqawuse and Makana, people who had passed into the realm of myth. When he washed the last of his childhood into the Mbashe River in 1934 he couldn't have known that in life he too would pass into myth.

In 1942 returning to Mqekezweni from Johannesburg to honour Dalindyebo's passing he found his thoughts occupied by a proverb: *Ndivelimlambo enamagama* – I have crossed famous rivers. By the time he gave his speech from the dock in 1964 his name, and the bright strength of the intersection of his courage and ideals, had crossed the oceans and entered the grand stage of universal history.

In 1986, in the midst of the state of emergency, *Asimbonanga*, Johnny Clegg's exquisite song for Mandela, soared above the blood and teargas on the streets yearning for the day when "We cross the burning water".

Mandela, the song seemed to suggest, could take us across the burning water.

Mandela, Mandela the man, did come back from Robben Island. And while the sun didn't rise red on the day of his return and the dead didn't arise to make the world whole, time seemed to stand still as he returned to the embrace of a mass movement.

There are critiques of how this delicate moment was handled. Some are important, some are infused with little but the cheap wisdom of hindsight and some are just empty bluster – the

radicalism of those for whom engagement does not move beyond the adoption of a posture and the manipulation of words.

Those who say that we should have chosen war over negotiation tend to take no account of the balance of forces at the time, locally and globally, nor the depth of the bitterness of war or how its corrosion eats into its victors.

By the time he gave his speech from the dock in 1964 his name, and the bright strength of the intersection of his courage and ideals, had crossed the oceans and entered the grand stage of universal history



.....
The passage from apartheid to democracy has made us citizens of one polity and given us the freedom to set our own course. It is up to us to seize this moment
.....

War is certainly no guarantee of anything – none of the anti-colonial wars fought in Africa led to democratic and just societies.

When history is examined at close quarters its messiness is painfully evident. But when it is examined over the *longue durée*, the larger picture comes into focus.

With this lens, the lens that can see Makana, Nonqawuse and Mandela in one vista, it is clear that the wheel of history did turn in 1994 and that Mandela did take us across the burning water.

But if an awareness of the historical weight of this moment is not to become an ideology serving to legitimate on-going injustice we need to be very clear that we did not undo many of the injustices that honed Mandela's anger in the 1950s, and which are elegantly laid out in the recently republished *No Easy Walk To Freedom*. The old Bantustans remain separate spaces, the mining industry continues to exploit, education remains unequal, land has not been restored to the people and millions remain in shacks.

We are very far from the “revolutionary democracy... in which poverty, want and insecurity shall be no more” that Mandela looked forward to in his 1962 speech from the dock. Nonetheless the passage from apartheid to democracy has made us citizens of one polity and given us the freedom to set our own course. It is up to us to seize this moment.

The African National Congress carried the hopes of so many for so long. But it collapsed into a serious moral and political crisis in exile. It was the great tide of popular hope, grounded in popular action and the political strength of Cosatu and the United Democratic Front, and drawn to the messianic aura around Mandela, that carried us into democracy and illuminated its early days with a brilliant light.

Today the ANC is corrupt and brutal – its emancipatory energies have been squandered and when its glorious mo-

ments and the grand heights of its political vision are recalled, even in good faith, by the party's leaders they invariably function to legitimate the squalid reality of its degeneration rather than to catalyse renewal.

In death it may, in time, be easier to affirm Mandela, as he always wanted to be understood, as a man rather than a saint. But as Mandela returns from myth and into history we should not, amidst the humanizing details of his life as it was actually lived, or the morass into which the ANC has sunk, forget the principles for which he stood. We should not forget the bright strength of the Idea of Nelson Mandela.

Mandela was a revolutionary who was prepared to fight and to risk prison or death for his ideals – rational and humane ideals. In this age where empty posturing on Facebook or reciting banal clichés at NGO workshops is counted as militancy, where rhetoric often floats free of any serious attempts to organise or risk real confrontation, where the human is seldom the measure of the political, we would do well to recall Mandela as a man who brought principle and action together with resolute commitment.

Mandela was also a man whose ethical choices transcended rather than mirrored those of his oppressors.

Amidst the on-going debasement of our political discourse into ever more crude posturing we would do well to remember that no radicalism can be counted as adequate to its situation if it allows that situation to constrain its vision and distort its conception of the ethical.

Nelson Mandela has passed from this world but the Idea of Nelson Mandela remains with us. It's our world now and there are many rivers to cross. **CT**

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Richard Pithouse teaches politics at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa

The pact that sold out South Africa's poorest

Former South African freedom fighter and government minister **Ronnie Kasrils** tells how the government betrayed its people

South Africa's young people today are known as the Born Free generation. They enjoy the dignity of being born into a democratic society with the right to vote and choose who will govern. But modern South Africa is not a perfect society. Full equality – social and economic – does not exist, and control of the country's wealth remains in the hands of a few, so new challenges and frustrations arise. Veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle like myself are frequently asked whether, in the light of such disappointment, the sacrifice was worth it. While my answer is yes, I must confess to grave misgivings: I believe we should be doing far better.

There have been impressive achievements since the attainment of freedom in 1994: in building houses, crèches, schools, roads and infrastructure; the provision of water and electricity to millions; free education and healthcare; increases in pensions and social grants; financial and banking stability; and slow but steady economic growth (until the 2008 crisis at any rate). These gains, however, have been offset by a breakdown in service delivery, resulting in violent protests by poor and marginalised communities; gross in-

adequacies and inequities in the education and health sectors; a ferocious rise in unemployment; endemic police brutality and torture; unseemly power struggles within the ruling party that have grown far worse since the ousting of Mbeki in 2008; an alarming tendency to secrecy and authoritarianism in government; the meddling with the judiciary; and threats to the media and freedom of expression. Even Nelson Mandela's privacy and dignity were violated for the sake of a cheap photo opportunity by the ANC's top echelon.

Most shameful and shocking of all, the events of Bloody Thursday – 16 August 2012 – when police massacred 34 striking miners at Marikana mine, owned by the London-based Lonmin company. The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 prompted me to join the ANC. I found Marikana even more

distressing: a democratic South Africa was meant to bring an end to such barbarity. And yet the president and his ministers, locked into a culture of cover-up. Incredibly, the South African Communist Party, my party of over 50 years, did not condemn the police either.

South Africa's liberation struggle reached a high point but not its zenith when we over-

.....
The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 prompted me to join the ANC. I found Marikana even more distressing: a democratic South Africa was meant to bring an end to such barbarity



.....
**What I call our
Faustian moment
came when we
took an IMF loan
on the eve of our
first democratic
election**
.....

came apartheid rule. Back then, our hopes were high for our country given its modern industrial economy, strategic mineral resources (not only gold and diamonds), and a working class and organised trade union movement with a rich tradition of struggle. But that optimism overlooked the tenacity of the international capitalist system.

From 1991 to 1996 the battle for the ANC's soul got under way, and was eventually lost to corporate power: we were entrapped by the neoliberal economy – or, as some today cry out, we “sold our people down the river”.

What I call our Faustian moment came when we took an IMF loan on the eve of our first democratic election.

That loan, with strings attached that precluded a radical economic agenda, was considered a necessary evil, as were concessions to keep negotiations on track and take delivery of the promised land for our people. Doubt had come to reign supreme: we believed, wrongly, there was no other option; that we had to be cautious, since by 1991 our once powerful ally, the Soviet union, bankrupted by the arms race, had collapsed.

Inexcusably, we had lost faith in the ability of our own revolutionary masses to overcome all obstacles. Whatever the threats to isolate a radicalising South Africa, the world could not have done without our vast reserves of minerals. To lose our nerve was not necessary or inevitable. The ANC leadership needed to remain determined, united and free of corruption – and, above all, to hold on to its revolutionary will. Instead, we chickened out.

The ANC leadership needed to remain true to its commitment of serving the people. This would have given it the hegemony it required not only over the entrenched capitalist class but over emergent elitists, many of whom would seek wealth through black economic empowerment, corrupt practices and selling political influence.

To break apartheid rule through negotia-

tion, rather than a bloody civil war, seemed then an option too good to be ignored. However, at that time, the balance of power was with the ANC, and conditions were favourable for more radical change at the negotiating table than we ultimately accepted. It is by no means certain that the old order, apart from isolated rightist extremists, had the will or capability to resort to the bloody repression envisaged by Mandela's leadership. If we had held our nerve, we could have pressed forward without making the concessions we did.

It was a dire error on my part to focus on my own responsibilities and leave the economic issues to the ANC's experts. However, at the time, most of us never quite knew what was happening with the top-level economic discussions.

As Sampie Terreblanche has revealed in his critique, *Lost in Transformation*, by late 1993 big business strategies – hatched in 1991 at the mining mogul Harry Oppenheimer's Johannesburg residence – were crystallising in secret late-night discussions at the Development Bank of South Africa.

Present were South Africa's mineral and energy leaders, the bosses of US and British companies with a presence in South Africa – and young ANC economists schooled in western economics.

They were reporting to Mandela, and were either outwitted or frightened into submission by hints of the dire consequences for South Africa should an ANC government prevail with what were considered ruinous economic policies.

All means to eradicate poverty, which was Mandela's and the ANC's sworn promise to the “poorest of the poor”, were lost in the process. Nationalisation of the mines and heights of the economy as envisaged by the Freedom Charter were abandoned.

The ANC accepted responsibility for a vast apartheid-era debt, which should have been cancelled.

A wealth tax on the super-rich to fund developmental projects was set aside, and

domestic and international corporations, enriched by apartheid, were excused from any financial reparations.

Extremely tight budgetary obligations were instituted that would tie the hands of any future governments; obligations to implement a free-trade policy and abolish all forms of tariff protection in keeping with neo-liberal free trade fundamentals were accepted. Big corporations were allowed to shift their main listings abroad. In Terreblanche's opinion, these ANC concessions constituted "treacherous decisions that [will] haunt South Africa for generations to come".

An ANC-Communist party leadership eager to assume political office (myself no less than others) readily accepted this devil's pact, only to be damned in the process. It has bequeathed an economy so tied in to the neoliberal global formula and market fundamentalism that there is very little room to alleviate the plight of most of our people.

Little wonder that their patience is running out; that their anguished protests increase as they wrestle with deteriorating conditions of life; that those in power have no solutions.

The scraps are left go to the emergent black elite; corruption has taken root as the greedy and ambitious fight like dogs over a bone.

In South Africa in 2008 the poorest 50% received only 7.8% of total income. While 83% of white South Africans were among the top 20% of income receivers in 2008, only 11% of our black population were. These statistics conceal unmitigated human suffering. Little wonder that the country has seen such an enormous rise in civil protest.

A descent into darkness must be curtailed. I do not believe the ANC alliance is beyond hope.

There are countless good people in the ranks. But a revitalisation and renewal from top to bottom is urgently required. The ANC's soul needs to be restored; its tradi-

tional values and culture of service reinstated. The pact with the devil needs to be broken.

At present the impoverished majority do not see any hope other than the ruling party, although the ANC's ability to hold those allegiances is deteriorating.

The effective parliamentary opposition reflects big business interests of various stripes, and while a strong parliamentary opposition is vital to keep the ANC on its toes, most voters want socialist policies, not measures inclined to serve big business interests, more privatisation and neoliberal economics.

This does not mean it is only up to the ANC, SACP and Cosatu to rescue the country from crises. There are countless patriots and comrades in existing and emerging organised formations who are vital to the process. Then there are the legal avenues and institutions such as the public protector's office and human rights commission that – including the ultimate appeal to the constitutional court – can test, expose and challenge injustice and the infringement of rights.

The strategies and tactics of the grass-roots – trade unions, civic and community organisations, women's and youth groups – signpost the way ahead with their non-violent and dignified but militant action.

The space and freedom to express one's views, won through decades of struggle, are available and need to be developed. We look to the Born Frees as the future torchbearers.

CT

Ronnie Kasrils was a member of the national executive committee of the African National Congress from 1987 to 2007, a member of the central committee of the South African Communist Party from December 1986 to 2007, and the country's minister for intelligence services from 2004 to 2008. This is an excerpt from the new introduction to his autobiography, "Armed and Dangerous"

An ANC-Communist party leadership eager to assume political office (myself no less than others) readily accepted this devil's pact, only to be damned in the process

The long walk of Prisoner #46664

Tim Knight remembers a great leader who led his country from the edge of bloodshed and tragedy

.....
I look into his eyes, he looks into mine, and somehow I know I'm in the presence of sheer greatness
.....

It's July 1990. Nelson Mandela is in Dublin to accept the freedom of the city for his long, long fight against apartheid.

It's only a couple of months since he's freed after twenty-seven brutal years in South Africa's jails.

I'm there at the same time to train TV journalists at Ireland's public broadcaster, RTÉ. I take the afternoon off to join a long reception line meeting Mandela at Dublin City Hall.

(Thirty years earlier I'm a very young newspaper reporter in South Africa when Mandela, already legendary as the Black Pimpernel, goes underground to fight for his people's freedom as leader of the African National Congress's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). I'm fascinated by his cause, his famous integrity and his courage. But he's betrayed and arrested before I ever get to meet him.)

This day in Dublin, Nelson Mandela shakes my hand.

I look into his eyes, he looks into mine, and somehow I know I'm in the presence of sheer greatness. Not because of what he's done or had done to him, but simply because of who he is.

He smiles, murmurs something I can't

remember afterwards and I have to move along, uncalled.

For now.

In the square outside, Mandela makes a speech about human rights and democracy and five thousand pink and white Irish people clench their fists in the ANC salute and shout "Amandla".



.....
It's three years later, the eve of the 1994 general election in South Africa – first democratic election in the nation's three hundred and forty-two years.

I'm in Johannesburg leading a team of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation TV journalism trainers. Our mission is to try to turn South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) journalists from state broadcasters into public broadcasters.

From fascists to democrats.

Nelson Mandela, leader of the recently unbanned ANC, comes to the SABC for an election rally.

The black working classes – mostly drivers and cleaners and messengers and gardeners and cooks and waiters – abandon their jobs, flow in a mighty river through the dank corridors to the rally in the basement. Standing out in the crowd are occa-

sional white journalists and even a few curious white managers.

For the first time since I get here, the face of the SABC is mostly black, just like the face of the country. No-one of that skin colour has ever before been invited to a South African national election rally, much less been asked for their vote.

Here, in this tide of people, there's no rank, no class, no white skin privilege. Only the excitement of being part of democracy struggling to be born. Only the sweet, sweet smell of that once-so-faraway freedom.

Mandela climbs up on a platform and smiles out at the faces looking up at him, trusting him, needing him. And great waves of hope and love and respect flow back and forth between this man and these people who expect so impossibly much from him.

He looks around the huge basement, raises his fist in the ANC salute, shouts "Amandla".

And suddenly there's a new light and a new truth in the faces of the folk who have served the SABC, this grim peddler of apartheid's obscene lies, for so long.

"Amandla" they chant back to him. "Viva" and "Viva ... Mandela ... viva". And "Viva Madiba" (his Thembu clan name).

And fists everywhere rise up in salute because now people have hope and nothing excites more than hope.

Mandela is no rabble-rouser. He speaks slowly, deliberately, carefully, like a headmaster rallying the school at morning assembly. He says words the people gathered here want and need to hear.

Words about change and freedom and hope and a new South Africa. The beast that is apartheid is doomed, he tells the crowd.

"Amandla" and "Viva Madiba."

And as he must because he's Madiba, a leader not a demagogue, he warns against expecting too much, too soon. There's a long, hard road ahead, he cautions. Expect no miracles.

"Amandla ... Viva Madiba."

And there's a threat, a hint of cold steel,

when he warns the white men who run the SABC that the corporation's role as the servile arm of government propaganda is over. That the SABC will serve all the people in a new, democratic, multi-racial South Africa.

The crowd roars "Amandla". And "Amandla" again. And again. Next to me a man in messenger uniform says softly, "it is the truth, man. Madiba speaks truth."

His fist punches the air. Tears run down his cheeks.

"Amandla".

A couple of years later, His Excellency President Mandela, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, the Lenin Peace Prize, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, Britain's Order of Merit, honorary citizen of Canada, along with some one hundred other awards and honours, is to make an important speech to the international news media.

Correspondents from the world's most powerful newspapers, magazines and TV networks gather together in jovial splendour in the ballroom of Johannesburg's Carlton Hotel.

Excellent South African wines and brandies. Much backslapping and toasting and versions of "... haven't seen you since Saigon/Sarajevo/Mogadishu/Beijing/Paris/Lubumbashi!"

I'm back in South Africa to do more TV journalism training at the SABC. I notice people heading toward the elevators, wander over to investigate.

Half a dozen of my very white and very important international colleagues are lining up in formal reception committee mode. Out of the hotel elevator to their left come four very black, very large, very tough-looking men in tight dark suits and dark, mirrored sunglasses. Like synchronized dancers, they glare left, at a cluster of hotel maids waiting for the service elevator, then right, at the international journalists' reception committee.

Left again. Right again.

His Excellency, the President of South

.....
He speaks slowly, deliberately, carefully, like a headmaster rallying the school at morning assembly

.....
It's only when he's finished chatting with the curtsying, giggling Carlton Hotel maids that His Excellency the President of South Africa, turns and walks over to the very important international journalists standing in a line, waiting to greet him
.....

Africa, strolls out of the elevator.

Instead of turning right to the waiting reception committee of very important international journalists, the president of South Africa turns left and, smiling, makes a detour to the maids.

One by one he shakes hands and chats. And one by one the maids curtsy and giggle and try to answer his questions. And curtsy and giggle again.

And it's only when he's finished chatting with the curtsying, giggling Carlton Hotel maids that His Excellency the President of South Africa, turns and walks over to the very important international journalists standing in a line, waiting to greet him.

It's July 18, 2001, two years since Nelson Mandela gave up the presidency of South Africa.

I'm back in Johannesburg for yet another training workshop with SABC journalists.

This day is Mandela's eighty-third birthday. The SABC Morning Live crew and I are invited to his Johannesburg home to broadcast early morning birthday celebrations.

It's not early for Mandela, of course. He's already been up since 4.30 a.m. and exercised for an hour. It's a routine he picked up in prison and can't break.

Interviewed by one of the Morning Live anchors, he's charming, courteous and generous. But there's always that hint of steel, particularly when his causes – racism, children, poverty – come up.

Asked about his health, he says he's doing fine, doesn't mention that he's just been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Again.

After the cameras turn off, Mandela and I talk briefly. I stumble around for the right things to say to this man who almost single-handedly saves South Africa from a bloody race war.

What do you say to the person you admire most in all the world?

Fortunately, there's talk that a Hollywood producer is in pre-production for a movie based on part of Mandela's autobiography,

Long Walk To Freedom.

So I suggest to Mandela that my old friend Morgan Freeman, with whom I once wrote a never-finished book, is the only actor with the integrity, gravitas, looks and talent to play him in the movie.

Mandela recognizes Morgan's name, thinks about it, smiles, nods, seems to agree without actually saying so. We talk a little more before we shake hands again and minders take him off to talk to other birthday greeters.

(Eight years later, Morgan Freeman stars brilliantly as Nelson Mandela in *Invictus*. Watching, I keep having to remind myself that it's my old friend Morgan up there on the screen, not Mandela.)

Back at the birthday party, Mandela pretends he's surprised to find a multiracial children's choir on the steps outside his house. He beams while the choir sings "Happy birthday Mr. Mandela ... may all your dreams come true ..."

"I'm so happy to see you ..." he tells the children, and asks if he can shake hands with each of them "... because it would make my day."

Thrilled, the children make Mandela's day.

Now, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Thembu prince, freedom fighter, first president of democratic South Africa and the most honoured person in the entire world, is dead.

The country he saved has become, in effect, a one-party state under an increasingly corrupt and incompetent president Jacob Zuma (he of the four wives, one divorce, 20 children and a new \$27-million palace in his rural Zulu village).

Zuma's ruling-for-life ANC party runs just about everything in the country shows little respect for democracy, even less for the independence of the courts, the police or the press.

Over the past few years, better housing and social services for millions of poor blacks have finally been delivered. But not

nearly enough. Huge, rancid slums still surround most cities and towns.

South Africa's black schools still rank among the world's worst. It's as if President Zuma believes that if he can make it to the top with nothing more than a primary school education (ages seven to twelve), anyone can. The country is plagued by endemic poverty. Nearly half its people are unemployed and virtually unemployable. HIV/AIDS and crime rates are among the highest in the world.

Considering what's happening to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's dream of a rainbow democratic nation, perhaps it was time for him to go.

December 5, 2013, was likely a good day to die.

Nelson Mandela, the politician who fathered the new South Africa, has survived all criticism. Mostly because of his exceptional leadership skills – his unique blend of humanity, integrity, skill, courage, stubbornness and pragmatism.

But also because the world has understood that a great leader sometimes has to make agonizing choices, often between heart and head.

Mandela's only choice, as he likely saw it, was to choose head over heart and seek the greatest good for the greatest number of his people.

Nelson Mandela the man was no saint. He loved hanging with celebrities and right up to the end had a fine eye for good-looking women.

When pushed, for all his obvious humanity, humility and integrity, he could be an arrogant, authoritarian ruler.

His stubbornness – some called it pig-headed rigidity – while entirely suited to a traditional Thembu prince, sometimes harmed his own causes and hugely frustrated colleagues.

Indeed, it took the AIDS death of his son, Makgahto, to make him finally respond to the AIDS crisis which was killing thousands

of his people.

Even so, it was this same Mandela stubbornness that was largely responsible for destroying apartheid and birthing democracy without the horrors of a race war spilling oceans of blood in the cities, the townships and the veldt of his beloved country.

And it was Mandela's stubbornness, combined with his famous ability to charm even his most rigid opponents, that transformed South Africa from a despised pariah into a reasonably stable member of the family of nations.

In the years after he gave up the presidency and before he died, the man seemed entirely at peace with himself. He radiated the message: "I did my duty. I gave everything I had. I could do no more."

Mark Twain sums up Mandela's effect on those who, like me, were truly honoured to meet him: "The really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."

In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela explained his philosophical generosity, developed over twenty-seven years locked up in apartheid's brutal prisons.

"It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed."

Prisoner #46664's long walk is over.

He's finally free.

Hambe Kahle Madiba.

How better to salute the great man who was Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela than to quote the great playwright:

"Now cracks a noble heart.

Good-night, sweet prince;

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

CT

Tim Knight is author of "Storytelling And The Anima Factor". His website is <http://TimKnight.org>

it was Mandela's stubbornness, combined with his famous ability to charm even his most rigid opponents, that transformed South Africa from a despised pariah into a reasonably stable member of the family of nations

A very sozzled apprehension of politics

Thinking about the woes of the planet leads **Fred Reed** to drink

.....
At the Five-Sided Wind Tunnel a thousand colonels, also in arrested development, will wonder why the war on Yemen goes the way of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and so on
.....

I am seated in front of the Optiplex, drinking Padre Kino red and garnering insight. The garnering is tough these days. Still, to this end nothing is so effective as cheap Mexican wine at thirty-nine cents a trainload. My stepdaughter says “Google, *lo sabe todo*,” Google knows everything. Ah, but Padre Kino, the Great Purple Father, understandeth everything.

All right, the news. I should know better than to read it, but I don't. First I encounter a sententious suit-and-tie federal civil-serpent from NSA saying the Edward Snowden has endangered the national security of the United States, eeeek. At this, I shuddered and began mentally designing a bomb shelter.

But then I wondered how, precisely, are Americans now endangered? Is there a massed invasion fleet of Arab swordsmen poised to devastate North Carolina, and we need to read their tactical codes? I pictured Winston-Salem savaged by scimitar-wielding, hashish-smoking maniacs on weird double-humped camels. These be parlous times, methought.

Or are Yemeni nuclear forces readying a first strike? Maybe this was the problem. As delivery systems they could use FedEx and UPS. Or maybe Snowden just embarrassed the children in the tree-house at Fort Meade, where everybody has a Captain America secret decoder ring.

“*Ou sont les Neigeden d'antan?*” I thought poetically if not altogether coherently. Coher-

ence is overrated anyway.

Next, I see that some wet-lipped psychopath piloting a drone has killed fifteen people at a Yemeni wedding. Drones seem to hit a lot of weddings. These massacres, I suppose, are the result of letting little boys play Grand Theft Auto. I pictured an Air Force of trigger-happy eleven-year-olds in arrested development. However, I concede that targeting weddings does make military sense: I have been to many weddings, and they all looked like Al Qaeda convoys. It's just how weddings are.

At the Five-Sided Wind Tunnel a thousand colonels, also in arrested development, will wonder why the war on Yemen goes the way of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and so on. They will say it's just like those rag-headed wogs to get upset over an occasional gutted bride. Give them a few bucks in compensation. They'll get over it.

Excuse me while I get more Padre Kino. Some things require two-bottle understanding. But why, it occurred to me, should we expect the Pentagon to win wars? It has nothing to gain by winning, and everything to lose. From a budgetary point of view, victory would be as bad as defeat. In either case, contracts would slow.

Anyway, Washington is riddled with incompetence at all levels. I have read that only thirty-seven percent of secretaries in the capital can touch type. The rest are hunt-and-

peckers. I cannot vouch for this, though.

Clicking wildly about, I see that the UN, which means Washington, has waxed prissy (and perhaps polished it) because Uruguay has legalized marijuana. Why is this the UN's business, I wonder unglobally. Anyway, José Mujica, president of Uruguay, responded that if Colorado and Washington state have legalized the insightful vegetable, how can Washington....

Oh, never mind.

I haven't met José Mujica, but have walked past the President's house in Montevideo. It was just a house. You know, the kind people live in. Unlike the Great Double-wide on Pennsylvania Avenue, it wasn't barred, blocked, and Jersey-barriered. One had no sense that an emperor lived in it. I was told that presidents of Uruguay have simply walked to the grocery store all by themselves. What is the world coming to?

Actually the world is beginning to wobble strangely, or maybe it is just Mexico. I suspect though that the entire planet is encountering some sort of orbital difficulty. When this happens, further wine has a stabilizing effect. I will do my best.

I suspect that the problems dragging down America result from political inbreeding that may result in hemophilia, or at least presidents with twelve toes. First we had Bush I, a mediocrity. Then Bush II, for whom mediocrity would have been an achievement, like winning a marathon while hopping backward on one leg. There was talk of Jeb Bush as Bush III; together they would have constituted a topiary garden. We had Clinton I, who at least was intelligent, and almost had Clinton II, but instead we got Obama, whose only qualification was that he was black and read a teleprompter well. So Hillary became Secretary of State, for which her only qualifications were two terms as First Basilisk. We now have Kerry as SecState, whose only qualification is that he married a pickle heiress. They keep taking turns.

Next, I see that the FBI wants access to all telephone conversations to Stop Terrorism.

We might be better off with terrorists to stop the FBI. What I can't figure out, no matter how much Padre Kino I have as lubricant, is what they think they are doing. Is there a conscious plot to make the US into North Korea? Or just self-important minor-league dipsticks who find themselves miraculously at the controls of the amusement park? Maybe it doesn't matter. Anyway, FBI guys always look like Mormon missionaries with carry permits.

The government seems to be becoming an enemy of the country. This is new. I mean, Yahoo and the gang talk about resorting to cryptography to keep Washington from reading our email, and now that we know that the government can turn on our web cams without our knowing it, there is talk of manufacturing little plastic covers for the lens. I thought the KGB was supposed to be the enemy.

Next, I check out Drudge, who is the national thermometer: a combination of grocery-rack tabloid, Bradley Manning, and the only free press left in America. Where else can you find headlines like, "Dwarves, Evicted from Posh Hotel, Honeymoon in Cardboard Box"? I swear there was one the other day about someone rescuing a shark that was choking on a moose.

But to serious matters, if anything can be more serious than a shark choking on a moose. Today there is a Drudgeline about a robot telemarketer who, or that, refuses to admit that she is a robot. See, she calls and asks for information and sounds like a real woman, which is scary. When a listener got suspicious and asked if she were real, "she replied enthusiastically that she was real, with a charming laugh." She didn't quite fool him, since she didn't know what vegetable grows in a tomato garden.

Close, but no cigar. And getting closer. Soon we will be watched, listened to, read, fondled, X-rayed, and called by machines with enchanting laughs. Things are getting eerie, I tell you. On that hopeful note I will sign off. I need to do something to calm the planet, which seems to be lurching with greater abandon.

CT

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.....

.....
Fred Reed lives in Mexico. He has worked for Army Times, The Washingtonian, Soldier of Fortune, Federal Computer Week, and The Washington Times. His web site is <http://fredon.everything.net>
.....

What's wrong with People Before Profit?

William Blum turns his gaze on global warming, George W. Bush the artist, Hollywood's perversion of history and the state of the media

.....
It's only the Left that maintains as a bedrock principle: People before Profit, which can serve as a very concise definition of socialism
.....

If nature were a bank, they would have already rescued it." – Eduardo Galeano
What do you think of this as an argument to use when speaking to those who don't accept the idea that extreme weather phenomena are man-made?

Well, we can proceed in one of two ways:

1. We can do our best to limit the greenhouse effect by curtailing greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) into the atmosphere, and if it turns out that these emissions were not in fact the cause of all the extreme weather phenomena, then we've wasted a lot of time, effort and money (although other benefits to the ecosystem would still accrue).

2. We can do nothing at all to curtail the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and if it turns out that these emissions were in fact the cause of all the extreme weather phenomena (not simply extreme, but getting downright freaky), then we've lost the earth and life as we know it.

So, are you a gambler?

Whatever we do on a purely personal level to try and curtail greenhouse gas emissions cannot of course compare to what corporations could do; but it's inevitable that the process will impinge upon the bottom line of one corporation or another, who can be relied upon to put optimization of profit before societal good; corporate "personhood" before human personhood. This is a bar-

rier faced by any environmentalist or social movement, and is the reason why I don't subscribe to the frequently-voiced idea that "Left vs. Right" is an obsolete concept; that we're all together in a common movement against corporate and government abuse regardless of where we fall on the ideological spectrum.

It's only the Left that maintains as a bedrock principle: People before Profit, which can serve as a very concise definition of socialism, an ideology anathema to the Right and libertarians, who fervently believe, against all evidence, in the rationality of a free market. I personally favor the idea of a centralized, planned economy.

.....
Holy Lenin, Batman! This guy's a Damn Commie!

Is it the terminology that bothers you? Because Americans are raised to be dedicated anti-communists and anti-socialists, and to equate a "planned economy" with the worst excesses of Stalinism? Okay, forget the scary labels; let's describe it as people sitting down and discussing what the most serious problems facing society are; and which institutions and forces in the society have the best access, experience, and resources to offer a solution to those problems. So, the idea is to enable these institutions and forces to deal with the problems in a highly organized and

efficient manner. All this is usually called “planning”, and if the organization of it all generally stems from the government it can be called “centralized”. The alternative to this is called either anarchy or free enterprise.

I don’t place much weight on the idea of “libertarian socialism”. That to me is an oxymoron. The key questions to be considered are: Who will make the decisions on a daily basis to run the society? For whose benefit will those decisions be made. It’s easy to speak of “economic democracy” that comes from “the people”, and is “locally controlled”, not by the government. But is every town and village going to manufacture automobiles, trains and airplanes? Will every city of any size have an airport? Will each one oversee its own food and drug inspections? Maintain all the roads passing through? Protect the environment within the city boundary only? Such questions are obviously without limit. I’m just suggesting that we shouldn’t have stars in our eyes about local control or be paranoid about central planning.

.....
“We are all ready to be savage in some cause. The difference between a good man and a bad one is the choice of the cause.”

– William James (1842-1910)

So, George W. Bush is now a painter. He tells his art teacher that “there’s a Rembrandt trapped inside this body”.¹ Ah, so Georgie is more than just a painter. He’s an artiste.

And we all know that artistes are very special people. They’re never to be confused with mass murderers, war criminals, merciless torturers or inveterate liars. Neither are they ever to be accused of dullness of wit or incoherence of thought.

Artistes are not the only special people. Devout people are also special: Josef Stalin studied for the priesthood. Osama bin Laden prayed five times a day.

And animal lovers: Herman Goering, while his Luftwaffe rained death upon Europe, kept a sign in his office that read: “He who tortures animals wounds the feelings of

the German people.” Adolf Hitler was also an animal lover and had long periods of being a vegetarian and anti-smoking. Charles Manson was a staunch anti-vivisectionist.

And cultured people: This fact Elie Wiesel called the greatest discovery of the war: that Adolf Eichmann was cultured, read deeply, played the violin. Mussolini also played the violin. Some Nazi concentration camp commanders listened to Mozart to drown out the cries of the inmates.

Former Bosnian Serb politician Radovan Karadzic, on trial now before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, charged with war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, was a psychiatrist, specializing in depression; a practitioner of alternative medicine; published a book of poetry and books for children.

Al Qaeda and other suicide bombers are genuinely and sincerely convinced that they are doing the right thing. That doesn’t make them less evil; in fact it makes them more terrifying, since they force us to face the scary reality of a world in which sincerity and morality do not necessarily have anything to do with each other.

.....
Getting your history from Hollywood

Imagine a documentary film about the Holocaust which makes no mention of Nazi Germany.

Imagine a documentary film about the 1965-66 slaughter of as many as a million “communists” in Indonesia which makes no mention of the key role in the killing played by the United States.

But there’s no need to imagine it. It’s been made, and was released this past summer. It’s called “The Act of Killing” and makes no mention of the American role. Two articles in the Washington Post about the film made no such mention either. The Indonesian massacre, along with the jailing without trial of about a million others and the widespread use of torture and rape, ranks as one of the great crimes of the twentieth century and is

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ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

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There has been speculation about what finally led to Mandela's release from prison; perhaps a deal was made concerning his post-prison behavior
.....

certainly well known amongst those with at least a modest interest in modern history.

Here's an email I sent to the *Washington Post* writer who reviewed the film:

"The fact that you can write about this historical event and not mention a word about the US government role is a sad commentary on your intellect and social conscience. If the film itself omits any serious mention of the US role, that is a condemnation of the filmmaker, and of you for not pointing this out. So the ignorance and brainwashing of the American people about their country's foreign policy (i.e., holocaust) continues decade after decade, thanks to media people like Mr. Oppenheimer [one of the filmmakers] and yourself."

The *Post* reviewer, rather than being offended by my intemperate language, was actually taken with what I said and she asked me to send her an article outlining the US role in Indonesia, which she would try to get published in the *Post* as an op-ed. I did so and she wrote me that she very much appreciated what I had sent her. But – as I was pretty sure would happen – the *Post* did not print what I wrote. So this incident may have had the sole saving grace of enlightening a *Washington Post* writer about the journalistic standards and politics of her own newspaper.

And now, just out, we have the film *Long Walk to Freedom*, based on Nelson Mandela's 1994 autobiography of the same name. The heroic Mandela spent close to 28 years in prison at the hands of the apartheid South African government. His arrest and imprisonment were the direct result of a CIA operation. But the film makes no mention of the role played by the CIA or any other agency of the United States.

In fairness to the makers of the film, Mandela himself, in his book, declined to accuse the CIA for his imprisonment, writing: "The story has never been confirmed and I have never seen any reliable evidence as to the truth of it."

Well, the filmmaker should have read

what I wrote and documented on the subject some years after Mandela's book came out, in my own book: *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* (2000). It's not quite a "smoking gun", but I think it convinces almost all readers that what happened in South Africa in 1962 was another of the CIA operations we've all come to know and love. And almost all my sources were available to Mandela at the time he wrote his autobiography. There has been speculation about what finally led to Mandela's release from prison; perhaps a deal was made concerning his post-prison behavior.

From a purely educational point of view, seeing films such as the two discussed here may well be worse than not exposing your mind at all to any pop culture treatment of American history or foreign policy.

.....
Getting your history from the American daily press

During the US federal government shutdown in October over a budgetary dispute, *Washington Post* columnist Max Fisher wondered if there had ever been anything like this in another country. He decided that "there actually is one foreign precedent: Australia did this once. In 1975, the Australian government shut down because the legislature had failed to fund it, deadlocked by a budgetary squabble. It looked a lot like the U.S. shutdown of today, or the 17 previous U.S. shutdowns." ²

Except for what Fisher fails to tell us: that it strongly appears that the CIA used the occasion to force a regime change in Australia, whereby the Governor General, John Kerr – a man who had been intimately involved with CIA fronts for a number of years – discharged Edward Gough Whitlam, the democratically-elected prime minister whose various policies had been a thorn in the side of the United States, and the CIA in particular.

I must again cite my own writing, for the story of the CIA coup in Australia – as far as I know – is not described in any kind of detail anywhere other than in my book *Killing*

Hope: U.S. Military and C.I.A. Interventions Since World War II (2004).

Americans are living in an Orwellian police state. Either that, or the greatest democracy ever

There are those in the United States and Germany these days who insist that the National Security Agency is no match for the East German Ministry for State Security, or Stasi, which, during the Cold War, employed an estimated 190,000 part-time secret informants, and an additional 90,000 officers full time, in a spying operation that permeated both East and West Germany. Since the end of the Cold War, revelations from the Stasi files have led to thousands of collaborators being chased from public life. Even now, new accusations of a Stasi association can hound politicians and celebrities in Germany.³

All that of course stems from an era before almost all information and secrets became electronic. It was largely labor intensive. In the digital age, the NSA has very little need for individuals to spy on their friends, ac-

quaintances, and co-workers. (In any event, the FBI takes care of that department very well.)

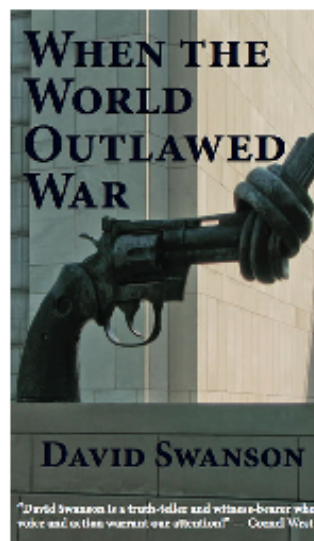
Can we ever expect that NSA employees will suffer public disgrace as numerous Stasi employees and informants have? No more than war criminals Bush and Cheney have been punished in any way. Only those who have exposed NSA crimes have been punished, like Edward Snowden and several other whistleblowers. **CT**

In the digital age, the NSA has very little need for individuals to spy on their friends, acquaintances, and co-workers

Notes

- 1. Washington Post, November 21, 2013
- 2. Washington Post, October 1, 2013 ↪
- 3. Washington Post, November 18, 2013

William Blum is the author of "Killing Hope: U.S. 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"



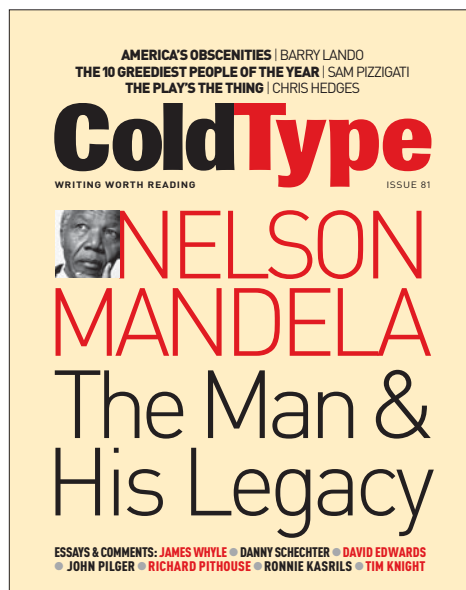
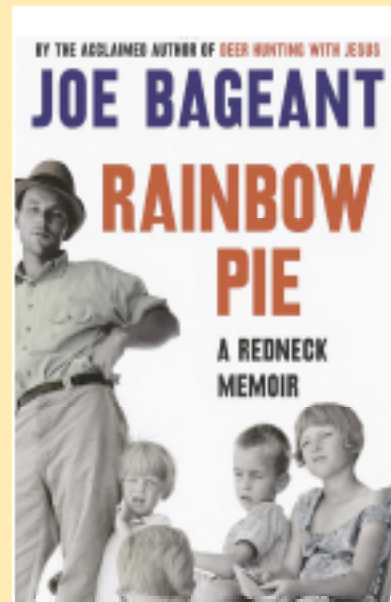
DavidSwanson.org/Store

JOE BAGEANT

Rainbow Pie: A Redneck Memoir

Bageant writes about the rural white underclass, not as an anthropological study of an exotic tribe, but as his very own people. Set between 1950 and 1963, combining personal recollections, family stories, and historical analysis, this book leans on Maw, Pap, Ony Mae, and other members of this dirt poor Scots-Irish family to chronicle the often heartbreaking postwar journey of 22 million rural Americans moving from their small subsistence farms into the cities, where they became the foundation of a permanent white underclass.

\$11.51 Amazon.com



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Desmond Tutu on international justice

Edward S. Herman finds lots of faults in a recent *New York Times* op-ed column by the Nobel Peace Prize winner

Former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a very decent individual who is usually on the right side in dealing with human rights issues. But in his recent op ed column in the *New York Times*, “In Africa, Seeking A License To Kill” (October 11, 2013), he misses the boat badly (in my opinion). He assails the many African leaders who oppose any African cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the ground that they seek a “license to kill” and need the threat of an ICC prosecution to constrain them.. Because a number of these African leaders want to be free to kill, according to Tutu they believe that “neither the golden rule, nor the rule of law, applies to them,” and “they conveniently accuse the ICC of racism.”

Tutu admits that “at a first glance, the claim [of racism] might seem plausible,” as the ICC “has so far considered only cases against Africans.” But this he explains, in part, “because independent tribunals were established to handle cases concerning the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and other countries.” But this is a feeble explanation for the exclusion from ICC indictments of any white-dominated country’s leaders, some of whom have killed vast numbers over the past several decades. Most notable, the United States and Britain were responsible for the death of possibly a mil-

lion people in Iraq during the invasion-occupation from March 2003 onward, and yet this case was explicitly rejected by the ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo. In sharp contrast, Moreno-Ocampo moved quickly to threaten Gadaffi with prosecution based largely on anticipated deaths, but he was doing here exactly what the leaders of the great white powers wanted him to do.

Tutu also glosses over the fact that the tribunals established for Yugoslavia and Cambodia were themselves very selective, serving the interests of the same great white powers that channeled ICC benevolence away from themselves and their clients, and exempting themselves in these specific cases. The Yugoslavia tribunal (ICTY) was organized at the behest of the United States to complement and aid its successful military and diplomatic program to dismantle Yugoslavia. In this case the NATO powers committed both a basic UN Charter violation of aggression as well as specific war crimes in their bombing war against Serbia, but the ICTY never came close to prosecuting those powers. (See Michael Mandel, *How America Gets Away With Murder* [Pluto: 2004], esp. chapter 6.) With similar political selectivity, no tribunal has ever been established to deal with the long-term ethnic cleansing of Palestine by Israel, a client of the United States and protected also by the EU powers.

.....
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CRIMINAL INJUSTICE

.....
Tutu seems unaware of the fact that the United States is rapidly expanded its military penetration of Africa, accelerated since the fall of Gadaffi, and that many of the abusive leaders of African states are in "partnerships" with the United States and are under its diplomatic as well as military protection
.....

Tutu also misses the fact that in Africa itself the work of the ICC is extremely selective, with its choices frequently traceable to great power interests and influence. The most massive killings there have taken place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), but as the major outside invaders and killers in the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, are clients of the United States and its allies, the leaders of those states have been entirely exempt from any threat of ICC prosecution. The ICC proceeded energetically in the case of Darfur, which has been Arab ruled and doing lots of business with China, and against Libya, in support of the successful Great Power effort to overthrow Gadaffi, but not against the United States and Ethiopia for their actions in Somalia, subjected to Ethiopian invasion and US bombing attacks.

Tutu seems unaware of the fact that the United States is rapidly expanded its military penetration of Africa, accelerated since the fall of Gadaffi, and that many of the abusive leaders of African states are in "partnerships" with the United States and are under its diplomatic as well as military protection. "Reminiscent of the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century, the US African Command (Africom) has deployed troops to 35 African countries, establishing a familiar network of authoritarian supplicants eager for bribes and armaments," John Pilger writes. "In 2011, Africom staged Operation African Endeavour, with the armed forces of 34 African nations taking part, commanded by the US military. Africom's 'soldier-to-soldier' doctrine embeds US officers at every level of command from general to warrant officer. Only the pith helmets are missing. It is as if Africa's proud history of liberation, from Patrice Lumumba to Nelson Mandela, is consigned to oblivion by a new master's black colonial elite whose 'historic mission', warned Frantz Fanon half a century ago, is the subjugation of their own people in the cause of 'a capitalism rampant though camou-

flaged'." (Pilger, "Modern times are upside down – an invasion is not news; licence to lie takes you to the movies," *New Statesman*, January 31, 2013.)

Tutu claims that the alternatives to the ICC "are too painful: revenge like what happened in Rwanda, Kosovo and Bosnia, or blanket amnesty and a national commitment to amnesia, like what happened in Chile." His history here is muddled and fails to depart from Western propaganda lines. In fact, the Rwanda killings of 1994-1996 were in large measure carried out by the military arm of a minority faction (of Tutsis) conquering the country following its earlier (1990) invasion from Uganda that was supported by the United States and its allies. This invasion positioned Kagame and his RPF within Rwanda, facilitating the 1994 assassination of the Hutu president and their pursuit of a final deadly assault, again supported by the great Western powers. Similarly, the Bosnia and Kosovo wars were rooted not in any Serbian forward policies but rather in Western encouragement and support of local nationalists intent on independence and collaborating in the West's dismantlement of Yugoslavia. In Chile, likewise, Pinochet's bloody conquest and rule, and long freedom from prosecution, was not a result of any "amnesia" but of the fact that his installation and rule received steady US backing.

Tutu fails to mention features of the ICC that reveal its structured bias. For one thing its charter does not make aggression a punishable crime, in this regard following the plan of the ICTY. This is convenient for the United States and its principal allies as they engage in aggression often, so it is excluded although it is the most basic and important criminal act and is a fundamental element of the UN Charter. Furthermore, the ICC's reach is limited to states that sign on to it, or when the Security Council requests that it act. The United States signed the original Rome statute in

December 2000, but it has never ratified that statute, so while denying ICC jurisdiction over its own acts it feels free to bring cases for the ICC to enforce against others. Given its power in the Security Council, Darfur and selected other African states can be subjected to an ICC indictment, but not the United States, Israel, or Kagame's Rwanda.

Tutu has convinced himself that the ICC is "very clearly an African court." This is based on the facts that 30 of the initial 108 countries signing on to the ICC are African, five of the 18 judges are African, and its vice president and chief prosecutor are African. He mentions also that former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, says that leaving the ICC "would be a tragedy for Africa." There is real and surprising naivete in this Tutu perspective. Blacks are second class global citizens, including both the leaders and populace of black-dominated states. Many of their more prosperous citizens seek education, style, and recognition and honors from the technologically advanced great white powers. And the officials of those powers often find it useful to choose some of these enterprising black citizens to give an aura of liberalism and fairness to their sometimes illiberal enterprises. Kofi Annan, mentioned by Tutu as an authoritative voice, is notorious for his subservience to the desires of the imperial powers. Richard Holbrooke himself, noted in his autobiography that Annan's elevation to Secretary General of the UN followed from his using his temporary authority, in the absence of his superior, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to approve NATO's bombing of the Bosnian Serbs. Boutros Boutros-Ghali was soon dismissed for excessive independence. Kofi Annan in high office proved himself to be a reliable instrument of the West. (See Herman, "Kofi Annan and the Art of Puppetry," Z Magazine, July 2005)

Tutu mentions that the ICC's current chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, "has

huge power over which cases are brought forward." But Ms Bensouda, who took over this office in June 2012, has a long record of subservience to Western interests in the Kofi Annan mode. She worked as ICC Deputy Prosecutor for several years during the corrupt Moreno-Ocampo era. Before that Ms. Bensouda had worked for some years as Legal Adviser and Trial Attorney with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), an organization notorious for its focus on Hutu criminals and complete avoidance of indictment of any Kagame-RPF killers (and we may recall that the State Department itself received a message in December 1994 that the RPF was killing 10,000 Hutus per month). In her only case so far as ICC prosecutor she rushed to indict Mali rebels when France invaded Mali in January 2012, in perfect ICC form, reminiscent of Moreno-Ocampo's rush to help the NATO attack on Libya in 2011. She is nominally independent, but over the years she has passed the subservience test with distinction .

So the ICC may have black representatives, but it is not a black court in its ultimate power and it does not represent the "interests of the [black] people." just as the UN under a Kofi Annan or Ban Ki-Moon has not represented the broad interest of either black or white ordinary citizens. Tutu mentions that the African leaders who want to have nothing to do with the ICC believe that "neither the golden rule, nor the rule of law, applies to them." But he ignores the more important fact that the rulers of the great white powers clearly believe that neither rule applies to themselves, and that exercising their power on this non-rule basis and with their geo-political interests in command, institutions like the ICC are instruments of power, not golden rule enforcers. They may sometimes go after bad guys, but this seeming benevolence may help them engage in their own crimes and protect those of their favored clients. Ultra selective and therefore corrupt enforcement is argu-

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CRIMINAL INJUSTICE

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Sometimes the human rights officials of the UN are uncooperative and anger US or Israeli officials. If so, out they go, as with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and others as well
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ably worse than no enforcement.

The human rights field has long been compromised by alignment with the demands of the powerful. The ICC is not alone in this regard. For example, not only the ICC but the ICTY failed to include aggression in their charters as one of the crimes to be dealt with, and both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International likewise exclude it when they deal with human rights issues. This is in keeping with the demands and interests of US policy-makers who have good reason to want that super-crime kept out of the way when they attack Iraq or Serbia or (etc)., and when client state Israel once again invades Lebanon and threatens to attack Iran. Both Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-Moon have expressed solidarity with US policy-makers and take it for granted that the United States and its principal allies will be the enforcers of human rights actions decided upon, not by UN leaders but by the enforcers themselves.

Sometimes the human rights officials of the UN are uncooperative and anger US or Israeli officials. If so, out they go, as with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and others as well. For instance, Mary Robinson, the former president of Ireland, who Kofi Annan, to his credit, appointed the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, eventually ran afoul of US and Israeli officials by criticizing the US “war on terror” and by participating in the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. She departed soon after that conference, after “sustained pressure from the United States led her to declare she was no longer able to continue her work.”

Robinson’s replacement as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004 was Louise Arbour, a model of a properly behaving human rights official and quasi-judicial official dealing with human rights. Arbour first came into prominence as prosecutor for the ICTY, where she served NATO interests without deviation; whenever they needed Serbs to be put in a bad light, she

rushed in to help. As one illustration, when in May 1999 NATO (really the US) began intensive bombing of Serbian civilian facilities – a war crime – Arbour quickly put up an indictment of Milosevic, based on evidence supplied by NATO, taking heat off of NATO’s criminal actions. (See Christopher Black and Edward S. Herman, “Louise Arbour: Unindicted War Criminal,” Z Magazine, September 2000)

Arbour was prosecutor for the Rwanda tribunal (ICTR) as well as the ICTY, and her performance there was equally corrupt. Most notable, her investigative team headed by lawyer Michael Hourigan informed her in 1996 that the April 1994 shootdown of the plane carrying Rwanda president Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death triggered the mass killings, had been engineered by Paul Kagame and the RPF. After consulting with US, officials, instead of prosecuting Arbour closed down the investigation, which has never been revived by the ICTR, steadily in service, like Arbour, to the great white powers who support Kagame.

Interestingly, Arbour’s successor, Carla Del Ponte, did threaten to investigate and prosecute Kagame and the RPF in 2003, but she got no support for this from Kofi Annan or, it goes almost without saying, US officials, and was very soon replaced by Hassan Abubacar Jallow, a US/U.K.-approved Prosecutor who promised not to prosecute any Kagame-RPF personnel, whatever the facts. The system works, and injustice thrives.

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The biggest crime story no one's reporting

Michael I. Niman says it's time to take action over companies that are foiling international attempts at tackling the problems of global warming

This is crime at a level never before seen in human history. Star culprits include Chevron Texaco, Exxon/Mobil, and BP. Co-conspirators include your daily newspaper and evening news broadcasts. Hundreds of millions of people have shared the bounty of this ongoing depravity. Billions are now at risk of losing their homes, their livelihoods, and even their lives.

The latest chapter of this saga took place in Warsaw earlier this month at the "COP 19" global governmental meeting on climate change. The big news, and this is news, is that once again, nothing of substance happened. The timeline for our story is chronicled not so much by years as by the parts-per-million (PPM) atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) count. The glaciers tell us that atmospheric carbon, before humans developed an industrial economy, fluctuated between 180 and 280 PPM.

By 1958, when we began sampling atmospheric CO₂ at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, back when President Eisenhower was cutting ribbons on the newly built Interstate Highway system, the atmospheric CO₂ number was 315 PPM.

This was around the same time that scientists started publicly warning about CO₂'s warming effect on the climate. In November 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated, the number had already

risen to 319 PPM. In 1979, when Jimmy Carter installed 32 solar panels on the White House roof and gave what became known as his "malaise" speech calling for energy conservation, the CO₂ count was 337 PPM.

When Ronald Reagan removed the solar panels from the White House in 1981, symbolically trashing Carter's call to conscience and responsibility and inaugurating a generation of conspicuous consumption, the CO₂ count was 339 PPM.

During Reagan's last year in office, when NASA climate scientist James Hansen loudly warned the US Senate about the ongoing global warming crisis, the CO₂ count had hit 351 PPM, crossing the 350PPM threshold that climatologists warn will cause catastrophic climate change.

By the time Reagan left office, the number was 352PPM. In March 1997, with the CO₂ count hovering at 363 PPM, the United Nations convened its first Council of the Parties (COP) intergovernmental meeting on climate action in Germany. In December of that year, with the CO₂ count hitting 365 PPM, the group met again in Japan, adopting the Kyoto protocols, with every UN member nation except Andorra, Canada, South Sudan, and the United States signing on, committing to cutting overall emissions of greenhouse gasses to five percent below 1997 levels, with historically polluting nations making the largest cuts.

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UP IN SMOKE

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Extreme weather now causes approximately \$400 billion of damage annually – just counting financial damage, not lost or ruined lives and cultures
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Eleven years later, in 2008, with CO₂ levels hitting 385 PPM, James Hansen renewed the warning he made 20 years earlier, pleading that only immediate drastic action could ward off the direst consequences of global warming.

Today the CO₂ count at Mauna Loa is at 397 PPM, with some counts having the number tickling the 400 PPM count. At no other time have humans lived on the planet with such a high atmospheric CO₂ count. With weather records breaking practically every year, we're living at the beginning of the future that climatologists warned of. Extreme weather now causes approximately \$400 billion of damage annually – just counting financial damage, not lost or ruined lives and cultures.

Last month at the COP 19 meetings in Warsaw, the government of Japan announced that rather than cut CO₂ emissions by 25 percent by 2020, they will limit their CO₂ emission increase to three percent, or 28 percent off of their promised target.

Looking at the numbers, by the early 1960s, CO₂ emissions were 40 PPM higher than historic pre-industrial highs. Now they are 120 PPM higher, with the increase having more than tripled since the alarm was first raised, and having gone up almost 50 percent since the first COP climate summit. Add forensic science to the climate mix and we can get a good idea about who is responsible for this crisis.

A recent study published in the journal *Climate Change* argues that almost two-thirds of the CO₂ added to the atmosphere since the 1950s, the aforementioned 120 PPM, can be directly traced to 90 fossil fuel and cement producers. Most of the culprits, having enriched themselves at the expense of our atmosphere and future, are still in existence today. Many of them are financing public relations campaigns aimed at stopping or delaying any meaningful climate preservation action.

At the top of the list of corporations is Chevron Texaco, whose activities have gen-

erated more CO₂ pollution than all other organized entities in history, with the exception of the government-run entities in China and the former Soviet Union. Chevron Texaco is responsible for 3.52 percent of the industrial world's atmospheric carbon contribution.

Exxon Mobil is right behind them, responsible for 3.22 percent, followed by BP at 2.47 percent, Royal Dutch Shell at 2.12 percent, and Conoco Phillips at 1.16 percent. Put together, these five private oil companies are responsible for 12.4 percent of the carbon causing global warming. We now have a real and quickly increasing global price tag for climate change.

And we have five corporations that are liable for 12.4 percent of this damage. No matter how you do the math, as super-storm-driven tidal surges push rising oceans across populated cities, if this really was a free market economy, the liabilities of these corporations would be far greater than their total value.

But this isn't a real free market. It's a corrupt system gamed by the largest corporations.

The top three corporations on this list, Chevron Texaco, Exxon Mobil, and BP, are also on the Center for Responsive Politics' list of the "Top All-Time Campaign Donors." Hence it should come as no surprise that the US's position at COP 19 was a firm "no" to any talk of reparations paid by top CO₂ polluters to the victims of CO₂-induced climate change.

And, once again, another global climate summit was scuttled thanks in large part to the consistent intransigence of the US government. If we're really serious about saving the climate, first we have to save democracy.

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Like bees to nectar

Chellis Glendinning on the value of our social movements

(To Elizabeth Hallett, who has devoted her life to social change and caring for the wounded.)

It's yet another *bloqueo, paro y huelga* in Bolivia, nary a week passes without one or two or three somewhere in the country. The syndicates, collectives, and communities are in the streets marching, striking, blocking traffic with boulders and tires, hurling rocks at the police, shooting firecrackers, martyring themselves in hunger strikes – causing havoc, threatening the national economy, pushing the blind eye of government to see their demands. All the while, activists, protestors, and anti-globalization visionaries in “advanced” societies are stunned, inspired, awed. And green with envy. The campesinos and city folk in Cochabamba’s 2000 Water War, after all, put a stop to an already-signed contract with mega-corporation Bechtel to privatize water sources and delivery, while those in the 2003 Gas War in El Alto brought down a government.

Yes, green with envy.

Having been exposed to Andean social movements for seven years and having lived the previous years inside movements spawned in the United States, I stand in awe as well. But from this southern side of the equator, I have also gained fresh perspective on our own efforts. It is pride and encour-

agement in these that I want to pass on to my *compañeros* to the north, as confused or disheartened as we may be in these times as the world turns *cuatro patas* to the clouds.

Of course, there is always a reaction when injustice occurs. Hostility, violence, manipulation, exploitation, and theft cannot take place without the knee-jerk screech of response emanating from an inborn knowing of what hurts. As Ernst Bloch has pointed out, boasting consciousness of self in the context of events, environment, and possibility, humans are hope-bearing animals; burgeoning with “anticipations, images of desire, contents of hope,” we are saddled with an urge to realize the full humanity that lies within imagination. And a willingness to jeopardize life and limb to resist when harm is done, to impede, heal, and create anew.

Eric Hobsbawm offers the insight that the US and European political movements of the 1960’s were essentially anarchistic – meaning spontaneous, often without discipline, thought-out tactics, or consistent membership; they were fought largely in the realm of symbolism; and they lacked the discipline of a “war strategy” that would have been required to bring about not just momentary change in policy, but structural change. Speaking from memory’s eye aimed toward the corner of Telegraph Avenue and Durant during the heat of clashes with the

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HEADING FOR CHANGE

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**Perhaps not a
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a Hobsbawmian
sense, but dear
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Berkeley Police and Alameda County “Blue Meanies,” I would have to agree. Years later, I was surprised to learn that many fellow activists of the period never grasped the significance of Vietnam War protest as a battle against US imperialism rather than a mere slip-up in foreign policy.

Yet another slant crops up. This is the remarkable wisdom that bloomed in those times. Here we were young, naïve, and burgeoning with the bizarre hubris that we knew *Where It Was At* and – despite KPFA-FM’s honoring of the brigades, heroes, and intellectuals from times before, the resurgence of old folk and ethnic music, the poring over Marx’s 19th-century theories – we were products of a technological “culture” whose chief attribute was to charge ahead in fast-forward.

And yet, and yet. From the depths of our psyches – it can only be from there – arose knowledge of the aspects of insubordination and embrace that would be required to rebuild the human world. There was the first health food store that presaged a national movement toward locally-grown, organic, natural foods and medicines. An urge toward communal living echoing the human propensity to tribal existence. The Diggers with their free food and white bicycles. Resurgence of craft and whole-earth tools. Consciousness-raising. Natural childbirth. Sexual liberation. Improvisational dance. Peace. Buddhism. Shamanism. Nature-cycled ceremony. Psychologies challenging repression while encouraging expression of feelings, memory of dreams, re-knitting the whole of human consciousness that had been eaten away since the days of Descartes. Bodywork to dispel the clutches of said philosopher’s mind/body split. Championing of roots in history, tradition, ritual, resistance. Peer groups. Cadres of activists dedicated to working together. Marches, protests, sit-ins, civil disobedience, building scaling, clandestine attacks on infrastructure, whistle-blowing, work stoppages, and hunger strikes,. The courage to cross a boundary,

don a disguise, charge an impediment, stand in front of a moving train. Fierce debate between violence and non-violence, socialism and communism, representation and full-on participation, large-scale and small-is-beautiful, hard reality and dream. Care for a planet being destroyed by industrial society. (Who can forget *Ramparts* magazine’s 1969 forewarning of the death of the oceans?) Remembrance of traumas long buried. Acceptance of death.

Arose from some inexplicable inner knowing, just as it had for so many generations before, the full panoply of the facets of a world we would like to live in.

Then, like bees to nectar, so many dedicated their entire lives to one or another aspect of this holistic endeavor. Came institutions, educational and support groups to further activism, research/take on issues, hone techniques, invent techniques, mobilize national protests, lobby congress, break barriers erected to separate classes, communities, and nations; agencies to disseminate other sides of stories than those told by the press; publishing houses, newspapers, radio stations; books, films, records, cassette tapes; funds, credit cards, and telephone companies to support activist labors; psychological/nervous-system-based tools for recovering from traumatic stress, group therapies situating individual healing in the context of a violent world, addiction-recovery support; progressive schools and colleges; organic farms, community gardens, natural food stores, meditation centers, dance studios, holistic health clinics, hospice; deeper analysis of the systemic nature of the dysfunction of mass civilization until near every thread was examined and made known.

Perhaps not a “war strategy” in a Hobsbawmian sense, but dear peers: in the midst of a global system that has penetrated/perpetrated pain upon every aspect of life, this is a monumental accomplishment.

Now, as fast-forward does, the ante has been upped. The new technologies – super-

computers, satellite and wireless mastery, techno-surveillance, genetic engineering, etc. – have fostered a global take-over that would make Alexander the Great and Adolf Hitler rise up out of their graves; a novel, at times invisible form of fascism is upon us; and through seduction, lying, eliminating choices, and force, every one of us has been corralled into it. The “web is constructed,” as Pedro Susz Kohl puts it, “woven, by a spider and, additionally, with a precise end in mind, to trap flies of the type the weaver eats.”

Hello 1984-on-steroids. From the salt flats of Bolivia’s Uyuni to the hip cafés of New York’s Village to the penthouse of an Indonesian skyscraper, we exist within lightning-fast links and interlinks, actions and interactions on a screen, the ultimate mediated reality; a barrage of ceaseless innovation; a splintering of person from meaning, action from effect; enforced relativity of experience, ideas, and events; facebook individualism; quickening of the clock; loss of Place; hyper-reality based in scandal, spectacle, and drama.

“Inverted totalitarianism” is Sheldon

Wolin’s term for this form of conquest. It “lies in wielding total power without appearing to, without establishing concentration camps, or enforcing ideological uniformity, or forcibly suppressing dissident elements so long as they remain ineffectual.”

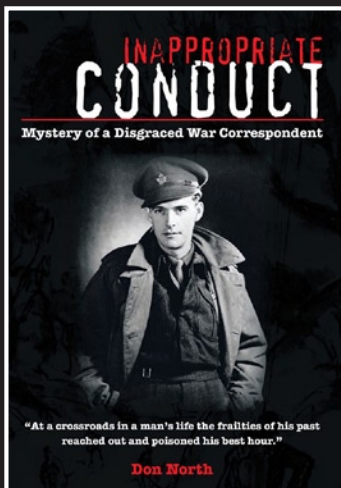
A question lingers. How are we applying who we have become and the knowledge of our experience to this predicament? With pride in our audacity, intelligence, and accomplishments, I would hope. With an outlook that is green with possibility. With reverence for the audacity, intelligence, and accomplishments of past heroes. With attention to the new generations that have arrived and respect for their intuitive knowings. And, to quote Susz: rife with “... permanent insubordination, the dare of the moment... the only form of affirming our irreversible decision to reposition the dialogue, the creativity, the imagination...”

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Chellis Glendinning is a psychotherapist, author, and card-carrying Permanent Resident of Bolivia. She can be reached via her website <http://chellisglendinning.org>

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How are we applying who we have become and the knowledge of our experience to this predicament?
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“I went in behind the lines and emerged as a kind of agent. I went in as a reporter and came out a kind of soldier. I sometimes wish I had never gone in at all” – Paul Morton



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