

REBELS, BUT NOT SLAVES | ANA STEVENSON
THE BLACK PANTHERS ARE BACK | REESE ERLICH
HENRY OF ARABIA | GREG GRANDIN

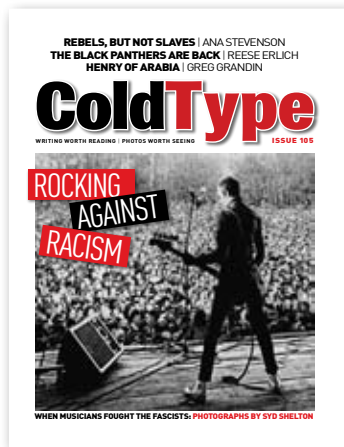
ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING | PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

ISSUE 105



WHEN MUSICIANS FOUGHT THE FASCISTS: PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYD SHELTON



Cover Photo:

Paul Simonon, The Clash, Rock Against Racism / Anti-Nazi League Carnival, Victoria Park, East London, 30 April 1978, By Syd Shelton. – Pages 12-17

ColdType

Issue 105 / Mid-October 2015

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Correction: A typing error changed the headline, in early copies of last month's ColdType, on Mark Curtis's Page 3 story, 'Jeremy Corbyn's threat of democracy,' into 'Jeremy Corbyn's threat to democracy'. If you downloaded an uncorrected copy, you can get a corrected pdf from <http://coldtype.net/Assets.15/pdfs/CT104.1015.pdf>

Editor: Tony Sutton – editor@coldtype.net



Ankara mourns: Both the government and terrorists were blamed after 97 people died in a terror bombing during a peace rally in the Turkish capital just days after Russia's entry into the fight against Syrian rebels.

Behind the Nato-Russia face off in Syria

Pepe Escobar sees a sudden shift in the war on terror in the Middle East and finds a flailing superpower and besieged prime minister

So a Su-30 enters a few hundred meters into Turkish airspace for only two minutes over Hatay province, and returns to Syrian airspace after being warned by a couple of Turkish F-16s.

Then all hell breaks loose as if this was the ultimate pretext for a Nato-Russia war.

Nato, predictably, went out all rhetorical guns blazing. Russia, it said, is causing “extreme danger” and should immediately stop bombing those cute “moderate rebels” the coalition of the dodgy oppor-

tunists refuses to bomb.

But wait; Nato is actually too busy to go to war. The priority, until at least November, is the epic Trident Juncture 2015; 36,000 troops from 30 states, more than 60 warships, around 200 aircraft, all are seriously practicing how to defend from the proverbial “The Russians are Coming!”

Still, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu – he of the former “zero problems with our neighbors” doctrine – actually “warned” Moscow that next time Ankara

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu actually “warned” Moscow that next time Ankara would respond “militarily”

How can a no-fly zone be imposed over Syria when Russia got there first?

would respond “militarily”.

Until, of course, he backed down: “What we have received from Russia ...is that this was a mistake and that they respect Turkey’s borders and this will not happen again.”

The incident could have been easily defused – via military to military communication - without the posturing.

But Ankara – Nato’s eastern flank – is under immense pressure from ‘Exceptionalist’. It’s no accident Pentagon supreme and notorious neocon Ash Carter “conferred” with Ankara about the incident. Carter, of course, is the most stellar practitioner of the official Beltway diktat: “By taking military action in Syria against moderate groups’ targets, Russia has escalated the civil war.”

‘Sultan’ Erdogan, right on cue, and straight from Strasbourg (no, he was not campaigning for the European Parliament) doubled down: “Assad has committed state terrorism, and unfortunately you find Russia and Iran defending (him).”

And yet ‘Sultan’ Erdogan won’t go down in history as the catalyst for the much-awaited Nato-Russia Hot War 2.0. At least not yet.

Only bomb if we say so

Enter Dr. Zbigniew “Grand Chessboard” Brzezinski, growling in a FT Op-Ed that Washington should “retaliate” if Moscow does not stop attacking US assets in Syria. “US assets” means CIA-trained “moderate rebels”. And after all, “American credibility” is at stake.

Dr. Zbig – Obama’s prime foreign policy mentor – insists bombing CIA-trained “rebels” accounts for “Russian military incompetence”. And the American counter-attack should be to “disarm” the “Russian naval and air presence.” Now that’s how you go for a Nato-Russia Hot War 2.0.

Dr. Zbig admitted though that “regional chaos could easily spread northeastward,” and then “both Russia and then China could be adversely affected.” Who cares?

What matters is that “American interests and America’s friends...would also suffer.”

This is what passes for prime geopolitical analysis in the ‘Empire of Chaos’.

‘Sultan’ Erdogan, for his part, remains restless. Moscow has already evaporated his so cherished three-year-old dream of a no-fly zone over northern Syria. There is an actual no-fly zone all over Syria now in effect. But it’s managed by Russia.

And that explains why there’s already full spectrum hysteria for more US Congress sanctions on Russia. How can a no-fly zone be imposed over Syria when Russia got there first?

And it was all going so swimmingly for the ‘Sultan’. Ankara – at the insistence of Washington – had finally thrown open its air bases to fight ISIS/ISIL/Daesh, but as long as this was part of a regime change operation in Damascus. And for that, Ankara would get its no-fly zone.

Enter ‘The Sultan’s’ recurrent nightmare; the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its sister organization, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

‘The Sultan’ simply cannot accept the PYD advancing to the western bank of the Euphrates to help in the fight against ISIS/ISIL/Daesh. ‘The Sultan’ wants to “contain” the PYD in Kobani.

The problem is the PYD – supported by the PKK – is the only reliable ‘Empire of Chaos’ ally in Syria. Yet ‘the Sultan’ could not help himself; he got into a war – again – against the PKK. Washington was not exactly amused.

And then there’s the key corridor from the Bab al-Salam border crossing down to Aleppo - controlled by Ankara-supported goon squads. That’s Ankara’s bridge to Aleppo; without it, not the slightest chance of regime change, ever. The fake “Caliphate” was threatening to take over the corridor. So action was imperative.

Russia’s spectacular entry into the war theatre threw all these elaborate plans into disarray. Imagine a complete liberation of

northeast Syria as soon as the PYD – with help from PKK fighters - is weaponized enough to smash the ISIS/ISIL/Daesh goons. And imagine the Russian Air Force providing air cover for such an operation, with extra coordination by the Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran central in Baghdad.

‘The Sultan’, in desperation, would have to maneuver his F-16s against such an offensive. And then we might really have a Nato-Russia five seconds to midnight scenario – with terrifying consequences. ‘The Sultan’ would blink first. And Nato would collapse into the ignominy it never left – back to its elaborate “Russia is invading” drills.

Say hello to my geopolitical jihadi tool

Next steps for the Russian campaign would be to pay close attention to the road linking ISIS/ISIL/Daesh’s capital, Al-Raqqah, around which jihadis are fighting for the control of oil and gas in Sha’ir and Jazal. And then there are pockets east of both Homs and Hama, and in al-Qaryatayn. Moscow – slowly, surely, methodically - is getting there.

What the Russian air campaign has already graphically exposed is the whole rotten core myth of the new Jihad International.

ISIS/ISIL/Daesh, Jabhat al-Nusra and assorted Salafi-jihadi goon squads have been kept up and running by a massive financial/logistical/weaponizing “effort” – which includes all sorts of key nodes, from arms factories in Bulgaria and Croatia to transportation routes via Turkey and Jordan.

As for those Syrian “moderate rebels” – and most of them are not even Syrian, they’re mercenaries – every pebble in the ravaged Sykes-Picot desert sands knows they were trained by the CIA in Jordan. The desert pebbles are also aware that ISIS/ISIL/Daesh goons have been infiltrated into Syria from Turkey – once again, across Hatay province; and vast swathes of ‘the Sultan’s’ Army and police were into the game.

As for who pays the bills for the lavish weaponizing, talk to the proverbial “pious wealthy donors” – incited by their clerics - in the GCC, the petrodollar arm of Nato. None of these goon squads could possibly thrive for so long without full, multidisciplinary “support” from the usual suspects.

So the hysterical/apoplectic/paroxystic rage enveloping the ‘Empire of Chaos’ betrays the utter failure, once again, of the same old “policy” (remember Afghanistan) of using jihadis as geopolitical tools. Fake “Caliphate” or “rebels”, they are all Nato-GCC’s bitches.

To add insult to injury, a frustrated ‘Sultan’ has also been forced to annex himself to a slightly changing Washington position – which now rules that “Assad must go,” yes, but it may take some time, as part of a yet to be defined “transition”.

‘The Sultan’ will remain a pile of nerves. He does not give a damn about ISIS/ISIL/Daesh. Washington now does – sort of. He wants to smash the PYD and the PKK. For Washington, the PYD is a helpful ally. As for Moscow, ‘the Sultan’ better watch his neo-Ottoman step.

‘The Sultan’ simply cannot afford to antagonize ‘The Bear’. Gazprom will expand the Blue Stream pipeline into Turkey. It would be by 3 billion cubic meters; instead it will be by 1 billion cubic meters. According to Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, it’s due to technical capabilities.

Yet Ankara better get its act together, because even that extension may evaporate if there’s no agreement on the commercial terms of TurkStream, the former Turkish Stream. Ankara is under tremendous pressure from the Obama administration. And ‘the Sultan’ knows very well that without Russia all his elaborate plans to position Turkey as the key energy transit hub from East to West will vanish in ANatolian scrub. In the end, he may even get regime-changed himself.

CT

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“Globalistan: How
the Globalized
World is Dissolving
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(Nimble Books,
2007), “Red Zone
Blues: a snapshot of
Baghdad during the
surge” and “Obama
does Globalistan”
(Nimble Books,
2009). His latest
book is “Empire of
Chaos”

When bombs fall like confetti . . .

The US bombing of a hospital in Afghanistan is just one symptom of comprehensive military failure, writes **George Monbiot**

There are hardly any circumstances when bombs – whether delivered from planes or drones, by the US, UK, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia or any others – improve a situation rather than exacerbate it

The strike may have resulted in collateral damage to a nearby medical facility.” This is how an anonymous Nato spokesperson described Saturday’s disaster in Afghanistan. Let’s translate it into English. “We bombed a hospital, killing 22 people.” But “people”, “hospital” and “bomb”, let alone “we”: all such words are banned from Nato’s lexicon. Its press officers are trained to speak no recognisable human language.

The effort is to create distance: distance from responsibility, distance from consequences, distance above all from the humanity of those who were killed. They do not merit even a concrete noun. Whatever you do, do not create pictures in the mind.

“Collateral damage” and “nearby” also suggest that the destruction of the hospital in Kunduz was a side-effect of an attack on another target. But the hospital, run by Médecins Sans Frontières, was the sole target of this bombing raid, by a US plane that returned repeatedly to the scene, dropping more ordnance on a building from which staff and patients were trying to escape. Curiously, on this occasion, Nato did not use that other great euphemism of modern warfare, the “surgical strike” – though it would, for once, have been appropriate.

Shoot first, suppress the questions later. The lies and euphemisms add insult to the

crime. Nato’s apparent indifference to life and truth could not fail to infuriate – perhaps to radicalise – people who are currently uninvolved in conflict in Afghanistan.

Barack Obama’s promise of an internal investigation (rather than the independent inquiry MSF has requested) is as good as the US response is likely to get. By comparison with both his predecessors, and his possible successors (including Hillary Clinton), Obama is a model of restraint and candour. Yet his armed forces still scatter bombs like confetti.

There are hardly any circumstances when bombs – whether delivered from planes or drones, by the US, UK, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia or any others – improve a situation rather than exacerbate it. This is not to say that there is never an argument for aerial war, but that if such a step is to be contemplated the consequences must be examined more carefully than anything else a government does. Yet every month we see reports of airstrikes that appear reckless and impulsive.

Of course the Taliban, Isis and al-Qaida not only kill civilians carelessly, but also murder them deliberately. But this surely strengthens, rather than weakens, the need for a demonstration of moral difference.

An analysis published last year by the human rights group Reprieve revealed that attempts by US forces to blow up 41 men

with drone strikes killed 1,147 people. Many were children. Some of the targets remain unharmed, while repeated attempts to kill them have left a trail of shattered bodies and shattered lives.

Because the US still does not do body counts – or not in public, at any rate – the great majority of such deaths are likely to be unknown to us. As the analyst Paul Rogers points out, the US Air Force dropped 1,800 bombs while helping Kurdish fighters to wrest the town of Kobane in northern Syria from Isis. It used 200kg bombs to take out single motorbikes. Of the civilian population killed in this firestorm, we know almost nothing, but they do not appear to have been the cause of much grief, or even reflection. An air force major involved in the bombing enthused that “to be part of something, to go out and stomp those guys out, it was completely overwhelming and exciting”. Sometimes this professed battle for civilisation looks more like a clash of barbarisms.

Recruitment poster

Every misdirected bomb, every brutal night raid, every noncombatant killed, every lie and denial and minimisation, is a recruitment poster for those at war with the US. For this reason, and many others, its wars appear to be failing on most fronts. The Taliban is resurgent. Isis, far from being beaten or contained, is growing and spreading: into north Africa, across the Middle East, and in the Caucasus (a development that Vladimir Putin’s intervention in Syria will only encourage). The more money and munitions the west pours into Syria and Iraq, the stronger the insurgents appear to become. And if, somehow, the US and its allies did succeed, victory over Isis would strengthen the Assad regime, which has killed and displaced even greater numbers. What exactly are the aims here?

By invading Iraq in 2003, destroying its government and infrastructure, dismantling the army and detaining thousands of

former soldiers, the US, with Britain’s help, created Isis. Through bombing, it arguably helps to sustain the movement. Everything it touches now turns to dust, either pulverised directly by its drones and bombers, or destroyed through blowback in the political vacuums it creates.

There are no simple solutions to the chaos and complexities western firepower has helped to unleash, though a good start would be to stop making them worse. But a vast intelligence and military establishment that no president since Jimmy Carter has sought to control, the tremendous profits to be made by weapons companies and military contractors, portrayals of these conflicts in the media that serve only to confuse and bamboozle: they all help to ensure that armed escalation, however pointless and counter-productive, appears unstoppable. Russia’s involvement in Syria is likely to provoke still greater follies.

There are no clear objectives in these wars, or if there are, they shift from month to month. There is no obvious picture of what victory looks like or how it might be achieved. Twelve years into the conflict in Iraq, 14 years into the fighting in Afghanistan, after repeated announcements of victory or withdrawal, military action appears only to have replaced the old forms of brutality and chaos with new ones. And yet it continues. War appears to have become an end in itself.

So here comes the UK government, first operating covertly, against the expressed will of parliament, now presenting the authorisation of its bombing in Syria as a test of manhood. Always clear in his parliamentary strategy, never clear in his military strategy, David Cameron seeks to join another failed intervention that is likely only to enhance the spread of terrorism.

Astonishing advances in technology, in military organisation and deployment: all these have made bombing much easier than it used to be, and the consequences harder to resolve.

Twelve years into the conflict in Iraq, 14 years into the fighting in Afghanistan, after repeated announcements of victory or withdrawal, military action appears only to have replaced the old forms of brutality and chaos with new ones

George Monbiot’s book “Feral” was recently released in paperback format. This article was originally published at his web site <http://monbiot.com>

The fury and the farce

David Edwards and David Cromwell discuss the London media's hysterical reaction to almost every word from Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

What to do when your bias has been so naked, so obvious, that it backfires? The political machine knows only one way – carry on regardless!

Last month, 250,000 British Labour party members voted Jeremy Corbyn leader of their party, “the largest mandate ever won by a Party Leader”. The combined might of the political and media establishment had fought and lost its Stalingrad, having bombarded Corbyn with every conceivable smear in a desperate attempt to wreck his reputation with the British public. The more extreme the attacks, the more people caught on. Social media surely played a part in this awakening; but the public simply needed to compare the cynicism with Corbyn’s obvious decency and common sense.

Long lines of media futurologists, having dismissed Corbyn’s prospects, shuffled back to their keyboards in defeat and disarray. The tide truly had turned; something like real democracy had once again broken out in Britain.

So what to do when your bias has been so naked, so obvious, that it backfires? The political machine

Never let the facts get in the way of a story: Britain’s Sun newspaper shows its bias with page one smears on the new Labour leader

knows only one way – carry on regardless!

Thus, the focus has been on Corbyn not singing the national anthem, on whether he would wear a white poppy or a red poppy, or a tie, or do up his top button, or refuse to promise to kneel before the Queen and kiss her hand; all this has been granted national news headlines and incessant coverage.

“At the heart of his dilemma”, opined a *Times* leader (“National Insecurity”, October 1, 2015), “is a reluctance to shift from protest to leadership”. Translating from Murdoch speak, Corbyn has shown a reluctance to shift from principles to obedience in the customary manner.

In his Labour party conference speech, Corbyn generously mocked, rather



than damned, the near-fascistic media coverage, noting that: “According to one headline “Jeremy Corbyn welcomed the prospect of an asteroid ‘wiping out’ humanity.””

With perfect timing, an *Independent* tweet made the point the following day: “Labour MP warns electing Jeremy Corbyn could lead to ‘nuclear holocaust.’”

The comment was a reference to Corbyn’s declaration that he would not “press the nuclear button” in any circumstance, giving the political and media establishment their first sniff at what they hoped was their great “gotcha!”

Dangerous loon?

Rather than celebrating Corbyn as a rare, principled politician sticking to a lifelong commitment shared by many reasonable people, he was portrayed as a dangerous loon risking nuclear annihilation. All without even the hint of a credible threat in sight.

We could provide any number of examples of media propaganda, but a high-profile piece on the BBC’s flagship News at Ten programme on September 30 supplied a truly stand-out performance. Here, BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg featured in an almost comically biased, at times openly scornful, attack on Corbyn’s stance on nuclear weapons.

Kuenssberg started by saying: “Jeremy Corbyn wants debate. Well he’s got one. And has run straight into a clash, saying what no Labour leader has said in recent history: if he was Prime Minister, whatever the threat, he’d never use nuclear weapons.”

The broadcast then showed her interviewing Jeremy Corbyn: “Would you ever push the nuclear button if you were Prime Minister?”

Corbyn replied: “I’m opposed to nuclear weapons. I’m opposed to the holding and usage of nuclear weapons. They’re an ultimate weapon of mass destruction that can only kill millions of civilians if ever used. And I am totally and morally opposed to nuclear weapons. I do not see them as a de-

fence. I do not see them as a credible way to do things...”

LK [interrupting]. “So yes or no. You would never push the nuclear button?”

JC: “I’ve answered you perfectly clearly. It’s immoral to have or use nuclear weapons. I’ve made that clear all of my life.”

LK: “But, Jeremy Corbyn, do you acknowledge there is a risk that it looks to voters like you would put your own principles ahead of the protection of this country?”

The content of the question, together with the obvious emphasis and passion, betrayed where Kuenssberg stood on the matter.

Corbyn responded calmly: “It looks to the voters, I hope, that I’m somebody who’s absolutely and totally committed to spreading international law, spreading international human rights, bringing a nuclear-free world nearer...”

Kuenssberg [interrupting]: “And that’s more important than the protection of this country?”

Kuenssberg sounded incredulous, appeared to be all but scolding Corbyn. Almost as an afterthought, she added: “Some voters might think that.”

This was her token gesture to the BBC’s famed, mythical “impartiality”.

The idea that the possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons might endanger the British public clearly falls outside Kuenssberg’s idea of ‘neutral’ analysis.

Again, Corbyn gave a reasonable response: “We are not under threat from any nuclear power. We’re not under threat from that; we’re under threat from instability.... Listen, the nuclear weapons that the United States holds - all the hundreds if not thousands of warheads they’ve got were no help to them on 9/11.”

What does it say about the BBC that the leader of the opposition, in declaring a commitment to international law and global peace, is portrayed as a danger to the country, if not the world, with no counter-view allowed?

BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg featured in an almost comically biased, at times openly scornful, attack on Corbyn’s stance on nuclear weapon

MEDIA BIAS

What does it say about the BBC that the leader of the opposition, in declaring a commitment to international law and global peace, is portrayed as a danger to the country, if not the world, with no counter-views allowed



Corbyn meets Kuenssberg: “We are not under threat from any nuclear power. We’re not under threat from that; we’re under threat from instability.... Listen, the nuclear weapons that the United States holds - all the hundreds if not thousands of warheads they’ve got were no help to them on 9/11.”

Screen shot from BBC interview

In a longer version of the interview, posted on the BBC News website, Kuenssberg asked a question about Syria that also betrayed her allegiance to an elite ideological view: “Isn’t there a danger, Jeremy Corbyn, as Syria falls to pieces, as Putin flexes his muscles, that, on a whole range of issues, it looks as though you will preside over a party that is discussing everything, rather than leading them anywhere?”

No hint here from the BBC’s political editor that Obama and Cameron might be flexing their “muscles” and leading Syria, like Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, into total disaster. Why does “doing something” always mean bombing in contemporary media discourse? Why is no other course of action conceivable? Why is our media so reflexively violent?

Corbyn replied: “Isn’t it better that you reach consensus and agreement within your party where you can. You recognise the intelligence, the values and the independent thinking of all MPs...”

Again, Kuenssberg interrupted, displaying impatience – perhaps even exasperation: “;..even when [inaudible] changes around you, things happen...”

Corbyn exposed Kuenssberg’s thin veneer of impartiality: “You seem to be stuck in the old politics, if I may say, where leaders dictate and the rest follow or not at their peril.”

Returning to the piece broadcast on BBC News at Ten, Kuenssberg then showed archive footage of Corbyn, presumably from the 1980s, helping to put up an anti-nuclear weapons campaign poster. Her accompanying, shouty voiceover told viewers: “Getting rid of nuclear weapons has always been his ambition. But now he wants to be the Prime Minister. And the Labour Party this week decided to stick to its policy of keeping nuclear weapons – Trident submarines – despite him.”

She continued: “This morning, though, many of his top team seemed aghast that he’d totally ruled out their use, even as a last resort.”

The BBC then broadcast no less than five senior Blairite Labour figures all opposing Corbyn: Andy Burnham, Shadow Home Secretary; Maria Eagle, Shadow Defence Secretary; Hilary Benn, Shadow Foreign Secretary; Angela Eagle, Shadow Business Secretary; Lord Falconer, Shadow Justice Secretary; and Heidi Alexander, Shadow Health Secretary.

The BBC did not allow a single person to express support for Corbyn's very reasonable and popular stance.

Why, for example, did BBC News not interview John McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer? Why not include other prominent Labour figures such as Diane Abbott who notes: "Jeremy Corbyn's critics seem to think that leadership consists of a willingness to kill millions."

Or Bruce Kent, Vice-President of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, who says of Trident: "It is manifestly useless as protection against accidents, suicidal or non-state groups, or simple human error. Their nuclear weapons did nothing to save the US in Vietnam or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan."

Or senior *Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins who writes: "I can recall no head of the army and no serious academic strategist with any time for the Trident missile. It was a great hunk of useless weaponry."

Jenkins goes on to expose the ugly and rarely-reported truth of Trident: "The sole reason for Trident surviving the Blair government's first defence review (on whose lay committee I sat) was the ban on discussing it imposed by the then defence secretary, George Robertson, in 1997. Members

were told to 'think the unthinkable' about everything except Trident and new aircraft carriers. It was clear that Tony Blair and his team had been lobbied, not by the defence chiefs, but by the procurement industry."

Or why not include a spokesperson from Scientists for Global Responsibility? The UK-based organisation says that: "the UK needs to place a much greater focus on the use of scientific and technical resources for tackling the roots of conflict, such as climate change, resource depletion and economic inequality, rather than prioritising the development, deployment and sale of yet more weapons technologies."

Noise and nuance

Kuenssberg claimed in her summing up from the Labour party conference in Brighton that voters were hearing "noise rather than nuance". A sublime example of what psychologists call "projection".

She concluded that Corbyn becoming Labour leader was: "thrilling for many but it's dangerous too. Mr Corbyn may strain to stop disagreements turning into public destructive disputes."

Danger! Threats! The nation is at risk! Ignorance is Strength.

If Corbyn achieves nothing else, we should be grateful that he and his 250,000 supporters have flushed the political and media establishment out of the pages of Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" and into the light. **CT**

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David Edwards and David Cromwell are co-editors of the British media watchdog Medialens – <http://medialens.org>

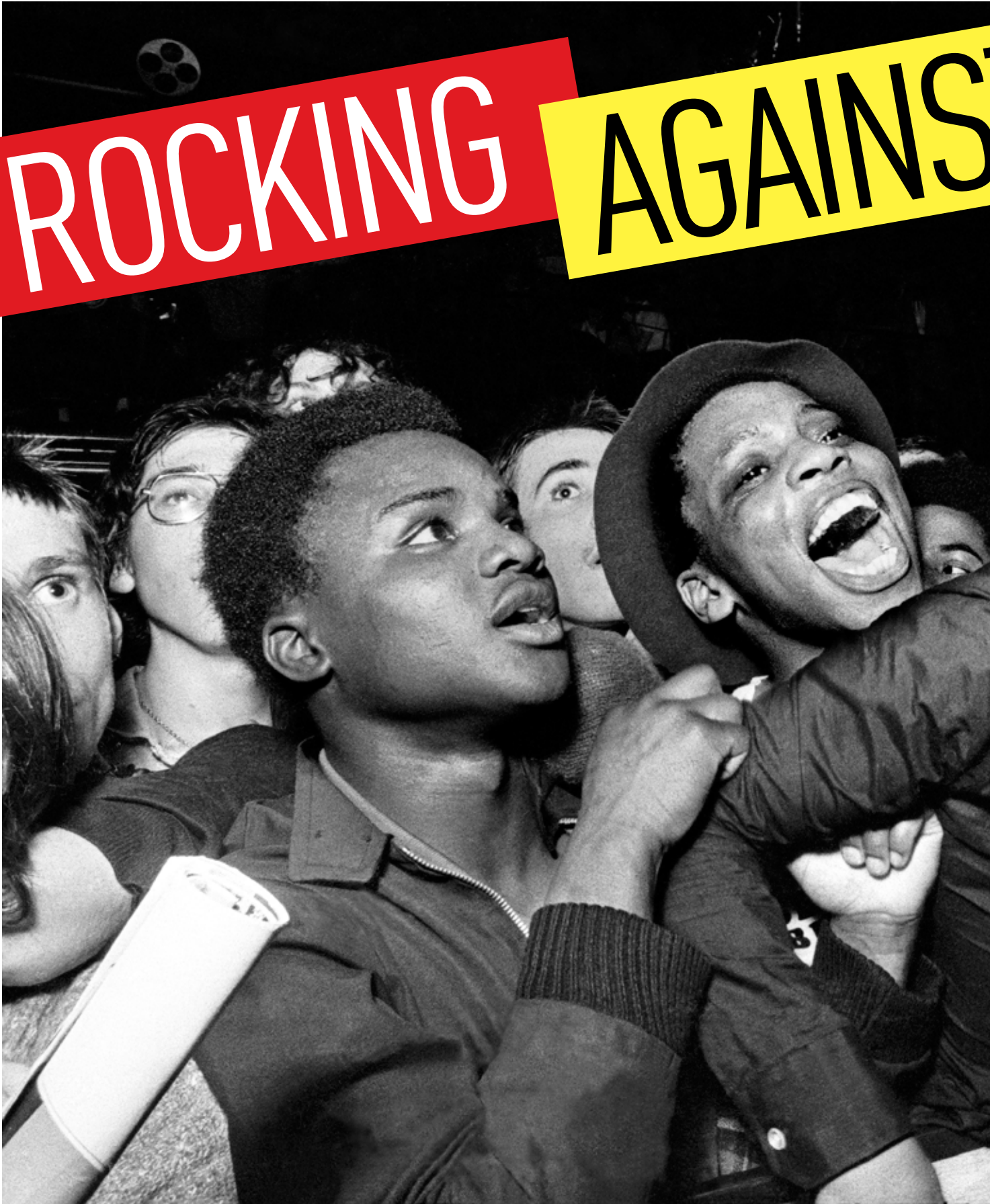
**Danger! Threats!
The nation is at risk!
Ignorance is Strength**

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at: <http://coldtype.net/joe.html>

ROCKING

AGAINST



ST RACISM



Fans of The Specials, Potternewton Park, Leeds, 1981 (All photographs by Syd Shelton, from his new book, *Rock Against Racism*)

IN THE FRAME



Paul Simonon, The Clash, Rock Against Racism / Anti-Nazi League Carnival, Victoria Park, East London, 30 April 1978

Ian Bissell tells the story of the creation of the British musical activist group Rock Against Racism and the work of **Syd Shelton**, one of its key photographers

Britain 1978: The far-right, whites-only National Front had just won 40 percent of the votes in the spring elections in Blackburn; an Asian teenager, Gurdip Singh Chaggar, had been murdered in Southall by a gang of white youths; and punk musicians Sid Vicious and Siouxsie Sioux were wearing swastikas as fashion statements.

In response to this rise of racism and fascism, 100,000 people marched on 30 April 1978, from Trafalgar Square to the East End of London, where violent clashes had taken place between National Front supporters and the local Asian community. Later



Above: Bagga, lead singer of British reggae band Matumbi, Hackney East, London, 1979. Below: Tulse Hill School, Brixton, London, 1977

The spark that led to the formation of Rock Against Racism was a drunken and angry rave by rock and blues guitarist Eric Clapton at the end of a concert in Birmingham

the marchers gathered in Victoria Park for a concert headlining The Clash, Steel Pulse, X-Ray Spex and the Tom Robinson Band. The march and concert had been organized by Rock Against Racism, founded in 1976, bringing together white and black musicians under the banner 'Love Music, Hate Racism'.

The spark that led to the formation of Rock Against Racism was a drunken and angry rave by rock and blues guitarist Eric Clapton at the end of a concert in Birmingham, where he reportedly told the audience that Britain should "throw the wogs out" and repeatedly shouted the National Front slogan "Keep Britain White".

In response to Clapton's comments, a group of political activists wrote an open letter to the music press saying: "Come on Eric... Own up. Half of your music is Black. We want





Above: Fans of the Ruts invade the stage at the Militant Entertainment Tour, West Runton Pavilion, Cromer, Norfolk, 1979.
Below: Demonstrators at the 'Anti-Anti Mugging March' held in response to the National Front's 'Anti-Mugging March', Lewisham, London, 13 August 1977.



ROCK AGAINST RACISM

Syd Shelton,
£30 (Published by
Autograph ABP)
Exhibition at Rivington
Place, London, runs to
December 5 2015.



Mick Jones and Paul Simonon, The Clash, London, 1977

Almost forty years on from the concert in Victoria Park, racism is still prevalent in Britain

Ian Bissell was a South African journalist and trade unionist during the apartheid regime. He was forced to leave in 1987 and is now a political activist and writer based in London

to organize a rank and file movement against the racist poison music” They urged readers to support Rock Against Racism, and within a fortnight received 600 replies.

Rock Against Racism clubs were formed up and down the country and, between 1976 and 1981, hundreds of gigs were held throughout Britain with a heady mix of punk, reggae and ska music. Rock Against Racism showed that music could do more than just entertain, that it could effect change.

Photographer Syd Shelton joined the movement early in 1977 and documented the struggle over the next four years. His images have been collected together in a new book, “Rock Against Racism,” which was launched by Autograph ABP at an exhibition this month in the East End of London.

Shelton’s raw, visceral black-and-white images, dramatically capture the volatility of a country being divided by race and class. The energy, anger and frustration is clear to see

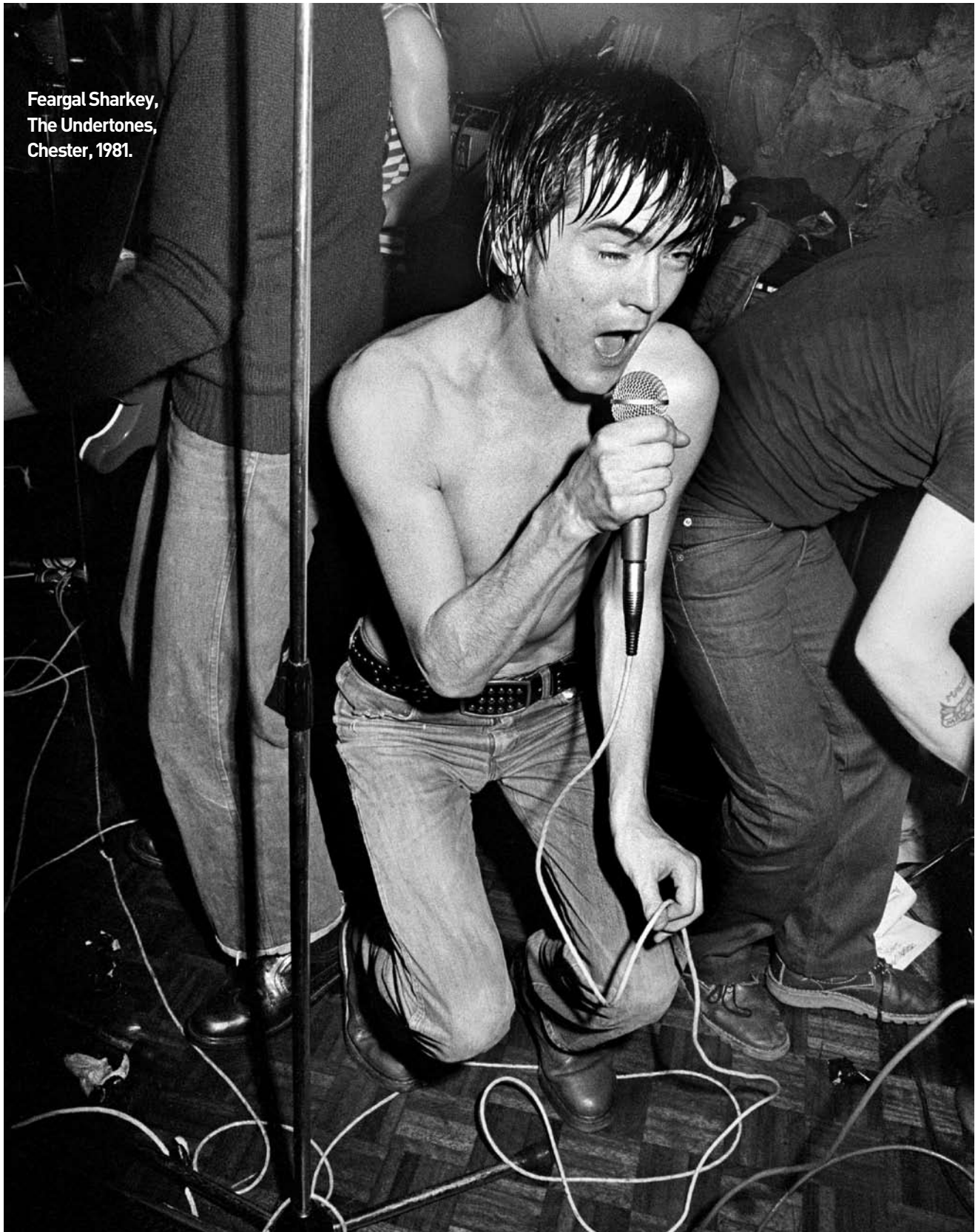
in the faces of the mixed race audiences and the performances by emerging bands such as The Clash, Elvis Costello, Misty in the Roots, Tom Robinson, Au Pairs and The Specials.

His images are a political statement as Shelton explains: “I used my photography during that period as a graphic argument, enabling me to be a subjective witness of the period which could hopefully, contribute to social change”.

They are also a potent example of the political impact of photography and its ability to influence and motivate change. A recent example is the shocking image of a dead Syrian boy on a Turkish beach that turned the tide of public opinion to Europe’s response to fleeing refugees.

Almost 40 years after that concert in Victoria Park, racism is still prevalent in Britain though its subjects are different to those at the time of Shelton’s images. Perhaps it’s time to revive Rock Against Racism. **CT**

Feargal Sharkey,
The Undertones,
Chester, 1981.



The Pope's place in Steinbeck's America

Dell Franklin has some interesting thoughts about Pope Francis and the people he met during his trip to the United States

Does he see people running for our highest office who are stooping to the lowest, most selfish and cynical common denominator so that in the end they can actually shaft these misguided and misinformed fools whose votes they seek?

The great author, John Steinbeck, who appeared to have little use for religion, might have liked this Pope. Steinbeck was all about the little guy who was not blessed with great physical strength, intelligence, drive and luck. He felt those who possessed these rare gifts should try and help those without them, for life and survival was so difficult, the world so merciless and unfair in many cases. I believe this Pope believes those with these gifts should be humble, compassionate and generous, not arrogant, greedy, selfish and inhumane.

So what must this Pope really think of us, while he observes our burgeoning oligarchy disguised as a democracy. What must he think about super pacs supported by billionaires like the Koch brothers, who despise our safety nets and wish to turn the entire country into a company town tossing crumbs to the over-worked peons? I had a political science teacher back in 1962 who warned our class that the greatest threat to our then thriving democracy was capitalism unchecked, in that it would evolve to the degree where money and material items and the trappings of wealth could become more important than our humanity.

So what must the Pope think of mean-spiritedness conservative Catholics like Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Rick Santorum,

Chris Christie, Jeb Bush and a few others so gorged with acrimony and persecution they actually want to de-fund Planned Parenthood and Obamacare, which have been created to help people without the means to help themselves and are therefore cast as parasites so un-American they are dragging down "America's Greatness."

What must the Pope think of Donald Trump's cannibalistic rhetoric, his racism, his bragging, his arrogance, his propensity to intimidate and make people feel small, and the mobs of strictly white hordes steeped in stupidity who idolize him and wish to see his ideas put into action?

Did the Pope see the Republican debates, where Carly Fiorina displayed a hypocrite's adoption of a lie to make her point about fetuses to curry favor with fanatics? Does he see people running for our highest office who are stooping to the lowest, most selfish and cynical common denominator so that in the end they can actually shaft these misguided and misinformed fools whose votes they seek? Did he notice those running for office in America fawn over him for political advantage and that their behavior is nauseating?

I'm sure this Pope assumes our people are good, not that we have become a crumbling empire ripe for demagogues, and that we are thinking only of our own self-gratification instead of the future of the planet



US Secretary of State John Kerry guides Pope Francis towards a receiving line before the pontiff boarded his chartered Boeing 777 at Andrews Air Force Base for a flight to New York. State Department photo

and the concern for those with disease, are homeless, and who suffer daily and seem to feel they have no way out of their situations – here and everywhere throughout the world.

This Pope, who has rankled those bishops in the Vatican who have feathered their own nests with luxury and avoided confronting the sexual abuse of children by their priests and generally behaved like expedient politicians above the people, eschews the trappings of his mantle and associates himself with those who worship what HE, as Pope, represents.

What they should really worship is the man himself, Francis. One wonders do those at the Vatican who for centuries reveled in the luxury, politics and pomp of

their mantles despise Francis for so blatantly eschewing these rewards and driving around in a tiny Fiat. Do they feel he is embarrassing them, show-boating, and a fool? Or do they realize that Francis, having seen the world at its worst and walked among the downtrodden, would feel ashamed of himself to wallow in the materialism success while those still suffer. This Pope leads by example.

This Pope has an aura of greatness, such as we've seen in people like Franklin Roosevelt, Churchill, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, in that whole civilizations liked and trusted these people and would follow them anywhere. Like those forementioned, there is an inclination to feel Francis is one of those very mortal beings

This Pope has an aura of greatness, such as we've seen in people like Franklin Roosevelt, Churchill, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, in that whole civilizations liked and trusted these people and would follow them anywhere

PAPAL VISIT

Donald Trump and those running for office and fawning all over the Pope would probably call Steinbeck a crackpot and probably a communist

who come along once in a lifetime and is special and will make a difference if we just let him, if we listen to what he says, and follow him.

In “Cannery Row”, Steinbeck’s main character, and in many of his books his personal mouth-piece, Doc Ricketts, sits and watches a parade pass by in Monterey and observes some bums and talks to a man named Richard Frost.

‘It has always seemed strange to me,” said Doc. “The things we admire in men, kindness and generosity, openness, understanding and feeling are the concomitants of failure in our system. And those traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest

are the traits of success. And while men admire the quality of the first they love the produce of the second.”

The Pope would know where he stood with one of our greatest writers. Donald Trump and those running for office and fawning all over the Pope would probably call Steinbeck a crackpot and probably a communist. What about the rest of the country? What do we really think of what Steinbeck said and what Pope Francis preaches as we exalt him? **CT**

Dell Franklin is a long-time journalist and founder of the Rogue Voice literary magazine. He blogs at <http://dellfranklin.com>

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The Black Panthers are back in town

Reese Erlich watches a new documentary about the controversial Black militant organisation that shook the US establishment in the late sixties

Seeing a documentary on the Black Panthers while sitting next to Bobby Seale is quite an experience. As we watch a press preview of the film in an East Oakland home, the co-founder of the Panthers sometimes calls out the names of old comrades as they appear on screen, or he corrects an occasional error in the film.

The documentary to be aired on PBS, “The Black Panther Party: Vanguard of the Revolution,” has a dramatic moment describing the 1969 Chicago 8 trial when Seale demanded the right to defend himself. The Chicago federal judge refused, and he ordered Seale shackled and gagged. As the film played audio tape of the scene, Bobby Seale, sitting next to me, recreates the sound of his speaking through the gag: “I want my freedom! I want my right to defend myself!”

“The Black Panther Party” is the latest in series of feature films and documentaries about the Oakland group that shook the establishment then – and causes controversy even today. Right wingers claim the film ignores criminal and thuggish behavior by the group. Seale and others criticize the film for not digging deep enough into black liberation history.

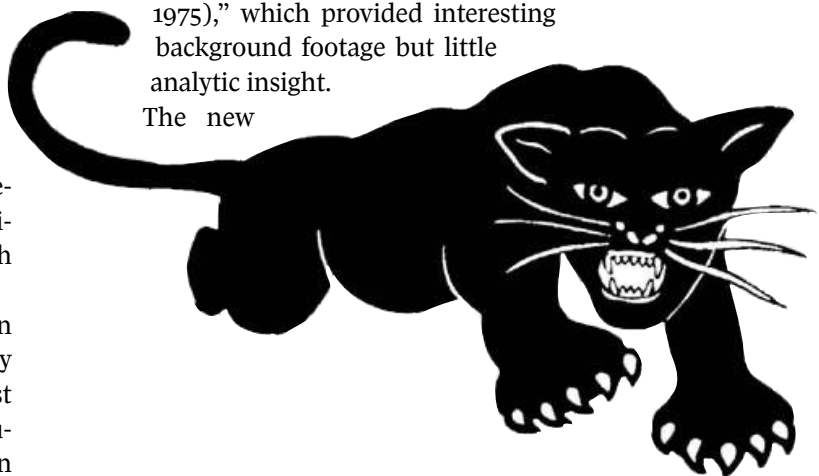
In 1966 Bobby Seale and Huey Newton co-founded the Panthers in Oakland. They fought police brutality, established breakfast for children programs and called for revolution. The group quickly attracted support in

the African American community but also among Latino, Asian and white activists. The FBI and local police brutally attacked the Panthers. Such luminaries as Marlon Brando, Jane Fonda and Leonard Bernstein opposed the government crackdown. By the mid 1970s, however, the Panthers ceased to function, due to harsh repression and serious political mistakes.

Since then a wide variety of film makers have taken a shot at explaining the Panther phenomena. Mario van Peebles directed a 1995 feature film “Panther,” which was politically sympathetic to the Panthers but a cinematic failure. In 2001 Spike Lee directed “A Huey P. Newton Story,” a dramatic one man show about Newton’s life. In 2011 Swedish journalists produced a documentary, “The Black Power Mixtape, (1967-1975),” which provided interesting background footage but little analytic insight.

The new

The FBI and local police brutally attacked the Panthers. Such luminaries as Marlon Brando, Jane Fonda and Leonard Bernstein opposed the government crackdown



BREAKFASTS AND BRUTALITY

Nowadays right wingers from white suburbs carry arms into Starbucks in defense of the Second Amendment right to bear arms. In 1966 African Americans legally carrying guns caused a 'right wing freak out', as it would today



Black Panther leader Bobby Seale at a John Sinclair Freedom Rally. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

PBS documentary, by African American director Stanley Nelson, takes the best shot yet. Nelson combines interviews with over a dozen ex-Panthers, archival footage, 1960s R&B songs and an original score. He shows that Panthers had a cultural as well as political impact. The Panthers' trademark natural Afro hair styles, dark glasses and black leather jackets became wildly popular.

The documentary reminds us that police brutality goes back long before the current Black Lives Matter protests. In 1966 the Panthers sought to deter police misconduct by following Oakland police patrolling in black neighborhoods. They openly carried loaded weapons, perfectly legal at the time.

Nowadays right wingers from white suburbs carry arms into Starbucks in defense of the Second Amendment right to bear arms. In 1966 African Americans legally carrying guns caused a 'right wing freak out', as it

would today. Then-Governor Ronald Reagan and conservative legislators quickly moved to ban the carrying of loaded firearms without a special permit.

The documentary builds tension as Panthers carry arms to Sacramento to protest the gun law changes. Bobby Seale and other Panthers were arrested, but the incident electrified the black community and made the group nationally famous.

After the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, Panther membership grew from 400 to a peak of 5000, with 49 chapters around the country, according to Seale. Referring to the system, Seale told me, "You killed Malcolm X. You killed Martin Luther King. And all you did was to cause my organization to spread across the United States of America."

As the Panthers grew, local police and the FBI cracked down hard. The FBI imple-

mented the secret Counter Intelligence Program (CONINTELPRO) aimed at stopping all black revolutionaries through direct attacks and by fomenting violent dissent between and among groups. The film shows with chilling accuracy the FBI and local police conspiracy to murder Chicago Panther leader Fred Hampton and dozens of others around the country.

The documentary includes interviews with former police officers and FBI agents, but clearly sides with the Panthers. And that pro-Panther perspective irks right-wing critics.

One reviewer in the Daily Beast attacked the documentary for failing to mention Panther torture and murder, even of their own members. Panthers did kill one another, particularly after a political split that pitted followers of Huey Newton against those of Eldridge Cleaver, an ultra leftist later turned Christian conservative.

Bobby Seale points out that that government agents instigated much of that violence. “Those shootings happened because they had infiltrators to encourage party members to fight each other,” he said.

However, the Panthers always skated a thin line between revolutionary and criminal activity. As a source of fund raising, some Panthers partnered with criminals to rob banks and deal drugs. Particularly after the Newton-Cleaver split, criminality became more common.

“Huey got into the drug trade,” said Seale. Seale says Newton was bipolar, with serious alcohol and drug addiction problems. He agrees with the former Panthers in the documentary who say the party had created a cult of personality around “a fucking maniac.” Newton died in 1989 during a drug deal gone bad.

Seale criticizes the documentary because it doesn’t delve deeply enough into the role played by the FBI and undercover agents. He also says the film fails to provide enough information about the Party’s organizing strategy and electoral plans in the early

1970s. Seale gives the film a rating of 5 on a scale of 10.

Elaine Brown, Panther chair in the mid-70s, criticized the documentary in the *New York Times*. She said the documentary turned Panther history into “a two-dimensional palliative for white people and Negroes who are comfortable in America’s oppressive status quo.”

Greg Morozumi, an organizer with the Oakland cultural group East Side Arts Alliance, viewed the documentary with Seale and I. He notes that the documentary is extremely timely because of the current mass movement against police brutality. But he says the “film doesn’t place the Panthers in a broader context of the black power and black liberation movements of the time.” None of the other black revolutionary groups of that era are even mentioned, he notes.

Such criticisms notwithstanding, “The Black Panther Party” serves as an excellent introduction to the political and cultural impact of the Panthers. Hopefully even better documentaries will come along next fall for the Party’s 50th anniversary.

“The Black Panther Party” is playing in select theaters nationwide and will air in the winter of 2016 on the PBS series *Independent Lens*.

CT

Reese Erlich is a journalist who writes frequently on foreign policy, arts, and culture. His most recent book is “Inside Syria: The Backstory of Their Civil War and What the World Can Expect”, with a foreword by Noam Chomsky (Prometheus Books). His web site is <http://reeseerlich.com> Twitter: @ReeseErlich

Bobby Seale points out that government agents instigated much of the violence



A mother thinks the unthinkable

Frida Berrigan wrestles with her fears for the future of her daughter

When I'm 85, it will be 2059, and what will that look like? When my grandkids are my age now, it could be almost a new century. And what will our planet look like then?

Madeline is in the swing, her face the picture of delight. “Mo, mo,” she cries and kicks her legs to show me that she wants me to push her higher and faster. I push, and push, and push with both hands. There is no thought in my head except for her joy. I'm completely present in this moment. It's perfection. Madeline embodies the eternal now and she carries me with her, pulling me out of my worries and fears and plans.

But not forever: after a few minutes, my mind and eyes wander. I take in the whole busy playground, crowded with toddlers plunging headlong into adventure and their attendant adults shouting exhortations to be careful, offering snacks, or lost in the tiny offices they carry in their hands. It's a gorgeous day. Sunny and blue and not too hot, a hint of fall in the breeze. And then my eye is caught by a much younger mom across the playground trying to convince her toddler that it's time to go.

When Madeline graduates from high school, I will be 57. Jeez, I think, that mom will still be younger than I am now when her kid walks across that stage. If I live to be 85, Madeline will be 46 and maybe by then I'll have some grandkids. In fact, I'm suddenly convinced of it. Between Madeline and her three-year-old brother Seamus and their eight-year-old sister Rosena, I will defi-

nately live to see grandkids. I reassure myself for the millionth time that having kids in my late thirties was totally fine.

And then another thought comes to mind, the sort of thought that haunts the parents of this moment: When I'm 85, it will be 2059, and what will that look like? When my grandkids are my age now, it could be almost a new century. And what will our planet look like then? And I feel that little chill that must be increasingly commonplace among other parents of 2015.

And then I'm gone. You wouldn't know it to look at me. After all, I'm still pushing the swing, still cooing and chatting with my buoyant 18-month-old daughter, but my mind is racing, my heart is pounding. This playground will not be here. This tranquil, stable, forever place wasn't built to last 100 years, not on a planet like this one at this moment anyway.

I look around and I know. None of this — the municipal complex, the school across the street, the supermarket up the road — is built for 100 years, especially not this hundred years. It won't last. And I can't imagine a better future version of this either. What comes to mind instead are apocalyptic images, cheesy ones cribbed from “The Walking Dead”, that zombie series on AMC; *The Day After*, a 1980s made-for-TV dramatization of a nuclear attack on the United States; Cor-

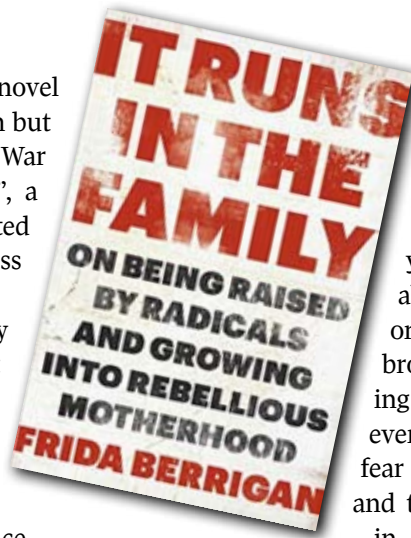
mac McCarthy's haunting novel "The Road"; Brad Pitt's grim but ultimately hopeful "World War Z"; and "The Water Knife", a novel set in the western United States in an almost waterless near future.

They all rush into my head and bump up against the grainy black-and-white documentary footage of Hiroshima in 1945 that I saw way too young and will never forget. This place, this playground, empty, rusted, submerged in water, burned beyond recognition, covered in vines, overrun by trees. Empty. Gone.

Then, of course, Madeline brings me back to our glorious present. She wants to get out of the swing and hit the slides. She's fearless, emphatic, and purposeful. She deserves a future. Her small body goes up those steps and down the slide over and over and over again. And the rush of that slide is new every time. She shouts and laughs at the bottom and races to do it again. Now. Again. Now. This is reality. But my fears are real, too. The future is terrifying. To have a child is to plant a flag in the future and that is no small responsibility.

We have nothing to fear but...

We mothers hear a lot these days about how to protect our children. We hear dos and don'ts from mommy magazines, from our own mothers, our pediatricians, each other, from lactation experts and the baby formula industry, from the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration, from Doctor Bob Sears, from sociologists and psychiatrists and child development specialists. We are afraid for our kids who need to be protected from a world of dangers, including strangers, bumblebees, and electrical outlets.



IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY
Being Raised by Radicals
and Growing into
Rebellious Motherhood
Frida Berrigan

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Such threats are discussed, dissected, and deconstructed constantly in the media and ever-newer ones are raised, fears you never even thought about until the nightly news or some other media outlet brought them up. But hanging over all these humdrum, everyday worries is a far bigger fear that we never talk about and that you won't read about in that mommy magazine or see in any advice column. And yet, it's right there, staring us in the face every single day, constant, existential, too big to name.

We can't say it, but we are increasingly afraid of the future, of tomorrow, afraid for our children in ways that, in themselves, are frightening to bring up. It's as diffuse as "anything can happen" and as specific as we are running out of _____ [fill in the blank: clean water, fossil fuels, space for people, arable land, cheap food stuffs, you name it]. Even if the supply of whatever you chose to think about isn't yet dwindling in our world, you know that it will one of these days. Whatever it is, that necessity of everyday life will be gone (or too expensive for ordinary people) by _____ [2020, 2057, 2106].

It's paralyzing to look at Madeline and think such thoughts, to imagine an ever-hotter planet, ever-less comfortable as a home not just for that vague construct "humanity," but for my three very specific children, not to speak of those grandchildren of my dreams and fantasies.

It's something that's so natural to push away. Who wouldn't prefer not to think about it? And at least here, in our world, on some level we can still do that.

For those of us who are white and western and relatively financially stable, it's still

My fears are real. The future is terrifying. To have a child is to plant a flag in the future and that is no small responsibility

I don't want to be paralyzed in the face of catastrophic climate change or any other looming calamity

possible to believe we're insulated from disaster — or almost possible anyway. We can hold on to the comfort that our children are unlikely to be gunned down or beaten to death by police, for example. We can watch the news and feel sadness for the mass exodus out of Syria and all those who are dying along the way, but those feelings are tinged with relief in knowing that we will not be refugees ourselves.

But for how long? What if?

They say: enjoy your kids while they're young; pretty soon they'll be teenagers. Haha, right? Actually, I'm excited about each stage of my kids' lives, but Madeline won't be a teenager until 2027. According to climate scientists and environmentalists, that may already be “past the point of no return.” If warming continues without a major shift, there will be no refreezing those melting ice shelves, no holding back the rising seas, no scrubbing smog-clogged air, no button we can press to bring water back to parched landscapes.

These are things I know. This is a future I, unfortunately, can imagine. These are the reasons I try to do all the right things: walk, eat mostly vegetarian, grow some of our own food, conserve, reuse, reduce, recycle. We had solar panels installed on our roof. We only have one car. We're trying, but I know just as well that such lifestyle choices can't turn this around.

It will take everyone doing such things — and far more than that. It will require governments to come to their senses and oil companies to restrain the urge to get every last drop of fossil fuel out of the ground. It will take what Naomi Klein calls a “Marshall Plan for the Earth.” In her groundbreaking and hopeful book, “This Changes Everything”, she writes,

“I am convinced that climate change represents a historic opportunity on an even greater scale [than the New Deal]. As part of the project of getting our emissions down to the levels many scientists recommend, we once again have the chance to advance poli-

cies that dramatically improve lives, close the gap between rich and poor, create huge numbers of good jobs, and reinvigorate democracy from the ground up.”

Which brings me to fear and how it paralyzes. I don't want to be paralyzed in the face of catastrophic climate change or any other looming calamity. I want to be motivated and spurred to action not by an apocalyptic vision of our local playground engulfed in flames or submerged under several feet of water, but by the potential for the brighter future than is surely within our grasp — within my grasp today and Madeline's in some future that she truly deserves.

Preparing for the unthinkable

Growing up, I heard this a lot: “Don't be so First World, Frida.”

That's what Phil Berrigan — former priest, brazenly nonviolent activist, tireless organizer for peace and justice — would tell me, his eldest daughter. If I was flippant or tweenish, that's what he would always say. “Don't be so First World.” It was his rejoinder when I asked for spending money or permission to go to the movies. What he meant was: regulate your wants, consider others, be comfortable being alone, put yourself second, listen, be in solidarity, choose the harder path.

My father's admonishment sounds a discordant note amid today's morass of parenting messages with their emphasis on success and ease and happiness. But it prepared me for much of what I encountered along the road to adulthood and it resonates deeply as I parent three children whose futures I cannot imagine. Not really. Will they have clean water, a home, a democracy, a playground for their children? Will they be able to buy food — or even grow it? Will they be able to afford transportation? I don't know.

What I can do is prepare them to distinguish needs from wants, to share generously and build community, to stand up for what they believe and not stand by while others are abused. When, as with Madeline at

that playground, the unspoken overwhelms me, I wonder whether I shouldn't sooner or later start teaching them how the world works and basic skills that will serve them well in an uncertain future: what electricity is and how to start a fire, how to navigate by the stars, how to feed themselves by hunting and gathering, how to build a shelter or find and purify water, or construct a bicycle out of parts they come across on the road to perdition.

The only problem is that, like most of my peers and friends, I actually don't know how to do any of that (except maybe for the bicycle building), so I better get started. I should also be planting nut trees in our backyard and working for global nuclear disarmament. I can help New London (a water's edge community) be prepared and more resilient in the face of rising sea levels and be active in our local Green Party.

I know that there's no simple solution, no easy or individual fix to what's coming

down the road. I know as well that there is no future except the one we are making right now, this second, again and again and again. And in our world, I call that hope, not despair. Perhaps you could just as easily call it folly. Call it what you will. I don't have a label for my parenting style. I'm not a helicopter mom or a tiger mom. But like a lot of other people right now, whether they know it or not, realize it or not, I am parenting on the brink of catastrophe. I'm terrified for my children, but I am not paralyzed and I know I am not alone, which makes me, despite everything, hopeful, not for myself, but for Madeline. **CT**

Frida Berrigan writes the Little Insurrections blog for WagingNonviolence.org, is the author of It Runs In The Family: On Being Raised By Radicals and Growing Into Rebellious Motherhood, and lives in New London, Connecticut. This essay originally appeared at <http://tomdispatch.org>

Like a lot of other people right now, whether they know it or not, realize it or not, I am parenting on the brink of catastrophe

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A long time for killing

Cops have recently been in the headlines for their violence against unarmed people, but there's nothing new there, writes **Michael Parenti**

Raiding the wrong house and shooting its frightened inhabitants became a regular pastime

Today, across the United States, we witness homicidal violence delivered against unarmed people by law enforcement officers. These beatings and killings are carried out with something close to impunity. The cops almost always get away with murder. Moreover, these crimes are nothing new; they are longstanding in practice.

A study of police brutality in three major cities – conducted just about half a century ago in 1967 – found that all the victims had one thing in common: they were from low-income groups. Other studies, however, showed that it often was enough just to be Black, even if middle class. Take the case of Carl Newland, an African-American, 48-year-old accountant who happened to be walking by a newsstand that had just been robbed one evening in 1975. He was roughed up by the police, then brought before the newsstand clerk, who emphatically denied that Newland was the stickup man. Nevertheless, because of his “belligerent attitude” he was taken to jail and severely beaten by the police, according to statements by several prisoners. He died in his cell that same night. Consider some other cases.

About a half century ago, a Black man was forced to lie face down in a Detroit motel and a policeman cold-bloodedly

pumped a bullet into his head.

- At about that same time, a 10-year-old Black boy walking with his foster father in Queens, New York, was killed by a plainclothes policeman who leaped from his unmarked car, firing away without identifying himself, shouting “Hey niggers!”

- A White “hippie” (as counterculture people were called in the late 1960s and 1970s), finding his home suddenly surrounded by unidentified, armed men in Humboldt County, California, fled in terror out the back door only to be shot dead by county police and narcotic agents surrounding his house, the wrong house. Raiding the wrong house and shooting its frightened inhabitants became a regular pastime decades ago. “Fighting crime” and “fighting the drug war” were the call of the day.

- A 12-year-old Chicano boy in Dallas, arrested as a burglary suspect, was shot through his head by a cop.

- A Black shell-shocked Vietnam veteran was killed by two police on a Houston street as he reached into his pocket to take out a Bible.

- In Champaign, Illinois, in 1970, a frightened African American bookstore employee attempted flight when police menacingly approached his car. He was shot in the back. The culpable officer

was indicted for voluntary manslaughter, released on a \$5,000 bond and soon found “not guilty” by an all-White, middle-American jury.

- In Cambridge, Massachusetts, an Italian-American, working-class youth was beaten to death by cops in a police van.

- A New York policeman shot a 22-year-old Black college student who was standing with his hands in the air. Then the cop planted a toy pistol next to the victim’s body.

- A Chicano youth in Houston was taken to a secluded spot by cops, beaten until unconscious, then thrown into a bayou to drown.

- A Black youth, who was attempting to retrieve a basketball in a schoolyard, was shot through the head by Chicago police.

One could go on and on with stories from years past about how the courageous Thin Blue Line repeatedly saved us with their endless killings.

Today, sparked by body-cam videos and social media, people are giving more attention to eye-witness accounts of such frightful events. Our Boys in Blue are being challenged by groups such as Black Lives Matter. But let us not overlook the many who were victimized by police during the late 1960s and 1970s and who are still with us, not merely in memory but in actuality. That is to say, a substantial number of those unjustly convicted long-ago are still in prison today. We all can name some of them: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Herman Bell, Janine Africa, Hugo Pinell, and others. Consider also the lesser known cases. One that I have in mind is Gary Tyler.

In 1974 in Louisiana, a bus carrying Black children was attacked by a mob of Whites, some of whom were armed. According to the bus driver, a gun was fired from the attacking crowd. The shot

missed the bus but killed a White youth in the surrounding crowd. The police arrived and forced the Black students out of the bus and to their knees. One of them, Gary Tyler (16-years-old at the time) was arrested for “interfering with an officer.” What he actually did was voice his objection to the deputy sheriff’s putting a gun to the heads of kneeling Black students.

The police claimed they found a gun on the bus but it curiously turned out to be a police revolver with no fingerprints. Nevertheless Gary was charged with being the possessor of the gun and murderer of the White youth. He was convicted by an all-White jury and sentenced to die in the electric chair. The prosecution’s case rested entirely on two witnesses, both of whom recanted their testimony. Both charged that police had coerced them into fingering Tyler. The police had threatened to take one witness’ child away from her and charge her as an accessory to the killing. In any case, the judge refused to grant a new trial. Gary ended up with a life sentence and no chance of parole.

This 16-year old student, Gary Tyler, had attempted to calm a snarling officer who was uttering threats while pointing his loaded weapon at the heads of Black school children. Gary could sense the rage emitting from the trigger-happy cops. Over the years many of us have confronted police in one or another such situation. Nowadays we get numerous same-day recordings of “cops gone wild” with pile-on beatings and shootings of unarmed civilians. On each occasion the local police department announces, “The incident is under investigation.” The killer cop usually is given “administrative leave with pay,” or what some of us would call “paid vacation.”

The police tell us that the victim was reaching for his waist band or was holding a cellphone in his hand that looked

The police said the victim was reaching for his waist band or was holding a cellphone in his hand that looked like a gun – certainly enough like a gun to perforate him with a deluge of bullets

IS THIS JUSTICE?

Innocent people continue to be victimized by a law enforcement system capable of the most venal acts both within the community and in the courtroom

like a gun – certainly enough like a gun to perforate him with a deluge of bullets. The public hears the cop’s familiar story. When attorneys and media ask for more information, what we get is what the police department decides they want us to see. Before too long, the accused cop is kindly stroked by a White, suburban Grand Jury and an obligingly soft-handed prosecutor who has his own eye on a more elevated juridical or political office, and who therefore does not want to offend his war-against-crime White constituency.

Gary Tyler is now 57 years old. He has been in prison since he was 16. He will likely remain incarcerated for the rest of his life unless the numerous pleas from around the country and from countries around the world should start having

some impact. There are scores of prisoners of political note, and hundreds of others like Gary who were just in the wrong place or just speaking up against the potentially lethal behavior of police. They continue to be victimized by a law enforcement system capable of the most venal acts both within the community and in the courtroom, taking away whole lifetimes of innocent people by use of street executions or judicial killings or perpetual incarcerations – an abuse of justice that is beyond measure. **CT**

Michael Parenti’s most recent books are “Waiting for Yesterday: Pages from a Street Kid’s Life (an ethnic memoir)” and “Profit Pathology and Other Indecencies”. Read other articles by Michael, or visit his website, <http://michaelparenti.org>

HURWITT’S EYE

Mark Hurwitt



The insecure security

A poem by **Philip Kraske**

Thousands of people make my nation secure,
Concerned for my safety, how touching, how pure.
But hard as they try and send cameras aloft,
I still get the feeling I'm no better off.

My firm might be purchased, the Chinese might steal
Our great techno-feat that derives from a peel.
That boy with a Glock might do show and tell,
And blow kids and coach and teachers to hell.

The dentist off-rips me, the plumber – oh my!
Insurers all gyp me, and Google's a spy.
Even the burger I buy down at Earl's
Consists of mule meat and bits of red squirrels.

The weather gets hotter and doesn't abate,
Yet on we continue to shop and to skate.
I'd like to conserve and go 'round without gas,
But find me a chick who digs guys with bus pass!

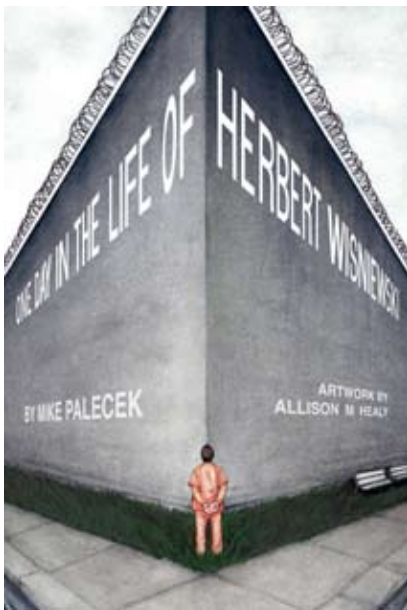
Abroad there's ISIL or whatever the name.
Roving the desert and enjoying some fame.
I really don't grudge them their day as top dog,
Until they start looking for sinners to flog.

Amazed they'd be at the fear all this urges,
The ten-hour meetings and budgeting splurges
On strong-arm black outfits that offer great pay,
Great jobs with great perks as way back in the day

All this at ten thousand kilom's from black flags,
Where teens spend their dough to wear blue jean rags.
And police go crazy on army sur-plus,
No cop on the beat, just robots-R-us.

All this as debt goes so high and so queasy,
I sorely perceive it cannot be easy,
To defend our corner and half Asia's too,
And pay those big bills with derivative stew.

Philip Kraske lives in Madrid, Spain, where he teaches English on a freelance basis and does some translation. His four novels, of varied plots but centering on American politics and society, began to appear in 2009. His web site is <http://philipkraske.com>



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SEE EXCERPT BEGINNING ON PAGE 56

Israel again lights the touchpaper at al-Aqsa

Slingshots and guns come face to face in Jerusalem as a third intifada seems more likely with each day that passes, writes **Jonathan Cook**

Palestinian access has been restricted and settlers have stepped up seizures of Palestinian homes in occupied East Jerusalem to encircle al-Aqsa

Since a boy named David slew the giant Goliath with a slingshot, the stone has served as an enduring symbol of how the weak can defeat an oppressor.

For the past month Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tried to rewrite the Bible story by declaring war on what he terms Palestinian “terrorism by stones”.

There are echoes of Yitzhak Rabin’s response nearly 30 years ago when, as defence minister, he ordered soldiers to “break bones” to stop a Palestinian uprising, often referred to as the “intifada of stones”, against the Israeli occupation.

Terrified by the symbolism of women and children throwing stones at one of the world’s strongest armies, Rabin hoped broken arms would deprive Palestinians of the power to wield their lowly weapon.

Now the West Bank and Jerusalem are on fire again, as Palestinian youths clash with the same oppressors. Reports suggest soldiers killed one Palestinian youth and injured more than 100 others on earlier this month. Talk of a third intifada grows louder by the day.

The touchpaper, as so often, is Israel’s transgressions at the al-Aqsa mosque compound, known as Haram al-Sharif, in Jerusalem’s Old City.

During the weeks of Israel’s high holi-

days, tensions have risen sharply. Israeli government ministers and ever larger numbers of Jewish ultra-nationalists, backed by paramilitary forces, have been ascending to the mosque area.

In parallel, Palestinian access has been restricted and settlers have stepped up seizures of Palestinian homes in occupied East Jerusalem to encircle al-Aqsa.

Palestinians believe Israel is asserting control over the site to change the long-standing “status quo” designed to keep Islamic authorities in charge.

Israel refers to the Haram as the Temple Mount, because the ruins of two ancient Jewish temples supposedly lie underneath. As Israel has swung to the right politically and religiously, government and settler circles have been swept by an aggressive Jewish messianism.

Barred from city

Palestinian efforts to resist have been limited. Israel has long barred Palestinian factions and organisations from any dealings in the city it calls its “eternal capital”.

The situation at al-Aqsa has come to symbolise in painful microcosm the Palestinian story of dispossession.

The mosque has also served as a red line, both because it is a powerful cause that unites all Palestinians, including Christians and the secular, and because it

rallies the wider Arab and Muslim worlds to the Palestinians' side.

But like Goliath, the Israeli prime minister appears to assume greater force will win.

First, he outlawed last month a group of Islamic guardians, many of them women, known as the Murabitoun, stationed at al-Aqsa. They had not even resorted to stones. Their crime was to try to deter Jewish extremists from praying at the site by crying "God is great".

Then, Israeli police stormed the compound to evict youths who had barricaded themselves in. Severe restrictions on Palestinian access to al-Aqsa followed.

As youngsters took to the streets, Mr Netanyahu authorised live fire against stone-throwers in Jerusalem, and minimum four-year jail sentences for those arrested.

Judges threatened

To ensure the judiciary complied, the police minister threatened the promotion of judges whose sentencing was not harsh enough. Predictably, violence has not calmed but spiralled. Early this month, a Palestinian youth stabbed to death two Jewish settlers near the Western Wall.

Israel has described such incidents as "lone-wolf attacks". In truth, these unpredictable outbursts of violence are the inevitable result of the orphaned status of Palestinians in Jerusalem.

Israel responded with another unprecedented move. Palestinians were banned from the Old City for the following 48 hours unless they lived or worked there. Israel's track record suggests this will soon become the new norm.

Mr Netanyahu also approved fast-track demolitions of Palestinian homes, more soldiers in Jerusalem and even tighter restrictions at al-Aqsa.

So where is this heading?

Doubtless Mr Netanyahu is in part proving his credentials to an ever-more religious and intolerant Israeli public. After

Saturday's deaths, Jewish mobs once again patrolled Jerusalem's streets seeking vengeance.

But he is also cynically exploiting western fears to reinvent the David and Goliath story. He hopes the words "Islamic terrorism" – conjuring up Islamic State's threats to religious freedom – will scotch western sympathy for Palestinian youths facing armed soldiers.

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, warned in his speech to the United Nations that Israeli measures were "aimed at imposing a new reality and dividing Haram al-Sharif temporally".

These are not idle fears. In 1994 Israel capitalised on a horrific massacre of Palestinians perpetrated by a Jewish settler, Baruch Goldstein, at the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron to justify dividing it.

Today, Jews have prayer rights at the site, enforced by Israeli guns, and central Hebron has been turned into a ghost-town – much as Jerusalem's Old City looks since the weekend ban on entry for Palestinians.

Most Palestinians fear an Israeli-engineered spiral of violence in Jerusalem will be used to impose a similar division at al-Aqsa.

There is little Abbas can do. His PA is barred from Jerusalem and committed to helping Israeli security elsewhere. Like the Muslim world, he watches helplessly from afar.

Which is why Palestinian youths will continue reaching for the humble stone, exerting what little power they have against a modern Goliath.

CT

Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His latest books are "Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East" (Pluto Press) and "Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair" (Zed Books). His website is www.jonathan-cook.net.

Mr Netanyahu authorised live fire against stone-throwers in Jerusalem, and minimum four-year jail sentences for those arrested

The revolutionary act of telling the truth

John Pilger speaks at the launch of a new book about Wikileaks

Every time we turn on a computer or pick up a digital device – our secular rosary beads – we are subjected to control: to surveillance of our habits and routines, and to lies and manipulation

George Orwell said, “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.”

These are dark times, in which the propaganda of deceit touches all our lives. It is as if political reality has been privatised and illusion legitimised. The information age is a media age. We have politics by media; censorship by media; war by media; retribution by media; diversion by media - a surreal assembly line of clichés and false assumptions.

Wondrous technology has become both our friend and our enemy. Every time we turn on a computer or pick up a digital device – our secular rosary beads – we are subjected to control: to surveillance of our habits and routines, and to lies and manipulation.

Edward Bernays, who invented the term, “public relations” as a euphemism for “propaganda”, predicted this more than 80 years ago. He called it, “the invisible government”.

He wrote, “Those who manipulate this unseen element of [modern democracy] constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country ... We are

governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of ...”

The aim of this invisible government is the conquest of us: of our political consciousness, our sense of the world, our ability to think independently, to separate truth from lies.

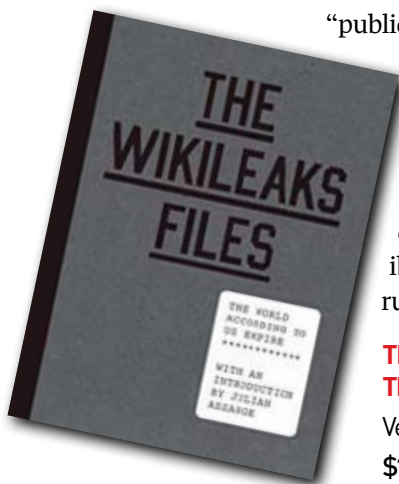
This is a form of fascism, a word we are rightly cautious about using, preferring to leave it in the flickering past. But an insidious modern fascism is now an accelerating danger.

As in the 1930s, big lies are delivered with the regularity of a metronome. Muslims are bad. Saudi bigots are good. ISIS bigots are bad. Russia is always bad. China is getting bad. Bombing Syria is good. Corrupt banks are good. Corrupt debt is good. Poverty is good. War is normal.

Those who question these official truths, this extremism, are deemed in need of a lobotomy – until they are diagnosed on-message. The BBC provides this service free of charge. Failure to submit is to be tagged a “radical” – whatever that means.

Real dissent has become exotic; yet those who dissent have never been more important. The book I have just helped launch, “The WikiLeaks Files”, is an antidote to a fascism that never speaks its name.

It’s a revolutionary book, just as WikiLeaks itself is revolutionary – exactly as Orwell



THE WIKILEAKS FILE
The World According to US Empire

Verso

\$16,47 (Amazon.com)

meant in the quote I used at the beginning. For it says that we need not accept these the daily lies. We need not remain silent. Or as Bob Marley once sang: “Emancipate yourself from mental slavery.”

In the introduction, Julian Assange explains that it is never enough to publish the secret messages of great power: that making sense of them is crucial, as well as placing them in the context of today and historical memory.

That is the remarkable achievement of this anthology, which reclaims our memory. It connects the reasons and the crimes that have caused so much human turmoil, from Vietnam and Central America, to the Middle East and Eastern Europe, with the matrix of rapacious power, the United States.

There is currently an American and European attempt to destroy the government of Syria. Prime Minister David Cameron is especially keen. This is the same David Cameron I remember as an unctuous PR man employed by an asset stripper of Britain’s independent commercial television.

Cameron, Obama and the ever obsequious Francois Hollande want to destroy the last remaining multi-cultural authority in Syria, an action that will surely make way for the fanatics of ISIS.

Justifying insanity

This is insane, of course, and the big lie justifying this insanity is that it is in support of Syrians who rose against Bashar al-Assad in the Arab Spring. As “The WikiLeaks Files” reveals, the destruction of Syria has long been a cynical imperial project that pre-dates the Arab Spring uprising against Assad.

To the rulers of the world in Washington and Europe, Syria’s true crime is not the oppressive nature of its government but its independence from American and Israeli power – just as Iran’s true crime is its independence, and Russia’s true crime is its independence, and China’s true crime is its independence. In an American-owned world,

independence is intolerable.

This book reveals these truths, one after the other. The truth about a war on terror that was always a war of terror; the truth about Guantanamo, the truth about Iraq, Afghanistan, Latin America.

Never has such truth-telling been so urgently needed. With honourable exceptions, those in the media paid ostensibly to keep the record straight are now absorbed into a system of propaganda that is no longer journalism, but anti-journalism. This is true of the liberal and respectable as it is of Murdoch. Unless you are prepared to monitor and deconstruct every specious assertion, so-called news has become unwatchable and unreadable.

Reading “The WikiLeaks Files”, I remembered the words of the late Howard Zinn, who often referred to “a power that governments can’t suppress”. That describes WikiLeaks, and it describes true whistleblowers who share their courage.

On a personal note, I have known the people of WikiLeaks for some time now. That they have achieved what they have in circumstances not of their choosing is a source of constant admiration. Their rescue of Edward Snowden comes to mind. Like him, they are heroic: nothing less.

Sarah Harrison’s chapter, ‘Indexing the Empire’, describes how she and her comrades set up an entire Public Library of US Diplomacy. There are more than two million documents, now available to all. “Our work,” she writes, “is dedicated to making sure history belongs to everyone.” How thrilling it is to read those words, which also stand as a tribute to her own courage.

From the confinement of a room in the Ecuadorean embassy in London, the courage of Julian Assange is an eloquent response to the cowards who have smeared him and the rogue power seeking revenge on him and waging a war on democracy.

None of this has deterred Julian and his comrades at WikiLeaks: not one bit. Isn’t that something? **CT**

To the rulers of the world in Washington and Europe, Syria’s true crime is not the oppressive nature of its government but its independence from American and Israeli power

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John Pilger’s film “Cambodia Year Zero”, which has been credited with alerting the world to the terrors of the Pol Pot regime, has just been named one of ITV’s 60 Greatest Programs



This little piggy went to Manchester . . .

Anti-Tory protesters hog the limelight

Why were demonstrators at the British Tory annual conference wearing pig masks? Read on to find out. Photos: **Ian Betley**. Words: **Ian Bissell**



This little piggy met a Tory . . .



This little piggy joined a protest . . .

Demonstrators pouring into Manchester for the Conservative party's annual conference could not resist the opportunity to poke fun at UK prime minister, David Cameron, after news of his alleged indiscretion with a dead pig while at Oxford University became public. Pig masks were seen in abundance at the anti-austerity demonstration organised by the TUC and the People's Assembly.

In an unauthorized biography, "Call me Dave", co-written by former deputy Conservative Party chairman Lord Ashcroft, released prior to the conference, it is alleged that Cameron put his private parts in the mouth of a dead pig as part of a university

IN THE FRAME



This little piggy was a capitalist swine . . .

society initiation ritual. Not exactly the kind of PR that the Tories would have liked leading up to their first conference since winning an overall majority in the May elections.

Spin was certainly the order of the day at the Tory's annual shindig. Cameron sought to position the party as champions of "working people" and crusaders for "social justice against the 'scourge of poverty' "

Behind this rhetoric, however, the Tory government is busy pushing through cuts to tax credits that will leave three million low-paid working families £1,300 a year worse off, while at the same time cutting corporation tax and slashing inheritance tax to the benefit of the wealthiest. This is combined with an unprecedented crackdown on trade unions, with plans to criminalise picketing, permit employers to hire strike-breaking agency staff and choke off the flow of union funds to the Labour party.

The battle lines are now drawn between the Conservative's David Cameron – a polished politician who won't allow truth to spoil his well-crafted rhetoric – and Labour's new leader Jeremy Corbyn – an authentic, principled "man of the people", seeking to change politics. Polish vs. Principle. Interesting times. **CT**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN BETLEY – Ian Betley is a Cheshire-based photographer with a passion for events and people photography across the UK. See more of his work at <http://betleyimages.com>



This little piggy preferred apples . . .



This little piggy shouted out against injustice . . .



And this little piggy had a warning . . .

British prime minister David Cameron allegedly put his private parts in the mouth of a dead pig as part of a university society initiation ritual

When Glasgow said No to the landlords

Recent housing protests in London echo the Glasgow rent strikes that took place 100 years ago, writes **Gerry Mooney**

Glasgow was an industrial powerhouse, the “second city of the Empire”. It was an important producer of the armaments of war – and of soldiers for the front line

Anger over government housing policy is undoubtedly one of the running themes of this decade. Most recently we have seen anti-gentrification protests in east London over people being pushed out due to huge increases in private rent costs and a lack of social housing, which made headlines for targeting the hipster Cereal Killer Cafe in Brick Lane.

This is an era of severe shortages in social housing, aggravated by Tory plans to extend the right to buy scheme to housing associations. We have seen staggering increases in the costs of private renting, dwindling owner occupation and of course the bedroom tax. The London protests were a reaction to the effective social cleansing of working-class residents by Tory/Lib Dem coalition policy. Local tenants’ organisations and protest groups have also been formed to co-ordinate discontent. Meanwhile, Corbyn’s Labour is proposing the biggest social-housing programme since the 1970s.

This is exactly 100 years after the Glasgow rent strikes of 1915, another period that lacked affordable and decent rental accommodation and squeezed those who could least afford it. World War I saw numerous rent strikes in different towns and cities around the

UK including Leeds, Sheffield and Wolverhampton in 1913-14, but the Glasgow protests were the ones that transformed the country and ultimately brought forth state policies for working-class housing.

It is vital to appreciate the context of Clydeside at that time. Glasgow was an industrial powerhouse, the “second city of the Empire”. It was an important producer of the armaments of war – and of soldiers for the front line. The city had grown enormously during its Victorian heyday, and this continued in the early 20th century as the huge needs of the war industries boosted migration to the city.

By the mid-1910s, the city was suffering from acute overcrowding problems. In early 1915 private landlords took advantage to announce that rents would increase by up to 25%. They had a virtual monopoly over working-class housing, which put them in a powerful position, and they would not have expected much opposition at a time when so many men were away fighting in France.

Yet the Glasgow Women’s Housing Association, established before 1914 to

fight for better housing conditions, soon galvanised growing discontent over the increases by calling for a city-wide rent strike (and note the parallels to the current London





No surrender: The Glasgow rent strike of 1915.

Photo: Wikipedia

Led overwhelmingly by women such as Mary Barbour and Helen Crawford, this tenants' movement was instrumental in the fight against the landlords

protests, in which women have been heavily involved). Early support from the areas closest to the shipyards, such as Govan and Partick, where tens of thousands were crammed into poorly maintained tenements, soon spread across much of the city.

By September 1915 around 20,000 households were on rent strike in Glasgow alone, and the protests were spreading to other parts of the west of Scotland and beyond. Street-level organisation by working-class women ensured that when court officials arrived to evict those refusing to pay rent, they were met by strong opposition. Sheriff officers were forcibly prevented from entering tenement closes to carry out evictions. When 18 tenants were prosecuted in November 1915 for not paying their rent, it led to huge demonstrations by the tenants' movement.

Led overwhelmingly by women such as Mary Barbour and Helen Crawford, this tenants' movement was instrumental in the fight against the landlords. It led to growing numbers of shipyard and industrial workers agitating for better working conditions and wages, which prompted fears from the government that a Bolshevik-style revolution would break out on what was increasingly viewed as "Red Clydeside". Barbour and other

leaders of the rent strike were active socialists in the Independent Labour Party, which was then strong on Clydeside.

Faced with the threat of a class war at a time when the country desperately needed to unite against foreign enemies, the government felt forced to intervene in late 1915 by passing a Rent Restrictions Act that froze rents at pre-war levels. After securing this famous victory, municipal housing provision came to be seen as a right. It paved the way to further tenant demands that led to the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 in which council housing was born.

The campaigns of 1915 also went on to inform opposition to the poll tax in the late 1980s and early 1990s and then more recently the bedroom tax. Bedroom-tax protesters have paid tribute to Barbour by singing about belonging to "Mary's army", for instance. We can also thank the Glasgow protests for the growth of tenants' organisations and campaigns for more affordable accommodation and council housing. It is all a reminder of the power of people to bring change, just like the Jeremy Corbyn election and the Scottish Yes campaign – another protest currently celebrating its anniversary. So much changes, so much stays the same. **CT**

.....
Gerry Mooney
is senior lecturer in Social Policy and Criminology, at The Open University. This article originally appeared at <http://theconversation.com>

Rebels, but not slaves

Ana Stevenson discusses the outrage created by comparing the Suffragette movement to slavery in promotions for a new film

Pankhurst's quote speaks to one of the greatest rifts in the history of feminism

It was at a 1913 meeting for the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in London that suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst cried: "I would rather be a rebel than a slave."

Pankhurst was a militant campaigner for women's voting rights, a calling that meant she and many others were imprisoned repeatedly by British authorities.

The story of the political opposition experienced by these early-twentieth-century activists is told in the upcoming film "Suffragette", which made headlines this month after Pankhurst's words were used in a marketing campaign to promote it.

Response to the campaign – which involved the film's stars, including Meryl Streep (who plays the role of Pankhurst), donning t-shirts emblazoned with the contentious slogan – was swift: Buzzfeed noted people's "upset" reactions and Vulture deemed the choice of slogan "unfortunate", while The Mary Sue described it as "tone-deaf".

So why the outcry? Pankhurst's quote speaks to one of the greatest rifts in the history of feminism. Not only does it suggest an analogy can be drawn between women and slaves. It also suggests that slavery was a choice, ignoring the competing privileges and injustices derived from race and class.

It demonstrates how the interests of women of colour are seen as peripheral to women's rights activism, when in fact they should

be at its centre. In the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere, such language has been used to overlook how racial, class and gender oppression intersect.

A history of antislavery and women's rights

Before the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade, liberty versus tyranny – slavery versus freedom – were linguistic flourishes frequently used by Enlightenment philosophers.

Though this language had not yet attained clear racial overtones, hypocritical paradoxes soon emerged.

The political theory of Enlightenment philosopher John Locke relied heavily on the rhetoric of liberty versus tyranny. But, according to James Farr, Locke was "a merchant adventurer in the African slave trade" who promoted England's colonial policy.

A similar lexicon inspired protofeminist philosophers and social reformers. Mary Astell, in "Some Reflections Upon Marriage" (1730), asked: "If all Men are born Free, how is it that all Women are born Slaves?"

As Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart demonstrate in *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the "Era of Emancipation"* (2007), the nineteenth-century foundations of the antislavery and women's rights movement were intertwined.

For many social reformers, rhetorical slip-



Suffragette's stars: Carey Mulligan, Meryl Streep, Romola Garai and Anne-Marie Duff.

© Mary Rozzi/TimeOut

page occurred when describing the oppression of abducted and enslaved Africans and that of women, so racial overtones became increasingly common.

Women “may be convenient slaves”, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792), “but slavery will have its constant effect, degrading the master and the abject dependent.”

Historian Moira Ferguson observes more than 80 such comparisons in Wollstonecraft’s book. Some refer directly to chattel slavery in European colonies; others focus on slavery as a metaphor for unfreedom.

Similarly, British poet and printmaker William Blake’s 1796 etching, “Europe Supported by Africa and America”, linked the oppression of women to racial exploitation in European colonies.

Alongside the power imbalances borne of colonialism, this rhetoric had negative implications for the way Europeans engaged with non-white people. Ferguson describes the rhetorical reliance on slavery as “Anglo-Africanism”: “a colonialist discourse about

slavery that unwittingly intensified negative attitudes towards Africans in general and slaves in particular”.

The comparison between women and slaves became even more prevalent amongst US social reformers. Here, chattel slavery was so much more tangible because of its geographic proximity.

This analogy was ingrained in the reform vocabulary of US antislavery and women’s rights reformers such as Sarah and Angelina Grimké and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. These women were also pioneer suffragists for movements in the US and the UK.

However, Indian and other non-white women were also intrinsic to transnational women’s movements. African American women such as Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells were at the forefront of the antislavery, women’s rights and anti-lynching movements.

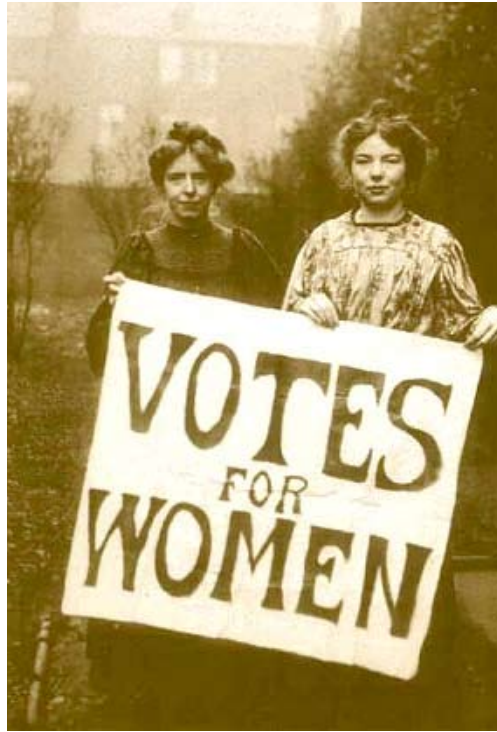
But internationally, Leila J. Rupp argues, white women reformers tended to forge bonds between one another.

In addition, prominent white suffragists

This rhetoric had negative implications for the way Europeans engaged with non-white people

FIGHTING WOMEN / 2

“Suffragette” seems particularly concerned with the exploitation of working class women, an issue that can be overlooked due to the tendency to focus on privileged middle-class white women



Left, Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst used violent tactics in Britain as members of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). Right, Sojourner Truth was a prominent early fighter for women’s suffrage, as well as a leading campaigner against slavery. Pictures: Wikipedia

like Stanton sidelined the efforts of women of colour. They also infused their women’s rights arguments with white supremacy, using violent language to justify what they saw as the greater importance of white women’s rights.

Laura Clay, the founder of Kentucky’s first suffrage organisation, wrote: “The white men, reinforced by the educated white women, could “snow under” the Negro vote in every State, and the white race would maintain its supremacy without corrupting or intimidating the Negroes”.

Similarly, Rebecca Felton, the first female Senator in the US, argued: “I do not want to see a negro man walk to the polls and vote [...] while I myself cannot vote at all. [...] If it needs lynching to protect woman’s dearest possession from the ravening human beasts – then I say lynch, a thousand times a week if necessary”.

The history of women’s rights, suffrage and feminism is infused with white women’s

racist diatribes. Such utterances demonstrate a systematic misunderstanding of racial and class oppression.

Making and remembering history

So how does “Suffragette” fit in? It is a film that clearly has good intentions.

It will likely have a historically sound narrative, pass the Bedchel test and doubtless be uplifting.

“Suffragette” seems particularly concerned with the exploitation of working class women, an issue that can be overlooked due to the tendency to focus on privileged middle-class white women.

It will also create positive images of defiant suffragists, unlike the ridicule produced by anti-suffragists or the negative popular culture depictions of characters such as Mrs Banks from *Mary Poppins* (1964).

But even Mrs Banks echoes Pankhurst when she encourages women to “cast off the shackles of yesterday” in the song Sis-

ter Suffragette.

When creating historical memory, however, there is the constant danger of repeating the problems of the past.

Much black feminist scholarship critiques the power hierarchies of feminism. As bell hooks writes in *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), nineteenth-century black women understood that “true freedom entailed not just liberation from a sexist social order that systematically denied all women full human rights.”

In “All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave” (1982), Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith identify another key paradox: if scholars of race are primarily concerned with men, and scholars of gender focus on white women, where do women of colour fit in?

This gap is where the theory of intersectionality comes in. Since oppression and privilege are derived from many different sources – gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion – the way these factors interlock must not be taken for granted, as they have been in the past.

The way British suffragettes used the language of slavery and tyranny, according to Laura E. Nym Mayhall, led them toward militant social protest. Routine imprisonment and force feeding meant their references to “shackles” did not necessarily mean chattel slavery.

Yet, as the Pankhurst quote demonstrates, they also did mean slavery. Specifically chattel slavery? Sometimes yes, sometimes no; but suffragists were certainly aware of the connection, and exploited it largely for the benefit of white women.

This permeated the historical memory the suffragettes created. Emmeline’s daughter Christabel Pankhurst entitled her history of the British movement *Unshackled: The Story of How we Won the Vote* (1959).

Even today, the politics of remembering is tainted by the tendency to remember white women’s history. This system of erasure is re-

peated by the celebrations surrounding the suffrage centennials.

Rebel, yes; slave, no

From a historical perspective, then, the use of this Pankhurst quote is not only accurate; it’s all too familiar.

If we look to Pankhurst’s many other speeches, as Bustle suggests, we would certainly find less offensive quotations. But we would also find more of the same.

In a June 1912 editorial for the WSPU newspaper *Votes for Women*, Christabel Pankhurst wrote: “Woman Suffrage [...] is a case of one sex being held in bondage by the other sex”.

And Emmeline Pankhurst’s autobiography *My Own Story* (1914) concluded: “For men to remain silently quiescent while tyrannical rulers impose bonds of slavery upon them is cowardly and dishonourable, but for women to do that same thing is [...] merely respectable”.

To understand the suffragettes, we need to consider what they said and why they said it; to view them as the fallible products of their time as well as the radicals they were.

And today, it is worth emphasising that Meryl Streep, Carey Mulligan, Romola Garai and Anne-Marie Duff are rich, privileged, white women who are celebrity movie stars – certainly not slaves.

There is a perversity in claiming otherwise when racial discrimination and domestic violence remain very present concerns; ISIS are selling Yazidi women as sex slaves; and thousands of adults and children continue to fall victim to human trafficking worldwide every year.

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Routine imprisonment and force feeding meant the suffragettes references to “shackles” did not necessarily mean chattel slavery

Henry of Arabia

Greg Grandin shows how Henry Kissinger helped create our dangerous and 'proliferated' world

Kissinger has a long history of involvement in Iran and his recent opposition to Barack Obama's Iran nuclear deal, while relatively subdued by present Washington standards, matters

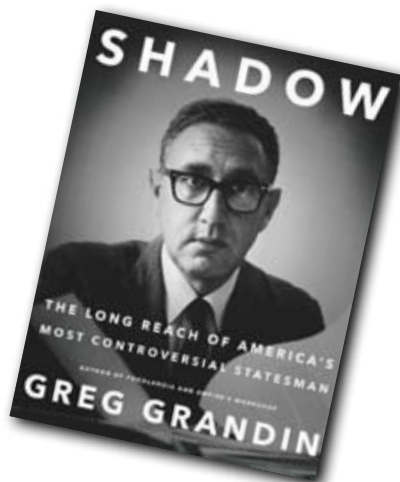
The only person Henry Kissinger flattered more than President Richard Nixon was Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. In the early 1970s, the Shah, sitting atop an enormous reserve of increasingly expensive oil and a key figure in Nixon and Kissinger's move into the Middle East, wanted to be dealt with as a serious person. He expected his country to be treated with the same respect Washington showed other key Cold War allies like West Germany and Great Britain. As Nixon's national security adviser and, after 1973, secretary of state, Kissinger's job was to pump up the Shah, to make him feel like he truly was the "king of kings."

Reading the diplomatic record, it's hard not to imagine his weariness as he prepared for his sessions with the Shah, considering

just what gestures and words would be needed to make it clear that his majesty truly mattered to Washington, that he was valued beyond compare. "Let's see," an aide who was helping Kissinger get ready for one such meeting said, "the Shah will want to talk about Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, the Kurds, and Brezhnev."

During another prep, Kissinger was told that "the Shah wants to ride in an F-14." Silence ensued. Then Kissinger began to think aloud about how to flatter the monarch into abandoning the idea. "We can say," he began, "that if he has his heart set on it, okay, but the President would feel easier if he didn't have that one worry in 10,000 [that the plane might crash]. The Shah will be flattered." Once, Nixon asked Kissinger to book the entertainer Danny Kaye for a private performance for the Shah and his wife.

The 92-year-old Kissinger has a long history of involvement in Iran and his recent opposition to Barack Obama's Iran nuclear deal, while relatively subdued by present Washington standards, matters. In it lies a certain irony, given his own largely unexamined record in the region. Kissinger's criticism has focused mostly on warning that the deal might provoke a regional nuclear arms race as Sunni states led by Saudi Arabia line up against Shia



SHADOW:
**The Long Reach
of America's Most
Controversial Statesman**
Greg Grandin
Metropolitan Books
\$15.40 (Amazon.com)



Henry's version: Kissinger speaks to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos in 2008

Iran. “We will live in a proliferated world,” he said in testimony before the Senate. In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed co-authored with another former secretary of state, George Shultz, Kissinger worried that, as the region “trends toward sectarian upheaval” and “state collapse,” the “disequilibrium of power” might likely tilt toward Tehran.

Of all people, Kissinger knows well how easily the best laid plans can go astray and careen toward disaster. The former diplomat is by no means solely responsible for the mess that is today’s Middle East. There is, of course, George W. Bush’s 2003 invasion of Iraq (which Kissinger supported). But he does bear far more responsibility for our proliferated world’s disequilibrium of power than anyone usually recognizes.

Some of his Middle East policies are well known. In early 1974, for instance, his so-called shuttle diplomacy helped deescalate the tensions that had led to the previous year’s Arab-Israeli War. At the same time, however, it locked in Israel’s veto over US foreign policy for decades to come. And

in December 1975, wrongly believing that he had worked out a lasting pro-American balance of power between Iran and Iraq, Kissinger withdrew his previous support from the Kurds (whom he had been using as agents of destabilization against Baghdad’s Baathists). Iraq moved quickly to launch an assault on the Kurds that killed thousands and then implemented a program of ethnic cleansing, forcibly relocating Kurdish survivors and moving Arabs into their homes. “Even in the context of covert action ours was a cynical enterprise,” noted a Congressional investigation into his sacrifice of the Kurds.

Less well known is the way in which Kissinger’s policies toward Iran and Saudi Arabia accelerated the radicalization in the region, how step by catastrophic step he laid the groundwork for the region’s spiraling crises of the present moment.

Guardian of the Gulf

Most critical histories of US involvement in Iran rightly began with the joint British-US

Kissinger knows well how easily the best laid plans can go astray and careen toward disaster

KISSINGER'S LEGACY

By 1976, Kissinger's last full year in office, Iran had become the largest purchaser of American weaponry and housed the largest contingent of US military advisors anywhere on the planet

coup against democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953, which installed Pahlavi on the Peacock Throne. But it was Kissinger who, in 1972, greatly deepened the relationship between Washington and Tehran. He was the one who began a policy of unconditional support for the Shah as a way to steady American power in the Persian Gulf while the US extracted itself from Southeast Asia. As James Schlesinger, who served as Nixon's CIA director and secretary of defense, noted, if "we were going to make the Shah the Guardian of the Gulf, we've got to give him what he needs." Which, Schlesinger added, really meant "giving him what he wants."

What the Shah wanted most of all were weapons of every variety – and American military trainers, and a navy, and an air force. It was Kissinger who overrode State Department and Pentagon objections and gave the Shah what no other country had: the ability to buy anything he wanted from US weapons makers.

"We are looking for a navy," the Shah told Kissinger in 1973, "we have a large shopping list." And so Kissinger let him buy a navy.

By 1976, Kissinger's last full year in office, Iran had become the largest purchaser of American weaponry and housed the largest contingent of US military advisors anywhere on the planet. By 1977, the historian Ervand Abrahamian notes, "the shah had the largest navy in the Persian Gulf, the largest air force in Western Asia, and the fifth-largest army in the whole world." That meant, just to begin a list, thousands of modern tanks, hundreds of helicopters, F-4 and F-5 fighter jets, dozens of hovercraft, long-range artillery pieces, and Maverick missiles. The next year, the Shah bought another \$12 billion worth of equipment.

After Kissinger left office, the special relationship he had worked so hard to establish blew up with the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the flight of the Shah, the coming to

power of Ayatollah Khomeini, and the taking of the US Embassy in Tehran (and its occupants as hostages) by student protesters. Washington's political class is still trying to dig itself out of the rubble. A number of high-ranking Middle East policymakers and experts held Kissinger directly responsible for the disaster, especially career diplomat George Ball, who called Kissinger's Iran policy an "act of folly."

Kissinger is deft at deflecting attention from this history. After a speech at Annapolis in 2007, a cadet wanted to know why he had sold weapons to the Shah of Iran when "he knew the nature of his regime?"

"Every American government from the 1950s on cooperated with the Shah of Iran," Kissinger answered. He continued: "Iran is a crucial piece of strategic real estate, and the fact that it is now in adversarial hands shows why we cooperated with the Shah of Iran. Why did we sell weapons to him? Because he was willing to defend himself and because his defense was in our interest. And again, I simply don't understand why we have to apologize for defending the American national interest, which was also in the national interest of that region."

This account carefully omits his role in greatly escalating the support provided to the Shah, including to his infamous SAVAK torturers – the agents of his murderous, US-trained secret police-cum-death-squad – who upheld his regime. Each maimed body or disappeared family member was one more click on the road to revolution. As George Ball's biographer, James Bill, writes: considering the "manifest failure" of Kissinger's Iran policy, "it is worthy of note that in his two massive volumes of political memoirs totalling twenty-eight-hundred pages, Kissinger devoted less than twenty pages to the Iranian revolution and US-Iran relations."

After the Shah fell, the ayatollahs were the beneficiaries of Kissinger's arms largess, inheriting billions of dollars of warships, tanks, fighter jets, guns, and other

materiel. It was also Kissinger who successfully urged the Carter administration to grant the Shah asylum in the United States, which hastened the deterioration of relations between Tehran and Washington, precipitating the embassy hostage crisis.

Then, in 1980, Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Iran, beginning a war that consumed hundreds of thousands of lives. The administration of Ronald Reagan "tilted" toward Baghdad, providing battlefield intelligence used to launch lethal sarin gas attacks on Iranian troops. At the same time, the White House illegally and infamously trafficked high-tech weaponry to revolutionary Iran as part of what became the Iran-Contra affair.

"It's a pity they can't both lose," Kissinger is reported to have said of Iran and Iraq. Although that quotation is hard to confirm, Raymond Tanter, who served on the National Security Council, reports that, at a foreign-policy briefing for Republican presidential nominee Ronald Reagan in October 1980, Kissinger suggested "the continuation of fighting between Iran and Iraq was in the American interest." Having bet (and lost) on the Shah, Kissinger now hoped to make the best of a bad war. The US, he counselled Reagan, "should capitalize on continuing hostilities."

Saudi Arabia and the petrodollar fix

Kissinger's other "guardian" of the Gulf, Sunni Saudi Arabia, however, didn't fall and he did everything he could to turn that already close relationship into an ironclad alliance. In 1975, he signaled what was to come by working out an arms deal for the Saudi regime similar to the one he had green-lighted for Tehran, including a \$750 million contract for the sale of 60 F-5E/F fighters to the sheiks. By this time, the US already had more than a trillion dollars' worth of military agreements with Riyadh. Only Iran had more.

Like Tehran, Riyadh paid for this flood of weaponry with the proceeds from rising

oil prices. The word "petrodollar," according to the *Los Angeles Times*, was coined in late 1973, and introduced into English by New York investment bankers who were courting the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. Soon enough, as that paper wrote, the petrodollar had become part of "the world's macroeconomic interface" and crucial to Kissinger's developing Middle Eastern policy.

By June 1974, Treasury Secretary George Shultz was already suggesting that rising oil prices could result in a "highly advantageous mutual bargain" between the US and petroleum-producing countries in the Middle East. Such a "bargain," as others then began to argue, might solve a number of problems, creating demand for the US dollar, injecting needed money into a flagging defense industry hard hit by the Vietnam wind-down, and using petrodollars to cover mounting trade deficits.

As it happened, petrodollars would prove anything but a quick fix. High energy prices were a drag on the US economy, with inflation and high interest rates remaining a problem for nearly a decade. Nor was petrodollar dependence part of any preconceived Kissingerian "plan." As with far more of his moves than he or his admirers now care to admit, he more or less stumbled into it. This was why, in periodic frustration, he occasionally daydreamed about simply seizing the oil fields of the Arabian peninsula and doing away with all the developing economic troubles.

"Can't we overthrow one of the sheikhs just to show that we can do it?" he wondered in November 1973, fantasizing about which gas-pump country he could knock off. "How about Abu Dhabi?" he later asked. (Imagine what the world would be like today had Kissinger, in the fall of 1973, moved to overthrow the Saudi regime rather than Chile's democratically elected president, Salvador Allende.) "Let's work out a plan for grabbing some Middle East oil if we want," Kissinger said.

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KISSINGER'S LEGACY

Kissinger has to answer for his role in the rise of political Islam

Such scimitar rattling was, however, pure posturing. Not only did Kissinger broker the various deals that got the US hooked on recycled Saudi petrodollars, he also began to promote the idea of an “oil floor price” below which the cost per barrel wouldn’t fall. Among other things, this scheme was meant to protect the Saudis (and Iran, until 1979) from a sudden drop in demand and provide US petroleum corporations with guaranteed profit margins.

Stephen Walt, a scholar of international relations, writes: “By the end of 1975, more than six thousand Americans were engaged in military-related activities in Saudi Arabia. Saudi arms purchased for the period 1974-1975 totaled over \$3.8 billion, and a bewildering array of training missions and construction projects worth over \$10 billion were now underway.”

Since the 1970s, one administration after another has found the iron-clad alliance Kissinger deepened between the House of Saud’s medieval “moderates” and Washington indispensable not only to keep the oil flowing but as a balance against Shia radicalism and secular nationalism of every sort. Recently, however, a series of world-historical events has shattered the context in which that alliance seemed to make sense. These include: the catastrophic war on and occupation of Iraq, the Arab Spring, the Syrian uprising and ensuing civil war, the rise of ISIS, Israel’s rightwing lurch, the conflict in Yemen, the falling price of petroleum, and, now, Obama’s Iran deal.

But the arms spigot that Kissinger turned on still remains wide open. According to the *New York Times*, “Saudi Arabia spent more than \$80 billion on weaponry last year – the most ever, and more than either France or Britain – and has become the world’s fourth-largest defense market.” Just as they did after the Vietnam draw-down, US weapons manufacturing are compensating for limits on the defense budget at home by selling arms to Gulf states. The “proxy wars in the Middle East could last

for years,” write Mark Mazzetti and Helene Cooper of the *New York Times*, “which will make countries in the region even more eager for the F-35 fighter jet, considered to be the jewel of America’s future arsenal of weapons. The plane, the world’s most expensive weapons project, has stealth capabilities and has been marketed heavily to European and Asian allies. It has not yet been peddled to Arab allies because of concerns about preserving Israel’s military edge.”

If fortune is really shining on Lockheed and Boeing, Kissinger’s prediction that Obama’s de-escalation of tensions with Tehran will sooner or later prompt Saudi – Iranian hostilities will pan out. “With the balance of power in the Middle East in flux, several defense analysts said that could change. Russia is a major arms supplier to Iran, and a decision by President Vladimir Putin to sell an advanced air defense system to Iran could increase demand for the F-35, which is likely to have the ability to penetrate Russian-made defenses,” the *Times* reports.

“This could be the precipitating event: the emerging Sunni-Shia civil war coupled with the sale of advanced Russian air defense systems to Iran,” said one defense analyst. “If anything is going to result in F-35 clearance to the gulf states, this is the combination of events.”

Into Afghanistan

If all Henry Kissinger contributed to the Middle East were a regional arms race, petrodollar addiction, Iranian radicalization, and the Tehran-Riyadh conflict, it would be bad enough. His legacy, however, is far worse than that: he has to answer for his role in the rise of political Islam.

In July 1973, after a coup in Afghanistan brought to power a moderate, secular, but Soviet-leaning republican government, the Shah, then approaching the height of his influence with Kissinger, pressed his advantage. He asked for even more military

assistance. Now, he said, he “must cover the East with fighter aircraft.” Kissinger complied.

Tehran also began to meddle in Afghan politics, offering Kabul billions of dollars for development and security, in exchange for loosening “its ties with the Soviet Union.” This might have seemed a reasonably peaceful way to increase US influence via Iran over Kabul. It was, however, paired with an explosive initiative: via SAVAK, the Shah’s secret police, and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), extremist Islamic insurgents were to be slipped into Afghanistan to destabilize Kabul’s republican government.

Kissinger, who knew his British and his Russian imperial history, had long considered Pakistan of strategic importance. “The defense of Afghanistan,” he wrote in 1955, “depends on the strength of Pakistan.” But before he could put Pakistan into play against the Soviets in Afghanistan, he had to perfume away the stink of genocide. In 1971, that country had launched a bloodbath in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), with Nixon and Kissinger standing “stoutly behind Pakistan’s generals, supporting the murderous regime at many of the most crucial moments,” as Gary Bass has detailed. The president and his national security adviser, Bass writes, “vigorously supported the killers and tormentors of a generation of Bangladeshis.”

Because of that genocidal campaign, the State Department, acting against Kissinger’s wishes, had cut off military aid to the country in 1971, though Nixon and Kissinger kept it flowing covertly via Iran. In 1975, Kissinger vigorously pushed for its full, formal restoration, even as he was offering his tacit approval to Maoist China to back Pakistan whose leaders had their own reasons for wanting to destabilize Afghanistan, having to do with border disputes and the ongoing rivalry with India.

Kissinger helped make that possible, in part by the key role he played in build-

ing up Pakistan as part of a regional strategy in which Iran and Saudi Arabia were similarly deputized to do his dirty work. When Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had backed the 1971 rampage in East Pakistan, visited Washington in 1975 to make the case for restoration of military aid, Kissinger assured President Gerald Ford that he “was great in ’71.” Ford agreed, and US dollars soon started to flow directly to the Pakistani army and intelligence service.

As national security adviser and then secretary of state, Kissinger was directly involved in planning and executing covert actions in such diverse places as Cambodia, Angola, and Chile. No available information indicates that he ever directly encouraged Pakistan’s ISI or Iran’s SAVAK to destabilize Afghanistan. But we don’t need a smoking gun to appreciate the larger context and consequences of his many regional initiatives in what, in the twenty-first century, would come to be known in Washington as the “greater Middle East.” In their 1995 book, “Out of Afghanistan,” based on research in Soviet archives, foreign-policy analysts Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison provide a wide-ranging sense of just how so many of the policies Kissinger put in place – the empowerment of Iran, the restoration of military relations with Pakistan, high oil prices, an embrace of Saudi Wahhabism, and weapon sales – came together to spark jihadism:

”It was in the early 1970s, with oil prices rising, that Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran embarked on his ambitious effort to roll back Soviet influence in neighboring countries and create a modern version of the ancient Persian empire... Beginning in 1974, the Shah launched a determined effort to draw Kabul into a Western-tilted, Tehran-centered regional economic and security sphere embracing India, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf states... The United States actively encouraged this roll-back policy as part of its broad partnership with

We don’t need a smoking gun to appreciate the larger context and consequences of Kissinger’s many regional initiatives in what, in the twenty-first century, would come to be known in Washington as the “greater Middle East”

KISSINGER'S LEGACY

Some still celebrate the decisions of Carter and Reagan for their role in pulling Moscow into its own Vietnam-style quagmire and so hastening the demise of the Soviet Union

the Shah... SAVAK and the CIA worked hand in hand, sometimes in loose collaboration with underground Afghani Islamic fundamentalist groups that shared their anti-Soviet objectives but had their own agendas as well... As oil profits sky-rocketed, emissaries from these newly affluent Arab fundamentalist groups arrived on the Afghan scene with bulging bankrolls.”

Harrison also wrote that “SAVAK, the CIA, and Pakistani agents” were involved in failed “fundamentalist coup attempts” in Afghanistan in 1973 and 1974, along with an attempted Islamic insurrection in the Panjshir Valley in 1975, laying the groundwork for the jihad of the 1980s (and beyond).

Much has been made of Jimmy Carter’s decision, on the advice of National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, to authorize “nonlethal” aid to the Afghan mujahedeen in July 1979, six months before Moscow sent troops to support the Afghan government in its fight against a spreading Islamic insurgency. But lethal aid had already long been flowing to those jihadists via Washington’s ally Pakistan (and Iran until its revolution in 1979). This provision of support to radical Islamists, initiated in Kissinger’s tenure and continuing through the years of Ronald Reagan’s presidency, had a number of unfortunate consequences known all too well today but seldom linked to the good doctor. It put unsustainable pressure on Afghanistan’s fragile secular government. It laid the early infrastructure for today’s transnational radical Islam. And, of course, it destabilized Afghanistan and so helped provoke the Soviet invasion.

Some still celebrate the decisions of Carter and Reagan for their role in pulling Moscow into its own Vietnam-style quagmire and so hastening the demise of the Soviet Union. “What is most important to the history of the world?” Brzezinski infamously asked. “The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Mos-

lems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?” (The rivalry between the two Harvard immigrant diplomats, Kissinger and Brzezinski, is well known. But Brzezinski by 1979 was absolutely Kissingerian in his advice to Carter. In fact, a number of Kissinger’s allies who continued on in the Carter administration, including Walter Slocombe and David Newsom, influenced the decision to support the jihad.)

Moscow’s occupation of Afghanistan would prove a disaster – and not just for the Soviet Union. When Soviet troops pulled out in 1989, they left behind a shattered country and a shadowy network of insurgent fundamentalists who, for years, had worked hand-in-glove with the CIA in the Agency’s longest covert operation, as well as the Saudis and the Pakistani ISI. It was a distinctly Kissingerian line-up of forces.

Few serious scholars now believe that the Soviet Union would have proved any more durable had it not invaded Afghanistan. Nor did the allegiance of Afghanistan – whether it tilted toward Washington, Moscow, or Tehran – make any difference to the outcome of the Cold War, any more than did, say, that of Cuba, Iraq, Angola, or Vietnam.

For all of the celebration of him as a “grand strategist,” as someone who constantly advises presidents to think of the future, to base their actions today on where they want the country to be in five or 10 years’ time, Kissinger was absolutely blind to the fundamental feebleness and inevitable collapse of the Soviet Union. None of it was necessary; none of the lives Kissinger sacrificed in Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Mozambique, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, East Timor, and Bangladesh made one bit of difference in the outcome of the Cold War.

Similarly, each of Kissinger’s Middle East initiatives has been disastrous in the long run. Just think about them from the vantage point of 2015: banking on des-

pots, inflating the Shah, providing massive amounts of aid to security forces that tortured and terrorized democrats, pumping up the US defense industry with recycled petrodollars and so spurring a Middle East arms race financed by high gas prices, emboldening Pakistan's intelligence service, nurturing Islamic fundamentalism, playing Iran and the Kurds off against Iraq, and then Iraq and Iran off against the Kurds, and committing Washington to defending Israel's occupation of Arab lands.

Combined, they've helped bind the modern Middle East into a knot that even Alexander's sword couldn't sever.

Bloody Inventions

Over the last decade, an avalanche of documents – transcripts of conversations and phone calls, declassified memos, and embassy cables – have implicated Henry Kissinger in crimes in Bangladesh, Cambodia, southern Africa, Laos, the Middle East, and Latin America. He's tried to defend himself by arguing for context. "Just to take a sentence

out of a telephone conversation when you have 50 other conversations, it's just not the way to analyze it," Kissinger said recently, after yet another damning tranche of documents was declassified. "I've been telling people to read a month's worth of conversations, so you know what else went on."

But a month's worth of conversations, or eight years for that matter, reads like one of Shakespeare's bloodiest plays. Perhaps Macbeth, with its description of what we today call blowback: "That we but teach bloody instructions, which, being taught, return to plague the inventor."

We are still reaping the bloody returns of Kissinger's inventions. **CT**

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Over the last decade, an avalanche of documents – have implicated Henry Kissinger in crimes in Bangladesh, Cambodia, southern Africa, Laos, the Middle East, and Latin America



Another country!

Above the skyline of Singapore's financial district, a gentleman of means floats in an infinity pool that graces the 57th floor of a local luxury hotel. This image from photographers Paolo Woods and Gabriele Galimberti appears in a new exhibition, *1%: Privilege in a Time of Global Inequality*, that began a worldwide tour last month in China. Notes exhibition curator Myles Lyttle: "I think the privileged these days speak a different language, live in a different part of the world, play by different rules."

Sam Pizzigati

Republicans Versus Planned Parenthood

The real fight is against medical research, says **Michael I. Niman**

The overwhelming majority of Planned Parenthood's federal funding comes in state and federal Medical Aid fee-for-service reimbursement, paying for services rendered to impoverished Medicaid recipients

The Planned Parenthood “controversy” that had congressional Republicans almost shutting the federal government again is not, despite media framing, a fight over abortion. If you allow the facts to interfere with a lively drama, it becomes clear that this is a Republican battle against fetal tissue research – plain and simple.

Planned Parenthood does not use federal funds to pay for performing abortions. This is the law. Planned Parenthood's compliance is verifiable by financial audits. Despite Republican claims on the floor of the US Senate that 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does is provide abortions, that number is actually closer to three percent. Slightly more than a third of their patients come in for treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and infections. Another 35 percent or so come for contraceptive services. Sixteen percent receive cancer screening and preventative care, and another 10 percent are there for routine gynecological treatment.

The majority of these women live near or below the poverty line. The overwhelming majority of Planned Parenthood's federal funding comes in the form of state and federal Medicaid fee-for-service reimbursement, paying for services rendered to impoverished Medicaid recipients. This same funding pool, rather than being an earmark for Planned Parenthood, pays for all medi-

cal services for Medicaid patients visiting a participating provider. Seventeen states provide state money to pay for abortion services rendered to Medicaid recipients by any abortion provider. Thirty-seven states prohibit poor women from receiving abortions under Medicaid. None of the laws governing how Medicaid funds can be spent are specific to Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of sexual healthcare to women in the country. As such they are highly visible. Despite the fact that abortion services make up a miniscule fraction of their traffic, their 50-state footprint and their ability through size to resist anti-abortion terror make them a target of the anti-abortion movement.

The current controversy surrounds Republican claims that Planned Parenthood sells and profits from fetal tissue from abortions – this based on a highly edited undercover sting video. When the video is viewed in its entirety, however, it discredits the doctored version, instead showing Deborah Nucatola, Planned Parenthood's senior director of medical services, explaining that the organization does not sell tissue for profit.

What Nucatola does say is that abortion providers want to accommodate “patients who want to donate their tissue” for medical research. Fetal tissue for research comes from miscarriages and some abortions and is classified as medical waste. Research fa-



Protesters at a rally in aid of Planned Parenthood, New York 2011. Photo: Dave Bledsoe (via flickr.com)

Though it sounds like a cut from a zombie or cannibal horror film, the video in question does not actually show such a scene, instead featuring images of what appears to be the remains of a miscarriage

cilities usually reimburse providers for costs involved in handling and preserving the tissue. Nucatola answers questions about these costs, explaining that individual clinics set these fees. The door opened for anti-abortion propagandists when Nucatola casually guesstimated that these costs might be \$30-\$100.

The tissue is primarily used in the testing and development of vaccines for diseases ranging from the flu to hepatitis. Researchers also use the material for research into diseases ranging from Down syndrome to Alzheimer's. The use of vaccines derived from such research is widespread, with almost no noticeable protest movement targeting popular products, such as flu vaccines. Likewise, the public generally supports research into treating diseases such as Alzheimer's, including research using fetal tissue.

This is not surprising, considering that a plurality of the population also supports abortion rights.

Things heated up further for Planned Parenthood, however, during the recent Republican presidential debate, with candidates once again breathing life into the discredited allegations. Republican presidential contender Carly Fiorina upped the ante, cit-

ing a related video from the same organization that produced the discredited Nucatola video. This video, she claimed, showed an aborted fetus with its "heart beating, its legs kicking, while someone says we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain."

Though it sounds like a cut from a zombie or cannibal horror film, the video in question does not actually show such a scene, instead featuring images of what appears to be the remains of a miscarriage. Also, according to *Time* magazine, the videographer does not claim that the images in his video "had anything to do with Planned Parenthood."

Despite what should be embarrassment not just for the punked Fiorina but for everyone at the GOP debate who let her slide, the Planned Parenthood body-part-snatching and -selling story is still trending among Republicans, who seem to be in a perpetual search for a reason du jour to shut the government and humiliate the nation. **CT**

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Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism and critical media studies at SUNY Buffalo State. His columns are available globally through syndication and are archived at mediastudy.com

One Day in the Life of Herbert Wisniewski

An excerpt — Chapter One — from the new novel by **Mike Palecek**

“... One, two, three, four, five and turn ... One, two, three, four, five and turn. For several hours I'd been pacing back and forth between the window and the door of my cell. I smoked, I was alert, my morale was good and I felt ready for anything.

“... The Chinese invented the drop of water falling on the head. The French invented silence. They suppressed every possible distraction. No books, no paper, no pencil, the window with its thick bars completely covered with planks of wood, although a few holes let a little light through.

“... One, two, three, four, five ... Fourteen hours of walking. To master the art of performing this continuous movement automatically, you had to learn to keep your head down, hands behind your back, walk neither too fast nor too slow, keep your steps the same length and turn automatically on the left foot at one end of the cell, on the right at the other.

“... One, two, three, four, five ... The restrictions of justice had turned me into a pendulum. This shuttle back and forth

in my cell made up my entire universe. It had been mathematically worked out. Nothing, absolutely nothing was to be left in the cell. The prisoner must have no distractions. Had I been caught looking through the crack in my window, I would have been severely punished.

“... A butterfly flew past, light blue with a thin black stripe, and a bee bumbled not far from the window. What were these little beasts looking for? Drunk with the winter sun, perhaps, unless they were cold and wanted to get into prison. A butterfly in winter is like life after death. Why wasn't it dead? And why had the bee left its hive? How foolishly bold of them to come here!

“... the day after the visit of my charming insects, I got sick. I couldn't take it any more. I was suffocating with loneliness. I needed to see a face, hear a voice, even an angry one, but at least a voice. I had to hear something.”

— **Henri Charriere, Papillon**

Why go on? So lonely, never alone. He dreamed and vowed to remember these sticky notes words to live by from his dream when he awoke.

No. 11936-999 made lists, even in his sleep.

He talked as he slept, reciting yet another list.

“The flag,” he whispered.

“The American flag.”

“Sweet Jesus.”

His chest rose. The rough grey blanket swelled up and down, a wave.

“Apple Pie,” he said and licked his lips as a real tear glazed his eyes.

“Hot dogs.”

He chewed.

“Chevrolet.”

His hands pushed the blanket up as he squeezed the steering wheel.

He loved prisons, American prisons, all of them, even though he knew of only one. They were strong and made of bricks and blocks and there was thought somewhere in them and heritage and meaning and history. He felt himself lucky to be in one of the biggest. He would never

enter the big stone buildings of Harvard, but he had been to famous Ninety-Two Federal Prison, in the small town of Ninety-Two, Wisconsin.

“There is much confusion about the mysterious name, ‘Ninety-Two,’ and the true origin may never be known” — said the town slogan on the sign that all prisoners saw from the prison bus window on their way in — out by the artesian well and the Quick Stop on Highway 17.

And that was something, where he came from.

He was recognized in his town, one of the most famous people, there, ever, prob'ly.

Or not.

In theory he knew they must all be good, the prisons.

Because that is the theory he subscribed to.

But even so.

No. 11936-999 knew he must kill himself.

There was just no other way to go on.

He was so bored and lonely.

He had trudged so long down this path and never come to the end.

He decided to be like the great American businessmen he had read about in the years-old Time Magazine in the TV room, who do not wait for something to happen.

They make it happen.

He will kill himself today, if he can find the time.

If he can ever get by himself, away from all these people.

No. 11936-999 paced, back and forth in his parents' living room, back and forth in tenth-grade English, back and forth on the 50-yardline.

“Five-finger discount. That’s a gas. You, dig?” he flashed the air quotes three times, then shoved his hands back under the blanket. It was so cold.

If there was one thing he was famous for in Unit 9 it was air quotes. It would not be humiliating if the folks back home knew that, but not the fabric of a heroic fable, either, he allowed.



**ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF
HERBERT WISNIEWSKI**

Mike Palecek
CWG Press
\$15 ((Amazon.com))

He mumbled, “11936-999,” over and over.

His eyes closed, he felt his lips moving.

Herbert Wisniewski opened his eyes and saw the butt bulge with a faded black “Atticka Attica Attika” written in a careful hand in permanent Magic Marker on the seam of the long johns.

“Warden John is a butt-licking, butt-licker!”

“Take your time, people. Please!”

“Don’t rush when making pancakes or shooting free throws!”

“You will make one hundred pancakes before you go home today, sir!”

The man above him screamed in his sleep along with the others.

From across the aisle someone yelled out, “Officer, Occifer, Officer-Occifer, Mr. Occifer-Occifer! What is the price of a gallon of milk these days in Missoula!”

Nothing anyone says in their sleep can be used against them. It had recently become a Ninety-Two meme. One of the jailhouse lawyers had discovered such a precedent.

They can’t hit you with what you don’t know what you are saying.

“Fuck you Warden!”

“And fuck you today, Lieutenant!”

“Fuck you!”

“Are you sure you bought the right bread?”

“Fuck.”

“Whole wheat I said! This is not whole wheat!”

“This is fucking whole goat piss! I said, whole wheat!”

“Eat goat piss and crap your goddamn fucking ... Occifee-OOOfficer, Sir, Lieutenant Sir! Have you checked your oil recently, sir!”

“You fucking fuckers.”

“May I eat your Corn Flakes, sir!”

Cries rang out around the dormitory until the keys of the overnight guard jingled and loud snoring echoed

down the rows.

It will murder him some day if he does not kill himself. And he will never know the name of the woman outside the fence if the butt bulge crashes and smothers him.

Herbert heard the scratching, like mouse toenails on the dormitory tile floor, the night work of the tunnel crews.

Everyone was supposed to help, but he had never been asked. He was just one of many.

The prisoners, like professional sports heroes, all celebrities in their hometowns, were not that special here because everyone had a story to tell.

And certainly not as important as the prison itself, which made money for someone who slept at night.

Even in the dark, even at night, even when everything is silent, in a prison you hear every noise. Keys jingling at a certain time, the particular thud of an iron door, a guard whistling the same tired tune, the clicking of his one heel, the other heel worn to mute.

Herbert Wisniewski lay on his back, hands folded over his stomach under the rough grey blanket.

He heard more sounds and knew what time it was, lack of other sounds and he knew what time it was. Whispers and he knew who it was, shouts, epithets, and he knew who it was and what sort of day it would be.

Like all others.

Herbert Wisniewski heard the buses lined up on the road from town. They squeaked in the cold every time somebody in chains went to the toilet in the back of the bus.

Some said the buses were empty and the squeaking was the wind. But when there is wind, Herbert Wisniewski heard the whistle in the corner on the outside wall above his head.

And so.

We are to be taken away, in the buses some said.

The War On Dougs is over and just like the Germans when the Allies were approaching from the east and west, the prisoners will be gotten rid of.

There are people in there. Then we are still to be taken away. They will take our place. They must always keep the prisons running. My father said that, and his father before him. And I say it now.

Herbert Wisniewski wiggled his toes inside his socks.

He felt the paper note in his hands. He fought the urge to piss. He did not open his eyes.

He thought of how keeping the buses running during the cold night is a waste of gas.

He tried to return to sleep, to float away, out of here.

Herbert did not want to be taken out to be shot.

He wanted to kill himself.

Like on the movie "MASH". They had showed it last Friday night in the auditorium and he had felt inspired.

I'm a good person.

I would never.

But I guess I did.

Kill myself.

Easy peasey.

Happy Death Day To Me.

"You look like a monkey, and you smell like one, too."

Big sigh.

Breathe in, let it out.

Even though I realize that imprisonment is not a sufficient punishment: prisoners are alive, they are less hungry, less cold, less deprived in general than many poor people or even workers, and

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF HERBERT WISNIEWSKI

I feel terrible about this.

Herbert remembered exactly what he had read in a brochure from one of the Sunday church people visits.

Still, I am in prison.

I feel bad about that, too.

And I realize I could have lived without that bread, actually, candy.

While at the same time realizing how lucky I am.

Now I am thinking too much. I will not be able to go back to sleep, but I must.

I cannot waste it, especially since this is the last one.

Oooh.

Uuuhhh.

Argghhh.

I don't feel so good.

He practiced.

He would die then and be better off.

Herbert Wisniewski rolled to his side, then again his back, crossed his hands on his chest and stared at the frayed cross-hatching of the wire supports for the bulging mattress above, and wondered when it falls how will it crush him.

There was no reason to wonder.

He rolled over.

The bible says that sleeping on your stomach is the work of the devil.

If he is to be crushed by the butt it will not be by butt-face, or butt-butt, for that matter. It must be butt-side. A butt-side death is good and honorable, so sayeth Leviticus.

And besides, there is still time, there is still precious darkness in the dorm.

Soon he will have to work.

Get to work.

Go to work in the factory for seventeen cents an hour. Years ago, he made thirteen, and before that eleven. Seventeen cents was a good, honest wage. He was proud of that.

Everyone wants to work in the factory and make seventeen cents an hour making army clothes for prisoners. In the prison that is the job to have.

He has it.

They used to get actual pass-downs from the army, but these days every civilian wants to dress in army clothes and there is a shortage. They work hard to supply the entire federal prison system and they are proud. Just think, the whole system. And now they will be adding a pink underwear line, someone said. Everything may need to be re-tooled, and dyed.

Everyone here is proud to have a job, work hard if they are allowed, so to feel good about themselves and believe they are not in a prison, their lives destroyed, delayed. They are working, making something of themselves, improving themselves every day, getting better.

They are Americans.

The overnight guard talked to the new guard coming on duty.

Not the usual tired mumbles.

They were excited.

Keeping his eyes closed, Herbert Wisniewski rolled to his other side.

He peeked and saw bits in between bunks and over sleeping mounds a line of crouching shadows along the wall, hiding, listening to the guards.

Herbert could not hear words, only tenor and volume, cadence.

The shadows passed the word down the dark.

The count is off! The forks in the kitchen.

There will be a shakedown.

Because if someone had the fork ...

Well ... perhaps, to stab himself somewhere.

In the shower, in the eye, quickly around some corner, in the nuts, the fingers, the forehead, the stomach.

That is where Herbert would stab himself if he did, right in the stomach and let his whole self run onto the floor and his boots, onto the fucking shined, buffed floor.

That might show them. They would miss him then.

He touched the side of his bunk, the space in between the mattress and the metal frame, where he hid things.

The count would be off, and that would mean paperwork, and men not getting home to wives, and wives being pissed off because they count on some relief at this particular time, a glass of wine, feet up on the sofa, some goddamn help, at this particular time!

The guards are nervous because they also have their hiding places.

Herbert rolled over, keeping his eyes closed, trying to preserve the chance at returning to sleep, maintaining the

seam of the rough grey blanket slicing his eyes into little melon halves.

Somebody is hollering that he has lost his pet goose or moose. Every morning he cannot find his pet goose. Maybe it is a moose. Moose. Goose. They rhyme. Many of the old timers believe there might be no goose at all. Another screams that there is no hot water and someone else says the bus is waiting outside and you cannot miss school yet another day this week!

Herbert heard it in his dream, placed the people with his own mind in the play showing in his head.

Officer X was unhappy with the missing fork.

He was much afraid he would be sent to The Russian Front.

His wife was very happy, and that made him very happy. Their two dogs were happy, which made their three cats very happy. The sheep were as happy as the goats, and the season wrestling tickets made their children happiest of all.

The Russian Front was a lark with family members as

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BOOK EXCERPT

they made jokes about something going wrong and Officer X being sent there.

He was not too much amused.

Officer X had a real name, but the co's and other prison staff were given letters and numbers as names in order that a prisoner might not write or call someone and have the guard and his family burned in their house.

Officer X thought the missing fork was missing in order to set him up. He'd been expecting it for some time.

He'd already sent word back to the kitchen to find the fork.

Well, don't you think we're looking?

Came the word back.

Where have you looked?

Where? Everywhere!

Came the word back again.

Just find it.

Where?

And so messages by trusty runner and text messages fired back and forth, all this in the pre-dawn hours while the prisoners slept, so soundly, not a care in the world as the world went on without them.

What kind of fork? Salad? Serving, other? What other kinds are there?

Officer X thought he knew probably every type of fork.

Officer X was overweight.

He was massive.

And he was angry.

Angry about how fit and healthy the prisoners on his unit seemed to be from smoking the marijuana that he imported to the unit, and how immense and out of breath he and his friends were from drinking beer.

He was dying probably.

He didn't know what to do, but for a moment he did not think about how uncomfortable he was in his tight blue shirt and tight dark blue pants.

The word came back, this time by the sharp ringing of the phone in the unit guard station.

No! It's a knife!

A knife?

Oh, no.

No, it's a fork ... definitely a fork.

He had expected something like this.

Officer X told the kitchen staff to count again.

"Again!" he shouted into the phone.

"Count. Cuenta!"

His shout ran down the cement hallways, shined and buffed to a razor's edge, the sound flew around corners and slipped and slid like ghosts on ice skates.

A new count?

In the lieutenant's office they stared at each other.

We just finished count. It was fine.

A new count?

We do not count if the count is correct.

Somebody has to give permission.

Someone has to make us do it.

Then we do it, very slowly.

So, not yet.

The Lieutenant, new to texting, began firing away messages to other lieutenants on duty and at home.

All of them, not convinced of the new thing, sitting on sides of beds with ruffled hair and bare feet just brushing the floor, thumbs firing back and forth.

We need to count the men, again!

Count the forks?

The forks. Someone took all of the forks?

No.

What is missing!

Marks.

Count all the Marks. How many can there be?

Dorks.

Someone was dispatched to run around every unit and count the dorks. They were all there, sleeping.

Corks. Pork. Sork.

"What's a sork? Geezuz H. Tits."

Zork.

"That's me," thought Officer X.

They are not to use my real name, even in texts.

He stalked to his file cabinet for the form to complain to the right person, at the correct time.

The dorm was abuzz with the snoring and silent thoughts of the men in the long, dark canary-walled prison dormitory.

Unspoken, still hanging in the air was the big news, the word that had spread like prairie fire yesterday that the war on Dougs was over. There was also talk they would be gassed from the ventilation system if there ever was a civil war.

Every time there is a new person some old timer has

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to tell him.

Many of the men have been here since the 1980s and somehow on the TV yesterday there were big shots saying how the long sentences had been destroying lives, the harmful effects of long sentences on families.

That was news to everyone because they had forever been in favor of the war on Dougs and had enjoyed this time alone and the opportunity to think things over.

They wanted the war to continue because they felt they were winning. They had all the Dougs they needed.

Now that the war was over they would likely be sent home, to jobs, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, to noisy children, hunger, sleeping outside, and church.

Herb was so lonely.
So alone.

Without looking he ran a finger lovingly over the rash on his palm.

Other finger, other palm.

He would kill himself, but how, with all these people everywhere.

Nowhere during his day or night was he alone. There were hundreds of people where he slept, hundreds where he worked, where he walked, where he ate.

If he could escape.

If he could run forever across the desert, or whatever is out there. Then he would be alone and there he might finally call a halt to this failed experiment.

He would kill himself. Kill himself. Kill himself.

Every week Herb received visits by chaplains, case managers, evangelicals from the church in town that are carefully designed to help, but do not help.

They are not meant to help.

The only thing that would help him is to die.

These people do not address the real problem.

That Herbert is alive.

They want to feel good about themselves, what they are doing for the poor prisoner, while not caring too much at all about the poor prisoner.

If they really cared they would kill him.

Herb got letters from home that are supposed to help.

They don't help.

They never say "go kill yourself."

They say, keep going, you're doing great. We love you. We will be here for you. We are trying to get you out.

That's not helpful.

One bunk down the way always featured an American flag fluttering from one of the iron supports.

That prisoner had photos of the flag that he will one day take to his case manager along with newspaper clippings of him holding the severed head of a rival gang member, to show how he had changed.

That prisoner often says how he feels it his patriotic duty to be in prison. While he plays the national anthem from a cassette player his family sent to him, he recites the Pledge of Allegiance each morning on his knees in front of his bunk, in the aisle, a rosary around his neck, on the cold tile, along with his prayers on the card that the evangelicals from town gave to him.

Yes, of course, Herbert agreed, we are all solid soldiers in the War On Dougs, on the frontlines, doing what we can, shouting back over our shoulder, to encourage those in the rear to keep pushing.

But why get up so early?

Are we glad that our incarceration has been of use to someone? Of course. That someone was able to make a living out of selling concrete blocks and iron bars. Yes. Hot dogs? For sure. Buns? Yes. Apple pie, white vehicles to patrol the perimeter, guards, guard houses, guard cars and toys for guard children?

You got that right.

In his mind, Herbert high-fived himself.

But it is still dark, precious dark and almost silence, not to be wasted.

Herb thought that he will ask the doctor how to kill himself.

And if the doctor won't tell him, he will ask the chaplain, if he is in — if it wouldn't be more in the spirit of the whole dying and resurrection if Herb could get on with it.

He might starve himself on the days he does not like the food, but that would take time. Some of the food he likes very much: Sunday brunch, the hash browns, spanish omelets, coffee, toast. Mmmm.

He groaned under the rough, grey blanket pulled to his nose, practicing.

He pulled his knees to his chest.

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The knees are comfort, friends, as the hands he wraps together backward before he goes to sleep. They have been with him through many things.

So desolate, an island within the prison of a thousand grown men.

Each of them as alone as a kindergartner on the first day of school. Keeping eyes closed. Don't let any light through, not yet.

Herb imagined the head of The Cuban whispering loud exploding like a melon dropped from the roof. He thought of the guard's belly finally exploding and the walls exploding and everyone running out. He pictured all of the people that he cannot understand a word they are saying exploding.

Oh, God, there they go again, already.

Through his closed eyes, perhaps still asleep, Herbert viewed the scene down the way, as if he were standing right there himself.

There are already, gathered around the American flag, three Mexicans saluting with hands over hearts, along with the other man on his knees, head bowed, whisper-singing "The Star Spangled Banner," hoping someone will see them one of these mornings, like the men at church club willing to eat bibles and fart Leviticus to get to home or whatever street corner or lonely apartment tugs at their hearts.

Herb stared straight up at the looming indentation in the mattress above, changing shapes, becoming the face of that one famous actor, now a not so famous TV horse, and now back to December moon over the Rockies.

He wondered for a moment about all the things happening in the outside world, the bombings, the sprayings, the stabbings, the shoutings, the eatings, the bouncings, all these things that must be happening, if there is a world still out there.

The only evidence was the black and white TV in the recreation room and the earphones connected to the radios that prisoners with money could buy in the prison store.

Those wires must lead somewhere.

Herbert never had money to buy a radio, or tennis shoes, or postcards to send.

Herbert Wisniewski sensed The Shadow.

The Shadow was everywhere, gliding, silently.

He was the dormitory orderly. That was his job, to clean. Creepy, yes, to have a grown man obsessed with cleaning, in love with cleaning liquids and other various cleaning supplies, brushes, old rags, Drano, but still, a necessary part of modern dorm living.

He would be trying to find news of where is the fork, already, in the dark, before people are even up yet.

While there is still hot water.

Yesterday, on the news there was talk of war and poverty and murder and a school bus had plunged over onto another school bus off the interstate, both drivers' heads had collided and been fused through the impact. They had rolled over and over and when they had stopped, as the children who were still alive crawled and ran out, a lone man who was a quiet man in his neighborhood was waiting for them and shot them all.

Where is the fork then!

For a moment Herbert drifted back to sleep and he heard the news announcer screaming at him and rattling the important papers in his hands.

Herbert Wisniewski heard the guard hiss at The Shadow as he pressed against the bars

and slipped The Shadow his Melba Toast crumbs.

Herbert remembered.

He growled, with eyes closed, half asleep.

Someone had stepped in front of him at mail call last spring and before that, in a cold month, a tall, skinny man had used all the hot water.

He forced the hate from his heart at least to the edge. He thought about today and he smiled deep inside.

Happy Death Day To Me.

Today is the day he will die.

Miss American Pie, hmm, hmm, hmm.

He will see his father and young brother and he will be here no more.

Yippee.

He allowed another smile under the blanket and his eyes glowed, for a moment, then all returned to scowl, jail face, signifying nothing.

But I feel fine.

I really don't feel good. He told himself.

Herb will have to believe it, if he's going to be

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believable.

All around him the lowest of the low got ready for their day.

Ugly, short, obese, wildly unsuccessful men moaned and yawned, cursed, shouted. Bunks shook, feet slapped the floor as those on the bottom bunks swung out and some of those on top hopped down.

Slap. Slap. Slap.

They got up for work as were, well, how many of their countrymen everywhere, putting on work clothes, hurrying to brush their teeth, listening to their stomachs ask what was there to eat.

And neither occupants of the two worlds within the same country gave one thought to the other.

Could not.

He must get into character.

Another character. The main character is already fully developed, able to rise and exist and go through the day, with arms and legs, and feet.

A sub-rosa, minor character, to be disposed of after awhile without much fuss.

The sick guy, not able to work, but must stumble to the doctor and chaplain and ask permission and instructions to die.

Some sort of sidekick to walk beside the main character.

The main character was tired. Tired of grinding, pushing, struggling.

Thinking.

Because, only here you can think – no traffic, no job, children, a very different kind of stress. You can think. And that can be very hard on people, remembering, thinking, sitting still, time passing slowly.

Understanding.

Fuck that.

Out there, many great distractions, Barney The Dinosaur, Katie The Reporter, Jimmy The Quarterback, Old Style The Beer.

But here, much thinking, like a factory of thinking, churning, grinding, never stopping, shift work, dependable employees, 20-year watches, thirty, 50-year.

Like monks in the cloister lifting the heavy thoughts for the rest who don't have the time.

Sitting with crossed ankles on the concrete steps of The Forum: the Greeks, Romans, Cubans.

In the real world Herbert had been a, well, it's not important what he had been.

That was gone.

What he was now was a prisoner.

But if one fork could be found, all would be forgotten for a moment. All would be joy and happiness erupting in silent celebration by souls allowed to live another day, by not getting their rack destroyed, their locker tossed into the aisle, their rectums searched by spelunker flashlights, their mouths explored with sharp instruments, their hair and balls sifted, investigative reporters pulling on blue plastic gloves to move the tongue and the balls, the corn rows out the way in search of the missing fork from the kitchen.

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Herb Wisniewski eased open his eyes, like a tired shopkeeper rolling up the metal grate protecting his windows, forcing himself to enter the dormitory, the stitches of the rough grey blanket right up close, like a

rough grey blanket Imax movie.

The dead Chopin played.

Military Polonaise, Opus No. 40.

Daybreak.

Every morning he heard it, either from a radio somewhere, through the walls, or in his own head.

His left hip hurt from lying too long on that side, on the thin mattress. His neck ached from the thin, doubled pillow. He did not want to move, collecting the aches in his arms and tossing them into the closet and throwing the door closed, storing them, shutting his eyes again.

The person in the top bunk moved, rolled over, shaking Herbert like a semi-trailer loaded with Jello pulling into the truck stop, made noise, put his feet down into Herb's face, and again, rather than the smiles of his own children over Cheerios bobbing in milk, Herb got to see the dirty cracked heels and mangled toes and poop on the bottom of this prince's feet.

And Herb accepted, once more — like a punch in the face from a father in the dark — that he is in prison. **CT**

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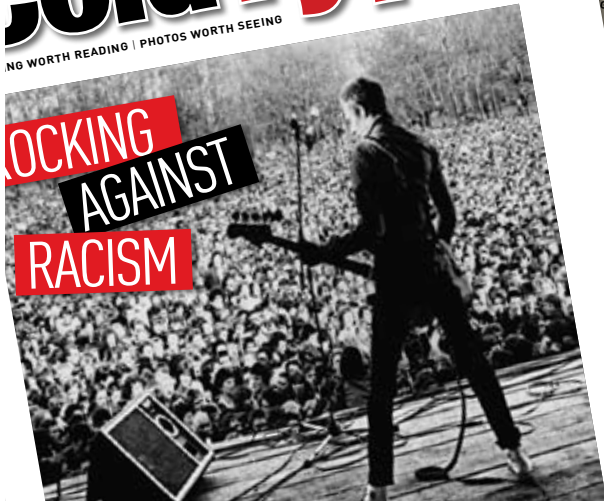
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ISSUE 102

NO WORTH READING | PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

FROM AN ACTIVIST

... my mom and dad's fault. They
... stand, almost alone in the
... for Cuba, unions and peace,
... inst the war in Vietnam,
... bombs, apartheid South
... ism and book-burning
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