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New

NI 508 December 2017
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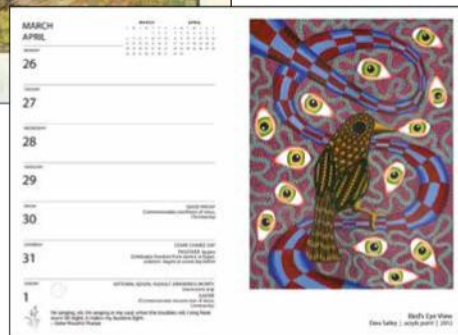
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Resisting the squeeze on public space



It's hard sometimes to get the balance right.

At the **New Internationalist** we strive to tell the unvarnished truth which can be dauntingly negative. But we try to leaven it with positive news. When it comes to the subject of December's *Big Story* on the authoritarian assault on democratic rights around the world, one is in danger of being swamped by negativity.

To balance, we sought out an example of a fertile political space with a record of creative alternative-building. Catalonia seemed to fit the bill perfectly. Then all of a sudden the determined but usually gentle Catalans became ground zero in the assault on democratic rights with bleeding senior citizens being dragged out of polling booths by Spanish police. Whatever the ultimate results of the current independence struggle, Catalans have a proud record of building radical democratic alternatives especially in their economic lives.

In this issue we make common, if informal, cause with the international NGO Civicus, which is leading the way in the fight to defend democratic space around the world. As the number of examples of state and corporate assault on the right to dissent mount it becomes crucial to build effective coalitions to defend our basic rights. This issue of the magazine is a contribution to the effort to do just that.

Elsewhere in this edition, we catch up with Pablo Beltrán, the guerrilla leader from the ELN at a critical point in the peace talks with the Colombian government; and we take a look at Port Augusta, the town in Australia that gave up coal for solar. ■

RICHARD SWIFT
 for the New Internationalist Co-operative
newint.org

This month's contributors include:



Priti Salian is a Bangalore-based journalist who has written about social justice, healthcare and education, among other things. Her work has been published by the BBC, *National Geographic*, *The Guardian* and others.



Sian Cowman is a writer, researcher and journalist from Ireland. She is active in feminist and environmental justice groups and writes about grassroots environmental activism and eco-feminism.



Leny Olivera studied Sociology at San Simón University in Cochabamba. She is active in autonomous feminist groups, recently with a decolonial perspective.



Mandeep Tiwana is Head of Policy and Research at the global civil society alliance, CIVICUS. He specializes in legislation affecting the core civil society freedoms of expression, association and assembly.

A special thank you to our Club of 500 investors!

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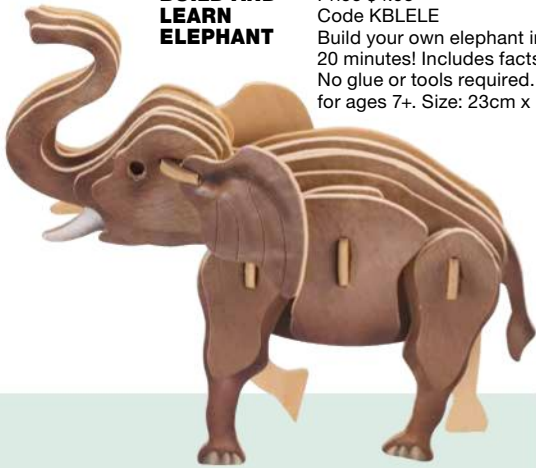
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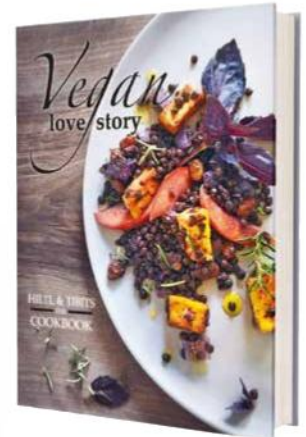
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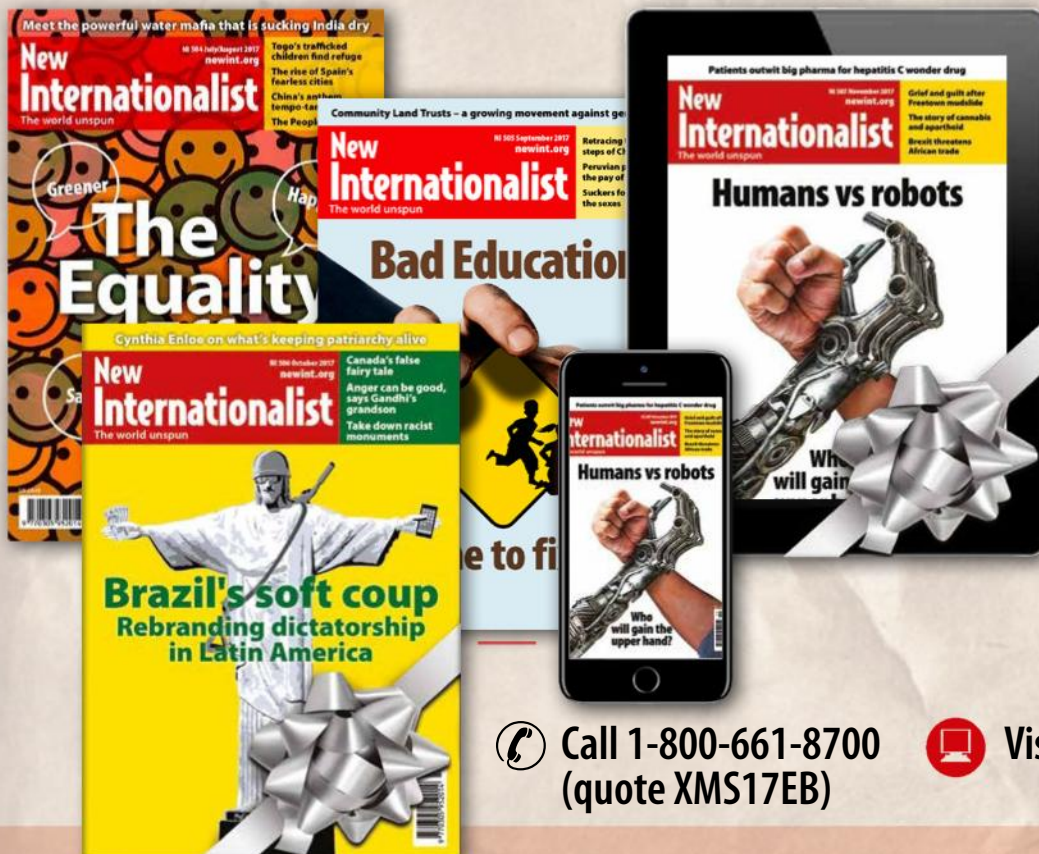


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Jason Mieczek / Reuters

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EFE News Agency / Alamy Stock Photo

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Praise, blame and all points in between? Give us your feedback.

The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They might be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Letters should be sent to letters@newint.org or to your local **NI** office. Please remember to include a town and country for your address.

Exterminate!

Surely, if super-intelligent robots are ever developed (**NI 507**) they will say, 'here is a species hell-bent on destroying itself and its environment: it must be exterminated', and devise a quick way of doing it.

Richard Betts Norwich, England

Window to the soul

Congratulations to Payam Boromand for his excellent cartoon (*Open Window*, **NI 507**). I don't often cry when looking at a cartoon, but this one is so poignant, and says so much about the way we treat refugees.

Ann Collins Hinckley, England

Disingenuous

Grace Meneer's disingenuous anti-vaccination letter in **NI 507** is part of a profoundly misleading anti-science movement, whose core claim, that the overwhelming majority of qualified scientists are callously and spinelessly lying to the public, is absurd and irresponsible: it's the exact same dishonest attack on scientists that's made by climate change deniers.

Struck-off, disgraced ex-doctor Andrew Wakefield and the debunked film *Vaxxed* have no peer-reviewed

scientific credibility, despite the support this mass panic has received from rightwing gutter tabloids like the *Daily Mail*... and Donald Trump.

The 'follow-the-money' argument that often uncovers corporate misbehaviour falls flat on its face in the case of vaccines, which are far less profitable than treating the lifetime of severe symptoms that are caused by the diseases vaccines prevent.

Ironically, it's the anti-vaccination movement who are militantly one-sided about this issue, refusing to acknowledge the vast amount of simple, easily available and solid evidence that regularly debunks their pseudo-scientific claims.

Paul Fitzgerald Manchester, England

Little beacon

Please, please can we have more details in the *Reasons to be cheerful* section. Among the often rather depressing or disturbing articles, it's a little beacon of light. But with extremely scant yet tantalizing information, eg **NI 506** – who are the amazing Robin Hood Army or the mothers2mothers? Why not make a full feature of each of these heart-warming stories?

Sue Williams Brighton, England

A Kiss

It was a day
a day when the heart
no longer cries –

A day when the sweetness
of a kiss
has lost its memory –

A day when a kiss
no longer cradles
a fragment of hope –

It is an hour when
yearning to be trembles
in shadows heavily walked upon –

The brevity of the moment
forecloses on the soul as each day
terror is lived – seen by the world
and passed by –

It is a moment when the fractured self
is replaced by nothingness
and dignity has expired –

After reflecting on the *Making Waves* article on Jamila Afghani in **NI 506** where she recounts seeing a refugee Afghan woman in Pakistan begging for one rupee in exchange for a kiss.

Judith Morrison Mt Waverley, Australia

OPEN WINDOW

Each month we showcase the work of a different cartoonist – in collaboration with cartoonmovement.com

THIS MONTH:

Doaa Eladl from Egypt with '#Me Too'

Doaa Eladl drew this in response to the wave of revelations about sexual harassment by powerful men. She is based in Cairo and currently works as a cartoonist for the prominent Egyptian newspaper *Al Masry Al Youm*. She has also contributed illustrations for children to *Qatr El Nada*, *Alaa-EIDin* and *Bassem* magazines. In 2009 she received an excellence award for her skill as a caricaturist.



When the post doesn't come

Bolivians have had to get used to doing without postal services. AMY BOOTH on how they manage instead.

One thing that has amazed me about Bolivia is how easy it is to forget completely the existence of things I once considered commonplace. When I last visited the UK, I rediscovered with amazement passenger trains, takeaway meals and paying by card.

Yet, the single most conspicuous absence here was something I didn't even notice until it was pointed out. Travelling back from the town of Toro Toro in a pickup truck, the driver gestured at Cochabamba's only post office.

In Bolivia, the post as I knew it does not exist. There are no street corner postboxes, postal workers making their daily rounds, or neighbourhood post offices. While there is a central post office, I have only ever used it as a landmark for meeting people.

There is a national postal company, Ecobol, but it is mired in financial difficulty. President Evo Morales announced plans to close it in June 2016, and while that has not happened yet, workers have been striking this year over months of unpaid salaries.

My friends sometimes use it, but with mixed results: packages can take months to arrive, and sending items can be chaotic. 'I'm still waiting for stuff from the beginning of the year,' one friend told me in October.

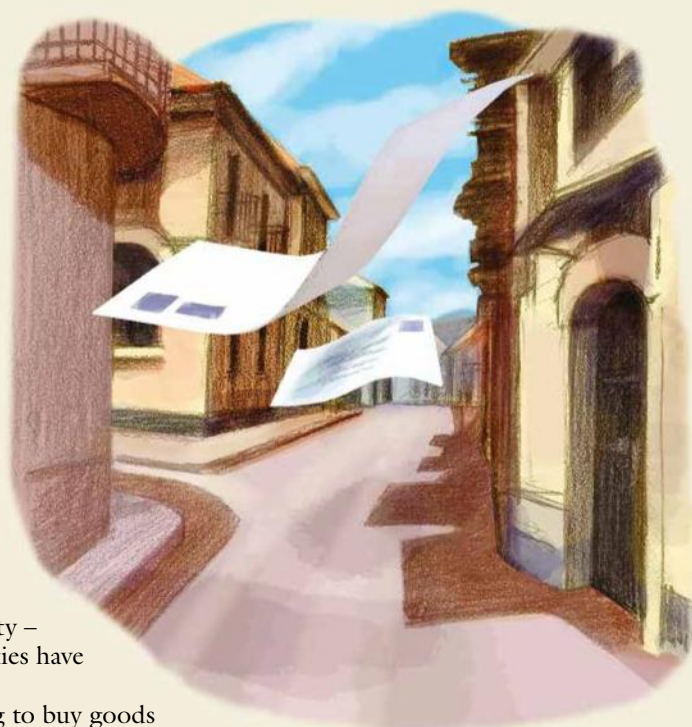
The implications of not having domestic delivery are remarkably far-reaching. At a basic level, utility bills don't come in a sealed envelope and can't be pushed into letter boxes that don't exist. Electricity bills are often rolled up and balanced precariously in the hinges of the garden gate. I have seen utility bills blowing down the street in the wind.

People who want to send parcels long-distance often give them to bus drivers, telling the recipients which company has it so they can pick it up at the terminal in their city – although not all cities have direct bus links.

Online shopping to buy goods that can't be found in Bolivia also becomes difficult. Those who want something from abroad are constantly on the lookout for anyone who is travelling. The last time my partner and I went back to the UK, we were asked to bring a bass guitar in its case, a large quantity of diabetes medication, two teflon-coated milk jugs, Guinness and a five-foot unicycle.

Setting up a postal system in a country with so much migration from countryside to city would be complicated at any rate. In the *barrios* where I work, the streets have no names and the houses, no numbers. Many homes have sprung up, quite at random, in the past 20 years. It would be hard to label envelopes to houses with no address.

Common pieces of post like bank statements, utility bills and junk mail are often irrelevant in a country which does its finances and utilities differently. Only 42 per cent of Bolivians have bank accounts according to 2014 World Bank figures, making regular paper statements beside the point for many. Despite the government's roll-out of piped gas connections, for most people gas still comes in big yellow cannisters. In poor areas of Cochabamba, water is often delivered by truck or comes



from a system run by the community. Newspapers are bought from sellers on the street corner.

Day-to-day, I don't miss the post much, but I do feel there are some ways in which it would improve our lives here. Not having a home delivery postal system is just one piece in a large jigsaw that also includes lack of banking access, infamously slow internet, and customs delays.

Books and films are often pirated, originals are prohibitively expensive, and there are no large chain bookshops in Cochabamba able to leverage their size to offer books from all over the world – although there is much to be said for the independent bookshops boasting ample collections of Bolivian writing. Ultimately, lack of access to books, films and other art makes it hard to access ideas.

Domestic delivery post is not what Bolivia needs most. As internet use grows, correspondence and utility bills may be able to skip the paper stage entirely. Domestic post is not the only way to send parcels. But my letters from Cochabamba will never come with a stamp on them. ■

Amy Booth is a freelance journalist and circus instructor living in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

BOLIVIA

Against mother nature

Last month, two indigenous Bolivians, Fabian Gil and Marqueza Tecu, travelled to the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany to denounce their government.

In front of the International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature – a symbolic court held on the fringe of the conference – the activists presented evidence against President Evo Morales, who has revived plans to build a major highway through the protected TIPNIS ecological reserve.

Although governments railroading indigenous people in the name of ‘development’ is nothing new in Latin America, this conflict is different: Morales is the country’s first indigenous President and was once seen as a champion of environmental policies.

Covering over a million hectares, TIPNIS is home to indigenous people from 69 communities, including the Moxeños, Yuracaré and Chimán peoples. Many are resisting the proposed highway, saying that it will cause deforestation, enable the exploitation of oil and gas and cultivation of coca.

‘These activities may put at risk one of Bolivia’s most important ecological lungs,’ says Gil, who is president of the TIPNIS communities.

In August 2017, the government effectively annulled Law 180, which had protected TIPNIS and declared it ‘untouchable’. The law was passed in 2011 following the first wave of anti-highway mobilization, which included a 360-mile protest march from the Amazon Basin to Bolivia’s capital city, La Paz.

The state’s volte-face on Law 180 has sparked a new wave



A protester holds blood-stained images of government figures during a demonstration against the annulment of Law 180 in August 2017.

James Brunner News / Alamy

of protests, vigils and sit-ins across the country.

The Bolivian government was the first in the world to endow the natural ecosystem with personhood when it passed the ‘Laws of the Rights of Mother Nature’ law in 2010. As far as the protesters are concerned, Morales is now violating the very rights of Mother Nature that he helped enshrine.

‘We made this public denouncement [in Germany] so that the whole world knows what the government is doing here,’ says Tecu, representing the women of TIPNIS. ‘But also to call you to the defence of TIPNIS and our territory against these projects.’

Morales has increasingly come into conflict with Bolivia’s indigenous people over oil, gas and hydroelectric projects. He has labelled the resistance to TIPNIS a ‘colonialist environmentalism’, which is ‘not interested in the indigenous movement having electricity or [Bolivia having] highways’.

Aldo Orellana Lopez

WORLD

The Alternative World Cup

As the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifiers come to an end, teams like Tibet, Matabeleland and Northern Cyprus will be getting ready to play each other next year. Except, they won’t be playing in the official World Cup in Russia. Instead, the 16 squads denied access to ‘official’ international football will compete in an alternative tournament between unrecognized nations and minorities in London in May 2018.

‘We want to allow people to compete for identities they feel represented by,’ says Paul Watson, from competition organizers the Confederation of Independent Football Associations (CONIFA). ‘Through football, you’re bringing these teams to people who wouldn’t normally get involved.’



Abkhazia fans.

As well as seeking sporting glory, many teams have a political axe to grind. United Koreans in Japan – a team of South and North Koreans playing together – will demonstrate that coexistence is possible in the Korean peninsula; the team from the self-governing region of

Abkhazia will express their territory’s desire for independence from Georgia.

The players of Kiribati, a country of small atolls in the Pacific Ocean, will play as living examples of the threat of global warming. As theirs will be one of the world’s first countries to be submerged by rising sea levels, the players could be the last generation that gets to play football under the nation’s banner.

‘This is football that means something,’ says Watson. ‘You won’t find a single

player at that World Cup that cares about their team the way these players care about theirs.’ The teams will square off in London stadiums between 30 May and 10 June 2018. The full schedule is due to be released in the first months of 2018.

Alessio Perrone

40 years ago...



Sometimes this column leads me to pieces from the magazine’s first decade that I had never come across before. In the main theme on changing values in childcare from December 1977 I unexpectedly found, for example, an article by Margaret Mead, the most celebrated anthropologist of the 20th century, who was then entering the last

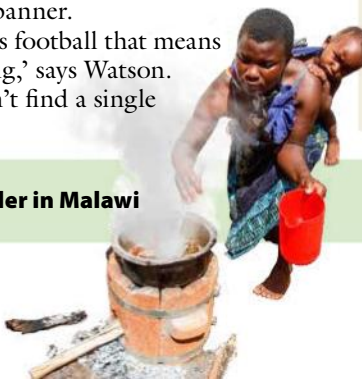
Magdalena Chodownik



ON THE WEB
newint.org

Silent killer in Malawi

Saudi persecution of Al-Nimr family continues



BRITAIN

Docs not cops

Under new rules from the Conservative government, NHS hospitals across England are now obliged to demand payment upfront from patients who are unable to prove they are entitled to healthcare through a ‘residency and immigration’ check.

But doctors and patients are fighting back.

In a recent protest, members of the activist group Docs Not Cops set up an ‘immigration checkpoint’ outside the Department of Health offices in London. Doctors, nurses and patients blocked the entrance and presented people with the forms that NHS trusts are using to screen patients.

The government uses migrants as a scapegoat for the NHS funding crisis, but their own figures show that so-called ‘health tourism’ accounts for just 0.3 per cent of the NHS budget.

Elle, a member of Docs Not Cops and a cardiology trainee, called the changes ‘a high price to pay for the pain and suffering [it] will cause to people who are too afraid to access healthcare’.

Leonie, a midwife, said that undocumented people already feel wary of accessing public services in Britain. ‘Many women won’t go back for the treatment they need and... their health will suffer as a direct result,’ she said.

The charity Doctors of the World has previously reported cases of cancer sufferers, pregnant women and people with sick children being too fearful to see an NHS doctor. ■

Simon Childs

year of her life. She talked about how parents are educated by their children as well as vice versa, and how vital this can be when migrants are adapting to the culture and conditions of a new country. She also discusses how ‘formerly isolated societies of the planet themselves change in response to their new interconnectedness under a shared, endangered and endangering atmosphere’ and you wonder what she would have made of the accelerating globalization of the four decades since (nin.tl/MargaretMead1977).

Elsewhere in that magazine Sunil Mehra visited a village in Gujarat, India, and

Introducing... João Lourenço

Angola has its first new president in nearly 40 years. The ailing José Eduardo dos Santos has stepped aside to turn over the reins of the MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) to the 63-year-old João Lourenço, a man with a solid MPLA pedigree – going from a guerrilla fighter in his youth to holding several important positions and most recently serving as Angola’s Defence Minister. His appointment maintains MPLA’s control over Angolan politics, which they have enjoyed since leading and winning the anti-colonial struggle against Portugal back in 1975.

But replacing the secretive dos Santos has not proved straightforward. In the election held on 23 August the MPLA’s share of the vote dropped to an all-time low of 61 per cent, amid charges from the main opposition party UNITA that



the government had misused its media monopoly for electoral purposes. Tumbling oil prices have made for a difficult situation in an Angola whose economy is subject

to the ‘resource curse’, which plagues many petroleum-dependent countries in the Global South. While Lourenço is committing the government to an agenda of change, including tackling poverty through employment, this will prove difficult without diversifying the economy away from diamonds and oil and those who control them (such as the former president’s daughter, who runs the national oil company).

Hopefully, he will also take some time to ‘change’ dos Santos’ abysmal record on human rights and his habit of smothering all critical voices, from street vendors to housing advocates and hip-hop rappers. ■

Richard Swift

SAUDI ARABIA Divided over driving

Saudi Arabia has decided to lift its ban on women drivers – but not everyone believes this is a sign of progress.

Saudi academic Madawi Al-Rasheed writes in *Middle East Eye* that the Kingdom is ‘co-opting women’s struggle’ to stifle the activism of Saudis against their absolutist monarchy – which restricts freedom of expression and punishes dissent.

But activists point out that the change comes after years of women challenging the law, often at high personal cost.

Many Saudi women are jubilant at being allowed to drive, taking to social media to express their excitement. ‘Saudi Arabia will never be the same again. The rain begins with a single drop’, wrote Manal Al-Sharif on Twitter, founder of the Women2Drive campaign that she started during 2011’s Arab Spring.

After the decree is implemented in June 2018, women will not need permission from a male relative to apply for a driver’s licence – a welcome move, given the country’s patriarchal guardianship system.

Others have dubbed the ruling a PR stunt, aimed at deflecting attention from the Kingdom’s two-year bombing campaign against the Yemeni population.

The decree will also have a negative impact on migrants. Thousands of low-income, foreign chauffeurs, who come to the Kingdom on ‘house driver visas’, are expected to lose their jobs. ■

Lydia Noon

Monbiot: We need a new politics



Inside Duterte’s jails



Reverend Billy vs the British Museum

BANGLADESH
Rohingya crisis not new

After coming to inspect us, Nashida, a bright and lively 10-year-old, returned to her father's side – his face clouded with pain.

Sadar Hospital in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh has a special ward for Rohingya refugees. Although their exodus from neighbouring Myanmar has made headlines recently, local people have seen the Rohingya people forced over the border for years. Along with health workers, the Bangladeshi government and NGOs they have helped to feed and shelter the refugees. ■

Lyndall Stein



Rohingya girl at Sadar Hospital caring for her dad.

Shahidul Alam/ DRIK

UK/ SOUTH SUDAN
Arms trade loophole

Shell companies are aggravating some of the world's worst conflicts through the role they play in illicit arms deals, according to human rights group Amnesty International.

A recent investigation has revealed

that UK-registered company S-Profit Ltd was involved in a deal worth \$169 million that appears to be the largest publicly disclosed arms transfer to South Sudan since the outbreak of civil war in 2013 – a conflict that has displaced over 2.4 million people.

Although 'shell companies' – registered businesses without many

assets that function as vehicles for other deals – are known for their use in financial crimes, like tax evasion, their role in illicit arms deals is less well known.

'By their nature, these companies are opaque,' says Oliver Feeley-Sprague, programme director for Amnesty UK's work on arms control. 'If your business is pedalling guns to the world's hotspots then operating under the radar is an advantage.'

'[Facilitating arms transfers in South Sudan] can result in the death of hundreds if not thousands of people,' Feeley-Sprague adds. 'In other places... it's arming security forces responsible for widespread disappearances, unlawful detentions, torture, harassment and the shooting of demonstrators.'

While Amnesty could not verify whether the weapons were delivered, S-Profit's involvement as an alleged 'supplier' to South Sudan could violate Britain's arms embargo against the African state.

The investigation also revealed how regulatory gaps in Britain make it easy for arms dealers to register sham companies.

'It is unbelievably easy to set one of these companies up,' says Feeley-

Scratchy Lines
 by Simon Kneebone



GERMANY

Whiteness is not rightness

When activists from the Asylum Seekers' Movement (ASM) held a protest-camp in Dresden to demand equal rights, they were disappointed by the lack of support they received from Germany's liberal and left-wing activists.

'They are used to talking on our behalf,' says Iranian refugee, Mesbah, one of the founding members of ASM. 'When we talk for ourselves it shows they get it wrong when they talk about refugees' needs because most Germans have never experienced it.'

When nearly 900,000 asylum seekers arrived in 2015, German activists rushed to support those fleeing violence and discrimination. But two years later, some refugees are asking why they have not yet been better integrated into civil society.

Javid Nabiyev, founder of Queer Refugees for Pride, says refugee-run groups like his are being overlooked. 'We are not taken seriously by other LGBT+ organizations,' says the Azerbaijani activist. 'There is a minority

that see us as competition for resources.'

While Nabiyev says he has encountered German groups that have the attitude 'whiteness is rightness', others are trying to become more inclusive.

Frankfurt-based charity Rainbow Refugees wants to further diversify its board. The organization is just two years old and run almost entirely by volunteers, says social worker Kate Osgood; currently one of its seven members is a refugee.

'Finding that time to work without pay is a luxury,' says Osgood. 'Refugees have a lot of other things to do, like finding jobs and getting an education.'

Another organization, Plus Mannheim, which has been running since 1999, uses 'volunteer contracts' to pay the expenses of three refugees who contribute their expertise.

Malek, a Syrian, is one them. But he believes Germans are better placed to be in charge because they have more local experience. 'If Europeans came to Syria, I don't think we would trust them to make decisions,' he says. ■

Morgan Meaker

A breath of fresher air

Millions of homes across northern China will be heated by gas for the first time this winter as part of a massive government effort to reduce the country's dependency on smog-producing coal. Although gas is still a polluting fossil fuel, the switch will help clean up China's famously noxious air, which worsens in the cold as households fire up their coal burners. With life expectancy in northern China three years lower than the south due in part to cardio-respiratory diseases brought about by pollution, according to a US study, this could be the first step in making the air breathable again.

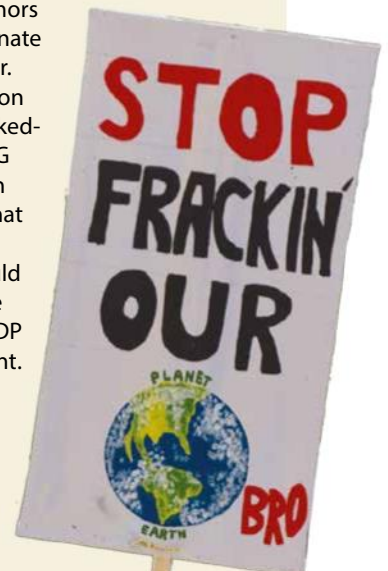
Hope in sight

With only five per cent of children with disabilities completing primary school worldwide, a pilot project to boost visually impaired children's education in Senegal offers hope. Working with the NGO Sightsavers, the West African country successfully trialled the integration of blind and visually impaired children into mainstream schools last year. The government has since committed to rolling out inclusive education nationwide. Sightsavers hope the pilot will become a blueprint for other countries.

Frack off, say Scots

Environmental groups have applauded a decision by the devolved Scottish government to extend a ban on fracking indefinitely. The move followed a public consultation that found 99 per cent of people opposed the controversial energy-extraction process, which has the potential to cause tremors and contaminate ground water.

The decision was also backed-up by a KPMG report, which concluded that embracing fracking would only increase Scotland's GDP by 0.1 per cent.



Sprague. 'It's £12 (\$16) and an online system; you can literally set up a UK registered company with fewer checks than it takes to join a gym.'

'It then gives you a UK address, providing a sense of legitimacy and prestige. But this is also not just a UK problem. The use of shell companies is global.'

The day S-Profit was formed, the sole shareholder was listed as New Zealand/Aotearoa-national, Ian Taylor. When Amnesty questioned him he denied any knowledge of the company.

Taylor used to be a company-formation agent and, through a business he ran with his father, GT Group, set up numerous shell companies in foreign countries.

His family made headlines in 2009 when an aircraft, leased by a New Zealand/Aotearoa registered shell company they set up, was found to be flying 30 tonnes of weaponry to Iran, in breach of UN sanctions.

The Panama Papers investigations have documented the role of other shell companies in the global arms trade, such as the case of a British banker who is alleged to have helped North Korea sell arms. ■

Steven Shaw

MEXICO

Anti-gentrification saint

September's devastating earthquake has brought issues of inequality to the surface in Mexico City where two local artists have installed the capital's first patron saint of gentrification: Santa Mari la Juaricua.

Nestled in an altar in one of the city's 'trendy' districts, Santa Mari has a prayer that calls for residents to be '[saved] from eviction, from rising rents... from greedy landlords and corrupt developers'.

Buoyed by a housing bubble, many of the city's damaged neighbourhoods have been transformed in recent years, with floods of money displacing low-income residents. Although Santa Mari was created before the earthquake, artists Sandra Valenzuela and Jorge Baca say she feels even more relevant now.

'As earthquakes in Mexico City force people to move, they make the lack of regulation visible,' Valenzuela explains. 'The term gentrification isn't used that often in Mexico – people confuse it with progress. Santa Mari is a tool to make us more aware of these complex issues.' ■

Yohann Koshy



Whose streets?

The current clampdown on popular rights mirrors a profound malaise with our system of top-down political representation, argues RICHARD SWIFT.

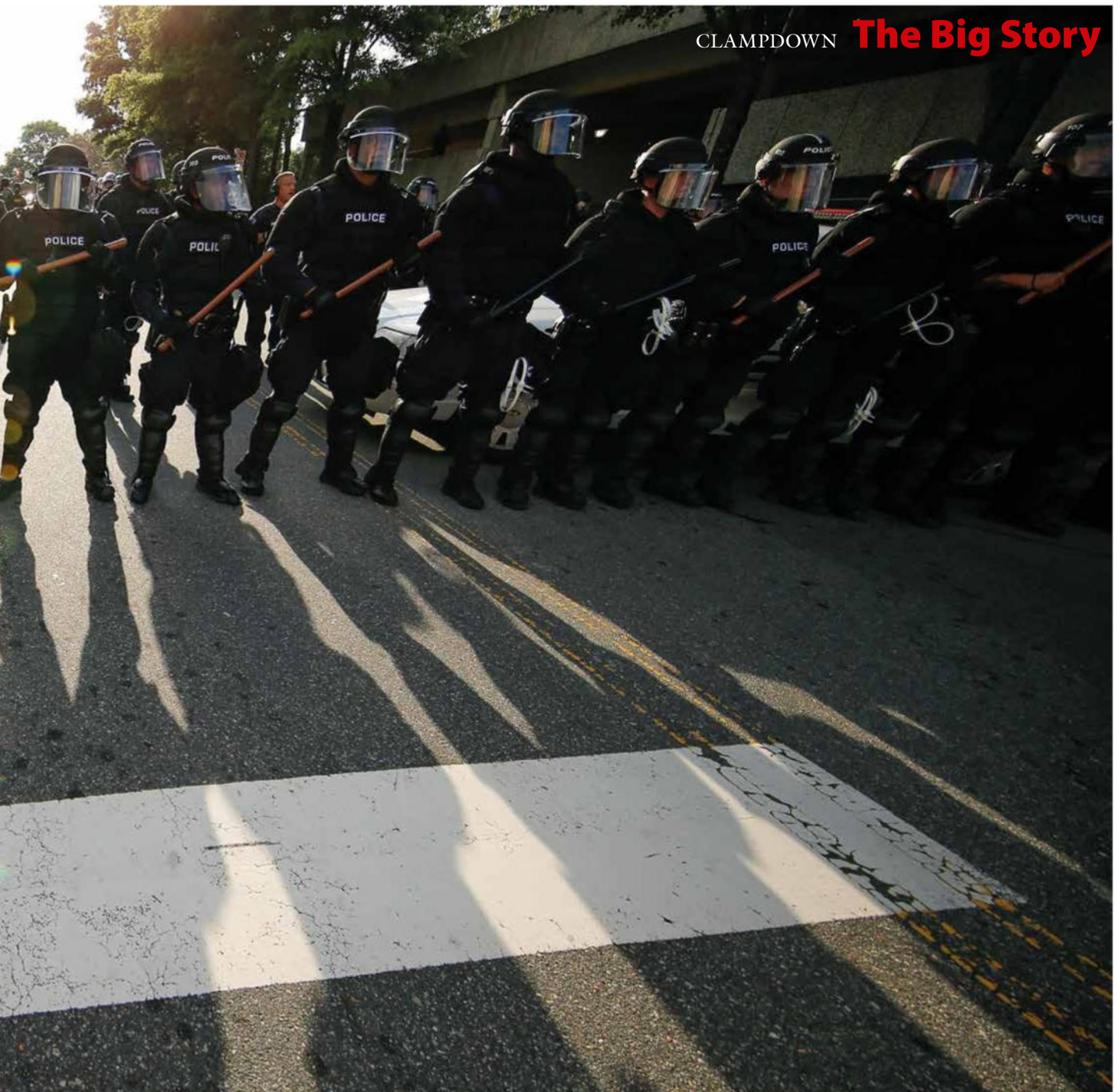
It beggared belief – a line of armoured

St Louis police chanting ‘Whose streets? Our streets!’ But that’s exactly how they trumpeted their power in September as they cleared the streets of people protesting against police brutality.

The officers were celebrating the acquittal of one of their own on charges of the unjustified killing of a black motorist. Of course, it is no surprise to anyone that heavily armed police control US streets, often acting like armed

militias occupying poor communities. What was different was the sheer brazenness of using a chant, made famous by the Occupy movement, to glorify their own power. Usually such arbitrary police activities are justified by professionalized gobbledygook. But it is a sign of the times. In those countries that even allow demonstrations a police permit is usually required to exercise this ‘right’.

The control of public space – streets, squares, parks, even Barcelona’s polling stations – is increasingly subject to arbitrary state intervention to try to prevent unapproved political expression. Such public spaces – Tahrir Square in Cairo and Gezi Park in Istanbul, for example – have long been rallying places for expressing dissent. The freedom to use public space is one of a set of crucial rights that together comprise democracy. Stopping people



Jason Mizek/Reuters

doing so significantly reduces the possibility of opposition. It is part of a broad establishment strategy that critics, such as the citizens' rights advocacy group Civicus, refer to as 'the closing of political space'.

Across the political spectrum, and across the world, this space is being squeezed. Repressive tools include everything from *ad hoc* administrative regulation, restrictive legislation, misuse of anti-terrorist measures, surveillance, draconian border controls, heavy-handed policing, manipulation of the judiciary, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, even torture and murder.

The Civicus folks have a map to rate the health of national political space using set categories – 'closed', 'repressed', 'obstructed', 'narrowed' and 'open'. According to their reckoning only two per cent of the world's

population now enjoy truly 'open' political space, which is to be found in countries including Ireland, Portugal, Germany and much of Scandinavia. For the rest of us it's an uphill struggle.

Neither of the two main political trends – rightist populist nationalism on the one hand and neoliberalism (of both centre-Right and centre-Left) on the other – have much use for open political space. While they talk a different language and may use different methods, they share a common desire to turn political space into an administered zone. From Viktor Orbán in Hungary to Vladimir Putin in Russia, to Donald Trump in the US and Mariano Rajoy in Spain, any commitment to meaningful democratic rights is paper thin.

This is also true in many places throughout the Global South. In India, once considered

In the US, police often decide who has the right to demonstrate and who doesn't. In this case riot police in Durham, North Carolina form an armed phalanx to control people attempting to protest against a white nationalist rally.

Without the rights to freely communicate, assemble and organize, a truly participative democracy will never happen.

‘the world’s largest democracy’, the space to organize is under intense pressure from the Hindu fundamentalist regime of Narendra Modi. In a France traumatized by terrorism, basic rights of freedom of expression and assembly (remember *liberté, égalité, fraternité*?) are under threat. In nominally democratic Peru, the government is even using ‘preventive charges’ against activists if it gets wind of future plans of resistance.

Why ‘small’ freedoms matter

Our freedoms are pretty fragile these days. By freedoms I’m thinking about all the little ones: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, of privacy, of communication, of opinion, of movement – in short freedom to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the government. I’m not thinking here of the big F ‘Freedom’ that at least some of those taking away our actual freedoms claim to be striving to protect. This big F version seems to have more to do with the freedom to manoeuvre by those who run the state and the corporations that control the economy. They have little interest in the fragile freedoms of everyday life – often seen as annoying obstacles to growth and profit. Their right to manoeuvre and our right to resist rub up against each other.

The big F Freedom, is articulated in many ways, but its final point of reference remains a national sovereignty exercised by centralized nation-states to pursue elite-defined national interests and make sure it’s ‘own’ citizens are obedient. Any state that monopolizes power, be it autocratic or representational, is prone to capture by powerful elites: usually large transnational corporations and international banking conglomerates. Any counter-power – vigorous labour and social movements, a lively civil society, a reciprocal and democratic economy – requires the oxygen of political

space if it is to breathe.

These days our current system of centralized representative government is in serious trouble. Large numbers no longer bother to vote. Political parties have trouble attracting members. There is a huge disconnect between the self-image of politicians (enlightened and selfless servants of the public interest) and how the general public regards them (manipulative liars bent on feathering their own nests). While partisan politics generate a lot of heat there are few significant policy differences and actual achievements remain pathetic. The inability or unwillingness of most political and bureaucratic elites to solve, or even address, basic questions of runaway inequality and looming ecocide has left their legitimacy in tatters. Repression is often the only card left in their hand.

Dutch author David Van Reybrouck, in his recent, provocatively titled *Against Elections: The Case for Democracy*, refers to this as Democratic Fatigue Syndrome. He and a great many others are making a strong case that democracy is badly in need of a rethink. Radical theorists Michael Hardt and Tony Negri, in their groundbreaking *Assembly*, see a democracy of participation as our best chance for achieving a healthy post-capitalist world. An emerging consensus of these critics holds that we need to move in the direction of popular participation and away from remote representation by an aristocratic caste.

There is a plethora of projects and ideas afoot to democratize our money-driven variant of representation. These include a radical municipalism where local government steps in to fill the void left by the absentee national state. A commons-based democracy based on collectively managing and expanding what we hold in common (from air to air waves) rather than watching them ruined through privatization. Ideas for a more participatory democracy include: citizen juries to discuss policy options; a return to a rotating drawing of lots to fill important positions; revocable mandates; participatory budgeting; more direct rule through legislative initiative from below; fairly organized and thoughtful referenda; and local assembly democracy.

But these are controversial and far-reaching changes likely to be resisted by both die-hard nationalists and those with wealth and power at stake. That is why the need to defend and widen political space is so vital. If activists committed to recreating democracy are to have any chance they need to be have their basic rights protected. Without the rights to freely communicate, assemble and organize (all now under pressure almost everywhere), a truly participative democracy will never happen. Indeed, we are likely to lose even the meagre democracy we have. It is essential to stop the current clampdown on rights. ■

ACTION

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Civicus (The World Campaign for Citizen Participation) is the single best source of information about the squeezing of political space around the world. It is also a great rallying point for campaigns to defend activists and their rights. civicus.org

The Amsterdam-based **Transnational Institute** is deeply involved in crafting alternatives and promoting discussion of rights-denying corporate capitalism. They have an interesting paper entitled ‘Rethinking Shrinking Space’. tni.org

The US-based **International Center for Not-For-Profit Law** tracks repressive legislation and violations of civil society, including those currently taking place in the US. icnl.org

FURTHER READING

Michael Hardt and Tony Negri, *Assembly*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

David Van Reybrouck, *Against Elections: The Case for Democracy*, Bodley Head, 2016.



From lecturer to prison

Academic İŞTAR GÖZAYDIN's first-hand experiences of the clampdown in Turkey.

I am a professor of law and politics and have dedicated most of my academic career to analyzing the relations between religion, state and society. I grew up in an almost non-religious family; I guess this is the source of my fascination, since I was a teenager, with the impact of religion on people. Never religious myself, I have nevertheless always respected all variants of belief or disbelief.

The Turkey in which I was born in 1959 has always been a fruitful laboratory for any social scientist to observe religion. It has also given me several opportunities to serve as a human rights activist – though I have never been a radical. In my academic work, I have criticized the policies of Turkey's single-party regime (1923-50), especially in terms of religious repression and the treatment of minorities. I have always rejected the understanding of democracy that allows majorities to ride roughshod over the rights of minorities – it is essential that such rights are protected.

Turkey has always experienced cycles of political fortune, but the past 15 years have

seen a series of critical junctures prompting a development in politics that is really quite unprecedented.¹ The stunning victory of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) in the parliamentary elections of 2002 marked a profound change in Turkish politics. A new political elite arose from a social base that had been mostly neglected since the founding of the Republic in 1923. The AKP speedily eliminated military tutelage and proposed significant initiatives to empower the citizenry and sustain civil liberties – both important steps towards democratization. But by 2007 signs of yet another fundamental transition began to emerge. The emphasis on democracy appeared to fall away as the AKP's conservative Islamist discourse intensified. Attempts at constructing a hegemonic authoritarian regime started to appear.

After the putsch

The Gezi Park protests of 2013 marked another turning point, after which Recep Tayyip Erdoğan finally took complete control of the AKP. The violent response of the Turkish authorities to the protests exposed a striking intolerance of opposing voices indicating Erdoğan's belief that conspiratorial rhetoric is the best way to mobilize support.

Turkish riot police crack down on people protesting against the purge of academics, outside Ankara University.

Unit Bektas/Reuters

The putsch of 15 July 2016 was the most recent, the most dramatic and – arguably – the most consequential event. It has touched every Turkish citizen in myriad ways and its effects will probably be felt in Turkey for generations. I personally experienced this process like no other in my life. At the time, I had been the chair of the Sociology Department at Gediz University in Izmir for almost a year. This was a particularly rewarding period in my academic career. I remember fondly the intellectual enthusiasm of young colleagues – many of whom had returned to Turkey having completed PhDs at prestigious universities around the world – as well as the intellectual curiosity of the students. Such an environment is sadly all too rare in higher education.

To my utmost surprise, I received an email on 21 July 2016 from human resources informing me that I had been suspended by the rector of the university because of allegedly pro-putsch tweets sent from my Twitter account. I had *retweeted* four or five tweets after 15 July; however, each was merely a call for rule of law and to stand strictly against violence, including restoration of capital punishment – a proposal that re-emerged in the wake of the coup attempt. My past criticisms of governmental policies in the media were, I suppose, a kind of pretext for the university to appear sympathetic to the government by making an example of me. In the event this proved pointless; Gediz was one of 16 universities closed by decree on 23 July 2016.

On 5 October 2016, I was heading to an EU project meeting in Sicily when, at the airport, I was informed that my passport had been annulled. At 6.30 am on 20 December, a buzz at the front door of my home in Istanbul marked my own critical juncture. I was taken into custody in Istanbul and later in the day transferred to Izmir. There, I was detained at Yesilyurt Police Station for eight days with only the clothes I wore and with no book or other reading material. The only thing I could focus my attention on was the box of medication I was immediately given to treat a circulation problem (I have to take this daily). Needless to say, I memorized every word of the pamphlet inside.

Jailed for 92 days

I was charged with being a member of an armed terrorist organization – the so-called FETÖ (Fetullah Gülen Terror Organization) blamed for last year's coup attempt. But there was no evidence to back this allegation. During the first interrogation, the police googled my name and found several TV programmes on which I'd appeared in my professional capacity. One response I had given about the definition of a terrorist

How Turkey's citiz

The last straw came this summer when well-known human rights activists, including Amnesty International (AI) Turkey Director Idil Eser and founding member Özlem Dalkıran, were taken into custody during a training workshop in Istanbul. They are still in pre-trial detention for allegedly aiding a non-specified terrorist organization. Their lawyer Hülya Gülbahar sees this as a clear message to Turkish society: 'We now live in a system without any citizens' rights, nor any chance of survival for organizations defending such rights.'

When AI Secretary-General Salil Shetty called world leaders to break their silence on the human rights meltdown, few democratic dissidents inside the country held out much hope. Advocates for a secular Turkey are still trying to digest being re-labelled as 'the East' following the Soviet decline. Turkey's NATO membership no longer entitled it to membership in 'the West', with geo-political thinking assigning us the role as 'moderate Muslims' who could bridge East and West. Playing a leading role in the Middle Eastern world seemed to suit Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Erdoğan's Western enthusiasts included German Chancellor Angela Merkel whose pre-election state visit to Turkey back in October 2015 drew accusations of meddling in the electoral campaign. Earlier in the year, there had been other elections. On 7 June 2015, a coalition of leftists, feminists, LBGTI+ and peace activists had supported the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), and helped it overcome the electoral threshold to become the third largest party in the Turkish parliament. The victory of this democratic bloc was short-lived. The ruling AKP quickly manoeuvred for new elections to restore its majority. More than half the population was outraged.

The four months between the two sets of elections were full of disasters. Bomb blasts ripped across the country, some claimed by ISIS or Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK). A few weeks before the second elections, two bombs went off killing 103 people at an Ankara Peace Rally.

But when, just days later, Merkel visited Erdoğan it was all broad smiles for the cameras – it felt like the two politicians were mocking a mourning country. It was in this climate of desperation that Erdoğan regained his majority.

A bizarre and useful coup

The attempted and suppressed coup of 15 June 2016 was bizarre. It was all over in a matter of hours. The coup and its aftermath

organization was the supposed 'smoking gun' for the authorities. I had answered a query as follows: 'A judicial decision is definitely needed to characterize a structure as a terror organization. It is still debateable, but certainly an administrative decision is not sufficient for an outfit to be named as such.'

This was considered by the Turkish authorities as me advocating for the so-called FETÖ. The female judge who I appeared before with seven others on 27 December 2016 obviously agreed with this opinion. I was formally charged and placed on remand.

I was in jail for 92 days. My cell mates were mostly judges and prosecutors, teachers

With no access to all I have produced intellectually since my 20s I feel like I've been lobotomized

ens lost their rights

which left 264 dead also left even the most experienced Turkish political analysts scratching their heads. Although much of the Western media sees the coup as an Erdoğan plot to consolidate power, there is mounting evidence that it was indeed plotted by Gulenist military officers. It seems likely Erdoğan knew of the coup and was prepared to use it as an excuse for a general crackdown.

Up until 2013 the Gulenists had been close allies of the AKP and held key positions in the Turkish state. During two show-trials, in 2007 and 2010, Gulenist judges helped Erdoğan rid himself of Kemalist military officers who saw themselves as guarantors of Turkey's secular constitution. By 2013, more than 10 per cent of generals and admirals were behind bars.

But the Gulenists were ambitious and wanted a bigger share of power. Erdoğan resisted, setting in train a kind of clandestine civil war. The Gulenist judiciary and police now launched corruption operations against Erdoğan and his business associates and in December 2013 the government responded by outlawing Gulenist networks.

Turkey's democratic bloc knew from the start that it was doomed if the Gulenist coup succeeded. But the state of emergency imposed after the coup was used as a pretext for closing all political space and silencing critical voices. Targets included HDP co-chairs and deputies, and publications such as the socialist *Evrensel*, pro-Kurdish *Özgür Gündem* and even the mainstream, secularist *Cumhuriyet*.

Veteran leftists, who had survived torture and prison sentences during previous coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980, today express an ironic yearning for the good old days of at least a semi-separation of powers. These days the 'accused' are sent to court for aiding organizations and ideas they have spent their lives fighting against. This absurd yet well-prepared targeting – reminiscent of 1930s Germany – wears down the capacity for coherent and critical thought. Though it is no longer possible

These days the 'accused' are sent to court for aiding organizations and ideas they have spent their lives fighting against

and academics who had been arrested almost immediately after the coup attempt. My thirst for reading during my period in custody led me to commit to reading a book every day I was in jail. I really did – some of them one a day, some chapter by chapter. By the time my case was transferred to an Istanbul court and I was released pending trial – 31 March 2017 – I'd finished 92 books.

Like tens of thousands of others suspended or removed from their positions, I struggle with the fact that it is simply impossible – *de facto* if not *de jure* – to find employment in Turkey. My loss, however, is primarily intellectual. All my electronical equipment

– including my laptop and backups – were taken by the police and they have not yet been returned. With no access to all I have produced intellectually since my 20s I feel like I've been lobotomized. Worse still, I cannot travel internationally – a freedom I've enjoyed since I was seven months old. True enough, nothing lasts forever; but I am very much afraid that as time goes by, it will not be possible to restore Turkey to a lasting peace. ■

1 For a detailed analysis of politics in Turkey leading to an authoritarian regime see, İstar Gözaydın, 'Epilogue: The Desire is There', in *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance and the AKP*, edited by Bahar Başer and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, IB Tauris, London 2017.



Artist Kaya Mar with his satirical portrait Erdoğan, the Turkish Sun King – after France's absolute monarch Louis XVI.

to claim there is any meaningful rule of law in Turkey, the courts are working overtime. Dissidents from all political backgrounds fill the courtrooms. Many of the Gulenists claim remorse and ask forgiveness from the state. But other dissidents – democrat, feminist or pro-Kurdish – who have been scandalously imprisoned under false charges, stand by everything they have said or done and courageously accuse the judiciary of working against the rule of law. Despite all the pain endured in today's Turkey, the integrity of such dissidents lifts the spirit of those still struggling for a just and democratic country.

Hakki Mahfuz is a Turkish writer and analyst.

PixNews / Alamy Stock Photo

On 5 September, Gauri Lankesh, editor of an outspoken weekly newspaper was gunned down outside her home in Bangalore, southern India. A staunch critic of Hindu nationalist politics, she had been convicted of ‘defamation’ last year for an article implicating influential politicians belonging to India’s ruling party in a corruption scandal.

Across the Arabian Sea in Bahrain, the president of the Centre for Human Rights Nabeel Rajab, is languishing in prison and in failing health resulting from torture. His crime – publicly criticizing Bahrain’s absolutist monarchy and demanding genuine democracy.

Lankesh and Rajab’s struggles, pursued in vastly different political environments, highlight a bitter truth. Around the world, a combination of resurgent nationalist political forces and old school tyrants are attacking civil society and the progressive media with a vengeance.

The link between the persecution of Nabeel Rajab and the crude actions of Bahraini authorities is pretty obviously part of their policy of preventing human rights advocates from going to UN meetings and even regularly harassing their family members. The causal link between Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s caution to Indian Supreme Court judges two years ago about ‘five star activists’, to today’s perilous environment in which a well-respected journalist like Lankesh can be gunned down in her own home, may be more subtle but it cannot be ignored.¹

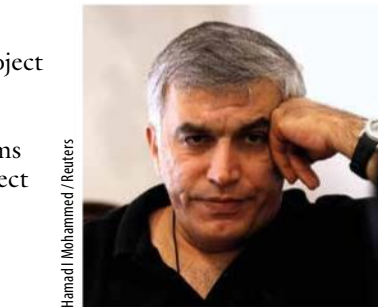
Many of us in civil society are deeply concerned by the emergence of an insidious, often neo-fascist, brand of global politics. The figureheads of this political project rally around narrow notions of nationalism based on religious or ethnic identity. They dismiss human rights and social justice norms as sentimental ‘political correctness’ and reject internationalism as being out of touch with the presumed views of the silent majority. Many of them may have assumed power democratically, yet following elections, they regard their mandate, whether rigged or fair, as absolute. Dissent is viewed as illegitimate. Rule of law matters less than edicts purported to reflect popular opinion. These autocratic politicians show scant respect for judicial and legislative checks and balances. They also tend to centralize decision-making, surrounding themselves with narrow coterie of advisors, often drawn from business elites, who benefit from the easing of business regulations.

Sharing tactics

Activists and organizations uncovering corrupt relationships or conflicts of interest are a grave threat to this kind of emotion-based politics that eschews logic. Members of civil society and the progressive media are derided as obstructive

You will agree

MANDEEP TIWANA sorts through the many cloaks of authoritarianism donned by the political class as repression becomes the rule rather than the exception.



Hamadi Mohammed / Reuters

Top: murdered Indian newspaper editor, Gauri Lankesh. Bottom: Nabeel Rajab, imprisoned human-rights defender in Bahrain.

or at work at the behest of outside forces. This toxic cocktail of resurgent nationalism and old school authoritarianism is feeding off the global security discourse. Genuine threats from terrorists are repurposed to place arbitrary limits on fundamental freedoms in the name of safeguarding national security.

In his September 2017 statement to the UN General Assembly, US president Donald Trump made repeated references to state sovereignty as a rebuke to universal human rights norms.

Since his election, several states in the US have attempted to pass anti-protest legislation to impede the constitutionally guaranteed right to peaceful protest.

Rightwing nationalist political elites are sharing tactics and egging each other on. Trump as president elect expressly supported Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s repudiation of a UN resolution urging an end to Israeli settlement activities in occupied Palestine.

Netanyahu’s government has been instrumental in pushing through a notorious foreign agents law that subjects civil society groups that receive international support to excessive state scrutiny and control – to prevent them from exposing abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Israeli law is in turn modelled on Russia’s foreign agents law passed by Vladimir Putin’s government which views civil society as a thorn in its side.

The trendsetting Russian law also inspired Hungary’s moves to undermine freedom of association by denying access to international funding to human rights groups. Like Putin, Hungary’s



Prime Minister Viktor Orbán views himself as a staunch defender of nationalist cultural values. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte has demonstrated his lack of respect for the rule of law by publicly stating that he would kill human rights advocates if they stood in the way of his ‘war on drugs’, and indicated murdered journalists deserved their fate.

The regressive actions of several democratic governments have emboldened authoritarian states. In Ethiopia, several hundred protestors have been gunned down with impunity during mass demonstrations against official policies in the last couple of years, while thousands have been arbitrarily detained.² In Egypt, the military-backed regime has decimated independent civil society organizations through a policy of implementing regressive laws and intimidating activists through politically motivated prosecutions. In Venezuela, the UN has lamented steady erosion of constitutional norms leading to systematic use of excessive force to curb democratic dissent.

Push back

In an unusually frank speech at the UN in June this year, the High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein issued a stark warning about the defiance of international law and constitutional norms.³ ‘The universal rights to freedom, equality and dignity have been held to be true across cultures and civilizations because of their intrinsic value, and because they make it possible to keep the peace. They are not frivolous add-ons; they are absolutely critical. Trash these, openly and defiantly, and the boundaries separating us from horrific violence dissolve.’

Although the current crop of political insurgents have little time for international

Dissent is viewed as illegitimate. Rule of law matters less than edicts purported to reflect popular opinion

institutions, rights defenders continue to score victories under the banner of human rights advocacy. In 2016, following sustained civil society pressure and despite fierce opposition, the UN for the first time was able to appoint an independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, bridging a key gap in international protection of the right against discrimination.⁴ In Poland last year, supporters of women’s rights came out in large numbers to push back a regressive anti-abortion bill that would reduce their agency over their bodies. These are but two examples of numerous defeats of regressive draft laws, along with the release of prisoners of conscience and emergence of principled public servants willing to put a stop to untrammelled political power.

We at CIVICUS argued in our 2017 *State of Civil Society Report* that in these polarized times, it is not enough for civil society to assert a belief in internationalism. We need a well thought-out and progressive internationalism to address the current global crisis of democracy. Many recent political shifts reflect genuine citizen anger. People feel increasingly economically insecure, and see their livelihoods becoming more precarious. They resent the growing gaps between the very wealthy and everyone else. They may also feel their traditional ways of living and values are under threat from technological change, urbanization or immigration.

In conditions of deteriorating public trust, people feel politics-as-usual tends to privilege elite interests. In the current era of outsourced government and crony capitalism, big businesses are bailed out while ordinary people struggle with their public services cut back. Citizens may see conventional political competition as meaningless and established political parties as virtually indistinguishable from each other. This can lead them to reject conventional politics and embrace more extreme positions; including, in some instances, a rejection of constitutional democracy – with its inherent protections for alternative voices – itself.

But the current lurch towards neo-fascist politics will likely lead to a pendulum swing. Disillusion is bound to follow when populist politicians fail to deliver on their contradictory and outrageous promises. We need to ready ourselves for that moment. In the meantime, we need to offer reasoned alternatives that speak to citizens’ grievances and demands for a better life. Our faith in social cohesion, and the human impulse to accept rather than reject diversity, needs to remain strong. ■

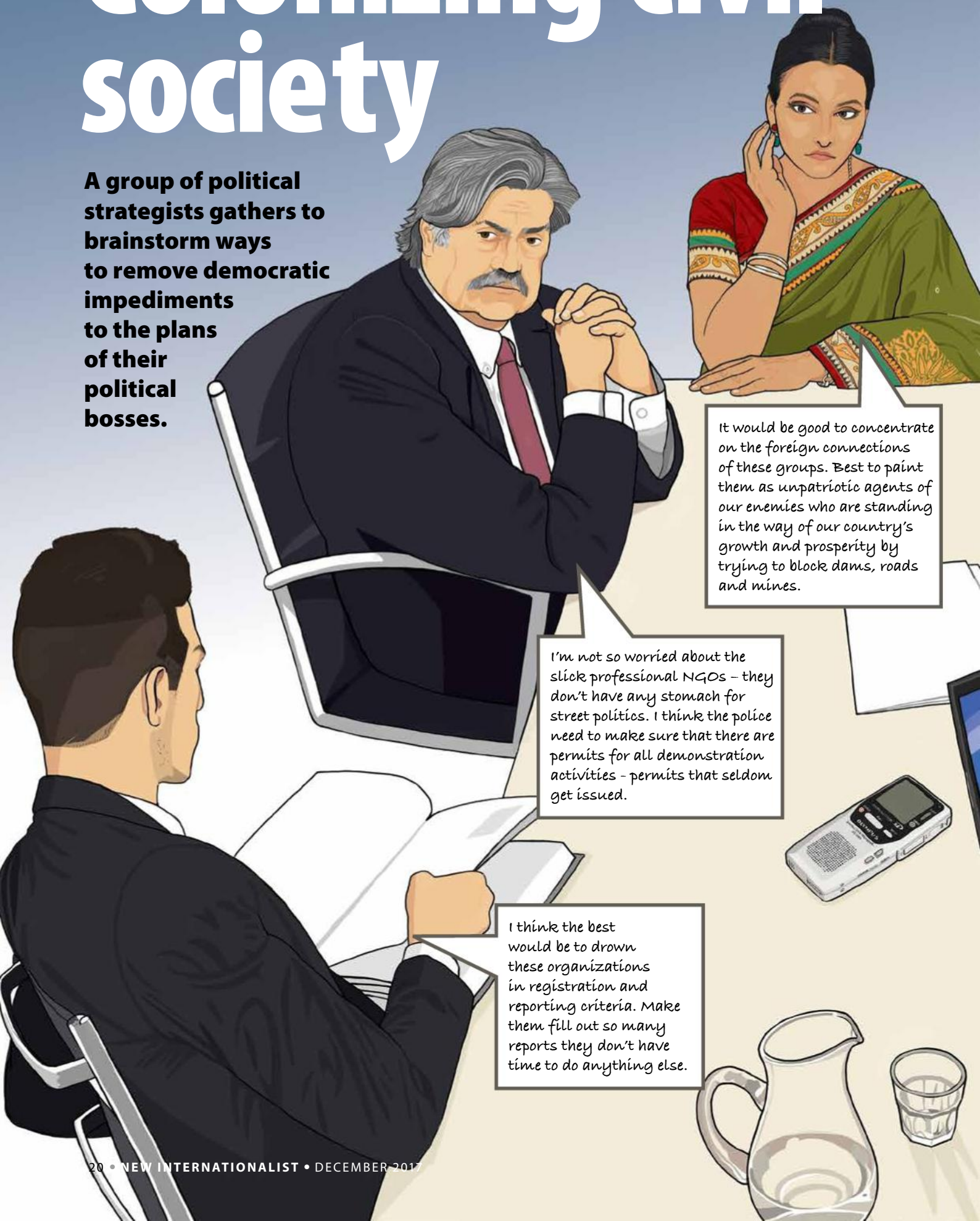
Mandeep Tiwana is the Chief Programmes Officer at the global civil society alliance, CIVICUS.

¹ thehindu.com, 5 April 2015, nin.tl/Modi-guard-against-activists ² monitor.civicus.org, 27 June 2016, nin.tl/Ethiopian-protestors-shot ³ OHCHR, nin.tl/denying-access-wont-stop-scrutiny ⁴ OHCHR, nin.tl/sexual-orientation-and-gender

Getty Images/Stockphoto

Colonizing civil society

A group of political strategists gathers to brainstorm ways to remove democratic impediments to the plans of their political bosses.



It would be good to concentrate on the foreign connections of these groups. Best to paint them as unpatriotic agents of our enemies who are standing in the way of our country's growth and prosperity by trying to block dams, roads and mines.

I'm not so worried about the slick professional NGOs - they don't have any stomach for street politics. I think the police need to make sure that there are permits for all demonstration activities - permits that seldom get issued.

I think the best would be to drown these organizations in registration and reporting criteria. Make them fill out so many reports they don't have time to do anything else.

Text by Richard Swift, illustration by Jonathan Williams

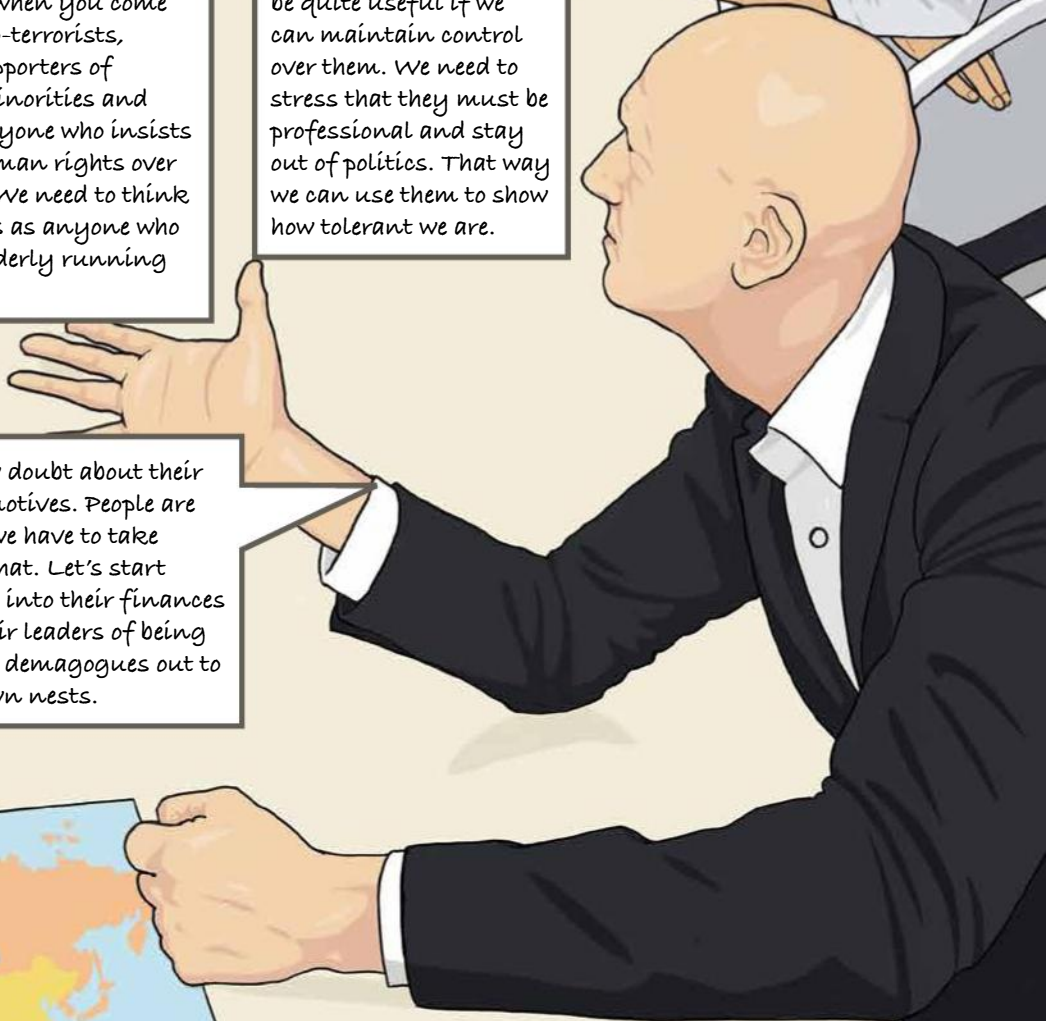


I think, no more kid gloves! Make an example out of these trouble-makers by knocking a few of them right out of the game. Get what I mean?

It's good to play the terrorism card. No one likes terrorism so let's broaden the concept. A lot of these groups are really just terrorists when you come down to it - eco-terrorists, feminazis, supporters of troublesome minorities and migrants - anyone who insists on putting human rights over public safety. We need to think about terrorists as anyone who disrupts the orderly running of society.

I don't know - that sounds kinda heavy-handed to me. I think some of these NGOs can be quite useful if we can maintain control over them. We need to stress that they must be professional and stay out of politics. That way we can use them to show how tolerant we are.

We need to sow doubt about their honesty and motives. People are suspicious so we have to take advantage of that. Let's start investigations into their finances and accuse their leaders of being power-tripping demagogues out to feather their own nests.



Are we all terrorists?

ter-ror-ism

especially for poli

'ter-ror-ist

terrorism.

**Activist
SCOTT
WEINSTEIN**
dances with
the terrorist
label and
finds it
a fickle
partner.

Terrorist! Yes, this means you.

Please open your *Old Testament* to *Numbers, 14: 1-25* where God tells Moses to spy on you Canaanites who were up to no good, and later slaughters you.

Skip ahead to the Declaration of Independence, a magnificent achievement guaranteeing the rights of all Americans – at least the white male property-owning ones. If you weren't one of these lucky guys and wanted to defend your land (an indigenous person) or gain your liberty (a slave from Africa) you were likely a terrorist even before terrorism.

Today, if you and your children are fleeing your war-for-oil targeted country, your very survival means crossing high security borders designed to keep out terrorist threats – that is, you.

Are you now, or have you ever been a terrorist?

My terrorism began innocently enough.

I helped the Service Employees International Union's campaign to successfully gain union status for janitors and parking lot attendants – most of whom were Latino immigrants and African Americans. In 1985 we blocked major traffic routes into Washington DC and earned the label 'traffic terrorists' by the US Congress.

In a 2015 anti-terrorism trial in Argentina, indigenous Mapuche activist Relmu Namku was charged with attempted murder. Her crime:

pelting a state representative with a stone. The politician was there as part of a delegation accompanying the US oil transnational Apache Corporation. Some 60 Mapuche communities in Chile have been accused of 'illicit and terrorist association'. Activists were designated terrorists and criminalized for protecting their community's ancestral lands from exploitation.

Remember, Argentina and Chile are supposed to be democracies now.

How did terrorism get so trifling?

The term originated in Western history's bloody re-birth of democracy – the French Revolution of 1789. Maximilien Robespierre's government used *La Terreur* – the Reign of Terror – to mass-murder its enemies. His justification was simple: 'Subdue by terror the enemies of liberty and you will be right, as founders of the Republic.'

Until Robespierre was guillotined without trial, he probably reasoned: what could possibly go wrong?

Before September 2001, only limited enemies were branded 'terrorist'. Al Qaeda's spectacular 9-11 violence birthed the big-bang of the Orwellian terror-industrial-complex. The US demanded, the UN Security Council mandated, and 140 countries dutifully passed 'counterterrorism laws' on September 28th. According to Human Rights Watch this represented 'a dangerous expansion of powers to detain and prosecute people, including



gettyimages/istockphoto

We are reminded that terrorists are everywhere. Throwing a stone is as catastrophic as throwing a bomb

peaceful political opponents'. Today there is one toxic label, one law and one response to a mishmash of enemies – real and imagined.

This 'terrorism' word, according to political linguists like George Lakoff, is being shaped to trigger emotional responses of fear and paranoia, training us to tremble and acquiesce. Kneejerk associations follow: you say Muslim, I think 'terrorist'. Terrorist is a kind of political swearword used to confront many kinds of democratic disruption. 'Anti-terrorism' replaces 'anti-communism'. 'Security forces' replaces 'death squads'. 'Anxiety' replaces 'critical thinking'. The 'War on Drugs' morphs into the 'War on Terror'.

We are reminded that terrorists are everywhere. Throwing a stone is as catastrophic as throwing a bomb. Many, of course, refuse to accept this rubbish. In 2012 Argentinian civil society took to the streets demanding the repeal of the Anti-Terrorist laws.

'Anti-Terrorist legislation is aimed at the persecution and criminalization of social protests. It has deepened to the point that there is no worker's struggle, no student, environmental, social or political resistance that doesn't end in the initiation of legal proceedings against the most visible activists of each struggle,' said the Judicial Federation of Argentina.¹

War on Terror fatigue

Counterterrorism degrades the ethical framework that governs society. I've ridden with pilots in Louisiana who fly secret rendition planes, and met CIA agents in El Salvador who supervised the torture and murder of Chileans in the soccer stadium. I've hosted a Syrian-Canadian tortured for months at Canada's request in Assad's prison. Paranoid US border agents rushed me with guns drawn because my companion's Canadian passport triggered an alarm – years ago in Palestine, Israeli authorities arrested her at a protest. Homeland Security asked her if she knew Osama bin Laden! Then to humiliate us, they handed us a 'customer satisfaction card' to complete. Spies and provocateurs infiltrate my Latino and Arab neighbours. My taxes pay for 'anti-radicalization programmes' in my city's schools, and for private immigration prisons far from the city.

This archipelago of rendition and control respects no borders until 'they' try to cross 'here'. Does any of this apparatus prevent 'acts of terrorism'? The polarization it encourages probably increases their likelihood.

The War on Terror nourishes Islamophobia which only divides us, alienating particularly young Muslims we claim to be so desperate to 'integrate'. Any nuisance whether it be the Kurds, the Palestinians, the Ukrainians, the Mapuche or the Rohingya and ultimately even you and I, may become worthy targets. After World War Two, countries as diverse as Algeria,

Kenya and Israel achieved independence with the help of terrorist groups. Now they treat their opposition as terrorists.

The total focus on antiterrorism means that other desperate needs get ignored. When I went to New Orleans as a first responder nurse after Hurricane Katrina, the national disaster response agency, FEMA, had no plans to deal with the catastrophic flooding – despite it having been predicted as a likely major disaster. As a FEMA boss told me: 'If hurricanes were designated as terrorist threats, we would have been prepared.' Badly flooded Houston, hurricane-destroyed Puerto Rico and wildfire-burnt California are the latest proof we can't focus to prevent predictable catastrophes.

Terrorism is violence, something society opposes, yet institutionalizes and glorifies. Many, particularly in the Global South, shake their heads at the hypocrisy of official society that denounces oppositional violence, and even non-violent activism, while glorifying military and police willing to use whatever violent measures are necessary to ensure healthy bottom lines for corporations. But drawing to the end of its second decade it feels like the era of antiterrorism is starting to fray at the edges. Call it War on Terror fatigue.

Resistance takes many forms from the rolling of the eyes at the latest terror alert to people in the US jamming airports in solidarity with Muslims after Trump's travel ban was announced – thereby bolstering the federal justices to rule against it. In Britain people rally to oppose migrant detention centres and arbitrary expulsions. Europeans flock to landing points in Greece and Italy welcoming and assisting fellow humans washing ashore from lands of destruction. NGOs advise Muslim charities on their rights and how to respond if the government lists them as a terrorist group.

Even establishment newspapers set up secret dropboxes to enable security-state whistleblowers, for the future Edward Snowdens and Chelsea Mannings.

Counterterrorism may be losing its mojo but it is still armed and dangerous and threatens the human future. We must not only reject its crude characterization of activism, but also retire that highly selective word 'terror' and describe the violence for what it is.

If we do, I think we will find that many of its roots are buried in the practices of the corporate state and predatory economy it services. ■

Scott Weinstein is a nice guy based in Montreal and Washington, DC. He writes as part of his activism which focuses on anti-racism and with the Canadian organization Independent Jewish Voices. His latest script *iScream* is about a society controlled by its digital devices, until the rebels hit.

¹ Judicial Federation of Argentina, FJA, nin.tl/Argentines-resist-anti-terrorism-law

Latin America has the highest rate of

murders of environmental and land defenders in the world. According to the organization Global Witness, at least 200 defenders were killed worldwide in 2016 and 60 per cent of those were in Latin America.¹

Defenders face a series of tactics to silence dissent. Murder is the final rung in a ladder which begins with manipulation of communities and can proceed through stigmatization and criminal prosecution – all steps which corporations use to suppress opposition to their activities, mostly with state collusion.

In countries with neoliberal agendas, like Peru and Colombia, free-trade agreements signed in recent decades have given favourable conditions to transnational corporations which operate extractive projects. As the number of mining, hydropower, agro-industry and other projects multiply, resistance also rises to defend common goods such as land, forests and water.

In one case in Peru, indigenous Aymara and Quechua people who prevented their territory being contaminated by a silver mine were labelled ‘backward’ and ‘against development’. Several face criminal charges for protesting. Peru currently has 39 mining conflicts.²

In Colombia, Jakeline Romero Epiayu, a Wayuu indigenous woman, is being harassed and threatened with death for leading opposition to the expansion of Latin America’s largest open-cast coalmine which will damage her community. Colombia has the third-highest number of murdered defenders, after Brazil and the Philippines.

These examples – just two out of thousands around the world – illustrate some of the tactics used against individuals and communities: stigmatization in the media;

Defame, criminalize, murder

Grassroots environmentalists are being violently targeted in Latin America. LENY OLIVERA ROJAS and SIAN COWMAN believe there is something we can do about it.

police brutality and indiscriminate arrests at marches and demonstrations; criminal prosecution in the courts; and the threat and reality of violence, including sexual violence, particularly towards women.

As Cesar Padilla, co-ordinator of the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America, points out: ‘Nearly every new mining project generates a conflict in the local

Indigenous and other activists gather in front of the Honduran embassy in London in response to the murder of anti-dam campaigner Berta Cáceres in 2016.



community. That makes it more difficult for the mining companies, so they develop different strategies. The latest strategy, given that all the others have failed, is the criminalization of social protest.¹

Protestors face charges of anti-social behaviour or disturbing the peace – often they are charged with several crimes at once.

Padilla believes criminalization is designed to halt further resistance. Although it serves corporate interests, prosecution is not carried out privately but through the publicly funded state judicial system. Often pre-existing patterns of discrimination based on gender, race and class are reinforced. Many murdered defenders are indigenous.

Huge protests in 2011, against a proposed Canadian-owned Bear Creek silver mine on the southern Peruvian border with Bolivia and against all mining expansion in that region, resulted in several deaths and many injuries. Some 18 Aymara and Quechua community leaders were charged with ‘Extortion against the state’ in addition to three other charges. This was retaliation for obliging the state to rescind the mine’s permit after massive protests sealed off the city of Puno for long periods of time.

This saga finally came to an end in July 2017, when all but one leader was acquitted. But the indigenous leaders had been forced to spend six years with the threat of jail hanging over them. At a 2016 protest against the leaders’ prosecution, one woman asserted; ‘We’ve never stolen or killed people, we don’t lie and we’re not lazy. With our own hands we work so that we can eat.’² Her words were in reaction to the racist stigmatization of indigenous people as criminals or lazy, all too common in Peru.

The media play an important role in painting protestors as violent criminals. Padilla believes: ‘The media are the echo chamber of the conceptualization of criminalization, meaning that when communities are criminalized people think, “oh yes, they’re the ones that are anti-development, that don’t want progress”.’

Women activists against extractivism are particularly subject to negative stereotyping and are frequently accused of neglecting the wellbeing of their children and safety of their families. They also face the threat of rape when they stand up to corporations and the state. Sexual violence in these contexts remains largely invisible, as the burden of proof falls on a victim who is not in a position to press charges due to lack of resources and the stigma around rape.

Environmental defenders become ‘criminals’ in the public imagination, and therefore any violence done to them seems justified. Even winners of international prizes such as the Goldman Prize winner Berta Cáceres in Honduras are not immune. No-one has been found responsible for the 2016 murder of the brave environmental activist.

This impunity comes from, and gets legitimized by, the state. Earlier this year, Global Witness announced: ‘Following a two-year investigation into who’s behind these murders [in Honduras] we can reveal how projects at the heart of conflicts are linked to the country’s rich and powerful elites, among them members of the political class.’⁴

In another example, Peru’s police can legally enter into private contracts with transnational corporations to provide security services, and police officers cannot be prosecuted if they kill people during protests.

As Padilla says: ‘For those who want to stop these kinds of activities [protests], there are some countries where it’s easier to kill people than go through legal proceedings.’

While the state is complicit in criminalizing defenders and allowing their murderers to go unpunished, it is extractive corporations that are driving this violence. Most are corporations from the global North whose shares are traded on rich world stock markets. ‘Let’s not forget that mining corporations’ shares are in the hands of pension funds in Canada, in Europe...’, says Padilla. ‘The question is: what’s the ethical responsibility of those societies when their pensions are stained with our blood? Their benefits have real costs.’

People in the global North have the opportunity to demand that pension funds divest from corporations driving environmental destruction and criminalization of the people most affected. Many banks also own shares in these corporations – customers can move their accounts if they find that their banks are investing in corporations carrying out activities they don’t agree with.

In July 2017, two European development banks withdrew their funding for the Agua Zarca mega-dam in Honduras that Berta Cáceres had been campaigning against. In that case, it was too little, too late.

After the Agua Zarca divestment, some headlines read ‘Berta won!’ She didn’t win – she’s dead. But the work of forcing investors to pull out of extractive projects is still alive. It speaks to a different kind of power – a people’s power to follow the money and make sure it’s not funding projects that cause destruction and death. ■

Leny Olivera studied Sociology at San Simón University in Cochabamba. She is active in autonomous feminist groups with a decolonial perspective.

Sian Cowman is a researcher and journalist from Ireland who writes about grassroots environmental activism and eco-feminism.

¹ Global Witness and Guardian, bit.ly/deaths-of-defenders
² Observatory of Mining Conflict in Latin America, nin.tl/map-mining-conflict
³ Judicial Process of Aymarazo conflict, bit.ly/YouTube-enviro-conflict
⁴ Global Witness, bit.ly/Honduras-deadliest-country

After the Agua Zarca divestment, some headlines read ‘Berta won!’ She didn’t win – she’s dead

Recent events have thrust Catalonia into the global spotlight. **KEVIN BUCKLAND** tells the background story we don't get to hear – about co-operatives, 'fearless cities' and the real challenges to authoritarian capitalism.

Now it's Catalonia's turn. Mahatma Gandhi

once said, 'First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.' In many places it seems like 'they' are done laughing, and have started fighting. Perhaps the wave of growing repression that is spreading around the world can be taken as a compliment – movements are building power and can no longer be ignored or simply laughed off.

In some ways it feels like politics is entering an exciting new terrain; in others, like it is repeating itself. Beneath the amusement-park facade of neoliberal Barcelona an invisible past has been blooming back into life. In 1919 the city abounded with anarchist unions and work-, housing- and food-co-operatives. They even printed their own coins. A 100,000 person strong general strike won workers an eight-hour working day and the right to unionize.

During 1936-37, the co-operativist spirit of the city mobilized against Franco's military coup, with autonomous neighbourhood assemblies collectively digging air-raid bunkers and organizing food distribution. Local militias were set up to ensure security after the city had expelled its police force. Catalonia saw collectivization of most of its factories and land, raising production as well as morale. Such anti-capitalism scared the West. It seemed that Catalonia had gone beyond the allowable scope of change. Catalonia became isolated – with Western powers refusing to provide arms, banks declining loans and businesses blacklisting collectivized factories. When Italian planes, in aid of Franco, dropped bombs on the collectively dug bunkers of Barcelona they were fuelled by gasoline originating from the oil fields of Texas. Catalonia fell under a 40-year fascist dictatorship.

But the past is alive today. On 1 October this year, it was some of the same neighbourhood assemblies that had once dug air-raid bunkers that barricaded themselves into polling stations to protect the Catalan Referendum. During the Franco years, these movements continued the below-the-surface work of transformative social and cultural change. Now the co-operativist spirit of Catalonia is rebounding.



Homage to Catalonia

Turning practical

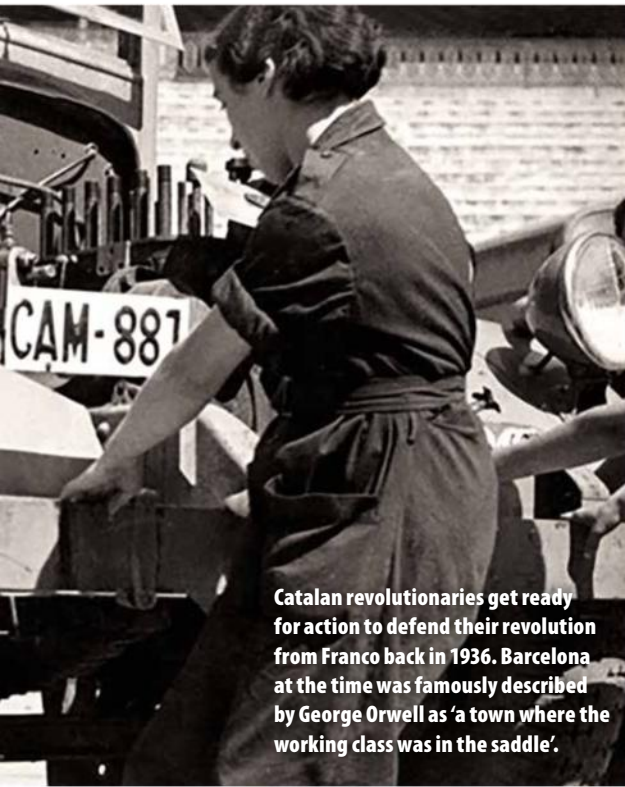
The economic crisis of 2008 that sparked the 15-million-strong *indignados* movement across Spain also drew people into Catalan co-operative projects. As the individualism stoked by a once-booming economy began to crumble, it gave way to more mutualist alternatives. Social movements pointed 'up' to the banks and political corruption to establish blame for the crash, rather than 'across' to immigrants or other scapegoats. In Catalonia massive protests rapidly turned practical, paving the way for a surge in projects to meet people's basic needs.

Today Catalonia is awash with co-operative projects that have been building a powerful infrastructure run by users and workers. Som Energia is a renewable energy co-operative founded in 2010 with 36,500 members and 55,000 contracts. It is transitioning from being an energy distributor to being a producer, placing solar panels on the roofs of its own users and offering incentivized saving bonds for its members to invest in the network. *Guifi.net* describes itself as 'a bottom-up, citizenship-driven technological, social and economic project with the objective of creating



Fernanda Leitarie / Cancillería del Ecuador

Barcelona's mayor Ada Colau is feminizing politics and trying to overcome polarization and the macho brinkmanship of Puigdemont and Rajoy.



Catalan revolutionaries get ready for action to defend their revolution from Franco back in 1936. Barcelona at the time was famously described by George Orwell as 'a town where the working class was in the saddle'.

a free, open and neutral telecommunications network based on a commons model? It is building a decentralized wireless internet network across Catalonia.

The multi-faceted *Cooperativa Integral Catalana* involves tens of thousands in user-based economies and currencies with hubs across the region. The Network for Energy Sovereignty is launching a campaign to buy back Barcelona's electrical grid, while the city itself has been replacing century-long corporate control with a public municipal water system. To confront the housing crisis – a consequence of the 2008 housing bubble now compounded by rampant tourism – a renters' union has been formed. And there is a large platform for those squeezed by mortgages to band together to keep their houses.

This past year saw the launch of *Coopolis* – a new piece of movement infrastructure to support fledgling co-operative projects as a kind of 'laboratory for inter-cooperation'. It is based inside *Can Battio*, a once-abandoned factory, now run by a local neighborhood assembly. The factory floor is crammed with self-organized production projects. Across Catalonia there is a real potential for such alternatives to scale up to challenge the existing corporate model.

'Fearless cities'

And it's not just Catalonia – across Spain a co-operativist movement is rejecting the limitations of confronting power by choosing instead to remake it. The focus is participatory municipalism – dedicated to opening up exclusivist urban political processes. Insurgent parties now run local governments in Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia, La Coruña and many other centres.

The city of Barcelona has not been governed by the party of ousted centre-Right nationalist

Carlos Puigdemont. It is governed instead by a citizen platform called *Barcelona en Comú* which draws part of its structure from the same neighbourhood assemblies used to mobilize against the fascists in 1936 and 1937. These participatory platforms allow neighbourhood and 'issue' working groups to develop political positions on key issues such as education, housing, and ecology. *Barcelona en Comú* facilitates decentralized rather than monopolized decision-making.

Most neighbourhood platforms have a deep commitment to feminizing politics and creating collaborative rather than competitive spaces. This approach has proved critical in trying to overcome the macho brinkmanship of Puigdemont and Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy, following the October independence referendum. Barcelona's first woman mayor Ada Colau convened a special meeting of diverse actors to develop a mediation process to ease the anti-negotiation polarization. A commitment to feminizing politics involves reinventing the entire participatory process. In its general assemblies, *Barcelona en Comú* alternates speaking opportunities between men and women and every commission must have at least half female leadership.

The majority of us now live in urban environments but we do so on an increasingly unstable planet. We must come together to effectively tackle this global climate crisis.

In June 2017, *Barcelona en Comú* held the world's first 'Fearless Cities' International Municipalist conference, gathering 700 urban activists from over 40 nations. The invitation to Fearless Cities began with a ringing declaration: 'In a world in which fear and insecurity are being twisted into hate, and inequalities, xenophobia and authoritarianism are on the rise, towns and cities are standing up to defend human rights, democracy and the common good.'

But efforts to recreate power inevitably provoke *status quo* resistance – as witnessed on 1 October as the Spanish state launched an assault against unarmed Catalans waiting to vote in the independence referendum. Like so many times before, the people of Catalonia took to the streets with the simple message: 'We are not afraid.' It is not just bravery but the stubborn determination of Catalans to use their little part of our besieged globe to build liveable alternatives. It is this that earns them our gratitude and support. ■

Kevin Buckland is a Barcelona-based activist and storyteller who works to cultivate cultural change in the age of the climate crisis.

Across Spain a co-operativist movement is rejecting the limitations of confronting power by choosing instead to remake it

Catalan independence supporters in Barcelona.



Bahrain

Last month, some 10,000 visitors funnelled through the Bahraini capital, Manama, for the country's inaugural international arms fair, organized by the British company Clarion. The event included US and Russian pavilions, with representatives from the UK Department of International Trade among its patrons. Attended by simultaneous outcry from human rights campaigners, the fair seemed to emblemize the geostrategic role of the tiny Gulf kingdom that has throughout its history relied on the protection – and patronage – of international players.

Bahrain, meaning 'two seas' in Arabic, is the only island nation in the Middle East, connected to Saudi Arabia by a 25-kilometre causeway to the west. It was in 2011, when Saudi tanks ploughed across the bridge to put down peaceful mass demonstrations, that the country entered the international spotlight. But it has been on the radars of Western and regional powers for at least two centuries.

Bahrain came under Britain's informal empire in 1820 when its Arab sheikh rulers were afforded status as a protectorate in exchange for co-operation in combating piracy. This bilateral dynamic has endured well beyond Britain's imperial decline and Bahrain's independence in 1971, though the UK navy bases were taken over by the US Fifth Fleet.

With its minority Sunni Muslim elite ruling over a Shia majority, the island has also been perceived as a battleground between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The entrenched rule of the Al Khalifah royal family has kept Bahrain firmly within Riyadh's orbit, and pleasure-seeking Saudi sheiks may be found enjoying the greater liberty of Manama's bars and resorts. However, persistent Shia dissent in Bahrain has continued to stoke anxiety among Saudi rulers aware of their own restive Shia population.

It is this narrative of sectarian rivalry that has been vigorously – and erroneously – employed by the Al Khalifahs to characterize popular opposition to their rule. The mass protest in 2011 brought forth well-worn regime claims of 'Iranian-backed terror', 'sectarian violence' and 'Shia extremism'. Yet the campaign did not initially call for regime change or revolution and it was rather the bloody and disproportionate counter-force with which the regime and its Gulf backers met these nonviolent, cross-sect protests that fuelled popular hostility. This outrage has been palpable ever since in Shia villages around the capital, where nightly rituals of tyre-burning and Molotov-throwing have persisted as local youths clash with the security forces.

The animosity is, however, driven by injustice and not ideology. Nor have such small-scale insurrections dented

the monolith of Al Khalifah authority. Despite the official 'reform' programme unfolded in 2011 to much Western applause, there has been no real effort on the part of the regime to deliver greater equality – for example, through overturning rules excluding Shia from the security forces and parliament. Instead, human rights in Bahrain have nose-dived. The country has the largest prison population in the Middle East and world's highest per-capita use of teargas. Torture, arbitrary detention and killing in its notorious jails are well-documented and the death penalty was revived earlier this year to execute alleged terrorists in what have been deemed extrajudicial killings. Activists have been routinely stripped of their citizenship. Opposition political parties have meanwhile been banned and freedom of expression further stifled.

All this has taken place not only without sanction from the international community, but in many cases, with its active support. Some £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) of UK Foreign Office funds have, for example, been poured into 'training' Bahraini police and security forces since 2011, while Britain is estimated to have sold over \$85 million worth of arms to the country between 2010 and 2016. Small wonder then that, despite the atrocities, the West is finding much to celebrate about Bahrain. ■

Zoe Holman

At a glance



Leader: King Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah succeeded to the throne in 1999 after the death of his father Isa bin Salman, who had ruled Bahrain since 1961.

Economy: GNI per capita \$22,700 (Saudi \$21,750, UK \$42,390).

Monetary unit: Bahraini dinar.

Main exports: 60% of Bahrain's national income is from oil exports, with other primary industries including aluminium and textiles.

People: 1.4 million. Population annual growth rate: 3.8%. People per square kilometre: 1,848 (UK 271).

Health: Infant mortality 5 per 1,000 live births (Saudi 13, UK 4). Lifetime risk of maternal death 1 in 3,000 UK 1 in 5,800). HIV prevalence rate: 0.1 per cent.

Environment: Large areas of Bahrain

are at risk of desertification from the degradation of its limited arable land and coastline, which is being destroyed by unbridled sand-dredging and oil-spills.

Culture: Bahrain's population is majority Arab (around 49%) with various South Asian (mostly Indian) immigrants constituting around 45% alongside African, European and other ethnicities.

Religion: 71% Muslim, 10% Christian, 10% Hindu, 9% other. The Muslim population is estimated to be around 70% Shia.

Language: Arabic is the official language, though English is widely used, as well as South Asian languages.

Human Development Index: 0.824, 47th of 188 countries (Saudi 0.847, UK 0.909).





Clockwise from top left: **Aerial photograph of the luxury Ritz Carlton resort near Manama, with the skyline of the capital in the distance; a Bahraini law student – there are more opportunities for women than in neighbouring Saudi Arabia; locals horse riding in the desert; a demonstration by Bahrainis in London demanding democratic rights in their country; the modern souk in Manama.** All photos from Alamy; photographers from top left: Ben Nicholson, Michael Austen, Giuseppe Masci, Peter Wheeler, Jack Malipan.

Star ratings Last profiled May 1998



INCOME DISTRIBUTION★★
Though few Bahrainis live below the poverty line, crony capitalism, corruption and uneven distribution of resources have produced severe and growing income inequalities. **1998 ★★★**



LITERACY★★★★
95% Bahrain has the highest female literacy rate in the Arabian Peninsula at 93.5%. Public education is free and mandatory for both girls and boys up to age 14. **1998 ★★★★★**



POSITION OF WOMEN ★★★
Bahrain ranks well in measures of formal gender equality compared with other countries in the region. Women hold around 19% of parliamentary seats, while abortion is legal and contraception readily accessible. **1998 ★★**



LIFE EXPECTANCY★★★★
77 years (Saudi 74, UK 78).

FREEDOM★
Since 2011, the government has escalated its crackdown on freedom of the press and expression and now owns all broadcast outlets, with *de facto* control over print outlets. Government surveillance is rife and Shia religious and political figures face serious barriers to operating freely. **1998 ★**



SEXUAL MINORITIES★★
Although the current legal status of same-sex relations under Bahraini law is ambiguous, recent years have seen reports of both women and men charged and imprisoned for homosexual activity. Non-gender-conforming individuals also face harassment and abuse by police and civilians.

NI assessment

POLITICS★
Bahrain is nominally a constitutional monarchy with regular parliamentary elections, but the political process is far from free or fair. The government has made concerted efforts to erode the Shia majority through promoting citizenship for foreign-born Sunnis. Formal political parties are illegal and registered opposition 'societies' have since 2011 – when the country came under martial law – had their activities further curtailed or have withdrawn from elections in protest at gerrymandering and corruption. **1998 ★**

★★★★★ **EXCELLENT**
★★★★ **GOOD**
★★★ **FAIR**
★★ **POOR**
★ **APPALLING**

While the world's largest coal



Alex Bainbridge/GreenLeft Weekly

With the Great Barrier Reef and climate targets under threat, TOM ANDERSON and ELIZA EGRET explain why this mega mine matters to all of us.

Australia is already the world's biggest exporter of coal. Now the Queensland Government has made plans that will double its output – by opening up the remote Galilee Basin to mining.

The Carmichael mine planned for north Queensland will be the country's largest ever, and among the biggest in the world.

If the project goes ahead, the mine will release an estimated 4.64 gigatonnes of CO₂ over 60 years and extract up to 60 million tonnes of coal per year. At least eight more mines in the Galilee Basin may follow, which could double Australia's total exports of coal.¹

Adani, the Indian company behind the scheme, plans to export most of the coal back to India via a specially constructed railway line running from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point coal port – located on the Great Barrier Reef. Hundreds more coal ships would populate the Reef's waters, and more than a million cubic metres of seafloor would be dredged for the port's expansion, damaging the fragile aquatic ecosystem.

Australian opponents of the project are

calling the campaign against the mine 'the fight of our times'. According to Greenpeace, the plan to construct nine mines in the Galilee Basin is one of 14 global mega-projects that, if successful, will trigger a 'carbon bomb', increasing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 20 per cent and causing a 5-6°C rise in global temperatures. The Carmichael project alone would produce enough GHG emissions that 200 such projects would exceed the threshold scientists say could avoid a 2°C rise.²

'Adani's massive coalmine will lead to more extreme weather and accelerate the warming of the world's oceans and the destruction of its coral reefs,' said Imogen Zethoven of the Australian Marine Conservation Society. 'A quarter of the world's marine life depends on coral reefs for at least part of their life cycle and 500 million people depend on coral reefs for their livelihoods.' The mining project may also drive the black-throated finch to extinction and will threaten many other species.³

Despite all this, Adani is set to receive strong financial support from the government in Australia. They will not be charged for the

mine gets the go ahead...



Protesters, including First Nations people, blocking the road to Adani's Abbott Point coal port.

The plan to construct nine mines in the Galilee Basin is one of 14 global mega-projects that, if successful, will trigger a 'carbon bomb'

potential billions of litres of water the mine will use each year. Adani is also in negotiations for A\$1 billion dollars' (\$780 million) worth of government loans.⁴ Many Australians are asking why their government is subsidizing a billionaire, Gautam S Adani, who is implicated in multiple corruption scandals.

The project may also greatly impact the economics of coal. Globally, the price of coal is dropping and according to financial analyst Tim Buckley, 'in a market where demand for seaborne coal is declining, to add supply will only accelerate the price decline'.⁵

One possible scenario is that this combination of falling coal prices and increased supply may tempt governments to invest in coal instead of renewable energy. However, even if the projected price-drop does not slow the transfer to renewables, the construction of the Adani plant still flies in the face of science: global energy consumption has to decrease dramatically to avert catastrophic climate change.

Sacred land under threat

Australian law permits a limited number of First Nations people, who hold what is legally referred to as 'Native Title', to negotiate new projects such as mines on their land. Yet, consultations over the Adani project have clearly shown how this process is manipulated in favour of mining companies.

'Most people didn't get the right information [on which] to base their decision,' says Ken Peters-Dodd, an elder of the Birriah people in northeast Queensland, which lies along the route of the planned coal railway line.

'You had a minority of people only in it for financial gain – influencing the meetings in favour of the mining company. Expert advice to inform this process was done internally by the company. Our family walked out in disgust.

'The Adani project will have an impact on the environment, our cultural heritage and our rights as caretakers and custodians of our country – for generations to come,' says Ken.

'Adani is destroying everything that's spiritual to us,' adds Carol Prior, an elder of the Juru people, whose land will be the site of the port and railway for the project. Carol was part of the negotiating process with Adani, but had been voted off the group after she raised concerns, which include damage to her people's cultural heritage, burial grounds, ancient rock art and ochre grounds.

'Our rock art is as if our ancestors wrote a letter and left it there for us,' she says. 'It tells us: "This is where you come from and this is where your spiritual connection is.

This is your country".'

Carol and Ken, along with other First Nations people, are at the forefront of the campaign against Adani, working to show that the project, according to Ken, 'does not have the consent of Aboriginal people'.

In June, the Federal Parliament passed an amendment to Native Title law, permitting Adani, and other companies, to go ahead with a majority, rather than a consensus, of those involved in negotiations. This has been met with massive opposition from First Nations people in Australia. According to Ken: 'In our law we should get a final decision that supports everyone's consensus.'

'When they changed Native Title, they tightened the chains,' says Carol. 'The bondages of slavery are still there.'

Legally, Adani's mine should not be able to proceed until a further court challenge by the Wangan and Jagalingou people is ruled on.

Call for back-up

Ken believes international solidarity is important for the struggle. 'We ask people from around the world to support us. We need to pull together and plan for the future,' he says.

Through concerted grassroots action and protest, campaigners against the Adani mine have already been successful in persuading the major Australian banks – and many international financial institutions – to withhold finance from the project.

In order to go ahead, Adani will need the support of a network of financiers, lawyers, insurers and engineering and construction companies. Many of these are international, so grassroots movements all over the world will be key to persuading these companies not to back the project.

Ken also sees the struggle as important for the rights of First Nations peoples globally. If the mine goes ahead despite opposition from the indigenous owners of the land, 'it will set a precedent which will diminish the future rights of all First Nations people'. ■

To see a list of the international companies involved in the Adani project go to Market Forces: nin.tl/adani-list

Tom Anderson and **Eliza Egret** are part of Shoal Collective, a newly formed co-operative of writers and researchers writing for social justice and a world beyond capitalism. @shoalcollective

¹ galileebasin.org, 26 November 2015, galileebasin.org/overview ² Greenpeace, 1 January 2013, nin.tl/point-no-return ³ *The Guardian*, 19 July 2017, nin.tl/finch-risk

⁴ Stop Adani, 26 September 2017, nin.tl/stop-adani

⁵ michaelwest.com.au, 19 April 2017, nin.tl/adani-no-sense



SolarReserve

Port Augusta had long been South Australia’s coal-fired powerhouse. But a five-year-long community campaign has delivered solar success and an end to the smokestacks, reports DAN SPENCER.

‘Now, there will be something for the children,’ thought Ursula Meese, an elderly and committed member of Repower Port Augusta, as she danced around her living room. She had just heard the news that the world’s biggest solar thermal tower with storage had been given the green light, thanks to the Repower campaign.

Ursula was one of many locals in Port Augusta who had spent over five years campaigning for the South Australian and Federal Government to reconsider its carbon footprint. For decades, two coal-burning power stations had served the region, provided jobs but impacted upon the health of both the community and the climate. Now, with the two coal stations being demolished, and a new solar plant in their place, Port Augusta has a bright future ahead as a clean energy hub.

This didn’t just happen overnight, of course. Between 2012 and 2017, swathes of community organizing and advocacy went into clinching this victory. There were local votes; a 328 kilometre walk from Port Augusta to Adelaide; rallies; trips to state and federal parliament; and online actions taken by thousands of people.

When the news rolled in that the smokestacks were to be replaced, the excitement and relief from local campaigners – and supporters around the country – was palpable. Lisa Lumsden, a previous chair of Repower Port Augusta, reflected on the rollercoaster journey. ‘This campaign was deeply personal,’ she said. ‘It was about the future of our town.’

It was that drive for a new future that led group members to persist through job losses, mental health issues and the deaths of three key campaign members.

Repower’s persistence has not only inspired people around Australia – as a true story of a coal town embracing a new future in solar energy – it has also inspired a new generation of campaigners.

When the local group formed, Lisa’s son Lachie was only a few months old. Now, when hearing news about Australia’s treatment of refugees, he suggests a rally. This is one of the things Lisa says she is most proud of – that others, especially young people, will hear of the success story of Port Augusta’s campaign for solar thermal and know that they can make a difference as well.

As SolarReserve, the company behind the solar plant, begins construction, Port Augusta is once again set to be an energy powerhouse for South Australia – but with a difference. The project will be the world’s largest of its kind and a vision of the future. Anyone driving north of Port Augusta, they will catch a glimpse of a monumental tower surrounded by a vast field of mirrors capturing and storing the region’s abundance of sunshine – making the project a perfect match for the South Australian electricity grid.

The solar thermal plant will store heat in insulated tanks of molten salt and is an innovative 21st-century solution to provide clean, affordable and reliable power. It will also make South Australia less reliant on skyrocketing gas prices. The new plant is estimated to be running by 2020 and will take A\$90 million (\$70 million) a year off wholesale electricity prices.

Port Augusta’s victory shines a light for other communities as an example of what people power can achieve. The campaign built unusual alliances and, after a whole lot of persistence, has resulted in a \$650 million investment in the town’s future and secured a new clean, affordable and reliable power source for South Australia. ■

An example of the proposed solar plant for Port Augusta.

Port Augusta has a bright future ahead as a clean energy hub

Dan Spencer is an activist. He worked as a community organizer and campaigner for the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and Solar Citizens with Repower Port Augusta from 2012-17.



Confronting a culture of sexual violence

On 5 October, a *New York Times* exposé revealed Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein's long record of unwanted sexual advances toward young women, particularly aspiring actresses. Subsequent reports, which included first-hand testimonials from targeted women, documented a damning pattern of sexual harassment and assault.

That Weinstein abused his considerable power to perpetuate such exploitation for decades, it turns out, was Hollywood's open secret. As long as he was producing popular spectacles such as *Pulp Fiction* and *Shakespeare in Love* – and minting money for his backers – the industry was willing to keep talk of his predatory pursuits to a whisper.

Weinstein is the latest in a series of high-profile American men – including comedian Bill Cosby, former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes and conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly – whose serial offences against women have erupted into far-reaching scandals. Courageous early accusers of such figures have faced disbelief and retaliation. But once space has appeared for survivors to come forward and be taken seriously, the floodgates have opened.

In the wake of Weinstein's fall, American women on social media, using the #MeToo hashtag, began sharing their own experiences of degrading treatment: lewd comments on the street and in the workplace, groping on the subway, uncomfortable

demands made by bosses in private, abuse in relationships, attacks that were dismissed when reported. Such experiences are not the exception but the rule. In cases involving rape and assault, rarely have perpetrators faced professional or legal consequences.

Viewed in an internationalist context, the US hardly has a corner on misogyny and sexual violence. Indeed, countless women scattered across the globe have since offered their powerful #MeToo contributions.

In a warped way, #MeToo is a sign of progress. Only after decades of hard-won feminist gains is sexual harassment recognized as demeaning and often criminal behaviour, rather than the result of natural transgressions by ultimately harmless cads.

But if the existence of #MeToo represents a victory, it is one that reveals the depth of the problem still before us.

While the US likes to think of itself as a leader in all things, more than 70 nations – including a long list of countries in the Global South – have been led by female heads of state. We have not. And although it may deal a blow to Americans' stereotyped views of Africa, the country with the highest percentage of women in national parliament is, in fact, Rwanda.

Such measures do not speak to a nation's success at combating sexual violence, but they do indicate that the US still has plenty to learn from others.

Beyond this, there are some unique challenges associated with toxic

masculinity in the US. For one, mass shootings – a distinctly American phenomenon – are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. Research on incidents between 2009 and 2016 shows that more than half of such shootings also involved acts of domestic or family violence.

And then there's the pussy-grabber-in-chief. Unlike Cosby, Ailes or Weinstein, Donald Trump was not stripped of power and prestige once evidence of his repeated abuses surfaced. Instead, he became president.

Trump's election may represent the last gasp of a dying order. He was able to ride into office on a wave of backlash fuelled by racism and male entitlement. But there is some reason to hope that this wave might soon crash on the shores of a better world. In the the 1950s and 60s, the KKK and White Citizens Councils initially grew in strength in response to challenges from the Civil Rights movement, as embattled defenders of the old regime dug in to resist change. Yet such organizations soon withered.

Progress, however, is never guaranteed. It requires determined organizing and mass mobilization. If a culture of sexual harassment and assault is to become a thing of the past, we must commit to making it so. ■

Mark Engler's latest book is entitled, *This Is An Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-first Century* (Nation Books). He can be reached via the website DemocracyUprising.com



Guerrillas gamble for peace

The clock is ticking for peace in Colombia. Next month a ceasefire with the ELN, the last remaining leftwing guerrilla organization in the country, is due to run out. Guerrilla leader PABLO BELTRÁN talks to MÓNICA DEL PILAR URIBE MARÍN.

A year ago, despite rightwing attempts to scupper the peace process, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos sealed an historic accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

There followed months of demobilization, disarmament and reinsertion of guerrillas into Colombian society. By August this year,

some 7,000 FARC fighters had laid down arms and the organization reconstituted itself as a political party – the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force.

Now the last remaining active guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN) is at a critical stage in its peace talks with the government, which began in February this year.

On 1 October, a bilateral, temporary and nationwide ceasefire was announced. It runs out on 9 January 2018. But it could be extended if the talks are going well, if the terms of the accord are kept, and if the enemies of peace do not destroy it.

Heading the negotiations for the guerrillas is Pablo Beltrán, an important ELN leader.

Beltrán was born Israel Ramirez Pineda, 63 years ago in San Gil in the department of Santander. His parents were working people – his mother a dressmaker, his father a master builder. He studied petroleum engineering at the Industrial University of Santander, during times of great political and social upheaval.

Pablo Beltrán and others in the ELN's peace delegation address the media during talks in Quito earlier this year.

'My own mistakes result from over-confidence. Maybe I am too convinced about what we are doing'

Many intellectuals committed themselves to the revolution and in the mid-1970s Beltrán joined the ELN.

First, he was an urban guerrilla. When the police broke into his house and began to hunt for him, he escaped to the mountains. In 1980 he joined the leadership of the ELN. In 1998 the guerrilla group told the media that it would 'never demobilize'.

Things have changed since then. Beltrán, leader of the ELN negotiating team in Quito, announced in October this year: 'All the agreements we have reached have been guaranteed, which shows that there is an internal consensus, and that this delegation has a unique mandate to put this bilateral ceasefire into effect, which is why the agreement was achieved.'

Mónica del Pilar: What is the difference between this peace process and previous attempts?

Pablo Beltrán: For the first time there is an agenda put together over four years of confidential discussions, and in which two points are established. One, there have to be transformations which remove the economic, social and political factors which gave rise to the armed uprising. Two, to take the violence out of politics. The guerrilla organization will stop seeking power by military means and the regime will stop defending it with arms.

Are you better prepared now?

Yes, because two years ago the ELN National Congress instructed us to sit down at the table and see if our interlocutor, the regime, has a desire for peace. The instruction our dialogue

delegation received this time was that we must never walk away from the table.

Which are the most difficult issues in the discussions with the government?

The members of the government make unilateral demands and try to impose things. We say that we came to negotiate, not to take orders. That puts the talks into periods of crisis. Afterwards we try to find solutions and we begin again.

You insist that civil society is important in these discussions. How is this participation happening?

It begins by asking people how they should take part, what are their experiences. Afterwards, it enters into a diagnostic phase, examining Colombian democracy, with the aim of reaching conclusions about the changes needed.

The government has stated that this process can continue, but that it is not binding. For us it is binding. If we involve everyone in a big national dialogue to know what must be changed in Colombia, and then we don't take what they say into account, it makes a mockery of the process.

The demobilization of FARC has been accompanied by procrastination and non-compliance by the government. Are you not discouraged by this scenario?

The FARC has made a clear political decision to say 'yes' to the peace process and the government has responded in this way. It's not a good sign for the future. It shows us that the regime is not so united in its desire to move the process forward. Of course this sows big doubts

EFE News Agency / Alamy Stock Photo



The ELN – in brief

Beginnings: Founded 4 July 1964 (the same year as the FARC) in Santander, northeast Colombia by trade unionists, students and intellectuals inspired by Marxist ideology and the Cuban revolution. In

December 1965, Catholic priest Camilo Torres joins their ranks, followed by three Spanish priests, among them Manuel Pérez, the guerrilla commander from 1983 until his death in 1998.

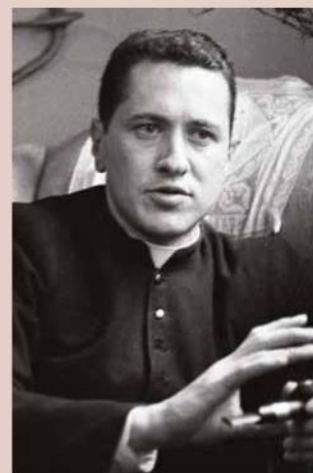
Ideology: ELN thinking mixes revolutionary ideas and Liberation Theology, calling for a struggle on behalf of the poor. It promotes a nationalist agenda, centred on the control of natural resources, and attacks on the energy and oil infrastructure of multinationals.

Numbers: One figure suggests 4,000 guerrillas, with many more militants. Government figures today indicate 1,500 guerrillas; The Peace and Reconciliation Foundation refers to 2,000 guerrillas, in 51 municipalities spread over 11 departments of the country. There are estimated to be five militants for each guerrilla, doing intelligence work, especially in the cities.

Organization: Leaders are Pablo Beltrán, Gabino, Antonio García, and 'Pablito'. The ELN had fewer guerrillas than the FARC but deeper political influence due to grassroots work with communities. The structure is politico-military and 'federal', with a number of 'fronts', each with its own spokesperson. The highest authority is the Central Command.

Tactics: Kidnapping and extortion have been used to fund the organization in its struggle for national sovereignty and a just, democratic socialist state.

Catholic priest Camilo Torres joined the ELN in 1965. He was to become a leading light.



Phillip Harrington / Alamy Stock Photo

among us. That's why we believe in actions more than words.

What do you think about the killing of demobilized guerrillas?

Attacking people who are trying to do politics legally is a way to block peace agreements and push people towards acting in self-defence.

What kind of reparations are appropriate, both for the victims of the ELN and those of the state?

The victims must be guaranteed their rights; the truth must be revealed; the responsibilities accepted and *there must be repentance*. Each person must say: 'I won't do this again.' On that basis there is a guarantee that what happened during the war will not be repeated. That is the essential foundation of reparation for the victims.

If you reach an agreement with the government, how should it be endorsed?

The participation of the people should not happen at the end of the process but from the start. The people must be involved in the planning, participation, analysis of the problems and the changes required, and committed to the conclusions that emerge from that.

What connections does the ELN have with drug trafficking?

Since the 1980s all the ELN congresses have committed to a categorical rejection of drug trafficking. This is maintained in the areas where illicit plants are grown. We collect a tax from the dealers but we don't have any kind of relations with the mafias or the cartels.

Does the ELN want peace?

We believe that we must continue looking for a way for Colombia to be at peace, and that the power struggle should continue without recourse to violence. We are going to persist in this.

Will the ELN do the same as FARC and form its own political party?

We are more interested in building examples of direct participatory democracy. But we don't reject a struggle based on parties or political movements. We support them. We are in agreement with that route, but it is not the only way to continue the political struggle.

What mistakes have you and the ELN made?

At the beginning our big mistake was to think that a small group was going to make the revolution happen, and not to value the ordinary people who were also struggling. It was through their pressure that the most important changes were achieved. I don't believe this attitude is present in the ELN nowadays.

My own mistakes result from over-confidence. Maybe I am too convinced about what we are

doing. I know how to listen, but very often that kind of deep-rooted conviction makes it difficult to listen to others.

In your opinion, what type of government is closest to what could be a 'good government' for the people?

It's very difficult to say. A good government has to be one in which the people participate, where society exerts a pressure and is in control and it isn't only the state that's in charge of governance.

What do you think of Donald Trump?

I think he is the expression of an empire in crisis. I don't mean that he is the solution! His presence is the measure of how much the US is in crisis.



Xinhua/Alamy Stock Photo

Bashar al-Assad?

The Western powers grouped around NATO are going to make war against any Syrian president, evil or not. It's all about controlling the oil resources. That is the shame of it – they are wars for oil.

Nicolás Maduro and the media war?

The war is to remove [the Chavistas] from power and take things back to how they were 100 years ago, in order to get better deals for the 300 billion barrels of oil that they have, which make up the biggest reserves in the world.

Part of the war is in the media. Maduro and the revolutionaries have made mistakes. The violent opposition of the extreme Right has made mistakes too, but it supplied considerable resources to the US for years. If they regain control they will do the same again. We hope the Venezuelan people can settle their difficulties, their contradictions, peacefully without external interference. ■

Translated by Graham Douglas.

Mónica Del Pilar Uribe Marín is editor of *Prisma* magazine and is currently working in Colombia.

Pablo Beltrán (right) and Colombian government representative Juan Camilo Restrepo (left) in talks to end five decades of conflict.



When comedy sides with tyranny

'Triggered' is such a weird insult, isn't it? 'Sorry, snowflake, did I trigger you? Did I make you feel an emotion in response to an event? Did my awful actions make you react with sadness or empathy, like you're supposed to when you're not made of pure evil? Oh, I *do* beg your pardon... Did my behaviour cause you to retaliate in a way that might suggest you're somehow human? Cucked!!'

People who delight in causing offence are so tedious. Why not just play nice? Surely a world of happiness is better than constant misery? At this point I must declare a conflict of interest: I like being happy, which is why I promote happiness. I am in the pay of Big Joy. Bear this in mind whenever you read my columns. It's actually why I wasn't allowed to stand as a member of parliament: the ombudsman told me that my belief in making the world a nicer place was incompatible with the regular cash rewards from the arms trade.

Recently we have had more dull old men telling us that our sensitivity to offence is ruining culture – like Hollywood's Mel Brooks, who opined that 'stupidly politically correct' sensibilities will lead to the 'death of comedy'. (In fairness, anyone who's ever seen one of my stand-up specials might also conclude that comedy is dead.)

So, I take it Hollywood's Mel Brooks is a freedom-of-speech champion, fearlessly saying anything in the pursuit of funny? Not so. Asked if anything was off-limits for comedy, Hollywood's Mel Brooks replied: 'I personally would never touch gas chambers, or the death of children or Jews at the hands of the Nazis'. So in other words: 'Political correctness is a curse on comedy, and we should joke about

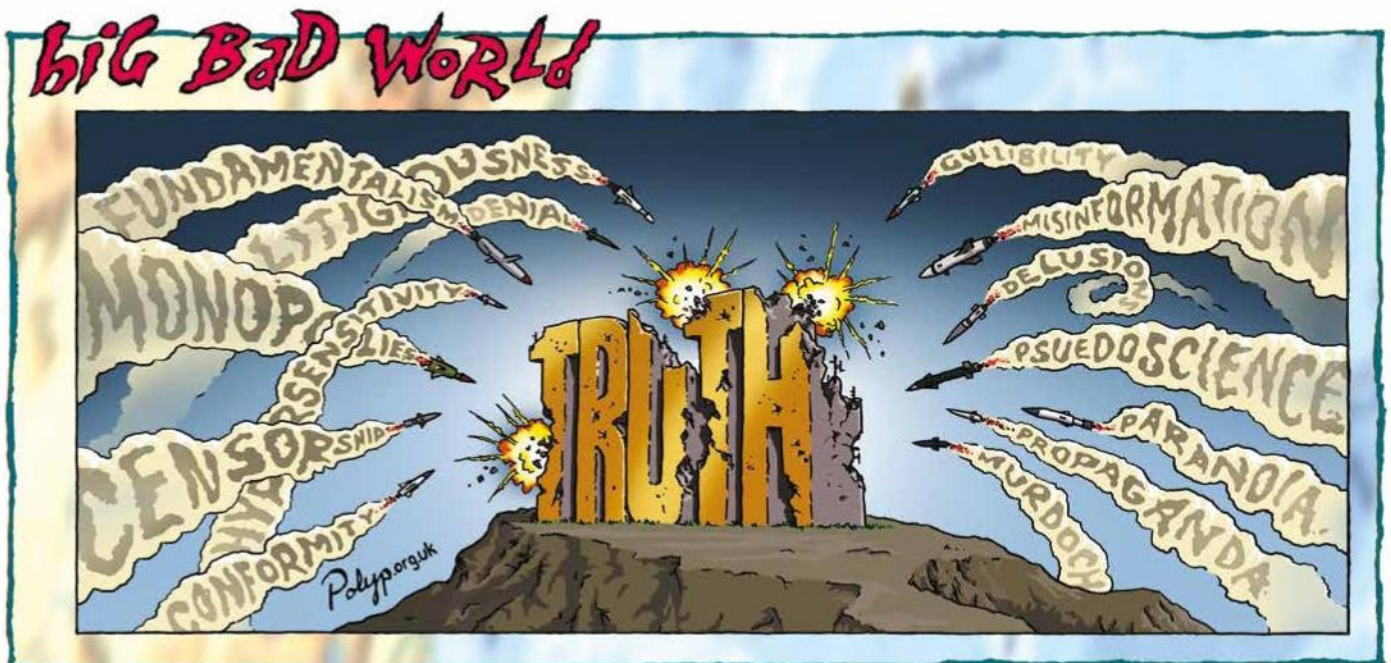
anything – apart from things which personally offend me, Hollywood's Mel Brooks'. Okay old man, thanks for joining in. Your flawed and defective opinion is noted.

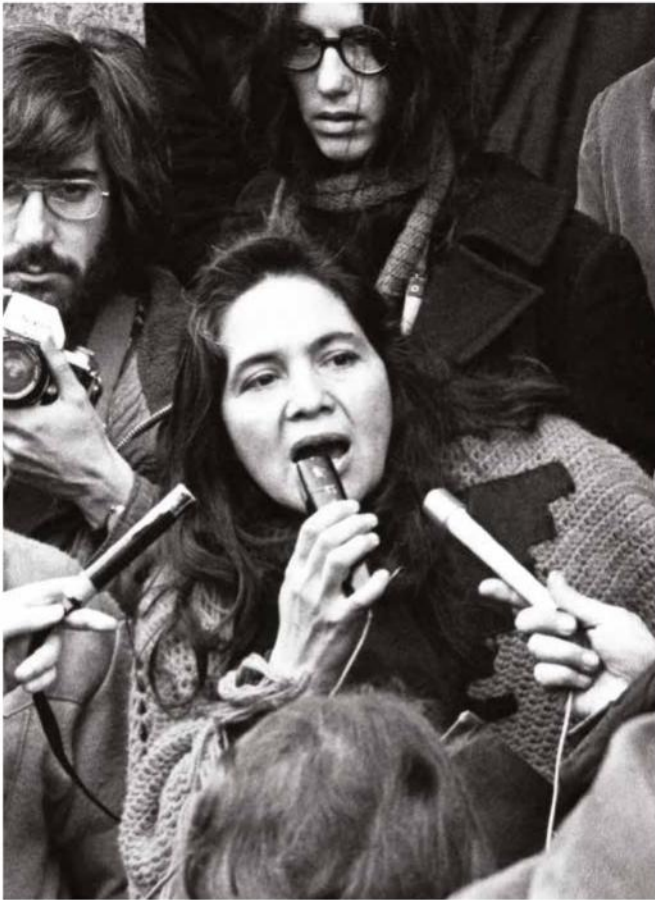
Now as it happens, I agree with Hollywood's Mel Brooks. Jokes about gas chambers *are* horrible, and people shouldn't tell them. The difference though, is that I would extend that kindness not just to things that affect me personally. Maybe by not making sexist or racist jokes. I like the idea of not bullying people. Does this make me a better person than Hollywood's Mel Brooks? That's not for me to say, but... yes.

Of course, there's a chance this isn't what Hollywood's Mel Brooks meant by 'political correctness'. Well, then Hollywood's Mel Brooks should choose his words more wisely. Because when you've got a pussy-grabbing president in Trump – who won power not least because he frequently promised his inflamed voters that he wouldn't be politically correct – well, frankly, it sounds a lot like Hollywood's Mel Brooks is, unintentionally, siding with tyranny.

Because, truth to tell, one person's 'loss' of freedom-of-speech is balanced by the millions of oppressed people whose lives have been improved. If you are committed to fighting sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism and tyranny – *embrace* political correctness. At worst, you won't be able to tell your garbage-trash jokes to your idiot friends. At best, you'll make the world a nicer place. I don't know about you, but that seems like a nice trade-off. ■

Chris Coltrane is a comedian and activist. Follow him on Twitter: @chris_coltrane. Download his podcast from TheLoliticsPodcast.com





Dolores Huerta, mobilizing farm workers in 1960s US.

Dolores (95 minutes)

directed by **Peter Bratt**

Ardent, direct, down-to-earth, Dolores Huerta was a pioneer organizer of Latino agricultural workers in California in the 1960s. She coined the motto *Si se puede* – ‘Yes we can’ – that 40 years later expressed massive hope for change in the US. From small beginnings as a community activist, encouraged by the civil rights movement, opposition to the Vietnam War, and the stirrings of the feminist movement, she had a vision and a path.

Neighbourhood improvements and voter registration mattered, but the biggest change in the lot of Latinos – ‘the worst-paid workers on the planet’ – would come through large-scale organization to enforce collective bargaining on agribusiness. With fellow activist Cesar Chavez, in 1962 she set up the National Farmworkers Association (NFA) with the aim of a California-wide strike within five years. They didn’t have to wait that long. In 1965 Filipino grape workers in Delano, California, members of another independent union, struck for better wages and the NFA joined them.

Within a year the two unions had become the United Farm Workers. It took five years of marches, boycotts, non-violent resistance to police attacks and killings, for the strikers to win. The doc’s footage of the strike is graphic, as is the assassination of Robert Kennedy in June 1968 after Huerta had spoken alongside him at his California primary victory speech. This is a stirring and inspiring portrait of a woman – now a sprightly and winning 87-year-old – who didn’t accept what was expected of her.

★★★★ ML

FILM

Félicité (124 minutes)

directed and co-written by **Alain Gomis**

She sings in a rough Kinshasa bar. The punters can’t help but hear Félicité’s powerful driving voice, but between songs she casts a jaundiced eye as they fight, gamble and look about for casual sexual partners. She’s a single mother, with her own tatty flat and a young teenage son. She’s tired, fed up – and her battered fridge keeps breaking down. Such is life.

Then her son is hit by a motorbike and hospitalized. He has a compound fracture of the tibia. An operation and post-operative care will cost a million Congolese francs – a convenient figure, plucked from the air, that probably no-one ever pays. They will operate on receipt of a deposit.

In a Kinshasa that is as scruffy, rough, vocal and tough as the bar in which she sings, Félicité tries to raise the cash by calling in money she is owed. She always stands her ground. When she doesn’t raise enough, she visits the smart part of the city, gate-crashes a mansion and fights when the ‘papa’ tries to have her thrown out. He pays her off, telling



Félicité’s eponymous hero in action in a tough Kinshasa bar.

her that if she returns she will be killed.

Félicité is a gritty portrait of a life and prospects, and goes to unexpected places. It delves into dreamlife, the communality of music-making – in a bar with a band, in the Kinshasa Symphonic Orchestra – and, ultimately, fellowship. It sprawls, but within it there’s heart and humanity.

★★★★ ML



Daniel Mburu Muhuni (left) and Sven Kacirek (right) against a backdrop of how global trade policies affect African farmers.

Economic Partnership Agreement

by **Sven Kacirek** and **Daniel Mburu Muhuni**
(Pingipung Records, Pingipung 59, LP and digital)

This record about global trade and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) from the viewpoint of Kenyan farmers and others is an important and impassioned focus on real problems and real injustices.

Sven Kacirek has featured in these pages before (**NI 442**). *The Kenya Sessions* (2011) was an ethically sound jamming travelogue, during which the German musician met fellow percussionist Daniel Mburu Muhuni. Kacirek had come across the EPA and was curious why Kenya had baulked at the free trade agreement proffered by the European Union to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. He soon discovered the reasons behind Kenya's refusal. Teaming up once more with Muhuni, the two sought out dissenting

voices to the EPA and it is these spoken narratives, set to music, that form this extraordinary record.

Testimony comes from diplomats, farmers, civil servants and former NGO workers: they all speak to how an economic model predicated on continual growth cannot aid weaker nations. It's a pleasure to hear Western politicians called out: 'Mr Mandelson; he was a terrible man' – is one of them, the musicians using loops and squawking saxophones to make their urgent point.

In terms of its method, this album has a kinship with Steve Reich's great work of testimony and music, *Different Trains*. And like Reich's masterpiece, it's a release that every politician and economist should listen to. Costing just €0.50 (\$0.59) for a digital download from the bandcamp site below, they have little excuse not to.

★★★★ LG

pingipung.de and <https://svenkacirek.bandcamp.com>

MUSIC



Maya Youssef's life-force response to anguish and destruction.

Syrian Dreams

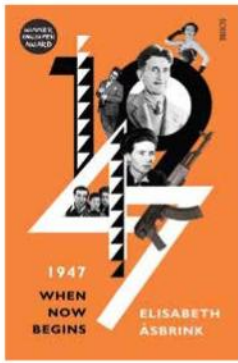
by **Maya Youssef** (Harmonia Mundi, HMM 902349, CD and digital)

Born and raised in Damascus, Maya Youssef was set for a career as a performer before the Syrian war began in 2011. She had defied convention by swapping the violin in preference to the *qanun* – traditionally, a man's instrument – and, excelling, had studied in Dubai before coming to the UK on a scholarship that recognizes exceptional talent. At that point, Youssef was studying for a doctorate and working with refugee children on the side. In 2012, a year after war had started, she describes how the music that makes up **Syrian Dreams** exploded from her. Her first set of compositions, the album is a direct response to anguish and it sets up music as a life-force which is the antithesis of destruction.

This luminous album might be a response to tragedy but it is also colourful and vibrant, displaying great virtuosity. Youssef's qanun is both voice and rhythm track. Quiet accompaniment from cellist Barney Morse-Brown, *oud* player Attab Haddad and percussionist Sebastian Flaig provides a solid basis from which Youssef flies, most impressively on 'The Seven Gates of Damascus' – a seven-part suite that expresses the character of each part of the city. The composer includes a few traditional tunes in her **Syrian Dreams**: combined with her own works, this is a celebration of a culture as much as a holding fast to all that is good.

★★★★ LG

harmoniamundi.co



1947 – when now begins

by **Elisabeth Åsbrink**,
translated by **Fiona Graham**
(Scribe, ISBN 978-1-911344-42-1)

What can a single year teach us about our past, present and future? How can a snapshot of people (from George Orwell to Eleanor Roosevelt), places (from Cairo to Coburg) and events (from the invention of the Kalashnikov to the partition of India) in the news

70 years ago be relevant to us today? In **1947 – when now begins**, the answer is expressed thus: ‘It has happened, so it can happen again.’

In this highly readable and original narrative history, Swedish journalist and author Elisabeth Åsbrink offers a salutary lesson that gives the lie to the idea that humanity

learns from its mistakes, and reminds us that small steps and seemingly minor choices can make waves, both across the globe and across time. Even as the world recovered from a devastating war, the seeds of conflicts were being sown – Palestine, India/Pakistan – that remain unresolved today. Political seeds, too, were sown that would lead to the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood, the CIA, and a (partly) united Europe. The drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights offered hope. And one Raphael Lemkin struggled to get genocide recognized as an international crime.

Though Åsbrink’s title suggests that 1947 was a seminal year, she could no doubt have found similarly momentous material in any other. The modern world – ‘Now’ – may have begun in 1947, but we live in an eternal present. Which thankfully means we always have the opportunity to make choices and take steps that can improve our future.

★★★★★ JL

scribepublications.co.uk

BOOKS The Death of Homo Economicus

by **Peter Fleming** (Pluto Press, ISBN 9780745399409)

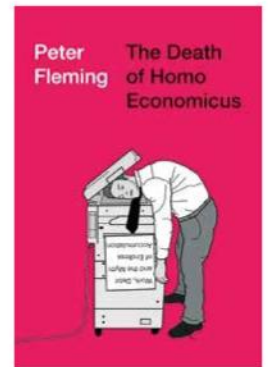
There is a corrosive fiction at the heart of today’s workplace, says Peter Fleming. We are sold the lie that if we work harder and longer, we will be rewarded with increased health, wealth and happiness. In his wide-ranging and thought-provoking book, Fleming traces the roots of this myth of Homo Economicus to the writings of economists such as James Buchanan, Milton Friedman and Stephen Moore – latterly an advisor to Donald Trump. These and other neo-conservative thinkers have peddled the idea that the modern worker is a ‘dollar-hunting animal’ driven by competitiveness and ego to ever-greater heights of earnings and productivity. Examining the world of work in the 21st century in detail, and with telling anecdotal evidence, Fleming exposes this argument as false, pernicious and leading to dire and entirely predictable consequences. In all spheres of employment, he says, from academia to industry, the public sector

to the gig economy, society is engaged in a fruitless ‘race to the bottom’, degrading human endeavour and trashing our natural world.

The thesis put forward in **The Death of Homo Economicus** is a persuasive if dispiriting one and its author offers little for our comfort in the way of amelioration or remedies for the predicament he describes. We live, he says, in ‘the growing winter of a wasted world, a vapid monoculture of nothingness’. In such a state, while accepting the validity of his argument, I would have wished for a better suggestion as to ways out of the nightmare rather than his monumentally vague call for us to ‘be worthy’ and ‘be ready’.

★★★★★ PW

plutobooks.com



Of Women – In the 21st Century

by **Shami Chakrabarti** (Allen Lane, ISBN 978-0-241-29634-9)

Campaigning lawyer Shami Chakrabarti has penned her crisp, contemporary treatise on the rights of women in the first person. Consequently, **Of Women** reads much as the former head of Liberty speaks – punchy, passionate and fiercely rational. In just 200 pages she covers: sex-based abortion,

dowries and bride prices; misogynistic abuse spawned by the internet and the heroism of Kurdish women who fought ISIS; and, of course, education, work and love.

This encyclopaedic treatment means that much will be familiar to the well-schooled feminist, but there are reflections that seem more original here too. Transgender women, she says, should be welcomed as ‘to jealously protect our particular victimhood is to make harder our

escape.’ Social-media spaces are privately-owned, she notes. So if a man calls a woman a pig, bitch or a dog, then he should be ejected by Facebook, just as he would be from a bar. There are moments when the packed-in, polemic style starts to wear thin. But elsewhere arguments are lifted by personal memories – being dressed in ‘cartoon-like frilled dresses’ or coveting boys’ weapons as a child – and peppered with rich cultural references that span Ancient Greek texts, feminist tomes and Hollywood movies.

Chakrabarti declares herself an optimist – and this is ultimately a hopeful book. Among the litany of injustice, she offers tough, practical solutions such as time-limited affirmative action or boycotts of gendered-toymakers. If just half of her ideas were put into practice, gender equality could be well within reach.

★★★★★ HH

penguinrandomhouse.com

With Ash on their Faces – Yezidi Women and the Islamic State

by **Cathy Otten** (OR Books, ISBN 978-1-682191-08-8)

The world woke up to the plight of Iraq's Yezidi community in August 2014, when an estimated 130,000 people were left stranded on Sinjar Mountain after fleeing ISIS. Over the next fortnight, most of them managed to escape across the desert to Syria, thanks to a rescue mission undertaken by troops from the Kurdistan Workers' Party and Syria's People's Protection Units. The world watched, sighed in relief and promptly forgot.

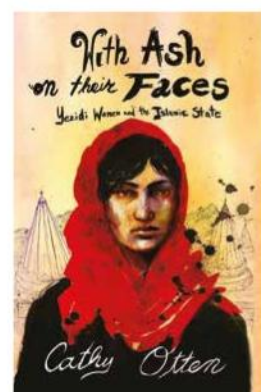
But this is a community that has experienced 74 genocides in its history, and whose future remains uncertain. Author Cathy Otten, who is based in Iraqi Kurdistan, conducted more than 100 interviews to piece together the harrowing truth of the ISIS attack and its aftermath, focusing in particular on the 6,000 Yezidis – mainly women and children – who were enslaved and transported to prisons, military training camps and the homes of ISIS fighters, where they were raped, beaten and starved.

Otten argues that, despite the mainstream media stereotyping of Yezidi women as passive victims, they were able to draw on their religious beliefs and oral traditions to find the strength to fight back – including by rubbing dirt into their faces to make themselves less desirable to their captors.

The women interviewed by Otten express deep anger and a thirst for revenge yet, despite broken bodies and hearts, their pride, courage and sense of identity have remained intact. And they are the 'lucky' ones – some 3,000 Yezidis are still being held in captivity. Perhaps this stark, shocking book will help the world remember them.

JL ★★★

orbooks.com



Also out there...

MUSIC From a Niger village close to the Malian border, **Les Filles de Illighadad's** first studio album, *Eghass Malan* (Sahel Sounds) is a beautifully resonating piece of work. Certainly among the first Tuareg women musicians to come to wider acclaim, the guitarist/vocalist Fatou Seidi Ghali leads her trio through rhythmically swirling songs that carry their own wonderful energy.



Pioneering Tuareg women musicians hit the world scene.

Cornershop, the British duo whose 'Brimful of Asha' still delights, has scripted the theme tune to *Remaniacs* – a very smart indeed anti-Brexit podcast. 'Demon is a Monster' (Ample Play) is a funk-grooved classic that really shows that Remainers have the best tunes. *Univers-Île* (InFiné), showcases **Jeremy Labelle** from La Reunion and his synthesis of Creole *maloya* music, guest performers and digital surprises to an impressive effect. Labelle's sound palette is expansive and deserves to be heard.

FILM Dee Rees's moving drama **Mudbound** superbly captures a time and place – dirt-poor rural Mississippi before and after the Second World War. Wives and 'coloureds' should know their place – including returning servicemen – and those acting otherwise face vigilante violence. Strong portrayals, a slow fuse, and lots of rain. In **Trophy** a South African landowner fences in 1,500 rhino, removing their horns to protect them from poachers, and, he

hopes, to sell to fund their upkeep. Another breeds animals to dot around a 'natural' outdoor setting – while from indoors US tourists shoot at them. Shaul Schwarz's film considers the irony of farming and hunting the 'big five' African mammals, to protect them from poachers and farmers. A cool, graphic, challenging doc on a desperate situation.

Eliza Hittman's lingering sensuous drama **Beach Rats** is a study of a Brooklyn youth out of step with the world and himself. His father is terminally ill, he hangs round with his friends smoking dope, gets a girlfriend, and meets older men for sex. He's evasive, aggressive, but innocent and regretful enough for us to care.

BOOKS In **Peru: Elite Power and Political Capture** (*Zed Books*), John Crabtree and Francisco Durand take a close look at a prime example of 'state capture' – when an entrenched corporate elite holds a monopoly on political power. This magazine has often covered the struggles of Peruvians against mining corporations (in September's issue, for example) but this book reveals in forensic detail the mechanisms used by elites to dominate political discussion to their benefit, and the key role played by international financial institutions and foreign investors.



Trump's election was a massive wake-up call and Paul Engler and Sophie Lasoff have responded by writing a **Resistance Guide: how to sustain the movement**, in collaboration with Momentum. They are offering it free to download or explore at guidingtheresistance.org. You can also buy a copy at amzn.to/2y9ecjB to appreciate Josiah Werning's inspired design and in the knowledge that proceeds will help cover costs of self-publishing.

REVIEWS EDITOR: **Vanessa Baird** email: vanessab@newint.org

Reviewers: Louise Gray, Hazel Healy, Jo Lateu, Malcolm Lewis, Peter Whittaker

STAR RATING

★★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★ VERY GOOD ★★ GOOD ★ FAIR ★ POOR

'Every signature represe



University students from the Free Papua Organization and the Papua Student Alliance resist police using water cannons during a protest in Jakarta, 1 December 2016.

Bay/Smoyo / AFP / Getty

How did West Papuan campaigners build a game-changing 1.8 million-strong petition in the teeth of government repression? Key organizers tell DANNY CHIVERS how it was done and what's at stake.

Smuggled under the cover of darkness.

Hidden among innocent-looking deliveries. Carried by people not known to the authorities, by volunteers along jungle paths, to highland villages unreachable by motor vehicles. Thousands risked their freedom – and their lives – to spread it in secret across a nation.

It's a lot more effort than we would usually expect to collect signatures on a petition. But this was no ordinary petition – it was a call for human rights and indigenous self-determination in a region where such sentiments are strictly banned. The Indonesian government is determined to hang on to the region of West Papua – a territory which it has occupied by military force since 1963 – and dissent by its indigenous peoples is frequently

met with intimidation, violence or arrest. Simply raising the West Papuan Morning Star independence flag could result in 15 years of imprisonment. Distributing a petition calling for an internationally monitored independence vote for the West Papuan people is, in the eyes of the Indonesian state, similarly treasonous.

The petition campaign ran from May to July this year. According to the Free West Papua Campaign, 57 West Papuans were arrested during that time for supporting the petition, and 54 were tortured at the hands of Indonesian security forces. One West Papuan, Yanto Awerkion, is facing a 15-year jail sentence for organizing a gathering in support of the petition.

It is therefore all the more extraordinary that – in just three months – a staggering 1.8 million people signed it. Seventy-one per cent of the indigenous West Papuan population placed their signature – or thumbprint – on paper, in defiance of the occupying regime. Around 100,000 Indonesian settlers living in West Papua also signed in solidarity with the Papuan population.

This result has a huge historical resonance. In 1969, Indonesia's military occupation was 'legitimized' by the ironically titled Act of Free

nted an act of courage'

Choice, when 1,026 indigenous West Papuans were hand-picked by the Indonesian military, marched to polling stations at gunpoint and ordered to vote to be part of Indonesia.¹

Indonesia's claim on West Papua rests heavily on this fraudulent event involving less than 0.2 per cent of the population. Now, via the People's Petition, the overwhelming majority of West Papuans have risked their life and liberty to call for a new, independently monitored freedom vote. The contrast with the 1969 sham 'referendum' could not be starker.

Gaining a voice

At the end of this summer, the petition was smuggled out of West Papua and officially validated by Dr Jason Macleod of the University of Sydney. As West Papuan leaders handed it to the UN's Decolonization Committee on 26 September, Macleod confirmed that it was 'an impressive example of community organization and mobilization across West Papua, one that reflects the sincere demands of the West Papuan people for self-determination.'

Benny Wenda, International Spokesperson for the United Liberation Movement for West Papua, said at the UN: 'Today, we hand over the bones of the people of West Papua to the United Nations and the world. After decades of suffering, decades of genocide, decades of occupation, today we open up the voice of the West Papuan people which lives inside this petition.'²

The story of this achievement is one of courage, unity and determination. When the petition idea was discussed by West Papuan independence leaders in 2016, they realized that this project had the potential to give the West Papuan people the public voice they are usually denied. Bazoka Logo, the National Petition Organizer and Spokesperson for the West Papua National Committee (KNPB), said: 'This petition was essential to provide vital proof that the majority of West Papuans in the cities, in the villages, in the jungle and as refugees, want independence.'

But to make the most of this opportunity, they needed to aim high and throw all of their resources into reaching the population – from the Indonesian-dominated coastal cities to remote villages in the jungle highlands. Logo explained: 'We divided our team into seven subcommittees. These groups visited local government offices, people in the cities, people in the villages; everywhere. Many people who signed the petition could not write, so they signed with their thumbprints. Others wanted

to sign at our offices and needed travel support. Often the teams went from house to house to collect signatures.'

'We cannot be scared anymore'

From May to July, the bulk of other demonstrations and protests were put on hold as West Papuan activist networks focused their efforts on spreading the People's Petition across the nation.

Some local leaders were willing to help. 'There were churches which helped to organize petition-signing events, and there were some churches which were scared to do so,' explained Logo. 'There were also some local government officials who helped and who signed the petition (right), and others who could not.'

Logo believes that many people who did *not* sign still supported the petition's demands. 'People told us, "We will not be safe with the Indonesian military and police if we give our names," but they fully supported the petition.'

Local petition organizer Steven Itlay is Chair of the KNPB in Timika, and was part of the Bomberai regional team who secured 267,437 signatures for the petition. He explained how every signature represented an act of courage: 'From the start of the petition until now, there are many people who have been arrested and tortured by the Indonesian military and police.'

Mama Togodly lives in a village in the Lapago region of West Papua, and attended a locally organized petition event. She said: 'I signed the petition because it is incredibly important for our people. I was not scared. We have already been killed, tortured and raped. We cannot be scared anymore. We West Papuan women are never afraid.'

The first response from Indonesian officials was to denounce the petition as a 'publicity stunt'.³ This is unsurprising, as accepting the legitimacy of the petition would put the Indonesian state's hold on power in West Papua at serious risk. The West Papuan people have made their position clear: they have roundly rejected Indonesian rule. Now it is the responsibility of the rest of the world to listen to their voices and support their clear desire to determine their own fate. ■

Danny Chivers is a writer, campaigner, performance poet and author of two *NoNonsense* guides for New Internationalist: *Climate Change* and *Renewable Energy*.



No	Name	Date	Signature	Signature
1	...	09/11/14	Agnes	...
2	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
3	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
4	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
5	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
6	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
7	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
8	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
9	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
10	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
11	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
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48	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
49	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...
50	...	28/11/14	Agnes	...

West Papua National Committee

'We have already been killed, tortured and raped. We cannot be scared anymore'

¹ *New Internationalist*, May 2017, nin.tl/morning-star-rising
² *New Internationalist*, May 2017, nin.tl/actforwestpapua
³ *The Guardian*, 27 September 2017, nin.tl/papua-petition

Toys from trash

Simple models by India's 'science magician', **ARVIND GUPTA**, are making learning fun for young minds around the world. **PRITI SALIAN** reports from a classroom in Bangalore.



On a bright October morning in Bangalore, India, the activity room of Purnapramati School is buzzing with excitement, curiosity and the occasional shrieks from primary and middle school students.

Each child has been handed a drinking straw, some neatly cut paper, adhesive tape and a pair of scissors. In contrast to their usual impatience, the pre-teens are glued to their seats – listening quietly to their mentor Vishal Bhatt as he tells them how to make a ‘rocket projectile’.

Many have moved closer to peep at the sample he is creating; others are wheedling him to improve their work. Bhatt patiently answers their queries, until each student has their toy ready. He then demonstrates how the cone-shaped paper projectile can be blown through the straw and targeted to perforate a newspaper placed at a distance. ‘Ensure that the tip of the cone is pointed,’ Bhatt instructs. ‘That will keep its area small, and when you blow it with force, it will pierce the newspaper due to extreme pressure,’ he says, inconspicuously slipping in the scientific concept.

Even though some of the students haven’t yet learnt about the correlation of area, force and pressure in their science class, they are likely to remember how it works for classes to come. Their teacher, Geetha Suvardhana, says that it’s thanks to the simple science toy they have created with which they will tinker, discuss and play for months.

This imaginative and easy-to-make toy comes from the repertoire of Arvind Gupta, an Indian engineer who has been fashioning do-it-yourself toys and science models from trash and inexpensive material for almost four decades. His goal? For children to better understand science and maths. Gupta’s toys recycle bottle caps, plastic balls and matchsticks – turning them into models for understanding turbines, the functioning of the eye and hexagonal figures.

‘The idea is to show the kids how they can reuse trash and make something valuable and extremely delightful without buying anything,’ says 64-year-old Gupta.

Bhatt values Gupta’s toys for the simplicity of their

design and material. ‘The fear of playing or tinkering is nil as the toys can be safely pulled apart and put together again,’ he says, adding that ‘the element of surprise keeps the kids totally engaged’.

Gupta’s YouTube channel has short films in 20 languages giving free access to ideas for over 8,500 toys and experiments. A handful of organizations in India also conduct weekly science workshops in schools through the year using Gupta’s toys.

In 1980, Gupta quit his job in a truck manufacturing company to become, as some children call him, ‘a science magician’ – churning out enchanting objects from random things. Gupta’s toys have not only found a place in his videos, but also in 30 low-priced books he has authored. He has visited over 3,000 schools in rural and urban India and in 25 other countries. ‘The innate curiosity of breaking this, and hammering that, is the definition of childhood,’ he says. He rues though, that schools in India still perpetuate learning science by rote. ‘Most teachers, even in elite schools, have few craft skills,’ he says.

However, Gupta’s free repository of fun science models for resource-poor schools and children is enjoyed by thousands of viewers. Children across the world, including those at a school for Syrian refugees in Germany, are making and using his toys.

Purnapramati students are excited to give their projectile a new spin by replacing the straw with a discarded electrical pipe or garden hose to see how it changes the way their toy works. ‘Making is only the first step for these kids; the actual exploration begins after that,’ says Bhatt. ■

youtube.com/user/arvindguptatoys

Priti Salian is a Bangalore-based journalist who has written on social justice, healthcare and education among other things. Her work has appeared in the *BBC*, *National Geographic*, *The Guardian*, *CNN.com* and many others.

Puzzle Page by Axe

The crossword prize is a voucher for our online shop to the equivalent of £20/\$30. Only the winner will be notified. Send your entries by 23 December to: New Internationalist Puzzle Page, The Old Music Hall, 106-108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE, UK; or email a scan to: puzzlepage@newint.org Winner for 225: Kevin Harrington, Chester, England.

Crossword 227

CRYPTIC Across

- Not rare at Wimbledon, for instance (6)
- Immense riches of Zimbabwe, although it's penned in (6)
- City-bound express reaches a more remote part of New York (7)
- US state 1Dn's second-rate score's got about (7)
- US hotspot gets sun later, then melts unnaturally (2,2,6)
- Nursing a gull, bringing it back to Pacific island (4)
- All Africa suffers as Nigeria eventually acknowledges sick village (5)
- Mogul, leader - one in Persia of old - paid off in advance (8)
- Bucks a UCLA cop makes here south of the Border (8)
- Old TV coverage of cricket score (5)
- French ending to name that's northern (4)
- Pole's here, with a promoted worker's affection, in a new car (10)
- Country piece by Bartok's hurried, only half-finished (7)
- What star has to do to overshadow Els' epic round? (7)
- African moneys exchanged over a nerve

CRYPTIC Down

- Principal, to make matters worse, expelled student (7)
- Transforms gallery, with numbers turning up outside (7)
- Alert is what striker has to be... (2,3,4)
- ...popping up regularly in teams is Rush for the leaders (5)
- Brits at sea, say Yanks - but not silly in the end - travel over to a place in the French interior (7)
- Missing the start point in Indian desert on a negative trip to state in north (7)
- Watered all over before austral hit Alabama and Georgia? (4,5)
- Way to enter appallingly torched Dutch city (9)
- Offence at America's opening of naval base results in war with Russia (7)
- Punch-line, the second one following play on words, Indian-style (7)
- Right angle ingredients (teaspoonful) mixed in Athens drink... (7)

- ...one firm swallowed up almost all anise, shaking 1Ac,4,1Dn... (7)
-1Ac, 4, 1Dn spilt an almost full pint glass over student (5)

QUICK Across

- Name given to the English republic of 1649-60 (12)
- Outlying, northern section of New York, outside of New York City (7)
- 1Dn of North Dakota (7)
- Active volcano in the Cascades, Washington State (2,2,6)
- Scene of a US Pacific victory in 1942 (4)
- fever, virus named after a village in Nigeria (5)
- (Past) ruler of a Muslim country or empire, like the Ottoman sultan (8)
- Mexico's premier Pacific resort (8)
- Repeat (of TV programme) (5)
- Suomi national (4)
- Continent whose coastline was only explored as recently as 1820 (10)
- European country, 1Dn Minsk (7)
- One celestial body obscuring another (7)
- Nigerian's bills? (6)
- Anglicized spelling of a classical Ionian island (6)

QUICK Down

- Investment (7)
- Transmogrifies (7)
- Sharp; competent (2,3,4)
- Titles given to all the members of the House of Saud (5)
- City of central France which gives its name to a kind of porcelain (7)
- State of northern India created in 1966, 1Dn Chandigarh (7)
- The heart of Dixie? (4,5)
- Dutch city built

- between the Rhine delta distributaries, the Maas and Waal (9)
- Pertaining to a peninsula claimed by both Ukraine and Russia (7)
 - Citizen of a state partitioned when Pakistan was founded in 1947 (7)
 - Greek white wine flavoured with resin (7)
 - In Greek, Lefkosia, 1Dn of a disputed Mediterranean island (7)
 - West African 1Dn (5)

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Pacific Ocean, 9 Nigerians, 10 Lulea, 11 Anasazi, 12 Ionians, 13 Pennine chain, 17 Anuradhapura, 22 Acheron, 24 Saintes, 25 Arran, 26 Via Cassia, 27 Hadrian's Wall.
Down: 1 Punjab, 2 Cognac, 3 Fortaleza, 4 Chadian, 5 Caspian, 6 Ahlen, 7 Alcazar, 8 Kansans, 14 Corsicans, 15 Karaman, 16 Bukhara, 18 Hanover, 19 Pescara, 20 Etosha, 21 Israel, 23 Ronda.

Sudoku 73

The Sudoku that thinks it's a word game!

			1					3
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						7		
							2	8
4	7			8				9
8			4					
	6	9			5			
			7					
5		4	8		2	6		

Now, using the key below, substitute letters for the numbers in the north-western block...

1=T; 2=O; 3=K; 4=H; 5=A; 6=S; 7=N; 8=B; 9=U

...and make as many words as you can of four letters or more from the nine letters in the keyword, the extra clue to which is: 'Direction one needs to put money into this arty part of London'. You cannot use the same letter more than once, nor use proper nouns (excepting the keyword), slang, offensive words, abbreviations, participles or simple plurals (adding an 's' or 'es').

GOOD 70 words of at least four letters, including 15 of five letters or more.

VERY GOOD 80 words of at least four letters, including 20 of five letters or more.

EXCELLENT 90 words of at least four letters, including 25 of five letters and 2 of six letters or more.

Last month's Sudokey keyword: 'Murchison'.

Solution to Wordsearch 71 The 18 cities of Spain were: Alicante, Almeria, Barcelona, Bilbao, Burgos, Cadiz, Elche, Gijon, Leon, Madrid, Malaga, Murcia, Oviedo, Palma, Seville, Toldeo, Vigo, Vitoria.

Wordsearch 73

Find the 15 Canadian cities hidden here.

X	W	I	N	N	I	P	E	G	O	O
N	A	F	D	K	H	Y	P	W	W	T
O	C	F	Q	W	R	O	W	H	A	N
O	E	L	I	U	H	I	J	I	J	O
T	B	M	B	L	N	C	R	T	E	R
A	E	D	M	D	A	O	A	E	S	O
K	U	D	S	L	T	H	N	H	O	T
S	Q	O	G	C	T	I	I	O	O	T
A	R	A	I	R	W	C	G	R	M	A
S	R	V	B	U	F	G	E	S	Z	W
Y	N	O	D	N	O	L	R	E	K	A



And finally...

Nitin Sawhney



Suki Dhandra

The acclaimed British-Indian musician talks to SUBI SHAH about colonialism, music as a passport to possibility and why he wants to be known as ‘someone who gives a shit’.

2017 marks 70 years since India’s partition and independence – what does that mean to you?

As somebody who’s grown up in diaspora, I feel the emotional resonance of how Partition affected my parents. It was an incredibly dark period – over a million people died in the violence and the struggle of their displacement. Of course, at the time, the British under-reported it as 200,000 but it was a lot more. That resistance of the Empire profoundly affected a lot of the next generation. For example, I didn’t accept an OBE because I didn’t want the word ‘empire’ after my name. Colonialism doesn’t interest me.

Who inspires you?

Noam Chomsky is an incredible inspiration; Nelson Mandela, whom I was lucky enough to meet and spend time with at his house; people who fought for justice and not power. Musically, it’s those who transcend barriers, like Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a Qawwali singer from Pakistan. Ravi Shankar, whose legacy is carried on by his daughter; Trilok Gurtu, the world’s finest percussionist.

I’m inspired by people who don’t allow geographical or political boundaries to restrict their exploration of music and life and understanding

and expression. Music is a passport to possibility – it’s a bridge.

You famously appeared in the BBC comedy *Goodness Gracious Me* some years back, how did that happen?

Music is what I have always done, what I’ve always loved since I was five. I was a classical pianist, a flamenco guitarist, I played tabla and was in a youth orchestra, a jazz quartet, a rock band, a punk band, I was into everything! Music is what I have always lived and breathed. Then when I did comedy, it was just fun to hang out with Sanjeev [Bhaskar]. I remember that as a really good time – a creative time.

Because I did stand-up and comedy, it gave me a different kind of confidence, to talk to the crowd and not just play when I perform.

What do you think about the second and third generations born to Asian immigrant parents in Europe – are they integrating enough?

For me, it’s not about assimilating; I believe all religions, perspectives and human beings are of equal value. That’s the way I was brought up. I think it’s about respecting different viewpoints and ways of thinking. If you start with that in mind, you’ll end up in a good place.

Is world politics moving more to the Right?

There’s a polarization that’s clearly emerging more strongly right now, which is being exacerbated by events like the Charlottesville tragedy and by stupid comments by Donald Trump – who I believe is inciting a lot of race-hate and all different kinds of hate across the world. He is giving a license to people who shouldn’t really have our attention – people who have extreme, nasty, rightwing views – that they should have a platform to speak with increased confidence. Add Brexit and Nigel Farage – who I think is a modern day Iago, stirring up hatred and suspicion in the most Machiavellian way... It’s depressing.

You’ve got a lot going on right now, what do you do to relax?

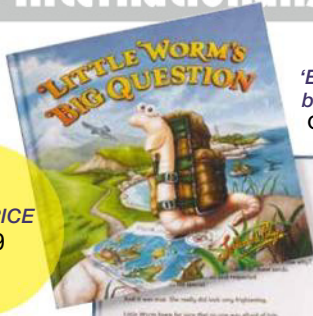
It’s a busy time. I’m scoring *Jungle Book* for Warner Bros and I’m also about to tour with a new film about a disability rights campaigner, Robin Cavendish. There’s also *Dystopian Dream*, my tenth album, which has been turned into a fully choreographed show by Saddlers Wells. When I want to relax, I do a bit of kickboxing, play chess and meet friends for a meal.

How would you define yourself?

As someone who always tried his best. Somebody who gives a shit. ■

Nitin Sawhney’s album *Live At Ronnie Scott’s* is out now on Gearbox Records and was reviewed in the November issue of **New Internationalist**.

Subi Shah is a broadcaster and journalist for the *BBC*, *The Voice* and LBC radio.

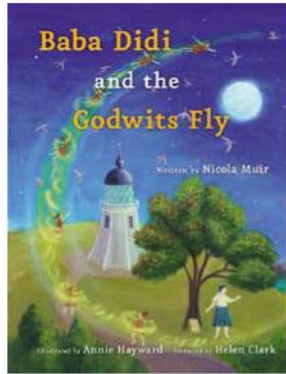
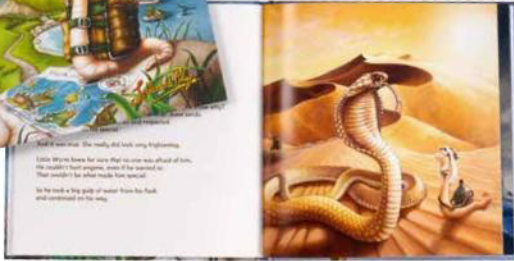


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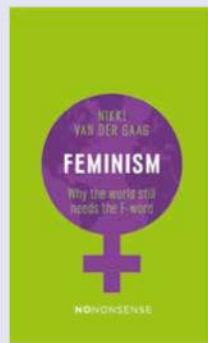
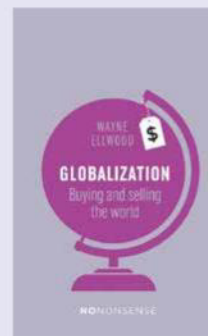
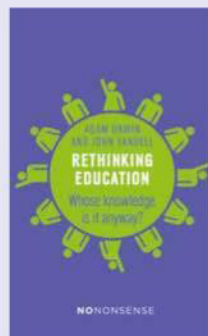
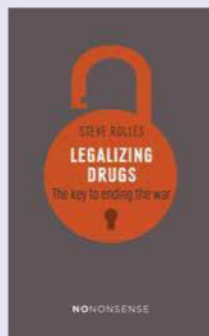
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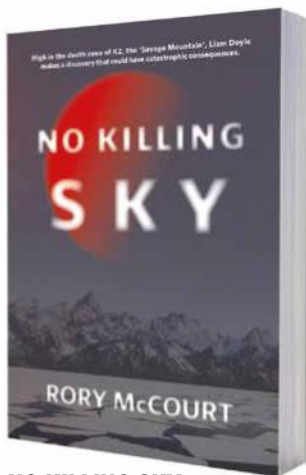
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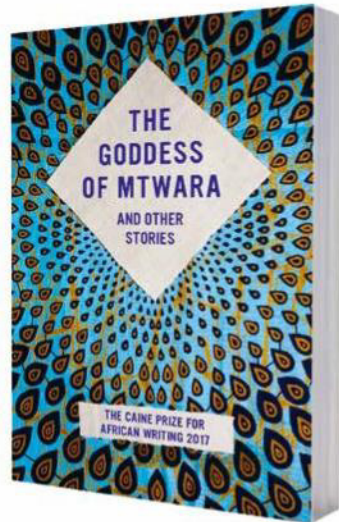
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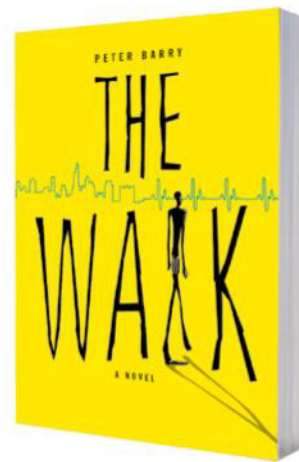
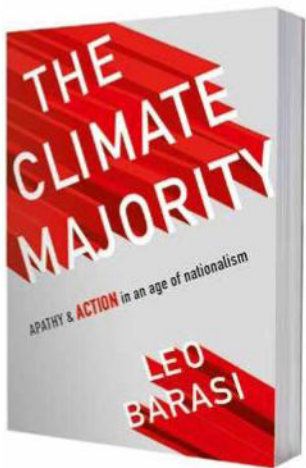
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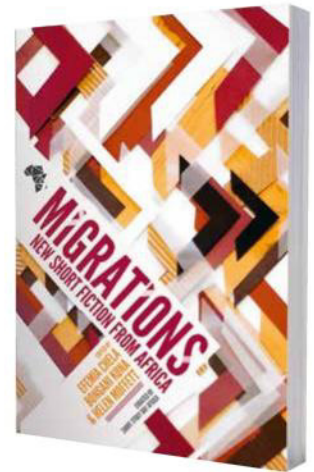
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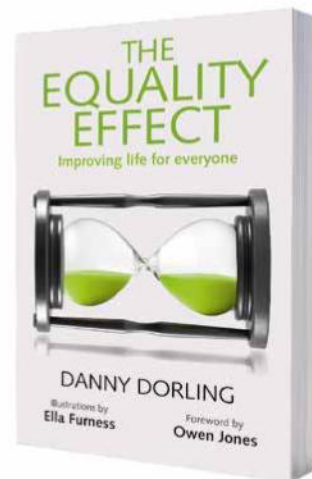
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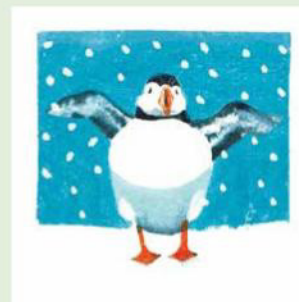


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