

The tapestry of threads connecting an escape from  
Guantánamo with the war on terror, banking crash,  
global warming,  $E=mc^2$ , and conspicuous consumption.

# SYNTHESIS

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## Dedications:

In writing Synthesis, I've been informed and inspired by (amongst others): John Pilger, Clive Stafford-Smith, Noam Chomsky, Ambalavaner Sivanandan and Michael Crichton, as well as George Orwell and Robert Tressell. I want to thank George Groom-White, for proof reading and guidance and Caroline Petherick for editing and enhancing the text. Though since then, I've added and altered many parts and take full responsibility for my errors.

## About the Author:

I'm no spring chicken. Left school at fifteen and worked some 17 years before returning to education, as a mature student. Acquired a sociology degree, followed by social work and teaching qualifications. Worked as a social worker for eight years, before starting to write Synthesis on and off from 2004 – some 13 years ago. Since then, I've worked variously as a builder, community worker, social worker and taxi-driver.

## By the same author

### Israel-Palestine: who's the victim?

This is a very brief, fact-based fictional book in six parts. It shows the essential issues at the heart of the Palestine-Israel conflict since 1948. The first two parts are an account of the 2008/09 Israeli Operation Cast Lead. Part Three looks at why the Palestinian people overwhelmingly voted for Hamas in January 2006.

Sections four and five provide updates and an assessment of the 2013, US-sponsored Israel-Palestine peace talks. The last part covers the 2014 Operation Protective Edge – Israel's latest attempt to kill the Palestinian people's irrepressible spirit.

This book exposes the big lie – the elephant hanging off a cliff with its tail tied to a daisy; of the claim, Israel, the victim. It is intended to put the other, seldom-heard point of view across to the reader – with a good dose of artistic licence.

**Good News – this book can be read under 3 hours!**



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## Chapter 1: The Impossible Escape

‘Allahu Akbar – Allahu Akbar!’ (God is great – God is great). Mubarak yelled out in jubilation. ‘I’m outside Camp Delta – I can’t believe I’m free ...’<sup>[1]</sup>

‘Shhh. No talking. Keep moving.’ Randy interrupted young Mubarak’s enthusiastic cries, briefly flashing the torch in his direction.’

‘Don’t stop for anything,’ Randy’s friend Zulfiqar added.

The five escapees heard the same instructions from the leaders of this miraculous escape mission. On and on they ignored the aches and pains of their limbs and muscles; running, staggering and walking over the wild grasses, dusty fields and undulating terrain; illuminated by the waning full-moon, and their torch beams through the night. Each and all were exhilarated by their unique experience and related thoughts engulfed their minds.

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My friend has set me free and signed his own death-warrant, Zulfiqar reminded himself. No more daily rituals and humiliations. No more being cooped up in my steel and concrete cell. Hidden away – just another nameless number, amongst the 750. All facing the eight-foot corridor of spit-and-polished, desert-camouflaged crew-cut soldiers. All round us, all powerful and menacing.

As he ran and felt the aches and sores turning to blisters on his feet, he remained grateful to Randy for acquiring the sports trainers from the soldiers’ gym, in place of their usual flip-flops – that wouldn’t have lasted two minutes under foot on this special night.

I’m outside now ... not handcuffed, chained or shackled, he laughed inside his head. I’m not even hooded or caged up any more. He laughed aloud this time and would have been heard, if he’d been close enough to the other four escapees. After nearly a whole year in that steaming hell-hole, I’m physically and spiritually free. This is the most wonderful night of my life. Thank you, Allah – I’m outside Camp Delta – and still alive.

‘We’ve got to keep going. Don’t stop for anything,’ Zulfiqar and Randy kept repeating to the three younger escapees.

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Who arrived at the first of many stops during this momentous night. Using the torches sparingly to save the batteries, they quickly found a suitable resting spot of slightly dewy, short-shrubby grass, alongside clumps of eight- to ten-foot-tall pine trees.

Removing each other’s rucksacks containing the MREs (ready-to-eat meal) and other essentials, the escapees felt the relief of lost weights, coolness of grass under their legs and feasted upon the sweet-smelling night air, disturbed only by the humming mosquitoes. No one spoke for the first few minutes, as they caught their breath and quenched their thirst.

‘I’ve not run so strenuously since my schooldays,’ Iftekhar said, slowing his breathing and flashing his torch to check out their immediate surroundings. His companions sitting either side of him, with their backs to the line of pine trees some six feet behind them.

‘My legs are so tired they feel like jelly, Brother Iftekhar,’ Mubarak said, ‘I could sleep for a week.’ He shuffled about to stretch his legs and prop his elbow against his rucksack. ‘All the time Zulfiqar and Randy keep telling us we’ve got to keep moving.’ He sighed at the huge task in front of him but remained determined, ‘Insha’Allah – God willing, I’m sure we’ll make it.’

‘Yes, we’ve got to keep going,’ Iftekhar said, ‘it’s our only viable option,’ before turning to the one female escapee on his other side. ‘What about you Sister Roxana, how are you feeling?’

‘No better than you two – but I’ve been able to keep up,’ she said, ‘unlike Zulfiqar and Randy.’ She glanced behind her to see if they were in view yet.

Her voice was clear and crisp; eyes shining and enticing to Iftekhar – long starved of female company.

‘I still can’t believe we’re outside Camp Delta, Brother Iftekhar,’ Mubarak addressed the British Oxford PhD graduate once again.

‘Yes indeed, it’s quite a miracle. I can’t quite comprehend it myself. I keep pinching myself, but it’s clearly not a dream.’ He turned to face him, ‘We’re definitely outside the US base. Furthermore, Brother Mubarak, we’re now on Cuban *communist* soil.’

‘How far back do you think they are?’ Roxana asked them both. ‘I keep seeing flashes of light, but just can’t tell how far away they are.’ She tried to get a good look at her companions in the intermittently flashing beams.

‘I think perhaps a quarter of a mile; they appear to be walking now,’ Iftekhar said, turning to note the steadiness of their torch beams. ‘They should reach us in a few minutes, Roxana.’ He observed how incredibly attractive she appeared to be in the torchlight, and felt the pull of emotions that he had never experienced before.

‘Well, at least it gives us longer rest-time,’ Mubarak said, while taking another gulp of water from his canteen, as he too noted Roxana’s striking radiance in the intermittent light.

‘Brother Mubarak, just drink small amounts like Randy and Zulfiqar informed us, or you’ll get a stitch and won’t be able to run at all. And please remember, this is all the water we have,’ while giving him a reassuringly friendly smile.’

‘Don’t worry, we’ve got plenty; my canteen’s half full, and we’ve got our second ones in the rucksacks. But you’re right – I don’t want a stitch.’

Iftekhar meant no harm but he could see Mubarak looked embarrassed at being ticked-off in front of Roxana, by someone he looked up to. He nodded at Mubarak with an apologetic smile and turned to Roxana. ‘I had no idea there were any women at Camp Delta and Zulfiqar’s informed me you’re from Palestine?’

‘There’s me for a start, Brother Iftekhar, so there could be others. And yes, I’m from Gaza.’ He seems to be kind of interesting and intelligent, like Randy said – and not bad looking.

‘Away from the horrendous experience just before our escape, I’m very pleased to meet you properly, Roxana,’ he held out his hand in a friendly gesture. Roxana turned to shake it and Mubarak covered both their hands with his own, bringing smiles and laughter all round.

‘Oh, that was a terrible and wicked thing before the escape – I feel so dirty and humiliated. Anyway, that’s behind us now. I’m pleased to meet you, Iftekhar.’ Yes, he does seem rather interesting ...

‘I wish it was a better situation, but I’m pleased to meet you too, Sister Roxana. I’m Mubarak, a Kenyan and originally a Christian – before I converted to Islam. Did Randy tell you about me?’ He enquired like a teenage child asking an older auntie.

‘Yes, he told me little bits about you all yesterday – and before you ask, I don’t know why the Israelis sent me to Camp Delta either?’ She took off her cap and shook her head, casually rubbing a hand towel through her dark silky hair before re-furling it back under the cap.

‘I’ve been asking myself the same question for the past six days and five nights. I’m pleased to meet you, Brother Mubarak.’ Poor boy, he seems to have suffered terribly, (she reflected from Randy’s info), yet smiling broadly to show an older auntie’s loving concern for him.

‘Don’t be too anxious about the mosquitoes Roxana,’ Iftekhar said, noticing her fearfully brushing away the occasional near flying insect, ‘unlike the African species, Cuban mosquitoes can bite, but they do not carry malaria.’

He and Mubarak then stood up and walked towards their approaching companions, helping to take off their rucksacks. Mubarak eagerly gave his canteen of water to Zulfiqar to quench his thirst and admiringly observed his elder brother and religious mentor regain his composure.

The three earlier arrivals waited patiently for Zulfiqar and Randy sitting opposite them now, to catch their breath before anyone spoke.

‘I’m absolutely knackered. My legs feel like lead weights and I must’ve sweated half a bucket,’ Zulfiqar said, trying to steady his breathing.

‘Just shows how out of shape I am. Never mind all the exercises in my cell – Randy, old buddy.’ He smiled showing his bright teeth.

‘You’re not alone Zuffy, I’m not feeling a whole lot better. I ache all over and must’ve sweated much as you.’

He returned a generous chubby-cheeked smile, picked up on his friend’s intermittently flashing torch. ‘Like we said, we’ve just got to keep going. Gotta put serious distance between us and the base – while it’s dark.’

‘Yes, I know, Randy; we’ve no choice. Insha’Allah, God will give us all the strength we need. I know he will – How far do you reckon we’ve come?’

‘As the crow flies, I’d say less than four miles from the base perimeter,’ flashing his torch around him and his handmade map to confirm their position.

‘But we’ve probably covered six or seven – with the twisting and turning – avoiding searchlights and everything. I guess, we can just head 45 degrees north-north-east now.’

Noting the other three had tucked into their MREs, he added, ‘Let’s eat something before we set off.’ Opening-up their vacuum sealed packs, they once again filled the night air with the smells of cheese, nuts, crackers and sweetened desserts, washed down with mouthfuls of water.

No sooner had he finished eating, Randy shone his torch on his map and lined up the compass. ‘Now listen up,’ he said, gaining everybody’s attention while focussing his powerful Maglite 3D torch into the far distance. ‘That’s where we’re heading, north-north-east – in that direction,’ he guided everybody’s attention along the length of his arm to the end of the torch beam.

‘See those tall palm trees on the edges of the uncultivated fields? You can’t tell from here, but I reckon they’re about four and a half miles away. That’s our next stop. You gonna be okay with that, Zuffy? – can you make it, old buddy?’

Zulfiqar looked his long term friend squarely in the eyes and spoke honestly: ‘I’m not as fast as the young ones and I know I’ll have to stop more often, but this is the greatest marathon of my life. Insha’Allah, God will give me all the strength I need – I know he will.’ He finished in a determined tone, ‘I’m no quitter. Let’s go Randy, I’m ready.’

Once more, Zulfiqar and Randy urged the group forward and onwards, putting serious distance between them and the US naval base. As they took to their heels, their individual thoughts returned as their constant running companions.

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After nearly three years of hell, Iftekhar the academic is free. No more rituals of the long rows of caged laboratory rats waking up to George Orwell’s 1984 nightmares everyday. Each day, a ceaseless continuation of Camp Delta’s Kafkaesque-like war of attrition – heads they win, tails

we lose. A battle of ideologies, of good versus evil, of two plus two equals five; of a free Christian civilisation ruthlessly pitted against a captured Muslim fundamentalism.

Yet by some great miracle of Allah, I'm now walking without being shoved or dragged, kicked or punched. I'm running of my own free volition.

Oh thank you God. I'm back in the real world of national laws and civil rights, international treaties and normal human relations. I've got my analytical mind back under my autonomous control and out of the reach of the automaton grunting guards.

Iftekhar the academic, is free to live and breathe fresh outside air once again, in communist-atheist Cuba ... And yes, by any aesthetic yardstick, Roxana is a stunningly attractive woman ...

'We've got to keep going. Don't stop for anything,' the ceaseless instructions from Zulfiqar and Randy continued to cut through the darkness.

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I can't believe I'm really free and there isn't an Israeli or American soldier in sight. My father's only daughter Roxana, has ended her Camp Delta nightmare after five nights and six days. I'm now on communist Cuban soil, which my father and visiting British lefty friends told me, they call *Cooba*.<sup>[2]</sup>

So it wasn't a trap. I didn't believe him – especially as he spoke in Arabic, but I'm outside the prison now. Quite incredibly, I've been given my freedom by an American military interrogator. A real, genuine, good guy.

And there's this mixed-race Kenyan boy with us, who seems to dote on Zulfiqar's every word; but to me he just looks to be wanting his mother. Poor boy, he's so painfully thin and seems to have suffered terribly.

Well, it's the first time I've met any of 'em, aside from seeing Randy yesterday, when he told me about the others.

'We've got to keep going. Don't stop for anything.' The words kept repeating, pushing them ever onwards.

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Once everyone had recovered and had something to eat at their next stopping place, Roxana asked Randy and Zulfiqar sitting next to each other – facing the younger three: 'I'm very curious to know how you two became friends? And what made you organise this escape?'

Though Zulfiqar answered first, he thought it was quite improper for a Muslim girl to be addressing her elders so casually – without being spoken to first. 'I'd just made corporal and it was part of my duties to liaise with the Americans. That's how I first met Randy in the summer of 1984 – twenty years ago.' He finished by giving Roxana a disparaging look.

Her attitude confirmed to him, his Afghan Muslim Imams' misgivings about the bitter Palestinian *intifada* of resistance. That it had created some over-assertive Muslim women.

'Yes, we first came across one another in '84 during Operation Cyclone in Peshawar, on the Pakistani border,' Randy added.

'I was attached with the CIA then, when our government was supporting the Afghan mujahideen and the foreign Islamists coming from all over the world – like Zuffy from Egypt – to help defeat the Russians.<sup>[3]</sup> We hit it off straightaway.' Zulfiqar nodded in agreement.

'We've been good buddies ever since. We used to discuss everything; the progress of the war in Afghanistan; our countries, cultures and governments; our families and army lives. – Zuffy



knows as much about my marriage problems as I do.’ Randy gave out a knowing laugh. The two briefly turned to smile at one another, conscious of their long memories.

‘Even though we practised different religions,’ Zulfiqar said, ‘we knew we prayed to the same God and shared a lot of religious beliefs.’

‘Most of all,’ Randy said, ‘we respected one another as honourable soldiers. ’cause in the army, honour and duty are everything. – Let me also tell you, I’m the only one allowed to call him Zuffy. Everyone else must all call him Zulfiqar.’

The young escapees noted he looked absolutely determined on this point, but gave a reassuring smile knowing that they would not disrespect their elder.

‘It wasn’t just the Americans – the British MI6 and their government also supported us,’ Zulfiqar cut in, ‘isn’t that right Randy?’ His buddy readily nodded his head.

‘I can still remember the smiling MI6 guy rushing over one day to show me his newspaper story. This had a photo of British Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher shaking hands with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in London.’

‘Yeh; it’s all correct, let me tell you,’ Randy supported his friend’s account. ‘President Ronald Reagan even dedicated the space shuttle Columbia in 1982, to the Afghan resistance fighters. Bottom line is, Zuffy and his comrades were said to be the good guys then ...’

‘Hekmatyar, was one of our Taliban Commanders in March 1986,’ Zulfiqar struck the air with his forefinger, ‘you know – when Thatcher described him as a courageous freedom fighter.<sup>[4]</sup> The MI6 guy showed me and my Muslim brethren this photo to prove to us how much his country was supporting our holy jihad. Except, everything’s changed today...’

Zulfiqar’s mood turned sombre and his voice took on a wounded, embittered tone; eyes moving languidly in stark contrast to his jabbing, accusing hand gestures. ‘Having encouraged me and my brethren to defeat the Russian atheists – our former cheerleaders have no more use for us. Today, they’ve reclassified me, from freedom fighter to terrorist.’

He jabbed the air repeatedly, expressing his rage and anger.

‘This flip-flop was the reason for my troubled Christian conscience – even before I got to Camp Delta,’ Randy added. ‘Except at Gitmo, I came to learn the big picture about the Camp Delta show. For starters, none of the detainees – sorry, I mean prisoners, were given individual assessments before being denied PoW status.’

Randy started to off-load the burdens troubling his Christian conscience to the outside world for the first time in his life, and took two quick mouthfuls of water.

‘All because the Washington big chiefs said, no US, Cuban, or international laws applied to Gitmo.<sup>[5]</sup> So they had no right to their own lawyers or to be tried in civilian courts.’ His companions noted the righteous anger in Randy’s voice.

‘They set up a system of constant interrogations using torture-like techniques to obtain confessions to put before the Military Commissions – which are allowed to use tortured evidence. Then I discovered through my CIA contacts, some 95% of the prisoners had no connection with terrorism, according to data known by senior Pentagon chiefs.’

All his companions listened intently, Iftekhar, Mubarak and Roxana getting to know this American interrogator of conscience – the organiser of this miraculous escape, while Zulfiqar exchanged long familiar glances with him.

‘The bottom line is, the real terrorists weren’t even at Gitmo. They were being held in secret prisons all round the world.<sup>[6]</sup> That’s when I realised this wasn’t a war on terror but something else, and I knew that I would have to act on my Christian conscience – sooner or later.’

Randy stopped to take another drink of water and his four companions saw in his torch-lit face, the dilemmas of conscience and patriotism that must have confronted him.

With the distant glow of the waning full-moon light, they were a strange sight to behold. Orange suited figures huddled round listening and talking in the middle of the Guantánamo countryside with intermittently flashing torches disturbing the still peace of the night.

‘Let me tell you guys, organising an escape was no easy business,’ Randy said. ‘The first day I played with this idea in my head, I became a traitor to my flag and country – and friends and family. I don’t feel good about that ... Like I said, honour and duty were everything.’

‘As a career soldier,’ his tone and manner became remorseful, ‘that’s who I was going to make the ultimate sacrifice for – my kith and kin. No, I don’t feel good about that. But my Christian conscience comes first.’ They saw the determination in his face.

‘I guess that’s Zuffy’s ideas rubbing off on me.’ On glancing round he noted his friend was smiling and nodding agreeably, while the younger three gave Randy their full respect.

‘How did you manage to get the guard outside my cell door removed? Roxana asked, ‘cause he told me – I’d been assigned the highest security – and 24/7 watch.’

‘I used the internal army protocols through the police sergeant to get him arrested and taken to the camp brig on suspicion of: *passing military secrets to the enemy*. I had to do that, ‘cause I knew it would put him in solitary all the way to the US military prison in South Carolina.’

He stopped briefly and noted Roxana and the others listening keenly. ‘Then I volunteered to stand guard ‘till his replacement arrived – that’s when I moved you out. Yeh, I feel pretty sick about that soldier ...’ Everyone sensed the inner pain reflected on Randy’s face.

‘That’s just some of the dozens of scenarios and logistics I had to work out over the weeks and months leading up to tonight,’ he finished in his usual matter of fact manner.

‘Well, you’ve done it,’ Zulfiqar said. ‘You’ve got us all out. Thank you, my true friend. May Allah bless you always and for ever.’ He vigorously shook Randy’s hand and his former lazy eyes were now glowing with affection and his wide chest heaving in gratitude.

‘A big thank you from the rest of us as well, sir.’ Iftekhar said leaning forward, while cleaning his glasses with a hand towel from his rucksack.

‘I hear what you’re saying, Iftekhar – but please don’t call me sir. I’m the same as you now. Call me Randy,’ he smiled to show his ready forgiveness.

‘My father was right,’ Roxana said, ‘We must never lose faith in ordinary Western people. He says, there’s good and bad everywhere. – You’re certainly a good guy. Thank you, Randy.’

Iftekhar flicked on his flashlight and caught the sight of Roxana giving Randy an appreciative smile. He knew he had no reason to be – but the Oxford academic felt distinctly jealous at this particular juncture of his life.

‘Now listen up ...’ Randy said, and all too suddenly the five Camp Delta escapees were on the move again. Once more reunited with the inescapable thoughts of the weary marathon runner, mile after mile ...

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I’m Mubarak, one of the constantly running escapees, who’s moving more than six feet and not bumping into steel walls or having my chain yanked by robot guards. I’ve broken free from my CIA torturers and US military persecutors.

I’m even in a different country now. A communist–atheist one. I wonder what that’ll be like? His mind was racing as he continued to puff and pant, on his never-ending run for freedom.

This feels even better than the time my extraordinary renderings finally stopped – just before I got sent to Camp Delta, in the CIA Gulfstream jet. Except this time, I'm actually free. Randy's really a good guy – just like Zulfiqar told me.

So its another adventure for me now, to add to the list, from my Christian missionary orphanage to finding my salvation in Islam in Nairobi; discovering my Muslim name of Mubarak; pilgrimages to Mecca, with stops in between to pick up the collections for our poor Islamic mission from the rich oil kingdoms. Just like my mosque elders asked me to ...

'We've got to keep going. Don't stop for anything,' was heard once again.

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I've done it. My escape plan worked perfectly. I've freed 'em all ... I've cleared my Christian conscience and become a US army deserter. After nearly 16 years a career soldier willing to put his life on the line, I, Sergeant Randy Reagan, have become an open traitor to my flag and country – and friends and family.

So there's no going back for me now. Not ever. Now I'm in the lap of the gods, in a communist country that doesn't recognise any god.

By three o'clock of the new morning, the five had kept moving for some seven hours. Desperate for a proper rest they agreed to stop for the night in a mysterious clearing of a twelve-foot-tall sugarcane field. 'It'll give us good cover,' Randy told them.

The gruelling escape had taken its toll; their bodies were exhausted and each was asleep within minutes of putting their head down.

# Synthesis

## Chapter 2: Missing Numbers

The US Camp Delta brigadier-general (BG) arrived at the large administration building of the Gitmo military prison complex at 22-45. He was in a foul mood having to leave the senior officers' ceremonial dinner, following Private Hudson's terse message: 'There's a situation, sir. I've got a Humvee waiting to take you to central control.'<sup>[1]</sup>

'Good evening, Captain,' he responded to his aide Jack Kozlowski, in the large open-plan office and another seven personnel arising to attention to salute him.

The general noted numerous documents on their desks and that they seemed to be overly busy – given the time of night. While his captain looked positively agitated in the front of row of the four lanes of twenty desks; with identical three-tier trays, telephones and computer terminals.

'So what's the big crisis? Couldn't it have waited 'till morning?'

His captain started nervously, 'Look, er, I know I should've called you earlier,' pointing to the stack of documents on his desk, 'but I didn't want to disturb the ceremonies for nothing, sir.'

Then quickened his pace, 'Anyway, I thought it was only going to be ten-fifteen minutes. Well, the situation is, the mainframe data systems went down at 20-00 hours. It took the IT guys over two hours to fix the problem – but the data's all corrupted, sir.'

The general had drank too much. He felt irritable and was having trouble concentrating. His military professionalism was out of focus; bladder over-full, and stomach churning.

'Almost all the 750 or so detainee numbers' identities and locations are twisted up, sir. The online readouts are showing 35 extra numbers.' His captain added assertively – to get the general's full attention, 'I know for sure, we've not had any fresh packages for 48 hours, sir.'<sup>[2]</sup>

'What of it?'

The distinguished looking, brushed-back-greying, six-foot-tall general remained unconvinced of any crisis. 'It's probably a computer glitch. You dragged me back here, for this?' Following the rebuke, he started walking away.

Except he somehow knew, this was going to be one hell of a career and pension night. His wrenching guts told him that – as he headed for the washroom in his office.

The captain ran after him and having paused for breath, began to lay out the full picture.

'There's a pretty serious foul-up, sir. Three of the numbers aren't in any of the places they're listed. I've had two duty sergeants,' pointing to the row immediately behind his desk, 'checking every computer printout with the hand logs for over two hours.'

'Have you checked every location?'

'We've covered all six blocks, the high-security A to C areas, the isolation Camp Echo and Camp Four, as well as the medical facilities and the interrogation centres, sir.'

The general thought his aide was being overly anxious over a situation that was likely to be an admin problem. Not an emergency.

'I've called all the holding locations but nobody knows the whereabouts of three specific numbers. There, that's the top and bottom of it. Three detainees could be missing, sir.' The captain expressed his worst fears with a wide-eyed look of unprecedented crisis.

'Check with the British. You know how MI5 have special interest in some numbers and like to keep them isolated – for periods of time.'

With that, he walked out of the large open-plan room and headed for his private office along the eight-foot corridor, muttering colourful expletives – hoping his captain would go away.

‘Yes sir. I’ve checked with the British,’ the captain caught up as he was keying in the door code, ‘their numbers are all present and correct, sir. Anyway, I’ve been able to cross-reference them with our hand registers.’

‘Well, it looks as if we may have a problem,’ the general turned to face him. ‘I still think it’s a glitch. I’ve spoken about the poor standard of some of the soldiers’ data inputs before. But you’re right; we do need to get on top of this, pronto.’

‘Yes sir, I’m sure you’re right about the recordings, but I’m really worried; three of the detainees could really be missing. Nobody knows their whereabouts.’

He hesitated before adding, ‘There’s something else, sir. Of course it’s not connected, but one of the duty sergeants is unaccounted for.’

‘Cut the dramatics, Captain. What’s he got to do with it?’ The general demanded to know, bearing down on his somewhat portly assistant.

‘He’s recorded as an emergency admission to the medical block at 20-30 with severe gastroenteritis. I’ve spoken with the admissions officer, she’s not seen him and he’s not in his barracks, sir.’ As he finished, he looked as if the two issues might well be connected.

‘Well, okay. Let’s call a security condition Amber and assemble the Gitmo Joint Task Force Commanders and senior officers. Schedule it in the war-room for 23-30.’

‘Get hold of the chief at Central Mainframe and tell him to bring one of his systems analysts.’ As he pointed out the obvious, ‘These numbers can’t have disappeared. They’re in the detention complex, somewhere. It’s an admin problem.’

‘I guess you’re right sir. But I’m still worried – and the missing sergeant doesn’t help matters. Nobody knows his whereabouts.’

‘Just a question of pinpointing their locations,’ he said, pausing briefly to respond to the two officers’ evening greeting and salutes. He noted and understood their looks of astonishment at seeing him back here – on the night of the senior officers’ ceremonial dinner.

‘As for the missing sergeant, he’s probably blind drunk somewhere,’ he told his aide. ‘You know yourself – there’s too many National Guard weekend warriors here. Well, some of ’em – just aren’t up to the job.’

On that point, the general walked into his office and headed for the wash room. He mixed three codeines with three tea-spoons of Alka-Seltzer in half a tumbler of water, gave a vigorous stir – gritted his teeth, and downed it in one.

Reminding himself once again, I must cut down my drinking, as he relieved his bladder during the five minute shower, shave and teeth brushing. Military efficiency in action.

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‘Good evening gentlemen ... and lady.’ She heard the brigadier-general introduce her with a deliberate pause of recognition for her Pentagon credentials, welcoming her to the Joint Guantánamo Task Force emergency meeting. Which she and the Camp Delta commanders had all rushed to attend, in the basement war-room of central control.

Whether summoned from their beds or the officers mess, they arrived in full uniforms. The war-room is aglow with shining brass, silver, and colourful bar-ribbons. All with a commonly shared mindset; they’re professional soldiers doing their duty night and day to keep their country strong and their people safe in their beds. Their primary mission in the war on terror.

The war-room is lined with light beech panels and stylised pictures of military figures. There are executive leather chairs and computer terminals around an island of dark-wood tables, resembling a court room.

The BG and his captain are sitting at the elevated top table, flanked by the joint interrogations and intelligence commanders, facing the twenty other senior officers. Prominently displayed behind the top table is a large photo and circular seal of the 43<sup>rd</sup> US President, George W Bush. The son of George H Bush, the 41<sup>st</sup> president.

‘We have a crisis; you’ll have learned from captain Kozlowski.’ The Pentagon officer heard the BG announce and noted he glanced over at his aide, who looked decidedly anxious.

‘There are discrepancies with detainee numbers and their locations. And a sergeant seems to have gone Awol. Now, I guess it’s all connected with the mainframe data systems crash.’

The Pentagon officer noted the BG looked up and down carefully at everyone to get their full attention. She took the opportunity to convey her smiling gratitude, for inviting her.

‘Yes, I know these things have happened before, but we must get on top of this problem of misplaced numbers Asap. That’s why I’ve called this Amber meeting, at this un-godly hour,’ he said decisively. ‘This is now our top – number-one priority, gentlemen and lady.’

Who herself thought, at last I’ve got some real news to report back – instead of the brochure tours I’ve been given by the general’s captain. So different from the other – naval side, where Captain Mitchell had allowed me to go anywhere and to speak to anyone, 24/7.

‘First off,’ the general said, ‘I want to know exactly what went wrong with the mainframe systems and why they’re still not functioning properly. Then I want all senior officers of each section to account to you for every one of the detainees, with physical head-counts.’

He turned to the base data systems chief on the left of the room, ‘Can your team back up the computer systems to just before the crash?’ As he poured himself another full glass of water.

‘No sir, that’s just not a viable option, ’cause the mainframe systems are integrated into time-frame grid-references points,’ the 20-something data systems analyst responded, following a whispered conversation with his chief.

‘These are online with the Pentagon supercomputer master control systems. I guess, I could do it if I had access to a Pentagon supercomputer – but not from any of the satellite stations. Let me explain, sir, how the IBM military grade systems are configured.’

The woman noted that the young technical officer paused to consider his best approach in explaining complex data systems to senior officers, and seemed to opt for military rationale.

‘Our computers follow protocols and instructions from the Pentagon supercomputers, just like we soldiers do – yeh?’ he asked rhetorically and neither she or anyone else disagreed.

‘I’ve got an idea of what I might be able to engineer, sir. I guess, I can insinuate a bypass programme to reconfigure the output sites and give us printouts for your requested time from our embedded memory banks. That way we wouldn’t be altering our databank records, sir.’

The Pentagon woman noted he acknowledge his chief’s startled gaze before adding, ‘But you haven’t heard me say that, sir – it’s not the correct procedure and it would violate our protocols.’

‘I’ll accept responsibility,’ the general said, as he glanced over at the woman and she nodded her agreement. ‘Do whatever you have to – but give us an accurate read-out of the detainees and their locations. You may leave right now to start your work. Thank you Lieutenant.’

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Following a ten minute recess that enabled the BG to relieve himself and the junior officers to leave, the general with his aide, the three base commanders and the co-opted data systems chief alongside the Pentagon officer moved into the Amber security restricted-briefing.

‘What have we really got here, gentlemen and lady?’ the brigadier-general asked rhetorically, before giving his preliminary assessment: ‘In the worst case scenario, I guess we could be looking at three numbers misplaced in the Gitmo complex. Maybe even a sergeant gone Awol.’

While the Pentagon officer amongst them thought, now I’ve really got something to report back. So, some detainees have been mislaid – have they?

‘According to my analyst, sir,’ the chief of data systems said, ‘It looks like a virus attack, which somehow bypassed our state-of-the-art antivirus system and penetrated the mainframe.’

He hesitated before adding, ‘What’s even more worrying, our system checks and back-tracking configurations are pointing to ...’ He paused again and visibly took a gulp of air, ‘This virus, could only have been introduced on the base, sir.’

‘Well, that certainly rules out the numbers or their international terrorist friends.’ Sighs of relief all round the room – including the woman, as the general followed it up with their second concern, ‘What about this missing sergeant? Who is he? What do we know about him?’

‘It’s Sergeant Randolph Reagan, sir. All the MI (military intelligence) guys know him as Randy,’ the interrogations commander said, from his right hand side. ‘He’s a lifer sir. A regular soldier with a distinguished 16-year army record. He was a US Marines frontline combat soldier until some six years ago – with previous attachments with the CIA.’

The Pentagon officer thought the commander’s description of the sergeant was a very positive one, but it seemed too much of a coincidence that he’s Awol during this crisis.

‘Following combat injuries and recuperation,’ the commander continued, ‘he undertook MI training as an interrogator. I understand he’s well trained and knows his job very well. He’s also a conscientious type – but even so, the young boys respect him for his military record, sir.’

‘I want your full risk assessment, Commander, for the reconvened Amber security meeting,’ the brigadier-general said. ‘Talk to his supervising officer. Find out what he really knows about him. Talk to Human Relations; that’s where a whole bunch of skeletons are kept.’

Once again the woman officer nodded her agreement, as she also began to wonder if the sergeant could somehow be connected with the missing numbers.

‘I want to know for sure,’ the brigadier-general addressed them all, ‘if any detainees are actually missing. If so, I want briefings on them. Meanwhile, we’ll remain on Amber alert, the base will stay locked-down and no one’s permitted to enter or leave the Gitmo station.’

This is serious, she thought. I must get some texts off ...

Having spelled out the situation, the BG placed a time-frame on their actions, ‘You have 90 minutes before we reconvene to evaluate a full risk assessment.’ The brigadier-general ended by declaring: ‘*God bless America,*’ emphasising the unprecedented nature of the crisis.

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‘I suggest, gentlemen and lady, we begin by receiving the sure facts from the Joint Detentions Group Commander,’ the Pentagon officer heard the brigadier-general say, opening the reconvened Amber meeting at 01-30.

‘Four detainee numbers can’t be located, sir – not three,’ the commander said.

‘Sergeant Randy Reagan’s definitely Awol,’ the interrogations commander added in a sombre manner, from his right. ‘He’s been missing from the same time as the numbers. The last

confirmed location of all four detainees and the sergeant was at 19-30 hours, when they were all together in an interrogation centre, sir.’

Then he took an unconscionably long pause – enabling everyone to digest the unpalatable diet of the unthinkable – an eerie silence pervaded the tense atmosphere, reminiscent of the split-second after a bomb explosion in the midst of people going about their everyday business.

Just before the blood and guts, limbs and torsos of children and adults come to be strewn across the twisted metal, broken glass, concrete and rubble – amidst the panic, as all hell breaks loose; familiar scenes amongst all in the war-room at different points of their military careers.

The visiting Pentagon officer sat up straight and began to listen intently. She even began to think the unthinkable – the atmosphere was thick with one word – that no one could utter.

‘After delivering three of the detainee numbers,’ the commander said, ‘the guards were apparently given a 30-minute relief break by the sergeant. On their return, the soldiers were told the numbers had been taken back by other guards ...’

Jesus H. Christ, some detainees have actually gone missing! A watchtower-sized spotlight lit up in the Pentagon officer’s head. The unsinkable Titanic has struck an iceberg, she thought.

‘The virus was introduced from a data input terminal accessed from one of the interrogation blocks, my analyst has just texted me, sir.’ The chief of data systems said, adding to the sense of impending shock.

‘All the evidence clearly points to Sergeant Randy Reagan. My guess is he did it to create maximum confusion. To buy time, for the ... for the *escape*, sir.’

There, he blurted it out, the Pentagon officer thought. The one unmentionable word in the Pentagon’s mission of war on terror. Making it patently clear to her and everyone else that this was a carefully planned and meticulously executed escape plan – not data mismatches.

It left the brigadier-general with little option, ‘Well, we might as well know the worst Captain Kozlowski, give us your profiles of the missing numbers and the sergeant please.’

‘The first of the four missing detainees, sir, is 1103, Zulfiqar Hassan.’ Simultaneously, the captain flashed up his photo from his laptop Powerpoint onto the four-by-six-foot plasma screen. An exercise he later repeated for the others.

‘He’s a 45-year-old man, originally from Egypt and is known to have been attached with the Arab foreign fighters and the mujahideen forces from 1982 onwards. He’s a real veteran of the successful mujahideen guerrilla war that forced the Russians out of Afghanistan, sir.’

The captain spoke with a commonly shared sense of pride amongst the island of conference tables. ‘That’s when our military and CIA’s Operation Cyclone not only expelled the Russians from Afghanistan but led to the total collapse of the Soviet communist empire.’<sup>[3]</sup>

Having acknowledged the smiling faces, he continued his briefing. ‘Zulfiqar Hassan was captured in Pakistan by their ISI Inter-Services Intelligence forces and turned over to us in September 2003. He’s been at Gitmo since November 2003, sir.’

The captain gave his assessment, ‘Of all four, he’s probably the most dangerous, sir. He’s very well trained; much of it by our own CIA based at the Pakistani–Afghan border camps.’<sup>[4]</sup>

‘Yes, that’s one thing we can rely on, gentlemen and lady – our CIA has always trained the world’s greatest terrorists,’ the general remarked in dark military humour. The Pentagon officer looked a little embarrassed and couldn’t help letting out a whimsical laugh.

‘Next, is number 0102; he’s 26-year-old Iftexhar Ramzan, a British Asian, sir. He was amongst the very first packages we took possession of at the start of our mission of war on terror, on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002. He was born and lives in England and is a British citizen.’



The captain looked disgruntled as he continued, ‘He’s highly educated, with a first-class honours degree from Oxford University, in England, sir. And he has a PhD doctorate in ...’ (he read out word for word), ‘Contemporary Socio-Political Paradigms.’

‘That’s what you get if you don’t charge proper fees for education – they study all sorts of subversives,’ the intelligence commander remarked, from his left hand side.

‘If he had a mountain of debt to pay back, he’d make damn sure his studies led to a high paying job – like with a military contractor,’ the brigadier general added from the top table and found everyone nodding their heads.

‘Well, anyhow it seems, he applied his very expensive education to help the terrorists,’ the captain resumed. ‘We believe he could’ve had some military training, but we definitely know he came into contact with some high-level militant Islamic thinkers, sir.’

The captain turned to another file, ‘The next missing detainee is 0904, a 22-year-old Mubarak Ali. A Kenyan young man, from Africa, sir.’

‘I think we all know where Kenya is, Captain. We’re not politicians back in the States. After all, there are 749 other overseas stations in 138 countries.<sup>[5]</sup> ‘The sun never sets on our global strategic interests – that’s why we need full spectrum dominance.’

The general injected some cynically circular, catch-22 military humour that went down well with everyone. ‘We’re professional soldiers who know the score. We’ve come to know all parts of the globe – have we not, gentlemen and lady?’ He asked rhetorically.

‘Yes sir, I take your point. Well, he’s a half-caste child raised by Christian parents who named him Jonathon Smythe-Dickinson. They provided him a good Christian family upbringing and education up to age 14. Then he left home and moved to the capital, Nairobi.’

The captain took a quick drink of water and glanced at Mubarak’s photo on the screen before resuming. ‘Over the course of six years in Nairobi, he became involved in a militant Islamic group – disowned his adoptive parents and started calling himself Mubarak Ali, sir.’

The captain next turned to an annexe file and opened a sealed envelope. ‘He came to the attention of the CIA in July 2003, who were monitoring his extremist Kenyan Islamic Front’s funding sources. He made several trips to suspect Middle East locations throughout 2002 and 2003, and his mosque obtained large donations from somewhere outside Nairobi.

‘In June 2004, the CIA picked him up for questioning in connection with our global war on terror. He was rendered to an undisclosed jurisdiction and extensively interrogated before being delivered to us in September 2004, sir.’

The Pentagon officer felt the sting of the captain’s piercing look in her direction – as she responded with a blank above my pay-grade expression.

‘Then there’s 1004, Roxana Khanam, a *woman* detainee sir! He exclaimed. ‘Until some 15 minutes ago, I didn’t even know we had any female guests here.’

Looking around at the knowing expressions on the faces of the three commanders, the brigadier-general and the smiling Pentagon woman, he realised that he and the data systems chief were the only ones to whom this had come as a surprise.

‘So the Palestinian woman’s amongst the four missing detainees?’ the general said. ‘This makes it a career-and-pension serious matter. We were only holding her temporary – a thank-you gesture to the Israeli Mossad, for their generous intel in the Iraq war theatre last year.’

This’ll piss-off a few five star generals – including my boss, the Pentagon woman thought – once news of this Palestinian woman gets out.

‘Well, she’s a 23-year-old Palestinian, who had apparently been held in an isolation unit for the past six days. That’s all the information I’ve been given on her, sir.’ Again looking up at the commanders, the captain realised her file must be highly restricted.

‘That’s all we need to know about her,’ the general cut across his aide and prompted him to continue with the last briefing.

‘Finally, sir, is our Sergeant Randy Reagan, a 42-year-old regular soldier. He had quite a commendable special operations record until six and a half years ago. Then, after combat injuries and post-traumatic stress recuperation, he retrained as MI interrogator.

‘Oh yes; it turns out he’s been having angry correspondence with Human Relations over their refusal to aggregate his first seven years’ service pension, sir.’

‘Is there any connection between any of the four detainees and the sergeant?’ The general cut in, hoping no one would actually say yes. But alas, this not being his night, he was about to be disappointed on this front as well.

‘I guess I can answer that, sir,’ the interrogations commander said. ‘It seems that Sergeant Reagan had befriended Zulfiqar Hassan at the time of the Afghanistan–Soviet war. Reagan was attached with the CIA Operation Cyclone logistics and strategic support operations then.’

A classic CIA blowback and Big Ben bell rang loudly once again in the Pentagon officer’s head. I’ve got to get some more texts off PDQ.

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The BG reconvened the crisis meeting following a ten minute break, when his thoughts had turned decidedly bitter and resentful – as he relieved himself. If the captain’s proved correct, not only am I not going to make full general – I could be forced to retire early.

No doubt my critics will claim, that’s what you get if you appoint an artillery officer to head-up an intelligence gathering operation. Bang goes my nine-to-five Pentagon job, followed by lucrative directorships with military corporations ...

‘Let me round up the situation, gentlemen and lady,’ he said. ‘We have four missing numbers, and a US soldier gone Awol.’

Turning to the military police security commander he addressed him directly, ‘I want to know – in your professional judgement, is it possible that they could somehow get off the base? Just give me your preliminary risk assessment, Commander.’

‘No sir, I don’t believe that’s possible. Our security protocols are tighter than any super-max prison in the States. Whenever the orange suits are shuffling outside their cells, or escorted along the corridors, they’re handcuffed, shackled and chained up through their waist-belts.’

He looked around the tables – especially at the Pentagon woman to forewarn her – ‘Hell, even when they have a crap, they’re in full view of the guards; who only release one of their hands to wipe their ass while holding on tightly to their other hand.’<sup>[6]</sup>

There followed a general unspoken admission of the ridiculousness of most Camp Delta protocols carried out by the soldiers, but they all understood the need to keep the ranks busy. Idle hands lead to questioning mindsets; the brigadier-general often reminded them.

‘When they’re being moved from one block to another, or to the outside interrogation centres, they’re always handcuffed, shackled and chained up.’<sup>[7]</sup> There’s just no way and nowhere they can escape to, sir.’ He paused for a drink of water and noted he had everyone’s full attention.

‘There’s watchtowers with sharpshooters all around. Even though we’ve removed our 75,000 landmines now, the numbers wouldn’t make ten yards towards the razor-wire perimeter fence before they’d be cut down for sure.’<sup>[8]</sup>

He finished in a resolute tone. 'There's only two ways on and off this base: by sea or by air. The port terminals and both airfields are 100 per cent security-tight. My guess is they're hiding on the base. They've got to be, sir.'

'Okay, for the time being we'll work on the premise that they're on the Gitmo base. I want them found – and found quickly, gentlemen and lady. Take whatever actions are necessary. And remember, this traitor sergeant may have accomplices.'

'Finally, Gentlemen and lady,' he added, 'I can't emphasise too strongly the seriousness of this crisis. We're permitted to lose certain numbers through accidents or overzealous interrogations.'

He looked over in a matter of fact manner suggesting forgiveness for such indiscretions and the Pentagon officer nodded her unstated agreement.

'We can also categorise some losses as undisclosed, under national security protocols. But we're not permitted to itemise a single one as *escaped*. Such a category simply doesn't exist. They've got to be found.'

The general concluded the security condition Amber briefing with a rousing rendition of their mission of war on terror: '*Are we all in the New York 9/11 frame of mind, gentlemen and lady?*' To which the commanders replied with the camp motto, '*Honour bound,*' and the brigadier-general himself returned the thumping chorus: '*to defend freedom.*'<sup>[9]</sup>

After they had all departed from the war-room, the Camp Delta commanding general turned to his aide, 'Any suggestions, Captain – how I'm going to break this little news item to our Pentagon chiefs? Especially as they'll have already received texts from that woman.'

Captain Jack Kozlowski kept his counsel. He knew heads were going to roll and he had plans for his own career and pension, which didn't include the albatross of a headless brigadier-general draped round his neck.

## Chapter 8: Culture and Crafts

‘Make yourselves comfortable,’ Omara informed the five in the front room. ‘Look around the house if you like. I’ll take you to the bathroom, one at a time.’

‘Oh, please may I go first? ’cause I need the toilet.’ Roxana ensured she was the first to shower. She wanted to wash the robot soldiers, their desert-camouflaged uniforms and the entire stench of Camp Delta right out of her body and hair, fingernails and nostrils. Only then would she feel able to explore this beautiful house, fully refreshed for the first time in six days.

‘I guess the bishop’s not agreed to give us sanctuary, or Father Sanchez would’ve just said so,’ Randy said, to his male companions.

‘It’s pointless guessing, my friend; let’s just wait for him. Then we can properly discuss our situation,’ Zulfiqar said. Iftekhar and Mubarak readily agreed and they started to relax and explore their hosts’ house.

‘Oh, just look at all the beautiful tiles and contrasting colours. There’s such lovely, dead-smart patterns on ’em,’ Mubarak excitedly informed his fellow escapees.

‘Yes, Brother Mubarak; they’re very decorative all over the house. But I think it’s this room’s tiles which are the special feature of our kind hosts’ house,’ Zulfiqar said and went on to describe them, as if he were tutoring him back in the Camp Delta cell block.

‘Look very carefully at these tiles, Mubarak, my boy. Each one is a foot-square and part of a group of eight – all making colourful patterns. Just like many splendid mosques.’ He began his lesson with a broad smile, fast-moving eyes and flowing hand gestures.

‘We also have beautiful sacred texts from the Qur’an displayed in our mosques, don’t we, Brother Zulfiqar?’ The young protégé enthusiastically remarked.

‘This highly skilled art form dates back even before prophet Mohammed’s time – peace be upon him.’ Zulfiqar conveyed a momentary reverence for the prophet. ‘Now, if you’ll just back up a few paces, my boy ...’ They all complied with his request to take in a wider view.

‘Can you see how all the different colours – browns and purples and reds are superimposed on the cream background? It’s this special blend of colours that gives it the sharp contrasts, which you noticed. You should also note, they’re cool to touch and very easy to keep clean.’

He looked around at Iftekhar, Randy and Mubarak, before adding, ‘And they’re the most delightful of sights after the drab and dreary steel and concrete hell-hole of Camp Delta.’

They all smiled in agreement with Zulfiqar on this point, as he continued his artisan skills lesson with the satisfied smile of a teacher instilling timeless wisdom into his pupil.

‘The greatest achievements of man are not to be found in machines and computers.’ He informed Mubarak of the wonders of Allah’s glories. ‘Or in making money, but in the traditional skills of craftsmanship. These exist all over the world and come from Allah.’

The protégé continued to listen attentively, admiring his mentor’s breath of knowledge and sense of absolute conviction.

‘They’re God’s gifts, which in his great benevolence he’s bestowed upon some of his hard-working craftsmen. Who always take great pride in using all their skills – no matter how ordinary their task. This is how they show their love for Allah.

‘You should always take great pride in your work, Mubarak, my boy. Always do your job – however menial, to the best of your ability. And always respect your elders. That’s how you will become a good Muslim.’

‘Yes, Brother Zulfiqar, I understand. *Allahu Akbar*, God is great, all powerful and omnipotent. He made the electricity for the air conditioners to keep his people cool while watching television, but I don’t think he made any of the programmes, though.’

‘You know,’ Randy said to Zulfiqar in Arabic, ‘I’m really fucking worried about his mental state. He needs some serious therapy PDQ.’

‘Yes, I think they’ve messed up his head pretty bad. Poor boy, most of the time he’s okay – but then just loses the plot.’

‘What about Roxana, my friend – how much do you know about her? Is she really a Palestinian activist like she says, or an Israeli Mossad spy?’

‘I wish I knew the story on her, Zuffy. She’s a proper mystery. We can usually get info on any detainee, but not her – it’s all top secret.’ The two of them continued to talk to each other in Arabic, leaving Mubarak to look around the house by himself.

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Remembering Zulfiqar’s words, Mubarak appreciated a traditional wooden handcrafted three-piece suite in the front room and the two matching, rocking armchairs along the narrower sides of the long room. He applied Allah’s gifts ideas to carpenters, because he wants to be a good Muslim – while God himself knows he’s always respected his elders.

Mubarak carefully observed the settee and noted how gracefully its broad, ornately carved front legs rose and moulded into the base of the armrests – gently converging into the backrest incorporating three panels of wickerwork and twine meshing.

All inscribed with each craftsman’s professional pride; precisely inserted and protruded into every cut and incision; turned into curve, twist and twirl, joint and straight line of the master carpenter’s wooden template, that Allah had provided to all his people – not just Muslims.

These are the wonders and glories of Allah, as Zulfiqar had told him – who Mubarak knew must be right, because he was his Muslim mentor and a celebrated mujahideen war hero too.

Mubarak noted the two armchairs were made of the same richly crafted design, and had very comfortable-looking leather back panels. This made him imagine their ski-shaped legs transforming them into rocking time machines.

He sat and gently rocked in one, daydreaming of the total happiness of the chocolate ice cream sundaes of his earliest childhood. Momentarily, he was in blissful ignorance of the 93-day trauma of the worldwide tentacles of the CIA’s extraordinary renderings ...

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‘You can really see a loving woman’s touch, with all the different displays of flowers and ornaments everywhere, Zuffy my friend.’

‘Yeh, and there’s these African ceremonial face-mask carvings – miniatures to over three foot-tall. Are they part of their religion, or arts and crafts? What do you reckon?’

‘The biggest ones are pretty intricately carved, so I guess they could be some sort of religious symbols,’ he said, though Randy also looked puzzled.

‘Oh, come and see this,’ Mubarak called out to Zulfiqar and Randy, pointing into a room with a half-open door. ‘Look, there’s African tribal masks, a Buddha, some bananas and flowers and toy elephants ... is it a religious display? I don’t understand.’

‘While our hosts are very nice people, Mubarak my boy, they won’t be going to heaven. There’s only one Allah-God – everything else is idolatry and sinful *haram*.’ He said in his usual certainty, though with knotted brows of confusion.

Walking back downstairs, Mubarak had many questions to put to Zulfiqar about this strange Cuban religion. But he thought he wouldn't get the words right and didn't want to sound as if Allah wasn't omnipotent in every country, or that he'd made exceptions for communists.

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Roxana felt clean and refreshed after her shower and was curiously peaking through an upstairs door at what appeared to be a religious altar.

'Come in and take a good look, my dear,' she heard Mrs Segundo invite her into her bedroom.

'Not many people practise religion in Cuba these days, but we do. Cuban-African Santería, is the result of the Spanish Conquest and their Catholic religion being imposed on us.'

'Roxana was struck by the sincerity with which Omara spoke.

'This became intermingled with the slaves' own African faiths and we managed to worship our conquerors' God, by merging our own gods' identities with their saints. Over time the two have become combined into Cuban Santería.'

'So it's a kind of Catholic religion with African gods, mixed in?'

'Well, you could say that,' Omara smiled politely and resumed.

'Now, this altar depicts the three Madonnas,' she pointed out the different religious items and their significance. 'Over here, is my china-clay elephants, traditional African agogó rattles, conical drums and African bells beside them. I've also placed fresh bananas on the other side – they're the African god Chango's favourite fruit.

'The other items in between are all sacred, even though they're plain ordinary things like a piece of cloth and fresh flowers. They're to please our other gods.'

Roxana continued to be intrigued by Omara's faith, as she pointed out the everyday items that were somehow blessed – and for her, come to symbolise religious artefacts.

'We don't want to offend anybody's gods or their belief systems, like the sitting Buddha over here,' she pointed to it, 'who's not a god but represents harmony between man and nature.'

Omara concluded, 'We want to be equally fair and include them all in our prayers and worship.' She said, with a rationally humane look in her eyes.

'So it's a mixture of religions, harmony between man and nature and socialist fairness and equality as well. Thank-you Omara,' Roxana said, smiling in gratitude for being enlightened.

'It's a little more complicated than that. But your welcome, my dear,' Omara said and added, 'Sorry for the lecture. I suppose – once a lecturer – always a lecturer.'

'Now, let's see, what we can do about your clothes.'

'Why, what's wrong with them?'

'Natural beauty is nothing to be ashamed of, my dear. It should be adorned.'

Omara went to her wardrobe and came back with a new, close fitting pair of denim jeans and a skin-hugging light blue blouse with short sleeves.

'I got them for Yalena, but she's got plenty.'

'Are you giving them to me?' Roxana asked excitedly.

'To show off your best features,' Omara said, showing pleasure in the giving.

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'I see, Sister Roxana, you're admiring Mr and Mrs Segundo's collection of books,' Iftexhar greeted her returning from his shower, looking clean and refreshed. His close-cropped damp black hair glistening in the bright sunlight streaming in from the window.

'Yes, Brother Iftexhar, I really like all the different books on display. Except I was also admiring the cabinet itself, which is beautifully carved.

'Just look down here,' she said 'pointing her slender hand downwards. 'There's reference books, a large encyclopaedia and a family photo album. On the next shelf there's English teaching books and dictionaries, box files of university documents and lecture notes. All neatly compiled with their overhead projector displays.

'I know a lot about such things, 'cause back in Gaza, I sort out my father's books and teaching materials and organise his school diary too.'

Roxana and Iftexhar drew closer to each other moving around the room, admiring the Cuban-African craftsmanship and symbols of their political culture. Together and alone, they exuded and consumed one another's tastes and smells and shared their backgrounds and personalities.

'On the top two shelves, Sister Roxana, there's novels and factual books in Spanish and English. Even in the Spanish section, I can recognise the names of Karl Marx, José Martí, V.I. Lenin, Ché Guevara – and look ...' as he excitedly pointed to it, 'here's the famous American author, Ernest Hemingway. He loved it here so much, he made Cuba his home for 20 years.'

'In the English language section there's Shakespeare books and Spanish-English dictionaries.' Roxana guided his attention along her slender bare arm – with the sleeve ridden-up the shoulder.

He smelled her tingling naked skin and looked curiously at her new light blue blouse.

'Yes, Mrs Segundo gave me it and the new jeans as well.' She showed them off with a twirl and grateful smile. 'Omara's really nice, she told me all about her Cuban Santería religion.'

'Oh look, Sister Roxana, I've just spotted two George Orwell books, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and *Homage to Catalonia*.' He pulled them out for her to take a good look.

'Here's *1984*, the third book from this collection.' Roxana in her curiosity, found hidden behind others. 'While this one here is one of my father's all-time favourites; *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* by Robert Tressell,' she enthusiastically informed him.

'Just look at the love and joy of the different photo displays, the cut glass tumblers and vases and wonderful china ornaments. Then there's the Cuban arts and crafts everywhere,' Roxana commented admiringly.

'They all make the house look so warm and inviting. Wouldn't you just love to spend a lifetime in a house like this?' She asked him not-so-rhetorically, as they moved further along the room to look at some dried and artificial flowers.

Having re-checked they were still alone, Roxana continued, 'This is what everyone in the whole world wants: love and happiness in their family life, surrounded by nice, beautiful things. Don't you think, Brother Ifty?'

'Yes, I quite agree. A happy family life surrounded by aesthetically pleasing things is what everyone wants,' he said with a gleam in his eye, especially appreciative of being called by his British nickname by this enchanting Palestinian woman, whom he'd barely known for a day.

Roxana and Iftexhar continued to admire the Cuban art and literature as they walked and talked and looked into each other's eyes and dreamed their individual and joint dreams inside their minds' eyes. Gradually and increasingly, they edged ever closer, together and alone ...

‘Just look on the top of that mahogany cabinet, Brother Ifty. She pointed her arm upwards. ‘It’s just an ordinary thermos flask, but the picture of a single red rose on the enamel-blue background makes it look so wonderfully romantic. Don’t you think?’

He saw her naked, slender upper arm again and took a mental photo. ‘Yes, and it’s very nicely contrasted with the displays of dried flowers in the vase beside it. Clearly a loving woman’s touch, don’t you agree, Sister Roxy?’ She’d never been called that before but liked it.

‘These pictures must be their family photos, Ifty,’ as she pointed to them. ‘This must be Mr and Mrs Segundo’s grown-up children and their happy-looking families.’ She reciprocated his attraction with generous lingering smiles.

‘This colour photo over here must be Mrs Segundo’s mother, and the black and white one seems to be Mr and Mrs Segundo on their beautiful wedding day. Don’t they look so young and happy in this photo, Ifty?’ She sounded exciting. Her clear brown eyes shining.

‘From how they look now,’ he said approvingly, ‘it must have been taken some 30 years ago.’

‘And they look just as happy today,’ she continued, rewarding him smiles.

Iftexhar then saw the world-famous photo of Ché Guevara and decided to impress Roxana. Never realising his preliminary PhD dissertation on Cuban Socio-Political Paradigms would become so invaluable. Or that he would find himself here – in such bizarre circumstances.

‘At one time,’ he confessed, ‘I had quite a crush on Ché for what he represented to radical students worldwide. And, I’m sure you’ll agree, we Muslims are hero-worshippers. Even without that, he is Cuba’s greatest export to the entire World; alongside numerous other positive aspects about this country – which, incidentally, Roxy, they call *Cooba*.’

‘Yes, I know that from my father’s teachings; thank you for reminding me, Brother Ifty.’ She gave him another enticing smile.

‘Are you also aware, dear sister, Cuba’s always the first to offer help to any poor country in need, regardless of their religion? Such a pity they’re not Muslims. Quite incredibly, this tiny island has defied America – the greatest power on earth for 45 years. As for Ché himself, his face has adorned millions of T-shirts around the world.’

‘No, I didn’t know these things in detail, but please continue, dearest Brother Ifty. I must confess, I’ve always secretly admired him too. Such an attractive, intelligent and conscientious man. Such a pity he wasn’t a Muslim. I quite agree.’

‘Well, this picture is his famous image by Alberto Korda and it’s known the world over. In fact, you could compare Guevara to a saint in our Muslim countries. You could even call him a Cuban deity, Saint Ché, or their A-list film star celebrity.

‘Do you know, Sister Roxy, while he’s one of their greatest heroes and most principled revolutionary, he wasn’t even a Cuban? And soon after the revolution, he left. I’ve heard it said, Cuba just wasn’t big enough for Castro and Guevara, but I suspect that’s gossip.’

‘Yes, its quite incredible that such a tiny island should produce two of the world’s greatest revolutionaries, at the same time.’

‘Well,’ he said, pleased with himself and relishing every moment of her keen listening ears and warm smiles, ‘Ché was their professional healer – a doctor by profession, who spent much of his life bearing arms. He was their dedicated lover of humanity and implacable opponent of injustice, for which he paid the ultimate price.’

Roxana felt the attraction of his rational mind and caring personality, as she edged ever closer.



‘Yes, this is the man himself and his world-famous photo. The most attractive gift of Cuba to the entire world. Saint Ché Guevara, their communist-atheist revolutionary.’ He looked at the picture – at Roxana and back again, drawn from one to the other with equal attraction.

‘Incredible as it may seem, Roxy, his photo has pride of place in every Cuban house and official building, inside and out. There are public photographs, paintings and murals of him by the hundreds of thousands for the insatiable 11 million – who seem to derive spiritual warmth and comfort from his presence and never tire of his omnipresence.’

‘Yes, well, I can see the attraction,’ she said with pleasure and excitement, looking at the photo. ‘See how proudly his warm brown eyes reach out to embrace the world’s poorest people.’

She turned to face him, ‘Then there’s his wickedly defiant long wavy hair, sticking out from under his beret.’ She pointed her slender finger to the picture. She had beautiful long fingers.

‘So I think he had some human vanities too. Though false modesty, in his case, might’ve been a lie. Yes, we do worship our heroes, don’t we, dearest Ifty?’

‘This is Ché indeed,’ he said, ‘upon whom Allah himself, it seems, had bestowed devilish good looks and the highest of principles. That’s why he’s no A-list celebrity of transitory glitter. No; he’s the shooting star of Cuba’s pride, and the embodiment of their joy and happiness.’

He certainly has a good turn of phrase, this academic Ifty. My headmaster father would be proud of such a son-in-law, Roxana felt mesmerised by his precise diction and cultured tone.

‘While many in the West and very many Muslims too,’ Iftexhar came to conclude his homage to Ché, ‘would not agree with what he fought and died for, they’d all accept he was a superbly handsome and thoroughly principled man.’

‘Though in Cuba, I can say without fear of contradiction, Cuban people either love him or they are in love with him. He’s their national treasure, who had the good fortune to be martyred in his prime, while his other half is forced to stand the test of time.’

‘That’s wonderful, Ifty,’ Roxana showed her pleasure and moved even closer, to almost touching distance, as – for the first time – their feelings and emotions fleetingly jumped the physical gap and embraced one another intimately.

‘You have a way with words, as my father would say. He says, the more you read the stronger you become. Because in my occupied Palestine – Ifty, education, is an act of revolution. That’s why the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) always try to destroy our schools and colleges.’

Iftexhar saw the fire of injustice glinting in her eyes, together with the electricity of determination surging through her veins, and was most assuredly smitten.

‘That’s why all Palestinian people are firmly fixed within every Muslim’s heart, Roxy. Which is not a bad start, is it?’ She now moved so close to him that they almost physically touched once again, as their rushing sensuous emotions pole-vaulted the Islamic gender-apartheid gap and embraced one another intimately – for the second time.

Yet on both occasions, they knew they would have to be vigilant in controlling their emotions in public places, as Muslim couples do not choose one another but are brought together by wiser heads. Except in foreign circumstances, for which Allah had allowed a special exemption.

## Chapter 17: Havana Takes Control

Randy was lying down half asleep on the bench when his door opened and some figures rushed in, unleashing a turbulent volley of explosive brute force throwing him to the floor. He barely had time to tense up but instinctively protected his head; as fierce kicks, blows, knees and elbows rained down on him ...

‘What the fuck ...? Who are you ...? Ahhh ...’ His indignant protests turned to reflex actions, invoking yelps and shrieks of pain. Alongside the rush of adrenalin was his sense of total powerlessness, in the most iniquitous combat of his 16-year army career.

He had no idea from whom the attacks were coming but was painfully aware where each and every blow was landing; punches and kicks, elbows and knees, striking and penetrating his body, crushing his flesh and pummelling his internal organs.

The attack was over in less than a minute and Randy was left panting on the floor; crouched in the foetal position, his arms and hands guarding his head; gasping and reeling from the murderously rude awakening. An immediate thought sprang to his mind: I’ve been ERFed!<sup>[1]</sup>

He recalled bits of testimony of an army guard, who’s career ended very abruptly one day: *They grabbed my arms, my legs, twisted me up ... reached round and began to choke me. I began to panic and I gave the code-word to stop ... somebody slammed my head against the floor and continued to choke me. I muttered out, I’m a US soldier. I’m a US soldier.*<sup>[2]</sup>

Randy had heard about this ERFing – which spread like wildfire amongst the guards and interrogators. In the subsequent internal investigations, every one of the Extreme Reaction Force team said, ‘We didn’t know it was an exercise.’ Except he knew even that didn’t make it right. For him, this became yet another sign of how the entire Gitmo show was all wrong.

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‘Urgent assistance to Cell Number 4 – and get the doctor and nurse,’ one policeman shouted as he entered the cell. Randy was carefully helped onto the bench by two policemen, who assisted him to lie flat on his back. He had no idea what they were saying in Spanish, but was quite sure they were not connected with the earlier attack.

‘What’s happened? Did you see who attacked you?’ One of the two senior inspectors arriving in his cell asked, through Eliades.

‘Where does it hurt the most? Can you remove your shirt please. I need to examine you properly.’ The doctor asked him via Eliades, before he had time to respond to the inspector.

‘Just try and raise your arms gently, while I undo the buttons,’ the nurse said.

Slowly and painfully, Randy raised his arms as the nurse removed his shirt and his warrant card slipped out. This was immediately noticed and retrieved from the floor by the inspector.

‘How’s this happened? You two were left in charge of these prisoners.’ The inspector turned to the two police officers. ‘I want to know who’s attacked him and I want them arrested immediately. Do I make myself clear?’

‘Yes sir,’ they both responded and quickly left the cell, leaving the doctor and nurse continuing to examine and take care of Randy’s numerous injuries.

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‘I regret to inform you, Senora, ‘I’ve just learned on my cell phone, the Northern Americano prisoner has been attacked in the police station by an unidentified group of men.’ The chief of police informed the general secretary, just as the emergency protocols meeting had finished. ‘My inspector’s taking immediate steps to apprehend the perpetrators,’ he added.

‘What’s the extent of his injuries?’

‘He’s sustained a severely bruised wrist, two cracked ribs and numerous bumps and bruises. Given his general fitness though, he doesn’t appear to be too seriously hurt. He himself is insisting he’s okay, but the doctor’s concerned about his breathing. He thinks one of the cracked ribs may be pressing on his lung.

‘We’ve also discovered a US army ID warrant card hidden about his person,’ the Chief informed her. ‘It looks genuine Senora – you’ll see, it’s being brought over to you.’

The general secretary reconvened the meeting, with some delegates summoned back from the rear exit door. She informed them of the attack on Randy and issued decisive instructions, ‘I want the chief of police, the army major-general and Luisa Salazar to undertake immediate enquiries.

‘We must find out who’s responsible and how this breach of security took place. We must ensure there’s no possibility of further lapses.’

‘I believe the CDR volunteers are a source of this breach,’ the chief said. ‘Therefore, Senora Secretary, I’m requesting that you remove them from internal support of the police station and the Party offices until such time as all our enquiries are completed.’

‘I protest, Senora Secretary, in the strongest possible terms,’ Luisa said, with anger in her voice. ‘The chief of police is saying the CDRs are the source of this breach before any enquiry has even begun.’

‘May I remind the chief,’ the secretary intervened, ‘the CDRs have a crucial role in the emergency protocols. ‘We’re operating under Code 2 – only one step away from a war footing. The defence of the revolution is every citizen’s responsibility, alongside the security services.

‘I suggest the chief apologises to Luisa Salazar for his remark. I will not tolerate any accusations amongst ourselves. I further suggest, he makes a sincere personal apology to the Northern Americano.’

‘Of course, Senora, I withdraw my disparaging remarks about the CDRs’ integrity,’ the chief informed her and the 22 delegates. ‘I hope Luisa accepts it was made in the heat of the moment, for which I apologise.’ Luisa smiled awkwardly to gesture her acceptance.

‘As for the Northern Americano, this attack is entirely unacceptable and a grave lapse of my department’s security measures. Whatever his crimes may be, he’s entitled to due-justice not mob rule. I assure you, I will apologise to him personally.’

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‘Like I said before, this Mr and Mrs Segundo are as much terrorists and secret agents as you and I are. But they’ve obviously been very foolish in not contacting the authorities.’ One of the inspectors commented to his colleague, following the comparisons of their notes of Mr and Mrs Segundo’s separate interviews.

‘Here, again,’ his colleague added, ‘their big mistake was trusting the Catholic priest. So much for academics. They may be intellectuals, but they’ve not acted particularly intelligently here, have they? No Cuban workers would’ve been led astray by a religious priest.’

‘Yes, I’ll grant you that – but the important issue is we’re both agreed, Mr and Mrs Segundo have no involvement with espionage or terrorism. So we’d better discharge them straight away, like the chief said. Do you agree?’

‘I agree – but as we’re operating under Code 2, I think we’d better check with Jochim Cooder at the Party offices.’

‘Yes, Father Sanchez’s version of events closely matches Mr and Mrs Segundo’s, Mr Cooder informed him on the telephone. ‘However, the secretary’s just expressed a wish to give them all serious advice. Can you have them brought here and they can all be discharged afterwards.

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‘I want to begin by making it clear,’ the general secretary addressed Father Sanchez and Mr and Mrs Segundo, ‘religion and beliefs in gods are not in question. They are guaranteed under the 1992 Constitutional amendment. I myself practise Santería, but these are private beliefs which are not above the Cuban socialist state. You’re all aware of the terrorism our nation has endured from the CIA and the Miami-Mafia. So there can be no compromises on national security.

‘Even if you weren’t absolutely sure before, I will make it clear. Any issues of escaped prisoners is a national security matter and must be reported to the authorities immediately. The essential criterion is, if in doubt – report it, and the authorities will remove the doubt for you. Is that understood? And are you all willing to give this undertaking?’

‘Yes Senora Secretary,’ they chorused in unison and Father Sanchez added, ‘I’m to blame, Senora. Mr and Mrs Segundo followed my advice in giving them shelter. I shall certainly not make such a mistake again. I apologise most humbly and most profusely.’

‘Yes, well, there’s probably a lot of truth in that,’ the secretary said. ‘Okay, you’ll all be discharged after you’ve signed a written statement with my lead officer. This will verify your understanding and full agreement with the advice you’ve received and agreed to abide by.’

‘I understand, Father Sanchez,’ she added, ‘that your bishop has expressed a desire to talk with you to convey his religious advice on such matters. Mr Cooder will arrange for you to speak to him before you’re discharged. That is all.’

The Secretary left the large interview room on the ground floor and headed for her office. Along the second-floor corridor she came across Mariela, who had just finished interviewing two of the five Cuban workers at the US naval base.

‘They’ve witnessed highly charged security exercises all day, Senora,’ Mariela said, ‘and both mentioned rumours of missing detainees and a sergeant gone Awol last night.’

‘Thanks Mariela. Now, can you ask Jochim and Luisa to come to my office in 30 minutes for a briefing meeting. Then come up to my office, we need to attend to another matter.’

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‘It looks genuine to me, Senora,’ Mariela said, referring to Sergeant Reagan’s ID warrant card that the Secretary produced from her desk, in her third-floor office.

‘We’ll soon see whether it’s genuine or not.’ She opened the department safe in the secure room, and slipped out the CD of ciphers from the Emergency protocols folder.

‘Would you like me to leave, while you’re verifying the card?’

‘No, you’re a Level One officer with enhanced security clearances. In any case, I’m not going to expose anything beyond your level. Switch on the scanner beside my computer.

‘Look away while I enter the password.’ At the same time she took out an authentic US military warrant card from the back of the CD envelope, ‘You can turn back now. Look, see, there are some advantages to a few of our citizens still working for the US naval station.’<sup>[3]</sup>

‘I knew this lost ID warrant card would come in handy one day.’ She placed the card under the lid of the scanner and repeated the operation with Randy’s ID as prompted by the computer, before requesting an identity-chip comparison analysis.

‘That’s 98.7 per cent – a match. Somehow, you never get a full 100 per cent but anything over 95 per cent is definite. So we can conclude the sergeant’s ID warrant card is genuine.’

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‘We’ve interviewed Mr and Mrs Segundo along with the Catholic priest and just discharged them,’ she began to brief the Habana PCC National Party’s second officer.

‘We’ve also gathered evidence from two of our US naval base workers, which confirms an escape of prisoners took place last night. They’ve witnessed unprecedented security exercises all day, and both heard rumours of four missing detainees and a sergeant gone Awol.

‘Regrettably, I also need to inform you, there’s been a breach of security at the police station resulting in the Northern Americano prisoner being attacked by a group of citizens.

‘How did that happen, and how badly is he injured?’

I’ve initiated enquiries into this breach. The sergeant is battered and bruised but otherwise okay. And we’ve discovered his military warrant card, which I’ve just verified.’

‘I will pass on these developments to the national general secretary, then he himself will ring you shortly. Please remain close to your secure phone.’

‘I’ve learned, Senora Secretary,’ she received a phone call from the chief of police, ‘the security leak came from an army soldier. He had informed a terrorism victim family about the detention of a Northern Americano. Then four men, took it upon themselves to seek vengeance.

‘They gained entry into the police station, with forged CDR credentials,’ he added in an apologetic tone, ‘which I readily concede my officers failed to check properly.

‘On a positive note though, all four of the attackers and the soldier in question are now in police custody. They’re currently being taken to a Santiago district police station. For obvious reasons Senora, I didn’t want them brought here.’

‘So, not only have you established the source of this security leak, you’ve managed to apprehend the perpetrators. Well done indeed. Your apology for the earlier un-socialist remark is accepted and you’ve redeemed yourself. Now, please remain alert.

‘Once again, well done. Please convey my appreciation to your inspectors for their diligence in this hour of National Emergency.’

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At ten p.m. she received the expected call from the national general secretary and immediately updated him on the results of the chief of police’s investigations.

‘Given the facts as we now understand them,’ the national PCC secretary said, ‘we’re reasonably confident that these five people have come from the detention camps at the US naval base, while the Northern Americano soldier has indeed engineered this escape. Given that he’s already been attacked in our custody, they’re politically hot property.

‘It’s our considered assessment that Guantánamo city’s too close to the US naval base.’ He added, ‘I’m sure you appreciate the politically sensitive nature of your possession of these prisoners. To say nothing of our already precarious relations with the US Government ...’

He just left this statement hanging there, and it took her a few moments to realise he was inviting her response.

‘Well, Mr Secretary, exactly what are you saying? That they would be better dealt with in Habana?’

‘Yes, that is indeed the case. We have the necessary resources to ensure their safe detention and to respond to the political fallout. The Party is very appreciative of course, and will recognise you and your officers’ proficiency in this matter in due course.

‘As a mark of appreciation and to maintain overall continuity you may attach one of your officers and Luisa Salazar, due to her long-standing CDR connections in Habana, with these five prisoners. They can accompany them to the capital and remain here for the foreseeable future.

‘The issue to remember,’ he pointed out, ‘we’re government servants. It’s our elected leaders who will need to make difficult decisions, balanced against our national interests.

‘You appreciate this will impinge on our international relations with our most un-neighbourly neighbour. The presence on Cuban soil of these escaped prisoners, who could still be terrorists, and a US army deserter, will raise issues far beyond our remit.’

‘How soon do you want them in Habana?’ seemed to be the only question she could ask.

‘Given the possibility of rescue attempts, we need to move quickly. Let’s not forget the breach of security that’s already taken place,’ he reminded her. ‘You need to relocate them overnight and place them on the first flight to Habana in the morning. Just use an ordinary scheduled flight, but maintain full security.’

He paused momentarily before adding, ‘I’ve arranged for my lead officer to work out the necessary details with your office.’

She was left quite stunned by the dramatic turn of events but understood the national secretary’s thinking. Judging by his closing remarks, though, she thought government leaders had already taken a hand in the matter.

Hearing noises in the corridor, she realised it was time for the briefing with her senior officers and was now acutely aware – the agenda of this meeting had completely changed.

‘Okay, this is the situation. Mr and Mrs Segundo and the priest have been cleared and discharged. As for the foreigners, it now seems pretty certain from various sources, four of them were prisoners at that horrendous Camp Delta prison. The fifth foreigner, the Northern Americano was an army interrogator there, who for whatever reasons has arranged their escape.

‘The security leak which led to him being attacked in the police station has been successfully investigated. The integrity of Luisa’s CDR volunteers remains unblemished. The chief of police has apologised and redeemed himself by quickly arresting the perpetrators.

‘Has anybody got anything to add to what I’ve summarised?’ She paused briefly. ‘Are there any questions?’

‘No, Senora,’ they all responded.

‘Turning to matters in hand, the presence on Cuban soil of these five prisoners is beyond provincial Guantánamo matters – as evidenced by the National Emergency Code 2 we’re operating under. The actions now required and their political ramifications are national issues.

‘It’s therefore been agreed with the National Party that the five prisoners will be relocated overnight and flown to Habana in the morning. One of our officers and Luisa will be attached with them in the capital, to maintain overall continuity.’

‘Well, it’s obvious, this is a national issue,’ Luisa said. ‘The glare of the whole world’s media is on this despicable torture prison. How we respond to these escapees carries international repercussions, which only the Habana Party and government leaders can deal with.’

‘Which officer have you got in mind, Senora?’ Jochim asked, shocked at the turn of events and realising Luisa had astutely analysed the situation.

‘Well, in my assessment, there’s no choice in the matter. It has to be Mariela. She’s the only one that’s fluent in English, and the situation requires somebody who can communicate with the prisoners and keep our office informed.’

‘Yes, I’m happy to do it Senora.’ Mariela said. ‘It could be an exciting assignment, though I’m aware it could carry some risks too.’

‘I’m ready and willing to do my duty, Senora Secretary, for the citizens and the revolution,’ Luisa said enthusiastically. ‘And I’ll be able to see some of my old Habana friends again.’

‘Well, there it is,’ the secretary resumed, ‘that’s the situation. We have to do our duty. Are there any questions?’

Following the silence, she moved the agenda to the very considerable logistics of the operation which they were now about to unfold.

## Chapter 29: Uncle's Story

'You can begin your uncle's story, Iftexhar,' the 30ish-looking interviewer informed him.

While her mid-20s PhD note-taking colleague looked forward to listening to the *Inglés* Oxford PhD graduate once more, hoping it would be a longer session than the previous aborted one. She particularly wanted to know the depth of his analysis.

'Because he's an old socialist,' Iftexhar began his second interview, 'at the time I dismissed his analysis about the UK situation out of hand. Now that I've had time to rethink everything, I'm not so sure.'

'He says, British Muslims were at the heart of the British progressive movement at one time, and played a central role in the unity of black people. This is when all non-white people referred to themselves as black – a political definition, nothing to do with the colour of their skin.'

'His thesis is, it was the British Government policies of elevating culture and ethnicity above everything else, which reversed the common experiences of black people.'

'The word *thesis* here,' the academic note-taker quickly explained to the interviewer, 'just means the main thrust of his uncle's arguments, not a book-length formal document.'

'This is why my uncle used to tell me,' Iftexhar resumed grateful for the explanation, 'you're the result of a social engineering project, which ripped apart the community's natural connections and reconstituted them with a different agenda. Which he said, Sivanandan had told him.'

'Let me also tell you,' as he caught the two women's eyes, 'you'd like my uncle. He was a street-fighting radical in his day; and a lifelong atheist.'

'He explained the bitter-sweet experiences of the post-Second World War, first generation of immigrants. Just as importantly, he identified the socio-political factors which lay behind the vicious racism they encountered. He said, it had nothing to do with a clash of cultures or ethnic differences, but the legacy of centuries of imperialism and the slave trade:

'British people had been nurtured to believe in their superiority over the conquered and enslaved people; to take pride in the Pax Britannica and to feel good about ruling a quarter of the world's population. All based on the hierarchy of races and skin colours.'

'Such ideas were widespread and entrenched within every British institution. This is what the first generation of British Commonwealth immigrants had walked into, in the 1950s and '60s.'

'My uncle also told me there was another story here – which I confess, to my shame, I hadn't been aware of. He said, black people's presence had left its mark on this island long before this post-Second World War generation. That our history dated back to the Roman times and included small but long-settled communities in all major seaport towns and cities.'

From the 16th century onwards there were many black people in England, from lascars and sailors and ayahs and nannies, to Indian doctors and popular activists in the Chartist movement. The forerunners of today's industrial trade unions.

'For instance, the Lord Mayor of Battersea in 1913, was a black man called John Archer. There was even an Indian, communist MP, called Shapurji Saklatvala in Parliament for six years in the 1920s. He fought for home rule for India and Ireland, alongside his London constituents' everyday issues.'

'Whereas the Indian Workers' Association of Britain was established in Coventry in 1938, long before the post-Second World War first generation's arrival.'



‘So there was clearly another story here, though my uncle informed me this was largely confined within the labour and trade union movement – seldom receiving recognition in higher education circles, let alone the popular press.’<sup>[1]</sup>

The note-taker was impressed by Iftekhar’s recognition of a holistic analysis capturing the overall and underlying dynamics of the various issues.

‘The obstacles over housing and the racist attacks encountered by the first generation,’ Iftekhar said, ‘led them to seek protection within their own communities. These in turn, spawned self-help groups and organisations reflecting the common and different concerns and aspirations of the young, the old, the conservative-religious, and the enterprising ambitious.

‘There was also the start of a common humanity agenda with the progressive British people. Indeed, it was a culture like any other and because it was at the forefront of adversity, opportunity and rapid change – it was immensely dynamic.

‘By the mid-to-late 1970s, these communities had settled and put down roots. Some 50 per cent were now British born-and-bred Asian and African-Caribbean second generation.

‘Then, as the economy shrank and unemployment rose, the racist and fascist political parties started to implement their extra-parliamentary policies. This is when the second generation found themselves running the gauntlet of everyday verbal abuse, threats and intimidation.

‘Even petrol-soaked burning rags were posted through their letterboxes – leading to the explosion of wire-cage letterbox sales. Though physical assaults were the more common visitation, as Paki-bashing almost became a national sport.’<sup>[2]</sup>

‘The underlying unemployment rates continued to grow faster for the non-white population, especially for the second generation. These young British-born-and-bred black people increasingly found themselves in confrontation with the police, who targeted young African-Caribbean men for stop and search operations and sus charges under the 1924 Vagrancy Act.

‘Not surprisingly, this issue became the principal source of their hostility towards the police, as well as growing alienation from mainstream British society.’<sup>[3]</sup>

‘Sorry, Iftekhar, you’re going to have to stop – the tape recorder’s not working,’ the interviewer said, as she fiddled with the switches. Meanwhile her colleague recognised how Iftekhar’s critique was building – step by step, into an overall holistic socio-political thesis.

‘Okay you can start; the tape recorder’s working,’ the interviewer said.

‘There was an enormous rise in the violent activities of racists and fascists at this time,’ – Iftekhar continued from exactly the point he had been interrupted. ‘Instead of offering protection, though, the police often blamed the victims, as did many of the politicians. Such responses led the second generation to mobilise their own community defences.

‘The Asians established Asian Youth Movements in all major towns and cities across Britain, while many other groups performed the same functions but had no use for names or constitutions. The African-Caribbeans had similar organisations and there were collaborative initiatives as black people, reflecting the growing unity of the different immigrants.

‘This is how fifty different organisations combined together under the umbrella of the Black People’s Alliance, in 1976. A statement of their new identity and political unity, born out of common experiences of racism and joint responses. It led to the wider labour movement coming to recognise the true depth of racism in British society, especially in its institutions.

‘Of course, it has to be said that initially the trade unions themselves were indifferent to black people’s rights, while some even colluded with the employers against the interests of their black members – like at the Imperial Typewriters dispute of 1973.’<sup>[4]</sup>

‘Nonetheless, these industrial disputes continued with Asian Muslims at the heart of many struggles, from Rockware Glass in Southall and Courtauld’s Red Scar textile mills in Preston in 1965, to the Midland Motor Company and Imperial Typewriters in 1973; and the long and bitter two-year dispute at the Grunwick film processing lab in north London, between 1976 and ’77.<sup>[5]</sup>

‘Please stop Iftekhar, the recorder’s gone off,’ the interviewer said and added, ‘that’s a pretty good memory you’ve got there,’ as she tried to restart the machine.

‘Thank you, *Senora*. Well, yes, I do have an almost photographic memory, which certainly helped me through my academic years. But it’s the holistic analysis of socio-political paradigms which I really enjoy; searching for the empirical truth of core fundamental ideas.’

‘Okay, you can restart,’ the interviewer said.

‘Increasingly, the progressive lessons of these struggles came to be reflected in the wider labour movement, resulting in some 20,000 trade unionists – led by Arthur Scargill of the NUM – gathering on 11th July 1977, to show solidarity for Grunwick’s strikers. Whom, amazingly for that time, were mainly Asian women.’

The young Cuban note-taker smiled broadly at Iftekhar at this time, impressed by his photographic recall of facts and data. I wish I had that. It would’ve made my PhD research and findings a whole lot easier to compile into the overarching thesis.

‘My uncle explained that these disputes largely involved Asian workers – but where they worked with African-Caribbeans, such as at the London Rubber Company, GEC and Grunwick, they were all united in their struggles.<sup>[6]</sup>

‘In support of these industrial disputes, the black community networks had mobilised themselves through their Asian Youth Movements and African-Caribbean equivalents, the women’s groups, the churches, mosques and gurdwaras, as well as the non-religious.

‘All uniting together as black people – same as they were constantly doing against the racist and fascist attacks on their neighbourhoods. These had inspired dozens of community defence campaigns, such as the Newham 7, the Mangrove 9 and the Bradford 12.

‘The latter, the Bradford 12 faced charges of conspiracy and making explosive devices (petrol bombs) in 1981. The jury however acquitted them, accepting their right to defend their community.<sup>[7]</sup>

‘That’s how black people established the right of self-defence – which is of huge importance, to every reasonable person in our country.<sup>[8]</sup>

‘At this time, the black community and especially the second-generation British Muslims were at the heart of the wider labour movement. Which was also the high tide of black unity.

‘Meanwhile most British institutions remained overtly or covertly racist, which the police force demonstrated most vividly to young African-Caribbean men, hitting them over the head with sus laws time and time again – humiliating and harassing them on every street corner.

‘For instance, the Brixton police Special Patrol Group stopped 1,400 young black men during 1975, and made 400 arrests. Similar patterns were repeated across many other black-populated city centres.<sup>[9]</sup>

‘This was the run-up and the simmering fuse which finally ignited the Brixton riots of April 1981. So clearly – as my uncle said, these riots didn’t come out of thin air.

‘Lord Scarman’s inquiry into the riots concluded black people were indeed suffering racism. Quite incredibly, though, he stated: this racism was nothing to do with the colour of their skin, but their unmet cultural and ethnic needs. And in the same breath he added, while there were some individual racists within the police force, there was no institutional racism.<sup>[10]</sup>

‘This came as very welcome news to the government, who heartily congratulated themselves for having appointed him. Yes, my uncle does have an ironic, dry sense of humour.’

Something that the PhD note-taker appreciated, as she too had come to adopt a dry sense of humour – wading through mountains of cold, uninspiring academic literature.

‘The Council for Racial Equality (CRE), imported some American race and ethnicity theories to promote multi-culturalism, to meet the ethnic needs which Lord Scarman said were holding back black people’s aspirations. The local CREs then recruited religious and ambitious businessmen that shared their mindset, and appointed them community leaders.

‘The CREs had ignored women’s interests – who hold up half the sky – as Mao Zedong said; the second generation’s views – who by then constituted sixty-three per cent of the black population; and others, including atheists.<sup>[11]</sup> (Well, my uncle would say that, wouldn’t he?)’

The PhD note-taker smiled at hearing Iftekhar quote Mao Zedong. He in turn, smiled back to acknowledge their shared appreciation of intellectual broad mindedness.

‘My uncle said, the CREs had reversed a progressive and dynamic black people’s agenda and frozen it into an ethnocentric, inward-looking tourist industry of artefacts – a saris, samosas and steel bands caricature.

‘That’s how British Government policies changed the organic community dynamics, just to kill black people’s anger. Over time, they effectively silenced the progressive second-generation voices, who would go on to father and mother the troublesome third generation.’

The note-taker continued to write down the markers and cues for the later transcription, while highlighting special sections of interest like – *third generation*.

‘Lord Scarman encouraged British local authorities to promote this new multiculturalism and the Conservative government provided the funding. This came to be known as Section 11.

‘In time, this growing fund was used to promote the CREs and their community leaders’ extremely narrow version of black cultures. In just five years, this Section 11 funding increased over tenfold, from £33 million in 1979 to £348 million by 1984.<sup>[12]</sup>

‘Essentially, the government achieved its objectives of creating employment for some ambitious black people within local councils and the race relations industry, and promoting conservative-religious leaders – especially within Pakistani communities.

‘All at the expense of women’s voices, the progressive second generation’s views and silencing the non-religious dissenters too.

‘The proof, according to my uncle, lies in the highly divisive criteria that were set to access this funding. In essence, the more different in nationality, ethnicity, religion etc they could show themselves to be, the easier it was to obtain funding.’

‘Sorry Iftekhar, you’re going to have stop again – the tape’s gone off.’ This time the note-taker also helped to check the machine – from the buttons to the tape-reading heads back to the power cable and plug – when it suddenly started working.

‘This Section 11 funding,’ he resumed, ‘completely changed the dynamics of the immigrant communities and over time, came to shatter the unity of black people into their constituent parts.’

‘It disconnected African-Caribbeans from Asians. Separated African-Caribbeans into West Indians, Ghanaians, Jamaicans, Africans, West Africans etc. It split the Asians into Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Bengalis, Sri-Lankans. Separated them again into Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Hindus; and yet again into regional variations, and even castes.

‘As one progressive black commentator, Paul Gilroy, said: the elevation of ethnicity above all else only leads to cultural insiderness, which is just as bad as biological insiderness.<sup>[13]</sup>

‘This led some African-Caribbeans to claim an exclusive right to the term black, because they had darker skins. Whereas some in the fast-growing Asian third generation didn’t see themselves as black British, Asian, or even Pakistani or Indian for that matter, but as Muslims.’<sup>[14]</sup>

‘These developments led to disastrous consequences for the Pakistani Muslims. It reversed the second generation’s progressive trajectory by removing their unity with African-Caribbeans and the British labour movement. It also elevated religious leaders – who used their official status to constrain the community’s diversity.

‘One issue clearly demonstrates this period of around 1983 and ’84. At that time my uncle was involved with the Bradford Asian Youth Movement’s campaign to oppose their religious leaders’ attempts to establish separate single-sex Muslim schools. During numerous public debates, the Muslim community rejected the religious leaders’ ideas.

‘The Asian Youth Movement’s policy document had warned of the consequences: *We fear the steps to establish religious schools will lead to the acceptance of the concept of segregation.*’<sup>[15]</sup>

‘Of course, the British prime minister, Tony Blair, later enthusiastically promoted such religious schools – which my uncle often bitterly complained about.

‘There were also some external factors raising the influence of these religious leaders. The Iranian Islamic revolution led to an international resurgence of Islam, and the Afghan mujahideen war against the Russians also raised the profile of Islamic fundamentalists.

‘Whom at the time, were presented as freedom fighters by Western leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan – though they would later go on to call them terrorists.

‘Then there was the Pakistani military dictatorship of General Zia al Haq. He had close links with the Afghan mujahideen and the Pakistani Islamic fundamentalists. General Zia had given the latter important posts in his military government, and even brought some Muslim Sharia laws into the nation’s constitution.

‘These were the effects of the international reach of the radical Islamists, spreading all over the world. The most powerful promotion of fundamentalist Islam however, especially in the UK, was linked to Saudi Arabian oil money – which was funding fundamentalist Wahhabi preachers and religious conferences right across Britain.’<sup>[16]</sup>

‘Well, I didn’t need my uncle to tell me that. All British Muslims know it really. As a matter of fact, the Saudi influence is much greater today.

‘This was leading the Pakistani Muslims into a dangerously exclusive trajectory, with dire consequences for the communities of Bradford and nearby Dewsbury. You obviously don’t know this in Cuba, but there are very strong connections between Muslims in England and Pakistan.

‘Which in the case of Bradford, meant the resurgent Islam in Pakistan came to be reflected by its religious community leaders, who used it to flex their political muscles.

‘Even at this time, though, there were enough progressive minded second-generation people to ensure the debt to the National Union of Mineworkers was repaid, during their 1984-85 national strike. They organised regular weekly collections from mosques, traders and door to door.

‘And they continued to struggle alongside their lefty-liberal friends to end Britain and America’s despicable support for the Afrikaans’ racist apartheid regime.

‘You know, my uncle spent three consecutive Christmas days picketing outside the South African Embassy in London. This was the four-year-long City of London, 24/7, non-stop picket – calling for the release of Nelson Mandela – which they finally achieved on 11th February 1990.

‘He also informed me, this was the one and only time that the official British Anti-Apartheid Movement had attended this picket.

‘Then Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* controversy exploded on to the British scene.’

‘I’ve heard about that book, Iftekhar,’ the experienced interviewer said, ‘could you try and explain something about it, please?’ Her colleague looked equally intrigued to hear his response.

‘Unfortunately it’s not something I could cover quickly, but I can tell you what my uncle’s opinion is. He says, the Bradford Muslim leaders initiated the Islamic world’s opposition to this book, to gain their community’s support behind an openly religious agenda – and succeeded.

‘While the ambitious, Section 11 Muslim workers, conveniently forgot they’d just been using Rushdie’s *New Empire Within Britain* critique as part of their racism awareness training – as they rushed to support their religious leaders’ politically motivated campaign against him.<sup>[17]</sup>

‘Soon after this, the diversity of voices from women, the progressive second generation, as well as independently minded black people came to be silenced.

‘As the Southall Black Sisters have so poignantly stated. The Muslim leaders, armed with the multicultural agenda, found local councils to be a pushover. But their real problem was always how to defeat the dissenters and the awkward within their own communities – on a strictly Muslim agenda.<sup>[18]</sup> For which they used the *Satanic Verses* controversy.’

The note-taker could now see, this is what Lord Scarman’s ethnicities agenda had led to.

‘By June 1989, the religious leaders had almost total control over the Muslim communities. They’d achieved their separate Muslim schools, as well as many other parts of their religious agenda. With the progressive elements now effectively silenced, the fast-growing third generation became dependent on their orthodox Muslim doctrines.

‘In the wake of the Rushdie issue and the backlash against British Muslims, the fascist British National Party held a provocative demonstration in nearby Dewsbury. This came to be opposed by local and regional Asian second- and third- generation Muslims, as well as white British anti-racists from Bradford, Wakefield, Sheffield, Leeds and much further across the region.

‘The day of the Dewsbury riots was actually beautifully warm and sunny – my uncle said, though it ended in violent riots involving over a thousand people and nearly a hundred arrests. Then the Dewsbury 82 Defence Campaign was launched, to support the mainly Asian defendants arrested for trying to protect their community against the racists and fascists.

‘The extremely narrow religious agenda of the Dewsbury and Bradford community leaders became very evident at this time.

‘During the Rushdie issue, they had demanded the support of such defendants against him – and yet, when they were defending their community against the racists and fascists, they did everything but lift a finger to help their young people.

‘My uncle often spoke bitterly about this appalling about-face.

‘At the end of that campaign, my uncle from Sheffield University made a forlorn cry at York University for the labour movement to not to abandon the peers of the Dewsbury 82 to such religious leaders – but it was already too late.

‘The trajectory had been set in motion by Lord Scarman’s incendiary ethnic cultures, shattering of black unity, and the task was completed by the CREs and local authorities’ promotion of religious leaders.

‘These leaders then led the Dewsbury third generation by the nose into the abyss. Except even my uncle couldn’t then foresee just how future events would come to typecast this third generation as the treacherous enemy within. But he told me the die was cast, the dice had been rolled and the trajectory was set in motion by Lord Scarman.

‘My uncle would say: It’s all about agenda-setting; those that set the agenda control the outcomes. His thesis is, as I too have learned, terrorists are not born but created.

‘I wish to be quite clear on this point. My uncle wouldn’t say British policies created the home-grown terrorists – but he would say, those who are now shouting the loudest against terrorism have been complicit in its creation and are still profiting from it today.’

‘I think I understand your uncle’s story, Iftekhar,’ the PhD-graduate said. He’s saying it was British Government ethnicity policies which shattered black people’s unity, diverting them into separatist paths. Well, this is the classic tried and tested, divide and rule tactic, which we Cubans know only too well. It was used on us for centuries.’

‘Yes; I agree about our diverse heritage,’ her interviewer colleague added, ‘but instead of letting it be used to divide us, we’ve learned to celebrate it as our common rich Cuban culture.’

‘Apart from that I must say, I’m very impressed by your photographic memory and detailed analysis, Iftekhar. I now feel much better informed about British black people and what went wrong with their unity. *Muchas gracias.*’

## Chapter 41: A Polemic of Our Time

For the British generation before the 2008 credit crunch shit-storm, your house values – your very own personal banks, kept growing and funding the rising living standards. The richest amongst you also enjoyed soar-away salaries, bonuses, lucrative pensions and elite education and health care plans. Then there were the second mortgages and equity-release schemes to pay off the ever-rising credit card debts, newer and shinier 4x4s, family holidays and luxury home goods too.

All keeping you motivated and committed 24/7 conspicuous consumers; oiled and greased by bankers urging you to borrow more and more – telling you, your very own bricks-and-mortar banks will keep on growing for ever. Welcome to the new world order.

Lifestyle politics of, *I'm worth it*, conspicuous consumption and designer labels became the order of the day, as you were persuaded to ignore the losers of the new world order.

The ever-rising prison numbers and growing inequalities making the rich richer and pricing the poor out of the marketplace – were not your concern. You were dissuaded from asking any awkward questions and to dismiss all alternatives from your increasingly materialist minds.

Such is the power and reach of the Murdochcracy multimedia and the internet of 24/7 continuous consumption, marketing and celebrities' world of Winner Takes All.

Then the October 2008, Sodom and Gomorrah act-of-God credit crunch shit-storm hit the proverbial fan, 13 months from the dam-busting blowback that foundered Northern Rock, sank Lehman Brothers and sent a tsunami tidal wave threatening to engulf every major bank on the world's financial high seas. Exposing the entire greed-and-profits financial sector as a total fraud – when the walk-on-water bankers, threatened with bankruptcy, got their bought-and-paid-for politicians to bail them out by drowning you the taxpayers – in their sea of debt.

At that precise moment of world history the true reality of the new world order was revealed to all – who had eyes to see.

Now the UK population realised their politicians and Curzon-style masters had not only destroyed manufacturing industry, they'd removed what was left of the dignity and self-respect of the working class. Almost all were deskilled and demoted, as their industries were destroyed, from precision engineering and car production to steel-making and craftsman shipbuilding.

For good measure, they even murdered the National Union of Mineworkers and demolished their social communities too. Like they say in deepest Grimethorpe of former King Coal Barnsley of South Yorkshire: *Out of the mines and into crime*.

Your politicians placed all UK's economic eggs in the hands of crooks, casino-gamblers and the greedy baskets of the City of London. Driving a working class that had emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from its centuries of servility – back into the forelock-tugging, 24/7, services economy.

Where the newest, youngest and most poorly paid workers were corralled into the laughable minimum wage sweatshop economy.

These politicians then imposed on all British workers special EC exemptions denying them minimum European employment rights, just to keep their Curzon-style masters happy.<sup>[1]</sup> While the immigrants and refugees were kept several rungs lower still. As the most hated and despised, they were the most totally exploitable. Such is the new world order.

Most shaming of all, the final greed-and-profits insult is that Britain's single largest manufacturing industry employer in 2008 is the arms industry. Not that surprising when you realise the UK has the second largest military budget in the world.

An investment specialist wrote an article in UK's *MoneyWeek* on 4 July 2008, entitled: 'Britain now heads the world arms export league,' with a record £10bn in overseas orders.'<sup>[2]</sup>

From the workshop of the world producing the finest Triumph Bonneville and Norton Dominator motorcycles, to this? To say nothing of the most powerful steam engines and locomotives on the planet, hand-crafted by people proud to go into work.

All powered by the original King Coal – black gold, won from the bowels of the earth through the sheer grit and determination of the coal-face miners working under the constant threat of death or serious injury.

Viewed in this human context, Britain's transition to becoming the world's greatest arms dealer in 2008, is certainly one in the eye for Arthur Scargill's salt-of-the-earth hard-working miners and Fred Dibnah's dignified artisan classes.

So I, White-Dove, the International Ambassador for Peace, want to ask you a simple question, my British friends. Is this really the legacy that you want to leave to your children? The world's greatest arms dealer? And how did you possibly get here? You may well be asking yourselves.

Well, my terra firma friends, if you'll bear with me for the remainder of the Synthesis story, I'll try and enlighten you.

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To begin with, I just need to remind you that it was Maggie Thatcher and that grinning Cheshire-cat, her true-blue son and heir, protégé and successor – both imperialist capitalists to their innermost core and sinew, along with the Curzon-style masters, who've imposed these changes on you Brits. Simply because it was lucratively profitable for them and their bankers.

Then as they amassed their vast fortunes over the last 30 years, they stretched the inequality gap between themselves and 99% of you, constantly rained upon British subjects.

Now please allow me, White-Dove, to acquaint you with the sickening facts of the underlying greed-and-profits disease itself. In just five years from 2000 to 2005, the big chiefs increased their salaries and earnings from 39 times the national average to over 100 times.<sup>[3]</sup>

They even priced the bottom 10% of people out of the marketplace, marginalising the poor from society – according to the 2007 Joseph Rowntree Foundation report.<sup>[4]</sup>

Essentially, the new world order is a perverse redistribution system. It takes both wealth and power from the majority of people and transfers them to the richest individuals and multinational corporations. Crucially, it destroys democracy.

In the new world order, you've been Extraordinarily Rendered a consumer. This means, the more money you have the more rights you have. You're no longer a citizen and your democratic right to hold your politicians accountable has been replaced by the vested interests of the biggest donors and richest lobbyists – who own and control your politicians.

Today, you also know the reality of this new world order, with its Dick Turpin gas and electricity highwaymen, to speed cameras mugging motorists, 24/7. Then, there's the smoker-exorcists – from the government, to vigilante in-your-face anti-smoking fundamentalists.

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These people may not bomb and kill like al-Qaeda, but they passionately believe the end justifies the means – and allow their opponents no rights whatsoever. To them, smokers are just collateral damage. While your supremely hypocritical politicians never tire of raking in extortionate taxes from the very people they most despise and have collateralised.

A marvellous misdirection, this anti-smokers one, as it divides each and every nation, race, class, gender, religion and atheists too, right through to every single family. (This was the first, all-pervasive misdirection and because it's so effective, its come to be repeated many times).



It's the misdirection by means of which governments and politically correct health professionals scrambling up the greasy pole acquire a willing fundamentalist police force from the very midst of you, training you to give prior allegiance to the government rather than your own work colleagues, families and even partners.

Just ask any British smoker today, they know they're regarded second only to the terrorists. All monitored and policed by Big Brother's ever-present No Smoking prohibitions – giving all a sundry righteous claim to declare any smoker a witch, 24/7, 365 days a year.

Please allow me to be perfectly frank with you. The anti-smoking fundamentalists won't be satisfied until the last smoker is stone cold dead and buried, six feet under, wiped from history and deleted from all future references too. They're now contraband labelling publications, music, arts and TV programmes which show smokers enjoying their depravity.<sup>[5]</sup>

Just like the Afghan Taliban Government banned kite flying, pigeon fancying, music and dance, cosmetics, TV and videos, celebrating May Day etc ...

Then it'll be somebody else's turn, like 'fat people' and working-class drinkers. Continuing the same process that demonised many working-class children and placed them on ASBOs. The fast-track escalator rushing them into the ranks of their older 82,300 record prison numbers.

Now, please allow me to give you an example provided by Iftexhar's uncle, during Maggie Thatcher's reign.

He witnessed the former UK Home Secretary and previous leader of the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire aid and abet his politically blinded, power-hungry Labour Party leader to destroy the fledgling Socialist Republic of Liverpool. (Though they were democratically elected).

During these political somersaults, Sheffield City Council banned smoking on all buses. With the voters' attention nicely misdirected, the council set about ditching its own socialist pretensions and adopted the new world order TINA agenda, wholesale – lock, stock and barrel.

This is a brilliant misdirection that can equally be used by the Right and the right-on-lefties. Indeed, the latter have shown they can be just as fundamentalist as any religious zealot or whipped-up hysterical Murdochocracy reader, against those deemed to be social scapegoats. While completely ignoring the real issues about the nation's health – both physical and economic.

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This anti-smoker stratagem stops you questioning the greed-and-profits of pharmaceutical corporations, fleecing the NHS, 24/7. It also diverts your attention from the hospital building contractors and mortgage-holders, through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) – super-con-trick.

This is a lucrative wheeze, channelling hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money into construction companies' profit margins. These make 67% profit during construction, followed by a 30-year revenue stream, or another 51% in the secondary PFI sales market.<sup>[6]</sup>

Nor should you forget the consultants and managers' own lucrative private practice interests, which they protect by continually telling you: there is no alternative – TINA rules, OK.

Which stops you asking, why are British health professionals always blaming the nation's ill health on smokers and bad working-class diets, when they're turning upside down the findings of their own 30-year-old Black Report?

Sir Douglas Black's national comprehensive study found British people's health was largely affected by the social status into which they were born.<sup>[7]</sup> While the recent 2007 Children's Fund report has said, British children were 'the most neglected and unhappiest in the rich world.'<sup>[8]</sup>

The World Health Organization's 2008 report states: A 'toxic combination' of bad policies, economics and politics ... is killing people on a 'grand scale.' This three-year study found huge inequalities in ill health and early deaths across world populations, including rich nations.<sup>[9]</sup>

Yet, British health professionals continue to blame the very victims. Think on that – my ethical friends, before granting them their claimed caring profession credentials.

That's how they've misdirected your attention from the real issues, like the additional billions of pounds having been poured into the NHS in recent years – with very little of it trickling down to the actual patients. Who today if hospitalised, have to pay nearly £4 a night just to watch TV.

Now please allow me, White-Dove, to inform you of what's really going on. These health professionals have traded in their Hippocratic Oath for the Hypocrites' Charter. They've jumped on the political bandwagon of blaming the victims. This is true of all functionaries today.

A society where even health and social care are subordinated to the dictates of the market and then camouflaged with sanctimonious morals, like stopping working people smoking, eating chips and burgers and smacking their children – whose lifestyle choices are deemed to be their downfall, not the lack of decent incomes.

Or I could put it in the words of our nearby Brazilian Roman Catholic Archbishop, Dom Hélder Câmara: 'When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.'<sup>[10]</sup>

Whereas once social workers would've understood their clients' real lives and even supported families against the bailiffs, today they're just as likely to be sending them in – albeit by default. Of course they'll provide them counselling: *So how do you feel about your rats, Mrs Client? Can't you work round them to ensure your children are appropriately cared for?*

For today's functionaries will not allow poverty and inequality to interfere with their professional policies and procedures. This is one of the outcomes of the new world order; they've adopted the TINA agenda of – there is no alternative.

The new world order is the haves and have-nots escalators going in opposite directions and the Murdochocracy-dominated mass media ensures long may this status quo continue. Its rewards are well illustrated by £100,000 GPs annual earnings today.

Or a Metropolitan police officer of a few years' experience on £31,650 in September 2008. Yes, you've guessed it, they're the Curzon-style masters' greatest insurance policy against the ever-growing inequalities created by their greed-and-profits new world order.<sup>[11]</sup>

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Yet, in spite of the 24/7, 365-days-a-year Murdochocracy multimedia propaganda and TINA rules agenda, most of you don't really believe the trickle-down theory any more. If indeed, you ever did. You simply don't have a choice; that's how TINA works.

The trickle-down theory says, if the rich and powerful are allowed to accumulate as much wealth as they can, then this prosperity will eventually trickle down to everybody. In fact, exactly the opposite has been the case. The rich have gotten far richer and the poorest have simply been priced out of the market. So, just like TINA, the trickle-down theory is a big lie.

Of course, there has to be a maximum, as well as a minimum wage. Without a limit on the maximum wage – as it grows unchecked, the value of all wages diminish.

Look at the money available as a circular cake. The number of degrees and slices in that cake – are always 360. If the top 1% are grabbing more and more slices, there's simply less cake left for everyone else. That's elementary arithmetic, regardless of whether it's a cheesecake, a chocolate gâteau, or even those beautiful, gorgeous Indian ludoos and burfis and ...

... even if the overall cake gets larger in absolute terms – in the real world – most of the UK population is worse off, because their earning power has been reduced.<sup>[12]</sup> They've been deskilled and demoted, while everything around them has been privatised and become so expensive as to be out of their reach. They've been priced out of the market.

Their marketplace is that of Cash Converters and Poundland, and their bankers are the back street moneylenders and loan sharks, dealing in hundreds of per cent misery, multiplied by thousand-fold compound interest entrapments.

All policed by the militias of flesh-tenderisers and bone-crushers, whose stock-in-trade is the emergency hospitalisation. This is the flip side of the new world order, of the haves and have-nots escalators going in opposite directions.

As for the workers of these newly privatised services and industries, they generally receive reduced wages, longer hours and far poorer employment conditions. They've been priced out of the dignified labour market – sold out and shafted.

They're the collateral damage of the new world order. They're expendable, so they're paid the minimum wage, which is set just enough to keep them outside state benefits. This explains why their wages, after central and local government taxes, utility bill robberies and paying off their landlord's mortgage are often less than benefit rates.

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Today, however, I really feel for all you Brits and North Americans too. You're in the eye of the October 2008 act-of-God credit crunch shit-storm, as you witness it disembowelling every orifice of its mantra. The capitalist free market is mortally wounded and the TINA agenda of there is no alternative, stands exposed as a big lie.

The bankers went bankrupt. Period. Under the capitalist system, there is no greater crime. Even the British *Times* newspaper declared in December 2008: He's back, and displayed a picture of Karl Marx underneath.

The strongest proof of all lies in the US politicians suddenly being able to find \$700 billion equivalent of their huge defence budget, as government guarantees to buy up fictitious sub-prime loans. Then there's the additional \$125 billion cash injection to save their paymasters' skins.

While the UK politicians topped its own world's second-largest military budget with a cash injection of some \$55 billion and some \$600 billion in government guarantees.<sup>[13]</sup> All to rescue their bankers and financiers and place them back on their thrones.

Here's a question that's occurred to many of you Brits, I'm sure. Why did the UK government give a cash injection of around 250% more than the US, relative to its less than one-fifth-size economy? Then to also provide guarantees to British bankers which were some 500% more than the US on the same basis?<sup>[14]</sup>

Is there something you Brits were not told? Were you conned with Afghan freedom fighters and Iraq's weapons of mass destruction big lies again?

Just ask yourselves: why, if not to deceive you, didn't your politicians show you the sterling pounds figures converted to US dollars? Then ask yourselves, why didn't your free press do their job? (Like informing you, British banks were in a far deeper hole than their US counterparts).

That's the new world order in action today, which the raging act-of-God credit crunch shit-storm of October 2008 has most clearly exploded, showering its greed-and-profits fulsome faeces intestines upon the entire world. Or to put it another way, shit happens. Except this particular shit-storm just happens to be part and parcel of the natural order of capitalism.

TINA does somewhat lose her sparkle and shine after the catastrophic international banking fiasco. TINA's beginning to crumble, and the hokum of new times is being exposed, as Sivanandan would say. And I, White-Dove, would agree with him and rejoice.

As for you humans, you simply need to recognise there always were and always will be better alternatives, even under capitalism.

What you really need to understand about capitalism, is that it's inherently unstable. The credit crunch shit-storm is not an act of God, and the other thing your lord and masters don't want you to know is that boom and bust are part and parcel of the greed-and-profits system. As are inequality and injustice, and the TINA agenda of there is no alternative.

Of course, the people preaching TINA have a vested interest in ensuring you don't consider other alternatives. That's how they maintain the status quo. All I ask is that you don't rule any alternatives off the agenda.

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So, at this time of transition, as a certain grinning Cheshire-cat once said: 'The kaleidoscope has been shaken ... before the pieces resettle ... let us reorder this world around us.'<sup>[15]</sup>

Except for our purposes, this means the capitalist – not act-of-God – credit crunch has kicked up a long-constipated, hottest-in-the-house, vindaloo-curry-style, pebble-dashing shit-storm – that the TINA agenda of no alternatives; of conspicuous consumption, built-in obsolescence, the end justifies the means, good and evil, and conveniently contrived terrorists with their military-industrial complex benefactors and CIA and MI6 handlers, are all being seriously questioned.

The credit crunch shit-storm has exposed the emperor with no clothes, and all the eloquent descriptions of the splendour of TINA's many gowns were just clever marketing con-tricks. The neo-liberal, new world order of greed and profits has crapped itself. It's the end of an era.

Of course, they'll force the workers to pay for their insatiable greed and catastrophic blunders. Over time, this will anger people more and more and they'll come to look for serious alternatives.

I, White-Dove, simply want to direct their anger towards these alternatives, the core principles of which are widely agreed by masses of people all round the world: *Equality and justice globally*. It's a paradigm shift in thinking. The exact opposite of greed and profits. An intellectual and grass-roots mass struggle for a fairer, kinder, and more cooperative new world order.

## Chapter 44: Habana and $E=mc^2$

Now for the treat I promised you, which you've richly earned after the heavy dose of facts and data and even weightier polemics. Of course, an airborne  $E=mc^2$ -conversant super-physical White-Dove like me takes it in her stride – but I know that many of you Westerners struggle with matters requiring attention spans longer than instant credit card gratification. So here's a reward for your patience.

Welcome aboard. Now, just hold on and stay within my wingspan as we soar up into my 360-degree unencumbered transit medium, my convivial multidimensional environment. Here, I'll show you some of the delights of my historic and modern-day Habana City.

Oh, just a word of advice about being on board – it's like riding a motorcycle, you have to lean with me – that's it, you've got it. Well done. It's amazing how much you can assimilate in a single flight.

This is an excellent indication of your ability to understand and truly appreciate  $E=mc^2$ . And trust me, you'll soon get used to the wind in your face.

Up, up, higher and higher – we're going until the skyscrapers look like square and rectangular Lego bricks alongside the roads and streets – the veins and arteries of my people's everyday terrestrial transit medium, the tumultuous beating heart of the urban mobile metropolis.

Okay, we're just about high enough here. The panoramic Habana scene laid out below is one-fifth of the nation's 11 million combined individual citizens.

As we start to gently glide down on the airborne highway thermals, you'll notice the rough turbulent air-currents transforming into a lovely cool effervescent breeze, enabling you to share some of the wonders which I'm privileged to enjoy patrolling up here every day.

There, just below my port wing, is laid out *Habana Vieja*; that's the old colonial part of the city and the location of our first visit. This has very many ornate buildings of grand European classical designs, alongside numerous museums, galleries and some churches too ...

I'll swoop down low and close for you to take a good look. For instance the *Catedral de San Cristóbal* – coming up right now – dead ahead! Don't worry, we'll turn in time.

This architectural inheritance has a magnificent baroque façade and it's been declared a national monument. I can also inform you, from my occasional extended patrols, it's one of the most beautiful churches in this region of the Americas.

Back in 1982, the whole *Habana Vieja* area was declared by the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be part of the cultural heritage of humanity. That's quite an honour for us, because we Cubans place all humanity above all else.

My city is a time-paused metropolitan landscape of stark contrasts. From the centuries-old colonial facades and European designs to mid-20th-century concrete, steel and glass skyscrapers, to neo-classical art deco replicas and frontages.

As we go in lower still to my people's eye line level, we can breathe in and taste the all-round riot of colourful mosaics, political slogans and pop-art cartoons seamlessly interwoven with the citizens' music, dance, literature and multicultural heritage. Symbols and signatures of their carefree Cuban identities, indelibly stamped over their habitat, work and leisure surroundings.

We've also got the ever-present atomic-fusion-erupting  $E=mc^2$  glorious Caribbean sunshine, dawn to dusk and cradle-to-grave. That's something I share with my Northern Americano X-Ray counterpart, the other  $E=mc^2$ -conversant mythical bird in this part of the earth's hemisphere.

For he too likes to look at the big picture. Or the Mind of God, as many bright-spark theoretical physicists like to say.

Over on the starboard wing, just coming into view is the neo-classical art deco Capitolio, which is one of the abiding symbols of my Habana. This was the pre-socialist centre of government and today houses the Ministries of Science, Technology and the Environment.

You will note the Capitolio's design and appearance is very similar to the White House in Washington DC, which is much larger, though our central dome is taller.

As you turn and turn again to take in the full 360 degrees, in my multidirectional airborne up-down gyroscope world, you'll see many other symbols of my nation's capital. An exuberant and highly colourful social community, whether at work or busily engaged on leisure time.

Just below on the roads and streets, you can see many modes of my flightless people's transport systems, from the North American 1950s gas-guzzler automobiles to the Canadian chopped-up and joined-on camel buses, with their multitude of human-sardine passengers.

And there's the tourist tricycle rides, with the Lada taxis taking them further afield, as well as the bright yellow, open-fronted fibreglass three-wheeled toy-like *cocotaxis* with their fare charges boldly displayed to ensure a fair exchange of services and labour value.

Okay ... just coming into view in front of you is the *Plaza de La Revolución*. This is our nation's political, administrative and cultural centre. Most of the buildings around here are from the 1950s and '60s, and have functional multi-storey designs. This is where my people have gathered for their rallies and national events ever since January 1959.

You'll recall, I'm sure, that's when I first came and took my place on Fidel Castro's right shoulder, when the Cuban people took us both into their loving hearts. Quite fittingly, this is also the place where we have the big military parades and official celebrations like May Day. Which, of course, you know is the international workers' day.

Naturally, it's one of the biggest events in my Cuba, attracting over a million people every year. Now that would be like six and a half million British people gathering in Trafalgar Square in London, all celebrating the common bonds of labour with their fellow internationalist workers across the globe. Wouldn't that be something quite wonderful?

Here at the Plaza the main speakers always stand at the podium next to the 18-metre-high white marble statue of José Martí – our national hero, at the foot of his memorial.

This is a grey marble star-shaped 142-metre tower that overlooks the city and is a well-known Habana landmark. Yes, I often like to come up here ... careful now; you know you're not used to such heights. I know it's a spectacular all-round view, but just don't lean over too far.

As I was saying, I often like to come up here and ponder on the great issues and perplexities of humanity, as I marvel at their stupendous achievements too, like the ultimate unity of  $E=mc^2$ . And seeing my people below, pretty much the same size and shape and all with more or less equal needs, just reminds me of why I watch over them all.

Yes, of course, as the international ambassador for peace, I also have higher moral duties to all humanity. After all, we're all part of the same warm-blooded vertebrate land-and-sky bipedal mammal species. All sharing this one precious, unique Planet Earth.

If I may speak quite boldly to you – surely it's not right for any one species to dictate its course to the detriment of others, much less the internecine, interspecies, nations and very family of humanity? Yes, I often sit and ponder such questions up here, and the unity of  $E=mc^2$ .

Incidentally, would you like to learn what  $E=mc^2$  is all about, in simple easy-to-digest terms? Well okay, when we're back on solid terra firma – when your stomachs are a bit less queasy.

Over there, on the opposite side of the statue of José Martí, you can see the sixteen-storey *Ministerio del Interior*, with the bronze-wire sculpture of Ché Guevara on the outside. This is where he worked briefly as the Minister of the Interior.

This portrait is inspired by his world-famous photo by Alberto Korda, like the one you saw in Mr and Mrs Segundo's *casa*. Except this one covers the vertical profile of the building and is quite a beautiful sight – especially at night.

All lit up bright and shimmering ... Oh, he was such an attractive man. Such a principled human being. Such a drop-dead-gorgeous ... Well, I suppose we'd better get back to our tour.

Now, on this route we're going to pass over *Universidad de La Habana*, the seat of my city's learning for some 300 years. You'll recall, I'm sure, this is where the God debate took place between the five escapees and the young Cuban students.

I'll just forewarn you; I'm going to swoop down low and fly over the broad, granite stairway before doing a 180° steep turn around the statue of our Alma Mater. So brace yourselves. Here we go ... Phew! Yes, she's always had her arms outstretched like that, always welcoming new students and fresh visitors to this much-loved fount of knowledge.

Of course, you're now aware from Mr and Mrs Segundo how much we value education. So you won't be surprised to learn that the Habana International Book Fair in February and March attracts well over half a million people every year. Proportionally this would be nearly 4 million British or 32 million North Americans going to a book fair.

For our next fleeting visit I'm afraid you're going to get wet – but you'll love it really, I promise you.

To cool down on many hot days, I like to fly along the Malecón. That's the winding seven-kilometre-long seafront promenade below us. There's no other place which shows off my Habana City better, and thrills its adults and children alike. Even the tourists love it here.

I can also inform you from my long personal experience, the Bay of Habana sunset looks absolutely magnificent – a favourite time for my visits here.

You know, on good stormy days, the Atlantic ocean swells come pounding in, led by huge, powerful waves that break against the rocks, leap over the two-storey sea walls, cross the three-metre-wide footpath and land on the two inside lanes of the carriageway. Sometimes though, they even cross all four lanes, to reach the opposite footpath.

In my younger days, I used to race just five to six metres in front of the biggest waves, then – whoosh, fly straight up, vertical, before they hit the jagged rocks in a thunderous foam of surf.

Well, I can certainly inform you, all the children you see along the Malecón absolutely love it here – while many lovers virtually live here: just sitting on the sea wall watching the incoming-outgoing mesmerising waves, longingly sharing the togetherness of each other's harmonised beating hearts; seeing the world through one another's locked eyes, sharing the essence of their inseparable unique lives. They have each other and everything else is a means to that end.

This is a wonderful sight, which I never seem to grow tired of. Yes, I suppose it's true, we Cubans do overly admire our lovers – young and old alike.

Further along the Malecón promenade is the splendid Hotel Nacional, a huge 12-storey white monumental complex of sumptuous luxury accommodation topped with two symmetrical towers rising another four storeys – surrounded by beautiful lawns and gardens. From its front you can look straight over the Malecón, far across the Gulf of Mexico and deep into the Atlantic Ocean.

You know, I've heard some unpatriotic nation-less birds claim they can see 90-mile-distant Florida on some days – but I must admit my vision is somewhat blurred by its Miami-Mafia mercenaries poking me in the eye with a sharp stick time and time again.

Some three blocks away, you can just see the United States Interests Section, which isn't an embassy but it does cater for certain US matters. Not that any US tourist would want to go there, as they risk a \$50,000 fine and ten years imprisonment – for being in Cuba.<sup>[1]</sup>

Though my Habana has just about more foreign embassies than any other Capital city, this does not include one for the US. Our socialist generosity does have its limits.

Directly facing it is the *Tribuna Anti-Imperialista*. This is a public square where my people gather to make their protests against the US of A's imperialist policies and actions against us. As you can imagine, they keep us pretty busy. This is also a major outdoor auditorium and venue for our national events and cultural festivities.

Mind your heads and brace yourselves now, as I'm going to go over and under and over and under again, followed by a loop-the-loop and figure of eight to complete the circuit around all four of the huge overarching semicircular steel-girder bridges. These carry the lights and sound systems for our public rallies and gatherings. Here we go ... phew and double phew!

That was absolutely bloody great, and wasn't it pretty damn exhilarating for you too? Well, I must say, it never fails to wake me up every morning. Anyway, it will help to dry us off after the effervescent sea-spray from the Malecón earlier on.

Finally, we're just coming into land on the roof of the *Teatro Nacional*. This is one of Cuba's finest national theatres, distinguished by its feature of a convex façade along the entire front of this otherwise modern functional building. It houses two auditoriums, a restaurant and many cultural archives and displays. For anyone to perform here – is a great privilege and honour.

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Now that we're back on terra firma, it's time for you, my flightless English-speaking friends, to learn of the wonders and genius of  $E=mc^2$ .

Okay, let's just consider Einstein's  $E=mc^2$ . No, don't worry – I found it quite daunting at first, until I understood its full mind-blowing significance. In order to understand it, we first need to separate it into its constituent parts. So first of all, E stands for energy, while m signifies mass and c stands for celeritas. This is Latin for swiftness, and refers to the speed of light.

The speed of light we all know is 186,000 miles, or 300,000 kilometres per second. Or seven times round the earth every second.

That's fast, 'cause there's nothing faster in the known universe.<sup>[2]</sup> While the small 2 beside the c simply means squared. In other words multiplied by itself.

So, what Einstein is telling us in his most famous equation is that the amount of energy in a piece of matter is equivalent to its mass multiplied by the speed of light, multiplied by the speed of light again. To put it very simply, it means that hidden away and locked inside every piece of matter is an absolutely stupendous amount of energy.

This is such a huge amount, it's very difficult to get your head round it. So I'm going to explain it to you, in a way that's easier to understand.

Let's say the world's richest corporation accumulates \$31.5 billion in a year. This works out at \$1,000 for every second. But if you could use the power of  $E=mc^2$  and bet just \$1, you would win back \$31.5 billion, multiplied by nearly 2.9 million. That's the stupendous power of  $E=mc^2$ .<sup>[3]</sup>



In order to understand  $E=mc^2$ , we first need to realise that scientific insights are based on a series of steps, discoveries and experiments which cumulatively lead to greater insights. The story of  $E=mc^2$  above all else, is the story of unity.

We can begin our study at the start of the 19th century, when scientists were aware of different forces, the force of a door closing, the force of the wind, the power of lightning etc.

What they did not realise however, was that there could be connections between the different forces. Some 20 years later, the invention of the lead-acid battery enabled observation and experiments, and led to the discovery of electricity affecting magnets and vice versa. They learned that these two previously unrelated forces were somehow inextricably connected.

Let me put it very simply. When electricity moves, it creates a little piece of magnetism and when magnets move, they create a little piece of electricity. These scientists also worked out that the chemicals inside the battery were converting into electricity, travelling along the copper wire and then with the addition of a magnet, converting into motion.

Which led them to the conclusion that they were simply all different forms of the same entity. Energy. So the first step had been taken; all these different forces had been united. So that's the E part of it. Now for m.

Well, m is pretty quick and easy. During roughly the same historical period, various other experiments proved that no amount of mass is ever lost or gained in any chemical reaction, regardless of whatever transformation takes place.

Substances could be changed from gases to liquids, to solids, mixed with other elements, separated out and changed back again, or even burned to ashes – yet no amount of mass was ever lost or gained, merely transformed. So, m, the second letter of the equation, is quite clear: mass can be transformed, but it cannot be lost or gained.

The discovery that the total mass of the universe is fixed – that's profound.

Now, the  $E=mc^2$  equation tells us that energy is equivalent to mass, but it's far from exactly equal; it's multiplied by the square of the speed of light, a huge number. So what's the connection with the speed of light? How can this connect with energy and mass?

Well, this is quite similar to the connection between electricity and magnetism, which the 19th-century scientist James Clerk Maxwell united as electromagnetism. His calculations also said, the transformation between electricity and magnetism must happen at the speed of light, and that the speed of light never changes.

This means, even if you were travelling at the speed of light yourself, it would still move away from you at 300,000 kilometres per second. This revelation defied all known laws of physics and meant that light was the one and only constant throughout the universe. Everything else could change – including time – but not the speed of light.

The last part of his equation is  $c^2$ , which means squared, or multiplied by itself. In this context, and in spite of his other enormous achievements, Sir Isaac Newton was plain wrong. He thought that the energy contained in a moving object was its mass multiplied by its speed – but later experiments demonstrated the energy figure was the mass multiplied by its speed squared.

Let's say a car travelling at 20 kilometres per hour (kph) takes 10 metres to make an Emergency stop. But a car travelling at 60 kph will not take 30 metres to stop; it will take 90 metres,<sup>[4]</sup> because the 10 metre stopping distance is not trebled but squared. (Yes I know  $10 \times 10$  is a 100 – my observant friends, but you have to allow for thinking time).

Eureka! Einstein realised that the amount of energy in any piece of matter is its mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light. A truly huge amount of pure energy in a tiny amount of matter.

Einstein also knew from Maxwell's formula that the speed of light is fixed and nothing can go faster. So, if the speed of light never changes – he realised to fit everything else around it – energy and mass, as well as time itself, must change.<sup>[5]</sup>

He calculated that as you approach the speed of light and try to go faster and faster by pumping more and more energy into the vehicle, it just keeps bumping into the fixed speed of light. So where does all the extra energy go? He realised it must go into its mass.

Another Eureka moment. He realised that mass and energy were not absolute and separate, but can change into one another.

However, it wouldn't just be a straight (linear) conversion; energy would be equal to mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light. For he knew like electromagnetism, this change from mass to energy would have to take place at the speed of light.

Newton had united the heavens and the earth through gravity. Maxwell had united electricity and magnetism. Einstein now came to unite all these different forces with mass, and time as well. All with the one and only constant entity in the entire universe, the speed of light.

This is the meaning of  $E=mc^2$ . And this formula became the fundamental building block of all life and matter in the universe. It has opened many doors and avenues of the modern world – but unfortunately its best known form still remains the atom bomb.

In the first atomic bomb explosion of 6<sup>th</sup> August 1945 at Hiroshima, the splitting of a single neutron atom released just enough energy to make a grain of sand jump. But it started a chain reaction, multiplied by millions and billions and trillions and zillions of uranium atoms.

Just half a gram of mass was turned into a stupendous 12.5 kilotonnes of pure energy. Which in one-sixth of a microsecond obliterated around 70,000 Japanese people from thermonuclear blast and radiation; destroyed 80% of the buildings; followed by the ferocious fires that murdered another 70,000 men, women and children.

As David Badanis, the author of *Einstein's equation of life and death* says: 'And the world was never the same again.'<sup>[6]</sup>

Einstein was a lifelong pacifist, but he was persuaded by a trusted colleague to urge the US President to start building the atom bomb, because the Nazis were believed to be doing so. Though he played no part in the actual making of the bomb, after the war he felt a strong sense of guilt and campaigned against nuclear weapons.

He stated: 'Here, then, is the problem which we present to you; stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?'<sup>[7]</sup>

Ironically, the same  $E=mc^2$  conversion of mass to energy is taking place in the sun, where atoms are fusing together – not exploding apart, as in the fission-powered atomic weapons and nuclear power stations; keeping all life forms and vegetation energised and alive on our one and only shared world. (Fission causes nuclear radiation – fusion does not).

According to my bird-brained way of thinking, human beings have a greater unity than  $E=mc^2$ , as they're the only species of life on earth which has the ability to master  $E=mc^2$  and – with a bit of luck, to master their own affairs too.

So I, White-Dove, put it to you, there's room for everybody on this planet. Yes, there may be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, but surely you human beings are smart enough to realise you've just got to learn to share Mother Earth more equally. Come on in – the water's lovely.

Or let me put it another way. The destructive power of explosives has grown some 50,000 times in the last 100 years, culminating in the splitting of the  $E=mc^2$  atom. The only other comparable rate of expansion is in electronics.

This is the other side of the sub-atomic  $E=mc^2$  world, where Einstein's laws completely break down and wild, irrational notions rule the way sub-atomic particles actually behave. Where chance, probability and multi-dimensional irrationality reign. And yet human ingenuity has managed to utilise it for the greatest electronics revolution the world has seen.

The revolution in electronics has been truly exponential. Which means, it's been as enormous as explosives. Unlike explosives however, it's still growing at breakneck speed.

Roughly every two years, the speed and power of the computer chip has doubled, while the price has halved. If a car engine had improved at this rate, it could go 200 times around the world on a single litre of petrol. That's exponential growth.

Professor Chris Bishop said in 2008, the average home PC will in the next two years have as much processing power as all previous computers combined.<sup>[8]</sup> Additionally he stated, the IT industry in the UK was growing at five to eight times its overall economy.

'While explosives have few intrinsically good purposes, electronics certainly could have. The exponential growth of computing power has enabled Western societies to take greater leaps in technology – and at a faster pace than ever before.

Computers however have inordinately served the interests of big business, and been co-opted by governments to gain unprecedented control over their people, via national databases, CCTV, mobile phones and PC surveillance etc.

Yet the home PC, the mobile phone, internet and other telecommunications revolutions could be used by millions of individuals to serve very different purposes. Because today, information is power – and increasing amounts of it are freely available on the internet, which means power to the people to act for the benefit of the one community of humanity.

Well, that's my international ambassador for peace, bird-brained Cuban way of thinking. You decide for yourself. And now I'm sure that you, my English-speaking terrestrial friends, are as anxious as me to return to the five escapees' story.

## Chapter 47: Banksters

Let me, White-Dove, start by explaining what people are led to believe and how today's banking system actually works, using the UK example. The vast majority of people think that customers deposit their money with banks, which then lend it out to businesses helping them to grow and take on more employees.

As more people become employed they buy more goods and services and the whole economy expands – making everybody better off. While the government (via the Bank of England), is in overall charge of the money supply.

The reality however, is somewhat different. Firstly, there are two kinds of money today: hard cash in the form of bank notes and coins – and there's electronic money; everything from cheques, debit and credit cards, to loans and mortgages. Just 3% of all the money in circulation in the UK economy is hard cash, and it only constitutes 1% of financial transactions.<sup>[1]</sup>

The total cash in the British economy in 2012 was around £57 billion, whereas the electronic money was a staggering £2,200 billion.<sup>[2]</sup>

I know it's difficult for you, homo sapiens – to get your head round such large numbers, so let me put it in a way that's more familiar to you. The average priced UK house in 2012 was £188,000. £57 billion was the value of 351,000 such houses and £2,200 billion the equivalent of 13.5 million of them. Or more than half of the total 22 million homes in the UK.<sup>[3]</sup>

Not only is 97% of the money in the British economy electronic money – a series of computer generated ones and zeros. They've all been created by the banks and building societies – out of nothing. Or technically speaking, out of the ether. ... You don't believe me?

Let me quote you the Governor of the Bank of England (2003-2013) Mervyn King's response to this very question. He said, 'When banks extend loans to their customers, they create money by crediting their customers' accounts.'<sup>[4]</sup> That is, they just write in new figures.

The other unbelievable issue is that the Bank of England only controls cash – 3% of all the money supply in the UK economy. You're shocked, I'm sure, but it's true.<sup>[5]</sup>

For every £1 of real money in 2012, there was nearly 40 times more bank created electronic money.<sup>[6]</sup> Well, you can imagine what would happen if all the savers suddenly wanted their money back. Then they would discover, they don't actually own the money in their accounts. Legally speaking, it belongs to the bank.<sup>[7]</sup>

Your government would have to bail out the banks – at your expense, so they can repay your money. This is more or less what happened in October 2008, which helps to explain why the Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, said in October 2010: 'Of the many ways of organising banking, the worst is the one we have today.'<sup>[8]</sup> For someone who normally speaks financialese – this was plain John Bull English.

The next issue is that of bank lending practices. Banks can make two types of loans, generally referred to as productive and non-productive. Productive lending is when banks lend money to businesses and industry enabling them to grow their operations, leading to more employment and a growth in the overall economy.

Non-productive lending is for property investments and speculation in the markets, which do not create more employment or expansion of the economy but help to inflate property prices and create speculation bubbles.<sup>[9]</sup>

Or as Adair Turner, the former Chairman of the Financial Services Authority said in 2009: 'A lot of banking activity is socially useless.'<sup>[10]</sup> You can't get any clearer than that, my friends, from a financialese speaker.

Most loans to businesses are in the range of £30,000 to £100,000 and require considerable detailed risk assessment by the loans advisor, studying the business plan, management skills etc, weighed against the risk of the loan not being repaid.<sup>[11]</sup>

If the loan defaults, there's usually little that a bank can recover – perhaps a coffee percolator and some PCs, as almost everything else is likely to be rented or already mortgaged to the hilt.

Whereas the mortgage loans system is virtually automated and requires little time and effort in making decisions. As property loans are significantly higher (averaging £188,000) – it means a higher bonus for the loans advisor and their manager. Even if the loan is not repaid, the bank can always re-possess the property and recover most, if not all of the outstanding debt.

Which in reality doesn't even exist, because the bank didn't possess this money before they lent it out. This is what most people of common sense would call fraud. Certainly, if they tried printing their own money – they'd be locked up quicker than the grinning Cheshire-cat could say, I'm worth every penny of my £2.5 million annual salary from the banks.<sup>[12]</sup>

You need to face the facts, my friends. The banking sector is a profit making enterprise. They make loans on the basis of where they will make the fastest and highest profits.

Contrary to the idea of capitalism – that money flows to the productive sector, the reality today is the complete opposite.

So is it any wonder that the former workshop of the world doesn't manufacture anything anymore? Except for the arms industry – that all UK governments bend over backwards to promote worldwide, even creating wars and conflicts to stimulate demand. Let's not forget, under Blair's government, the UK became the world's greatest arms-dealer.<sup>[13]</sup>

The next issue concerns your democracy, my friends. Just five major banks control over 80% of the UK money supply. Amongst their board members (and the other 20%), some 30 to 40 people are the real decision makers, who control 97% of the money in the UK economy.<sup>[14]</sup>

They have more real power than your elected government, which controls a mere 3% of it. How on earth is that democracy? Worse still, they charge everybody interest on this money, which they've created out of nothing. Heads they win, tails they win again – remember this one from somewhere, my terrestrial friends?

The banks not only prioritise non-productive lending but keep inflating the money supply, as they charge interest on every new pound. The fact that it continually pushes up property prices and creates speculation bubbles is not their problem – it's yours.

The average priced house in 1952 was £1,800 and £188,000 in 2012.<sup>[15]</sup> This now effectively bars today's young people from owning their own homes. On the other hand, the higher the property prices the more profits the bankers make – why should they stop?

The sad truth of the matter is, around 92% of all bank lending today is for non-productive purposes, while only 8% of it goes to businesses and industry.<sup>[16]</sup> Then, when people start defaulting on loans, the banks start panicking and stop lending altogether – as in October 2008, causing the credit crunch shit-storm.

How has this lunatic system come about – you might well be asking yourselves, my rational minded friends? Well, the creation of new money is governed by the 1844 Bank Charter Act. This followed the spectacular 1840's railway shares' speculation banking crash, finally forcing the government (via the Bank of England) to take control of the UK money supply.

The 1844 Act however only covers bank notes and coins, so the banks retained their ability to create substitutes for cash, like cheques and in due course electronic money.<sup>[17]</sup> Since that time the bankers have colluded and connived to ensure no national government or international organisation has ever been able to interfere with their lucrative money making rackets.

Their influence over elected governments and the economy today is decisive, via donations to political parties and promoting the interests of the rich and powerful. Let's not forget, some 50% of Conservative party funding comes from the bankers.<sup>[18]</sup>

They've got Cameron by the short and curlies; that's why he's excluded the City of London from the EU's proposed 0.1% to 0.01% tax (one tenth to one hundredth of 1%) on shares, bonds, and derivative transactions.<sup>[19]</sup>

The bankers speculation bubbles continue to make huge profits for the top 1% – before exploding, like in the 1930s Wall Street crash, when they were aptly named banksters.

Except, each and every time, they're cajoled and bullied governments to bail them out – at the taxpayers expense. While millions of ordinary people are thrown out of work and put through horrendous miseries over and over. In essence, the banker lunatics are running the asylum.

Of course, you can't trust your governments to create all new money either, as they would manipulate it for their Millennium Dome type of vanity projects, or party-political purposes. You need an independent body that would act on the needs of the whole UK economy.

This could create new money when inflation is low and restrict it when it's rising, much like the proposals from Positive Money. A campaigning group dedicated to reforming the UK money supply, and the banking system. Their ideas merit serious consideration.

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As you're now aware, my terra firma friends, there are seriously bad consequences for the UK economy, in allowing private banks to create virtually all new money. Firstly, there's a clear conflict of interest, the more money they create – the more profits they make. Secondly, it inevitably leads to boom and bust cycles.

These start with the banks lending more money – to increase their profit-margins, leading to people borrowing more and spending more. The economy grows and people feel securer in their jobs and take on bigger debts, moving to a larger house, a new car etc. When loans start defaulting however, the banks start panicking and stop lending altogether.

The sudden reduction in the overall money supply sucks the lifeblood out of the economy, resulting in a recession. Such boom and bust cycles have occurred on average every fifteen years in the UK, and led to spectacular worldwide crashes like in the 1840s, 1930s and 2008.<sup>[20]</sup>

During major banking crashes government tax receipts fall sharply, due to high unemployment – created by the recession. It then has certain unpalatable choices to make: raise taxes; cut capital projects; reduce public spending on schools, hospitals, welfare, etc; and make serious cuts in local government budgets.

Usually, most governments opt for a combination of all these measures and soldier on to the end of the recession. But crucially, they make up the difference in tax receipts by expanding the national debt. In 1997, the national debt was the equivalent of £8,900 for every one of you Brits, rising to £20,577 by 2012, and its forecast to be around £35,000 in the next few years.<sup>[21]</sup>

As virtually all money is created by the banks, every one of you Brits are paying around £81 a month interest on the national debt. That's £120 million a day going to the banks.<sup>[22]</sup> It's a sizeable chunk of what you're paying the utility companies' Dick Turpin highwaymen, who at least provide something in return. What do you get from the banks for your £81 a month?

This banking system also undermines your democracy. From 2002 to 2007 the overall government spending was £2.1 trillion, whereas bank spending was £2.9 trillion. So the banks had more influence over the economy than your elected government did. Worse still, they were allocating 92% of their money towards the financial markets.<sup>[23]</sup>

In essence, the banking sector is a redistribution system. Redistributing money from the productive economy, to the financial sector concentrated in the City of London. It also means a redistribution from the rest of UK to the centre: from the regions of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the north of England etc; all going to the City of London.<sup>[24]</sup> A parasitic system.

It's not so much that London and the south east are growing strongly, as you're now being told, but a question of how much they're sucking the lifeblood out of the rest of Britain?

Given the current very serious recession, and at least 2½ million people unemployed, new money is certainly needed to grow the economy – to put people back to work. But you certainly don't need any more debt, my featherless friends.

In 2012, the total money in the UK economy was £2,186 billion, while the overall debt was £2,492 billion. All owed to the banks on which they're making fat profits. Even if all the debt was repaid tomorrow, it would still leave a deficit of £306 billion.<sup>[25]</sup> Under the current system, your national debt can only grow larger, as every new pound puts you further in debt.

On the other hand, if your government created all new money – via an *independent committee*, not only can the national debt be paid off, there are other quite wonderful advantages too.

Currently the Bank of England creates 3% of the money supply, but every £5, £10, £20, etc (costing a few pence to print), is sold to the banks for its face value – at a huge profit. From 2002 to 2009, this amounted to £18 billion. If the government created all new money, it means additional revenues of around £67 billion annually.<sup>[26]</sup> An enormous sum of money.

This could be used to abolish VAT (on all but luxury goods), which currently forces the poorest people to pay the highest relative taxes – same as the BBC licence fee.

The minimum wage could be raised to a genuine living wage, instead of forcing people to rely on tax credits. These are, in effect, subsidies to employers – encouraging them keep wages low. If the minimum wage had risen like the top 1% earnings growth since 1999, it would be worth nearly £19 an hour today, instead of the £6-50 sweat-shop rate.<sup>[27]</sup>

Everybody's income thresholds could be raised as well. Some of it could also go to government departments and local governments, as well as private contractors.

Not only are local authorities very large employers, a substantial amount of their services are contracted out, so it would benefit some ten to twelve million workers. They would spend their money on the High Street creating additional demand and more employment.

There's also other equally marvellous benefits. This new money would be debt free, (helping to pay off the national debt over time), and it would be going out from the centre – London, to the regions – instead of the other way round.

Most crucially, because this new money would be going to the average or below average salaried workers, it would largely be spent on the High Street – not on stocks and shares or property speculation. This would lead to a resurgence in manufacturing and help to rebalance the underlying economic problems of the British economy.<sup>[28]</sup>

Finally, the Positive Money idea of two distinct types of deposit and investment accounts, means the savers money would always be safe. While the investment account holders would gain more control over where their money is invested. Better still, the banks would never have to be bailed out by the taxpayers again – and their hidden subsidies can be removed.<sup>[29]</sup>

According to the Bank of England, the £85,000 depositor insurance and other subsidies have amounted to over £300 billion in some years. As the economists – Jackson and Dyson comment, in these years: 'It's difficult to see how the banks would have been profitable without it.'<sup>[30]</sup>

Let's just demolish another big lie, while we're at it, my attentive friends – that the financial sector is a major contributor to the UK economy.

The UK's tax revenue during 2009/10 was about £491 billion. Just over £2 billion (less than half of 1%) came from banks in corporation tax, another £15 billion (around 3%) from bank employees in income tax and national insurance. The remaining £473 billion (97%) of taxes however, were paid by the non-banking sector.<sup>[31]</sup>

Not only are the Positive Money ideas eminently sensible, they're only proposing what most people are led to believe already happens – that the Bank of England creates all new money.

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Coming back down to earth, with a bang, let's examine what's actually happened.

With the pretence of addressing the 2008 credit crunch, the UK government created some £375 billion of new money (quantitative easing), and poured it into the City of London banking sector. This has largely had the effect of keeping share prices high – boosting the top 5% of earners' incomes by around £128,000 per household.<sup>[32]</sup>

Between 1980 and 2012, the richest 1% increased their share of income in 24 out of 26 countries, and the greatest margins of inequality have occurred in the US and UK – the two leading capitalist nations. In the US, the top 1% have captured 95% of growth in wealth from 2009 onwards, while nine out of ten US citizens have become poorer.<sup>[33]</sup>

Like you've already seen, my observant friends, the more slices of the cake the top 1% take the less cake is left for everyone else. Another way of looking at it, is like the Oxford University social geographer Danny Dorling suggests – to compare it to the royal family at a cost of £100 million a year. The cost of UK's top 1% today is equivalent to paying for 1,100 royal families.<sup>[34]</sup>

In 1998, FTSE chief executives earned 47 times their average employees and 143 times by 2014 (300% increase in 16 years).<sup>[35]</sup> Oxfam reported in early 2014, around '85 of the richest people had as much wealth (\$110tn) as the poorest half of humanity (3.5 billion people).'<sup>[36]</sup>

Not only are the richest people getting richer, the world's wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated. This has serious implications for your democracy, my conscientious friends. As the US Supreme Court Justice Louise Brandeis has said: 'We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but we cannot have both.'<sup>[37]</sup>

Instead of addressing these issues, your Con-Dem government has inflicted savage austerity measures on you: wage cuts and worsening employment conditions in general; and consigned most manual workers to the 24/7, minimum-wage, sweat-shop economy.

Leading to the explosion of Pay-Day loan sharks and nationwide food banks. The latter have grown from 26,000 in 2009 to 900,000 by 2014. Most shamefully, the majority of people in poverty today are also in work.<sup>[38]</sup>

The 35-fold growth of food banks in six years, is the price paid by the poorest and most vulnerable British people for the 2008 banking crash.

The average salary had declined from £28,207 in 2008 to £26,500 by late 2013.<sup>[39]</sup> Meanwhile, the richest top bosses have seen their earnings grow by 60%; so much for Cameron's: we're all in it together.<sup>[40]</sup>

The reality is that most ordinary people are in it up to their arm-pits, while the top 1% are able to walk on water. Such is fairness, Cameron and Clegg style. And there's much worse to come after the 2015 general election, let me warn you – my British friends, whoever you elect.

This is class war, pure and simple; working people have been hit very hard, while the most vulnerable and the disabled have been hammered into the ground, aided by the media's hysterical



scroungers agenda. Sensationalised stories of benefits cheats, TV docu-dramas of Benefit Street Britain etc, have accompanied the Con-Dem's insidious blaming-the-victims austerity agenda.

A large part of being poor, as Dorling says, is being made to feel worthless. Once human beings are demonised like this, its not so difficult to throw the most vulnerable and the disabled out of their homes, or burden them with enormous unpayable rent arrears, with ideologically driven scams like the bedroom tax.

Furthermore, the 20% VAT inflicted on all you Brits – has forced the lowest paid and the poorest people to pay the highest relative taxes – while the banks pay no VAT at all.<sup>[41]</sup>

All to pay for the credit crunch caused by the bankers, who continue to be rewarded huge salaries and bonuses. That's why it's a shit-storm. Your government and the bankers are shitting on you – from a great height.

Instead of giving £375 billion to the top 5% (around £6,000 for every man, woman and child), this money could have built 2¼ million badly needed social houses; lowering everybody's rents and creating employment for around a million people. (It's well known that the construction industry is the quickest way to economic recovery).

If they really wanted to tackle the credit crunch, that is. But that's not what the austerity agenda is about. As mentioned earlier, it's a con-trick to restructure the British economy, to transfer resources from the public to the private sector – to serve the best interests of the top 1%.

According to the International Monetary Fund, George Osborne's planned budget cuts will reduce the UK proportion of GDP going to the state to the lowest levels in Western Europe by 2015, and place it even below that of the US.<sup>[42]</sup> That's what the austerity agenda is about.

Worse still, my enlightened friends, all the mainstream parties – including the media favoured Ukip – are offering you the same crash-diet menu, with slightly different seasonings.

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In late July 2014, the UK economy was officially out of the longest and deepest recession since records began, after the 2008 credit crunch. So, had the British Chancellor, George Osborne reformed the British economy – with his austerity measures?

Not according to a rare BBC independent minded journalist, Robert Peston. He revealed: Though the service economy is 3% bigger today, manufacturing is more than 7% smaller and production industries had diminished by 11%.<sup>[43]</sup>

So, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings, my heavily-rained upon British friends, but the next credit crunch is not so far away – put on your life jackets – there's a shit-storm brewing.

## Chapter 53: Bombs and Bullets or Medical Diplomacy?

At almost exactly the ten-year-2014 point of our journey, my featherless friends, there are two issues that show the big picture particularly poignantly. They illustrate the opposing ideological viewpoints and the different values that they place on each and every human being on Planet Earth. On the one hand, is the international response to the humanitarian medical needs of the victims of Ebola fever in west Africa, effecting some of the world's poorest people.

Working on another perspective, altogether, is the US Pentagon's continuing regime change policies to control the Middle East and world energy resources. A strategy that is today inextricably connected with the great division in Islam.

To put it very simply, there are two main branches of Islam. Around 85% are Sunni-Muslims, 12% or so practice Shia-Islam and the remainder are very small Islamic faiths. These divisions can be likened to the Christian variations between Protestant, Catholic, etc.

Most Arab countries have either majority Sunni or Shia populations but some are quite mixed, including Christians, Jews and other faiths. Until the post-9/11 US war on terror, they've mostly lived relatively peaceably with each other, though with growing tensions.

These have largely been fuelled by the US and Saudi Arabia, as cited in Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's book. You will recall, he revealed in 2005, these two nations had been encouraging Islamic fundamentalists for nearly two decades – right across the Muslim world.<sup>[1]</sup>

Though the end product was the same, they did have different motives. The Saudi monarchy feared the rise of pan-Arab secular Islam and wanted to spread their absolutist Wahhabism instead, while the US encouraged all Islamic extremists – to proclaim a war on terror.<sup>[2]</sup>

The subsequent 9/11 al-Qaeda atrocities – committed by Islamic fundamentalists who were trained, armed and funded in Afghanistan by the CIA, MI6 and the Pakistani ISI during Operation Cyclone, enabled the US leaders to launch their war on terror.<sup>[3]</sup> Which from 2003 onwards they've been spreading to Iraq, Libya and Syria to carry out regime changes.

The facts are clear, my free-thinking friends. Prior to the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, the bombing of Libya and their continuing attempts to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, none of these countries had any al-Qaeda or other jihadists to speak of.<sup>[4]</sup>

Intermarriage between different branches of Islam was not uncommon and there was a tolerance for each other's beliefs under the overall umbrella of Islam. These particular nations also enjoyed relatively high standards of living, education and welfare facilities.

Most importantly, most people had jobs, peace and security. All gone now. Replaced with murderous, internecine rivalries and sectarian divisions pitting fellow Muslims at each other's throats – with the rise of us and them Saudi-driven Islamic fundamentalism.

Particularly galling is the Saudis claimed fear of Iranian Shia expansionism, when only four out of 57 Muslim nations have a Shia majority. In truth, Iran doesn't pose a threat to the region but it stands in the way of US and Israeli, Saudi Arabian and other Gulf States' grand plans.<sup>[5]</sup>

It was during the nine year insurgency against the Iraq occupation, that the Saudi-led Gulf States and other Sunni Muslim leaders encouraged such fundamentalism to incite and enflame Sunni-Shia rivalries – for their regional domination motives.

While the Christian US leaders also encouraged Muslim sectarian divisions to serve their overall regime change agenda.

By September 2014, the Obama-led NATO had come to establish an alliance of convenience with the Sunni-Muslim, Saudi-led Gulf States, as well as Jordan and Turkey. This is intended to

achieve their continuing aim of overthrowing President Bashar al-Assad, in Syria. He is a member of the Alawite branch of Shia Islam, controlling a largely Sunni population.

If successful, it will be followed by Shia-Iran; thereby removing all of Israel's most vocal opponents. But they keep this part of their agenda quiet from their Arab-Muslim allies. Whose royal mis-rulers and dictator-presidents deliberately don't mention it to their people either.

Even in the likes of the hand-chopping and stoning to death, absolutist monarchy of Saudi Arabia – who's own beheadings for blasphemy and sorcery (thought crimes) put ISIS to shame,<sup>[6]</sup> they can not be seen to be doing Jewish Israel's bidding.

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ISIS is the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and was formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Levant, but apparently, even al-Qaeda was so sickened by its atrocities that they separated in February 2014. Since then its been variously referred to as ISIS, IS, ISL, or the Islamic State, while some Arab-speaking media and governments refer to it as Da'esh.

It's a jihadist movement influenced mainly by the absolutist Saudi Wahhabism and has declared an Islamic caliphate under Islamic sharia laws, in the captured areas of Iraq and Syria.<sup>[7]</sup> ISIS fighters have become infamous for killing and butchering civilians and soldiers alike – from Westerners and Shia-Muslims, to other faiths and no faiths at all – anyone in their path.

A worthy successor to the Western media's former bogeyman, Osama bin-Laden; who must be spinning in his watery-grave, seeing ISIS doing the West's bidding in Syria.

The renowned investigative journalist, Seymour Hersh has revealed: 'The Red Line and the Rat Line' of covert US Pentagon operations against Syria. These included Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all supplying arms and logistical support to the Syrian rebels – before they became ISIS and their former supporters (supposedly) turned on them.<sup>[8]</sup>

ISIS is presented today as some peculiarly barbaric manifestation of Islam, who seem to glory in beheadings and other atrocities. Such barbarity, my thinking friends, is not exclusive to Islam – all religions are capable of it. But ISIS is a product of war. The results of thirteen years of US occupation of Iraq and regime change policies in Libya and Syria.

In some ways ISIS is strikingly similar to Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge that took power in Cambodia in 1975. They, too, were ruthless medievalists, who butchered countless hundreds of thousands of their own people – though not connected to any religion.

They were also the product of war; the aftermath of the US carpet bombing of their country between 1969-73; when their B52s dropped the equivalent of five Hiroshima atomic bombs – murdering some 600,000 men, women and children.<sup>[9]</sup> Barbarism, indeed.

Returning to the big picture and the Syrian regime change operation, the Western leaders have a problem caused by their people's opposition to their 2013 plans to bomb Syria. That's why President Obama today, his NATO colleagues and the Muslim alliance of convenience are using the pretext of fighting ISIS – whom, they all created for their joint and different motives.

As Robert Fisk says, 'it's the same old policy: confronting the greatest crisis in the Middle East, since the last greatest crisis in the Middle East,' by the very people who created these monsters – through their regime change operations.<sup>[10]</sup>

While flying daily sorties of smart-bombs and drone missiles on the heads of ISIS, this US-led coalition is training and arming more Syrian rebels in Saudi Arabia and Turkey.<sup>[11]</sup> The intended foot-soldiers and cannon fodder to overthrow the Assad regime. Of course, these rebels, may once again turn out to be another ISIS – and the war on terror goes on and on ...

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As opposed to perpetual wars for the benefit of military-industrial complex and bankers profits, an epidemic of the deadly Ebola fever struck west Africa in early 2014 – testing the world’s capacity for humanity. It raged unchecked through parts of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea – some of the world’s poorest nations.

By early October 2014, there were some 10,000 Ebola infections and over 3,300 deaths.<sup>[12]</sup> The World Health Organisation (WHO) was struggling to cope and appealed for additional international help. (Risen to 5,000 deaths and 13,500 infections by the end of October).<sup>[13]</sup>

I’m proud to say, my friends, my Cuba, immediately offered 165 medical professionals including physicians, nurses, epidemiologists and infection control specialists – doubling the WHO’s total number from around the world. We also agreed to send an additional 280 medical practitioners, as soon as they’ve completed their training for this mission.<sup>[14]</sup>

The US sent just 63 medical workers, but 3,000 soldiers instead – reflecting their full spectrum dominance priorities.<sup>[15]</sup> Bearing this in mind, I want to relate an unspoken conversation between the UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-moon, and it’s WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan.

*We both know Dr. Chan, that this tiny little island of Cuba can always be depended on to do the heavy-lifting – to give over and above any other nation – often more than our entire WHO.*

*Yes, Secretary, when it comes to international emergencies, Cuba’s always the first and most generous to offer medical professionals, from hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in the USA, to Hurricane Stan in Guatemala during 2005; the 2010 earthquakes in Pakistani Kashmir, as well as Haiti in the Caribbean; and now for the poor Ebola fever victims of west Africa.*

*Just as importantly Dr. Chan, they leave behind a legacy of field hospitals, locally trained medical aids and free scholarships to their doctors and nurses training programme in Cuba. They even train some poor medical students from the US as doctors – absolutely free.*

*Wouldn’t it be quite wonderful, Secretary, if other nations followed Cuba’s example?<sup>[16]</sup>*

*Amazingly, Dr. Chan, they didn’t even have any diplomatic relations with Pakistan before the Kashmir earthquake, but that didn’t stop them. Nor in offering help to the New Orleans’ victims, though they knew US governments continue to suffocate them with economic sanctions.*

*Yes, it’s a strange sort of United Nations, Dr. Chan. Cuba can do no right and America can never be wrong. Well, that’s the status quo – so we must keep our thoughts to ourselves and our opinions ultra quiet ...*

Let me explain, my eavesdropping friends, Ban Ki-moon and Dr Chan had to have this conversation in an unspoken manner, because they’re aware of Edward Snowden’s revelations about the US’s National Security Agency (NSA) listening in on the UN ...

Cuba, my friends, is able to respond so generously because it’s what we do – its our contribution to world humanity. This year alone, we have some 50,000 health professionals, including over 25,000 doctors (65% women) working in 66 countries.<sup>[17]</sup> In fact, we have more medical practitioners in more countries around the world than the entire WHO does.

Since our 1959 revolution, we’ve carried out some 600,000 medical missions in 158 countries worldwide involving some 326,000 health professionals.<sup>[18]</sup> All the more remarkable because following the revolution half of Cuba’s 6,000 doctors left for richer rewards in the US. Yet by 2008, we were training some 20,000 foreign doctors – for free.<sup>[19]</sup>

Cuban successes aren’t restricted to health, we also excel in education, sport and leisure too. From eradicating illiteracy in Cuba in 18 months, we’ve helped to eradicate it in Venezuela and Bolivia. Our reading programmes have been used from Latin America to Spain and even New Zealand. Cuban people are amongst the highest educated in the world, according to UN data.<sup>[20]</sup>

We see health and education in particular, as the development of the whole person, to enable our citizens to live creative and positive lives. That's why they're both absolutely free, along with sport and leisure – all enshrined in the Cuban constitution.

So, you can see a clear difference here, my friends, Cuban international medical aid is often greater than the entire WHO, while the US is renowned for dropping bombs and bullets, military invasions, threats and sanctions.

Their blockade against us is now estimated to have cost our economy around \$1.1 trillion, since it's start in 1960.<sup>[21]</sup>

In July, this year (2014), the US imposed the heaviest ever fine of \$9 billion on the French BNP Paribas Bank, for trading with Cuba and violating other US sanctions. In 2012, it slapped on a \$1.9 billion penalty on the British HSBC bank, and another \$674 million on the British-based Standard Chartered. Yet these banks had not broken any European or UN laws.<sup>[22]</sup>

In fact, the UN General Assembly has voted almost unanimously for an end to US sanctions against Cuba for 23 consecutive years. Most recently on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014, by a margin of 188 against 2. Yes, you've guessed it – US and Israel opposed the motion.<sup>[23]</sup> Regardless of world opinion, though, the US remains determined to destroy our revolution. Why?

Is it because of our phenomenal international medical aid successes? Or our refusal to put a price on people's health and education? A different value system – one that is opposed to bombs and bullets to control the world's energy resources, and perpetual wars to boost the military-industrial complex and bankers' profits. That's the crux of the matter, my terrestrial friends.

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On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014, US President Barak Obama and President Raúl Castro of Cuba – made historic announcements to their people simultaneously.<sup>[24]</sup>

The resumption of full diplomatic relations between the two nations. The release of the remaining three of the Cuban Five from US prisons – after 16 years, (the other two had been freed earlier in 2011 and 2014 – having served full sentences); alongside the release from Cuban prisons, of 50 or so people that the US deems to be political prisoners.<sup>[25]</sup>

The removal of US' 53-year objection to Cuba's attendance of the Organisation of American States (OAS). Lifting some travel restrictions on family visits, allowing cultural and business visitors – who will now also be allowed to use US debit and credit cards in Cuba. And starting the process of removing Cuba's name from the US-defined list of states that sponsor terrorism.<sup>[26]</sup>

Some of the most glaring omissions however, are also the most crucial. It remains illegal for US tourists to visit Cuba, (\$50,000 fine and ten years imprisonment).

The illegal US naval base on Cuban Guantánamo soil – the legal black hole of abuse and torture, was not mentioned at all. And as President Castro said: 'the essential thing remains – the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba ...'<sup>[27]</sup>

Most tellingly, my friends, Obama didn't say, we're very sorry for causing the Cuban people enormous hardship and suffering for 52 years, but: 'We will end an outdated approach that for decades has failed to advance our interests.'<sup>[28]</sup>

Or as the New York Times has increasingly argued: Only by ending the embargo, can the US pursue the economic penetration of Cuba – which like Russia and China, will be the most effective way to bring down Cuban communism.<sup>[29]</sup>

The US goal of destroying the socialist revolution and replacing it with a puppet capitalist regime had not changed at all – only the means.

Of course, my political leaders know this and will fight tooth-and-nail to safeguard socialism. But let's hope, that it's the start of a process which enables Cuba to trade freely and the US finally comes to accept – every nation has the right to determine its own political system.

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At the end of October 2015, the UN General Assembly welcomed the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US, and for the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year passed a resolution to end the USA's illegal economic sanctions of Cuba, with 191 states in favour and just two against. Yes, you've guessed it – US and Israel.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Chapter 65: End Game – Part Two

We come now – my enduring friends, to the big picture terminus of our thirteen-year journey in the spring of 2017. The different but connected issues showing us how the world really turns. This coincides with the culmination of the forty-year neoliberal project that began with Ronald Reagan and Maggie Thatcher in the 1980s, when it was called monetarism.

Now joined by Teresa May, Donald Trump and Emmanuel Macron. All with the same unrelenting TINA agenda of there is no alternative, to neoliberal greed and selfishness.

The post-9/11 war on terror replaced international law with American exceptionalism; kidnap and torture in secret and known prisons; extra-judicial executions by drones that kill fifty innocent people for every alleged terrorist; a million-plus regime change deaths of Muslim men, women and children; hundreds of millions of people's livelihoods wrecked, their infrastructure and economies shattered; and some fifty million refugees and displaced persons.<sup>[1]</sup>

American exceptionalism has turned normal justice principles on their head; it's better to kill fifty innocent people than let one alleged terrorist go free; better to kill hundreds of thousands of people and destroy entire nations, than let one national leader remain independent of US control.

As even a former high ranking US military official asks about the war on terror: 'Tell me how we're winning – if every time we kill one, we create ten?'<sup>[2]</sup>

Sixteen years on from 9/11, the net result is a hundred-fold increase in the numbers and viciousness of terrorists, beyond even Osama bin-Laden's wildest dreams, and loss of civil liberties in Western nations too – with all pervasive mass surveillance.

Which is not about detecting and stopping terrorism – as you know, but establishing control over digital information across all telecommunications, and social media. A central part of the US Pentagon's full spectrum dominance agenda, aided and abetted by UK's GCHQ.<sup>[3]</sup>

As J Todd Ring (author and political analyst) told us, the 'war on terror is the smokescreen and pretext, the justification and cover for the multinational corporations and bankers' conquest and empire abroad, and for a war on democracy and freedom, globally and at home.'<sup>[4]</sup>

Six years on, the Syrian war is still raging, which the Syrian people and government are slowly and painfully winning, helped by Russia, Iran, the Kurds and Hezbollah. But the Western leaders remain committed to supporting the moderate and fully-fledged terrorists, despite the election of an anti-establishment Donald Trump as the US president in November 2016.

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Yemen, one of the poorest nations on earth, is continuing to be bombed into the stone age by Saudi Arabia and it's coalition of oil-rich kingdoms of Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar; aided and abetted by Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies, looking for Saudi favours; while the Egyptian dictator-President Sisi, needs the Saudis to keep him in post. A motley bunch of war-criminals.

In early 2016 a UN expert panel accused Saudi Arabia of 'widespread and systematic' attacks on civilian targets. Then again in August 2017, they stated it was still 'violating international humanitarian law.'<sup>[5]</sup>

Two years of relentless airstrikes – supposedly against rebels, including the use of internationally banned cluster bombs (made in US, UK and Brazil), have hit some military targets – but mostly hospitals and schools, bridges and roads, farms and livestock, essential water and power supplies, and wrecked tens of thousands of homes.

This Saudi-led war has murdered some 10,000 civilian men, women and children and injured another 40,000 from March 2015 to May 2017.<sup>[6]</sup> To rub salt into the wounds, the Yemini people have been systematically starved through a sea and land blockade.

It's a war on the Yemini people – not the rebels, that has shattered the lives of hundreds of thousands, forced some 3 million to flee their homes and left nearly 19 million in desperate need of food, water, fuel and shelter, with some 7 million now literally at the point of starvation.<sup>[7]</sup>

A Situation that led the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council to poignantly state in early May 2017: Yemen faces a 'famine of Biblical proportions.'<sup>[8]</sup>

Instead of trying to stop this slaughter, Western governments – especially the US and UK have been making a killing supplying the arms and providing hands-on logistical support to the Saudis – in direct contravention of international law.

The UK alone has sold £3.3 billion of arms and related equipment to Saudi Arabia, together with the US making a total of \$5 billion. (And also given \$450 million in aid).<sup>[9]</sup>

Soon after taking office President Trump approved \$300 million of precision-guided missile systems for Saudi Arabia, blocked by Obama over human rights concerns.<sup>[10]</sup> And in May 2017, he sold another \$110 billion of arms (part of \$350 billion ten-year deal). Together with Obama's \$100 billion, it amounts to over £300 billion of US arms sales to Saudi Arabia in ten years.<sup>[11]</sup>

Adding insult to injury, certain UN nations had the audacity to vote Saudi Arabia on to its Women's Rights Commission in April 2017. The same despotic monarchy that bars women from driving and requires them to have a male guardian's permission before they can marry, travel or access higher education.<sup>[12]</sup>

Just like their shyness about being neoliberal, they don't want their ordinary people knowing which nations voted for Saudi Arabia. Let's have a guess, my friends. The US, UK and Israel certainly, who else? Of course, Denmark has admitted it, and its PM expressed deep regret.

Meanwhile the Western 'free press' is continuing to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to these – Yes, terrorist atrocities, inflicted on the 26 million Yemini population, 'cause they don't want to upset their government's lucrative arms deals. Such are ethics of the mainstream media.

It's the same ethics that sell \$5 billion of weapons to kill, maim and destroy the Yemini people with one hand, and 10% of it for aid and redevelopment, with the other. Neoliberalism stands exposed today, as the most ruthless stage of capitalism – for all who have eyes to see.

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Yemen graphically illustrates the viciously malign morals and ethics in pursuit of ever-more profits and the neoliberal agenda for what it is. A self-serving ideology imposed on people through the mantra of there is no alternative. Masses of ordinary people around the world have recognised they've been lied to and manipulated by their governments and media, and have started to challenge the status quo.

This is why they gave the establishment a bloody nose in the Greek and the Scottish referendums, (which the SNP lost, but then went on to win a land-slide victory in the 2015 general election).

And in June 2016 the UK people stuck two fingers up at their own and the EU establishment and voted for Brexit, totally confounding their mass media, mainstream political parties and especially their PM David Cameron. It just wasn't in his playbook – that the worm could turn.

Cameron made two fundamental mistakes over Brexit. The cardinal sin (amongst politicians) of asking the people their opinion, instead of making decisions for them.

Secondly, he was 100% convinced of victory, having secured the Lib-Dems and Labour Party's support – including Corbyn, (previously opposed to the EU), the overwhelming support of the business and wealth establishment, and the vast majority of the so called free press.



Yet, a clear 52% of people still voted for Brexit. The peasants had revolted. The establishment Titanic had struck an iceberg and Cameron had to be thrown overboard – to join Ted Heath.

Theresa May took the helm in July 2016 and set a course for the next crucial phase of the neoliberal project. (More of this later, my friends).

Then the biggest revolt of all, the US public voted in Donald Trump as their 45<sup>th</sup> President in November 2016, despite his crude racist and sexist bigotry. Some of them, because of it.

Essentially, they voted for him to end globalisation that had destroyed their industries and earnings for four decades, and they just didn't believe any of the anti-Russia hysteria, inspired by Hilary Clinton, EU and UK politicians, and heavily embellished by the Western mass media.

Worse still for the establishment, the US public supported his call to join Russia to defeat the terrorists rather than supporting the terrorists to defeat Russia. They also agreed with his calls to end foreign wars and regime change policies.

But most of all, they voted for Trump because the entire US, EU and UK political and media establishment opposed him. (There's a screaming message here, but its drowned out by their neoliberal TINA ideology telling them, there is no alternative).

The common factor in all these people's decisions has been a concerted fear-mongering campaign by all the forces of the mainstream politicians and media, all forecasting the end of civilisation, financial ruin – and the start of world war three, if the people dared to vote against their preferred candidate or referendum decision.

These events have shown the establishment's Project Fear is no longer able to cover their people and their mainstream media has lost its power to manipulate their votes. They've been overtaken by social media, that the neoliberals don't have that much control over – yet.

Donald Trump had 32 million Twitter followers who were able to counter the fake media and ensure his victory. Moving on just two months though, a somewhat different Trump emerged.

Weather it was to stop the relentless 24/7 media and political pressures on him, or that Trump had used anti-establishment ploys to get elected is currently unclear. Certainly, his ordering of the missile attack against a Syrian military base in early May (2017) – alleged to have launched a chemical attack on civilians, earned him some respite from the media and the establishment.

However, all independent experts are agreed this was a false flag operation. That ISIS or other terrorists had committed this atrocity in order to lay the blame on President Al Assad.

Let's just look at the facts – my thinking friends, even if the Syrian military still had some chemical weapons left, why would Assad order their use when he is winning the war? Especially as he knows this is the US's red line for direct military intervention.

What is crystal clear though, is that within the space of a couple of months Trump has done a full 180 degrees U-turn and fallen into the very Washington swamp that he was going to drain.

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Having taken the helm of the good ship Herald of Neoliberal Free Enterprise, Theresa May went on to call a snap general election for June 2017, in preparation for the next phase of neoliberalism – the total rule of the 1%. (Of course, she kept quiet about this).

She claimed it was to toughen up her EU negotiations stance, (not to silence the pro-EU critics in her own party), and certainly not to help out her New Labour Blairite colleagues to dislodge Corbyn, as their own efforts had failed so miserably.

Truth of the matter is – as we now know, the Tories, the Lib-Dems and New Labour all belong to the same economic and political party. Something that ordinary people have long known as: *they're all the same*. They just didn't know they were referring to the neoliberals.

As we learned earlier from Boris Kagarlitsky, under neoliberalism the role of governments has changed. They've turned over their social functions to the market to determine allocation on basis of the ability to pay, leaving them only their 'repressive' measures – to keep people in line.

The next critical phase of neoliberalism is to make privatisation irreversible by establishing the core principles of the *Trade in Services Agreement* and the *Investors States Dispute Settlement* into British law. (As we came across in the Three Ts).

This will ensure almost all public services can be privatised – including the NHS, and can't be reversed. While the ideology of greed and profits will come to encroach into every facet of human thought and activity at work, leisure and sleep; serving the best interests of the top 1%.

The UK government (and the EU, the US, and others) will also attempt to introduce international protocols to take decisive control (extension of UK's snoopers' charter) over social media. Of course, they'll claim it's to combat the threat of terrorism, etc. The real motive however will be to monitor and control any organised resistance, to the total rule of the top 1%.

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Question is, do you want to continue on this journey to the end of democracy, my friends? Like the US Supreme Court judge Louise Brandeis said: 'We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but we cannot have both.'<sup>[13]</sup>

There are much better alternatives, my conscientious friends – even under capitalism. You can have a different world order altogether.

A world order that is based on cooperation instead of competition. *Equality and justice, globally* – instead of wars and more wars, wrecking the lives of hundreds of millions of people, and wealth and power concentrating in the hands of the top 1%, and their corporations.

Corbyn has offered a path to some of these choices. It's telling, that it's not his basic ideas of a more caring and wealth sharing government that the mass media objects to, (knowing the vast majority of people support such ideas), but how it's going to be paid for?

Though Corbyn has only mentioned the £19.4bn savings from withdrawing the tax cuts to corporation tax, there are many other much larger sources of income that the British people would support being used for the public good instead of private profits.

Like Peter Tatchell's alternative economic strategy that we came across earlier. Cutting the Trident nuclear programme would save over £100 billion. (£170 billion in more recent estimates). Closing tax-avoidance loopholes would realise some £20 billion annually, and another £20 billion by stopping the tax relief on pensions for over £100,000 earners.

A Financial Transaction Tax of a very modest 0.05% (one twentieth of 1%), on currency, shares, bonds and commodity transactions would raise some £100 billion annually.<sup>[14]</sup>

These measures would not only clear the budget deficit – caused by the bankers, the heaviest burdens would fall on those that had benefited in the boom years – and still doing today.

This is not particularly revolutionary, as 11 EU states agreed in mid-April 2013, to a Financial Transactions Tax (similar to Tatchell's ideas), though Cameron was having none of it. Of course, his objections had nothing to do with 50% of his party's funding sources?<sup>[15]</sup>

Let's cast our minds back to the banking system that we looked at earlier and discovered, 97% of all the money in the British economy is created by the banks out of thin air (electronic money – on which they charge interest), whereas the government only creates 3% (hard cash).

Except we also learned that the government sells its banknotes and coins to the banks for their face value – at a huge profit. And if the government created all new money it would bring in around £67 billion annually. (Plus, this non-bankers' money would be interest free).

Other than bankers, no one would disagree with such a change, as its only doing what most people believe already happens – that the government creates all new money.

Furthermore, the government's current £85,000 depositor insurance and other bank subsidies have totalled over £300 billion in some years. Again almost everyone would agree the banks need to stand on their own feet – they've been subsidised long enough.

And let's not forget the estimated £70 billion stolen every year through tax evasion.<sup>[16]</sup> At least 30% of this could be recovered with some genuine effort.

Just as a back of the envelope figure there's some £650 billion of revenue here, much of it annual. The British people (equally applicable to all nations) have far better uses for this sort of money. So clearly there's more than enough money – what's lacking is the will.

Or let me put in another way, there's never any shortage of money when it comes to bombing countries, is there? The US president says jump and the British PM responds how high? While the issue of money doesn't get a look in.

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People stand today at the point of pivotal change, they've had enough of so called 'centre ground' policies that only benefit the top 1% and are looking for radical alternatives. The so called 'centre ground' is shifting to the right and left.

By definition, the interests of the top 1% never was and never could be the centre ground. This is by far the biggest of big lies. It's the elephant hanging off a cliff with its tail tied to a daisy, scale of lies. Or the classic, Iraq's WMDs, Bush and Blair's monumental lies.

Ordinary people have seen through neoliberalism, as a self-serving ideology of the top 1%. They've recognised TINA of – there is no alternative, is a big lie and are ready for fresh ideas.

Let me give you one of these ideas, the issue of Quantitative Easing (QE). You will recall, the UK government created some £375 billion QE money and poured it into the City of London, which boosted the top 5% of earners' incomes by around £128,000 per household.

Just imagine if we had £375 billion of people's QE. This could be used to build five million houses in ten years, with 70% of them being council houses. This would certainly address the very chronic housing crisis today, and also help young people – who's biggest costs are housing.

It would create over a million well paid jobs and kick start the real economy, and provide local authorities long term funding to redress some 35% of cuts since 2010. Plus, it would reduce rents and house prices, by changing the supply and demand equation.

Crucially, it would give a well deserved helping hand to young people, whom the baby boomers' politicians have shit on – from a great height. Particularly poignant as they themselves enjoyed a rising welfare state and free higher education, secure jobs and good pensions, and affordable houses too – the value of which has soared to become their personal banks today.

Genuinely affordable housing, and free higher education would be nice gestures to those expected to provide for the burgeoning older people's care and triple-locked pensions.

You could also abolish VAT on all but luxury goods, increase people's purchasing power and stop the poorest people paying the highest (relative) taxes. Alongside the £10 an hour minimum wage, a growing economy will continue to raise all wages.

While you're at it, you could even tax consumption instead of production. Then those that consume the most – like the top 1%, would have to pay the highest relative taxes, not the least.

Clearly, there's no shortage of money, what's lacking is the will. And in response to the howls of cries I hear – far from making everybody equal, it merely starts the pendulum swinging back to some measure of sanity.

Like I said earlier, my progressive minded friends, TINA is a big lie, there always were and always will be better alternatives to neoliberalism. You should consider all the options and rule nothing off the agenda. Think for yourself and act accordingly.

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Establishment critics will deny the central role of neoliberalism in the big picture story, in order to dismiss Synthesis, as a conspiracy theory. But let's just look at the facts, my independent minded friends. The war on terror enabled US-NATO desired regime changes, the military-industrial complex and bankers made huge profits, and governments removed civil liberties and imposed draconian mass surveillance on their own people.

Exactly what neoliberalism requires; weak citizens and strong states, as the Russian economist Boris Kagarlitsky told us, at the start of our journey.

This has also been documented by Naomi Klein in her book called *The Shock Doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism*. She has shown how neoliberal gurus advocated and used crises like coup d'état dictatorships, terrorist attacks, the banking crash and natural disasters, to impose the most repressive parts of neoliberalism on to shocked and desperate people.<sup>[17]</sup>

Just when people are distracted and frightened (as we learned earlier), is when they'll give up their democratic rights and civil liberties. It's not a conspiracy theory, neoliberalism is simply the most ruthless stage of capitalism to date. An undeniable fact of life today.

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Now please allow me, White-Dove, the international ambassador for peace, to give you a scientific thought to ponder on. Take the case of the proverbial laboratory frog placed in water of uncomfortably high temperature; it jumps out instantly.

But if the water is cool at first and heated up slowly, the frog remains in there, beyond the point when it's able to jump out – even when the water gets scalding hot.

It's the same from religionists to fundamentalists, from Thatcher and Reagan, Blair and Bush, Obama and Cameron, to May and Trump, and now Macron too. Incrementally, from the late 1970s onwards, the neoliberal economic and ideological politics of Western leaders have heated up to boiling point; ratcheting-up from right-wing to reactionary, to blatant imperialism.

All under the TINA ideology of – there is no alternative. All coinciding with the shift of wealth and power from the majority, especially from the poorest – to the wealthy, alongside the same rising prison populations in both the US and UK, the two leading imperialist nations.<sup>[18]</sup>

I'm only a bird-brained White-Dove, but I ask you – surely you human beings are smarter than the frog? After all, you mastered  $E=mc^2$ .

Except, I'm sorry to say, the evidence suggests you're still firmly skewered to the laboratory table, while your masters use their scalpels and think tanks to see how they can amputate your limbs and mortgage them back to you, alongside the air you breathe; as befits your new rights of the marketplace – where those with the most money have the most rights.

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Luckily, my English speaking friends, human beings remain eternally irrepressible and Tim Berners-Lee's internet is still growing exponentially. It's giving voice to people and ideas that continue to be excluded by the mainstream media. People are increasingly turning against a system that largely only benefits the top 1%, and coming to question the entire status quo.

They've recognised the collapse of the Soviet Union 26 years ago didn't lead to peace and prosperity, as promised. The USA – as the one superpower, became an arrogant bully, repudiating the UN and rejecting international law in favour of American exceptionalism.

Since 2001, the US has been on a military rampage across the globe, especially against Muslim nations. It's caused a million-plus civilian deaths in its war on terror, against terrorists – which the US and its allies armed and funded and are still doing today.

People no longer believe in TINA's agenda of, there is no alternative; the trickle-down theory that ensures the rich keep getting richer and the poorest and most vulnerable are hammered into the ground. Nor do they accept the market knows best and the banks are too big to fail – as when they do, they're forced to bail them out; while the top 1% continue to grow richer.

They can see through the big lies of Western supported Afghan freedom fighters that turned into the 9/11 terrorists; Iraq's WMDs that vanished into the ether; Western-backed Syrian moderates that morphed into ISIS; and the fictitious war on terror, that's been used to remove their privacies and civil liberties.

People now also know the real meaning of collateral damage. They can recognise this big, fat, juicy, Joseph Goebbels' sized lie for what it is. The removal of the status of *human beings* from the million-plus victims of the war on terror; aided and abetted by the Western in-bed-with journalists – acting as cheerleaders for their governments and military machines.

Just ask yourselves, my featherless friends, why it took the US nine years to find Osama bin-Laden? The answer – why kill the golden goose that served the Pentagon interests so well? They were simply waiting for ISIS and other terrorists to take hold, before they found bin-Laden.

And not even Western leaders claim, there were any Islamic terrorists (to speak of) in Iraq, Libya and Syria before the Iraq invasion of 2003. Which says it all.

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I leave you with three guiding thoughts, my free-thinking friends. First and foremost, on all matters, think for yourself and act accordingly.

Secondly, most worldwide people – as opposed to political leaders and the richest 1%, regardless of physical, linguistic, cultural, religious, or political differences all want the same things. To live peaceful and productive lives in reasonably caring communities, where every individual is equally valued.

Last but not least, the pre-eminent issue of our time is still the: *13, 9/11s* raining down on the heads of the poorest one third of humanity, murdering 40,000 of their men, women and children, 24/7, from poverty and preventable diseases.<sup>[19]</sup>

You stand today, at the cusp of radical change. An opportunity to create a more cooperative and far less unequal world. Good luck, my conscientious friends. You have nothing to fear, except fear itself. Nothing to lose – and a world to win.

Thank you and *muchas gracias* for listening to the Synthesis story – it's not often my Cuban people's ideas get a fair hearing. It's also what being an atheist is all about; practising your autonomy and refusing to be silenced by the fear of God or religionists.

Synthesis is a morality tale. You decide which ending you prefer, and what kind of world you want to live in. I already have. That's why I, White-Dove, wrote and directed Synthesis.

The End.



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## References and Notes

### Chapter 1: The Impossible Escape

- <sup>1</sup> 'Camp Delta' is one of many camps in the US Guantánamo prison complex, which is primarily a naval base. However it's not US, but Cuban territory. Therefore, the prison complex will not be referred to as 'US Guantánamo' but Camp Delta throughout the book.
- <sup>2</sup> Whenever the Cubans (and White-Dove) are speaking, they pronounce it: Cooba.
- <sup>3</sup> The CIA and MI6 'Operation Cyclone' trained some 100,000 Taliban and other Islamic fundamentalists 'in bomb making and the other black arts' of terrorism. Some of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's fundamentalists were trained by the CIA within sight of the Twin Towers. John Pilger (2006) *Freedom Next Time*, p.368.
- The foreign troops were still pouring in more than a year after the Russians had left. Jason Burke (2004) *Al-Qaeda: the Story of Radical Islam*, p.84.
- a) US President Carter's secret support and financial aid to the mujahideen fighters. On 3 July 1979, unknown to the American public and Congress, President Carter authorised a \$500-million covert action programme to support the mujahideen. John Pilger (2002) *The New Rulers of the World*, pp.150–151.
- b) Over time, 'American administrations poured \$4 billion into the pockets of some of the world's most brutal fanatics.' Pilger (2006) Op. cit. p.367. Also see pp.364–368.
- c) Michael Springmann, former head of US Visa Bureau in Jeddah: it was policy 'to bring recruits, rounded up by Osama bin-Laden, to the US for terrorist training by the CIA'. Pilger (2006), Op. cit. p.368.
- d) The BBC Newsnight programme (06 Nov. 2011) made clear admissions of lengthy UK involvement in the funding and training of Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan. *Newsnight*, BBC2 (6 Nov. 2011)
- e) According to Nafeez Ahmed: 'For 17 years, the United States deliberately cultivated an extremism against which it could later proclaim a war on terror.' Nafeez Masaddeq Ahmed (2005) *The War on Truth: 9/11, Disinformation and the Anatomy of Terrorism*, cited in Pilger (2006) Op. cit. p.366.
- f) Zbigniew Brzezinski, US President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, admitted in an interview in 1998, 'The Afghani *mujahedin* (sic) – and the Taliban and al-Qaeda – were effectively created by the CIA, its Pakistani equivalent the ISI, and Britain's MI6.' Pilger (2006) Op. cit. p.364.
- g) US, Saudi and British support of the mujahideen was all channelled through the Pakistani military government led by General Zia al Haq. Jason Burke (2004) *Al Qaeda: The Story of Radical Islam*, pp.59, 128.
- <sup>4</sup> Re Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (who used to traffic opium and throw acid in women's faces), received tens of millions of dollars from the CIA; he was invited to London in 1986 and lauded by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as a 'freedom fighter'. John Pilger (2002) Op. cit. p.151.
- <sup>5</sup> Re the actual [sinister] rationale for denial of Prisoners of War status, Alberto Gonzales, Counsel to the President has stated, not applying the Geneva Conventions: 'substantially reduces the threat of domestic criminal prosecution [of administration officials] under the War Crimes Act (18 USC 2441).' Michael Ratner and Ellen Ray (2004) *Guantánamo: What the World Should Know*, p.12.
- Similar to above, but from the viewpoint of a military intelligence officer at Guantánamo. Erik Saar and Viveca Novak (2005) *Inside the Wire*, pp.161–162 and 245. I'm highly indebted to the this book.
- <sup>6</sup> The vast majority of 'detainees' had no involvement with terrorism: this issue is borne out by the military being forced by the US Supreme Court to establish Individual Review Tribunals to determine whether 'detainees' were enemy combatants or not. This led to the release of 201 before, and 180 after the Individual Review Tribunals. Clive Stafford-Smith (2007) *Bad Men: Guantánamo Bay and the Secret Prisons*, p.164.
- a) In June 2004, *The New York Times* published a lengthy investigative article about Gitmo based on CIA top-secret assessments of detainees. It concluded that 'many of the accused terrorists appear to be low-level recruits who went to Afghanistan to support the Taliban or even innocent men swept up in the chaos of war'. Numerous officials said that 'only a relative handful – some put the number at about a dozen, others more than two dozen – were sworn al-Qaeda members or other militants'. Amongst these, 'not one was a leader or senior operative'. According to one senior Pentagon official with extensive knowledge of Gitmo, 'at least two-thirds of the 600 detainees held as of May 2004 could be released without hesitation

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immediately’.

David Rose (2004) *Guantánamo: America’s War on Human Rights*, p.42.

- b) ‘Only like 10% of the people at Guantánamo are really dangerous ... the rest are people that don’t have anything to do with terrorism,’ according to a CIA interrogator who spent 12 months at Gitmo.  
Stafford-Smith (2007) Op. cit. p.163.
- c) Re real terrorists: ‘Big fish’ are being interrogated in secret prisons in Thailand ... Pakistan and Jordan ... and floating interrogation cells in the Indian Ocean.  
Re secret prisons: the existence of lawless (rendering) jurisdictions.  
Stafford-Smith (2007) Op. cit. pp.245–247.  
Rose (2004) Op. cit. p.112.

Also see documentary, *Kidnap and Torture, American Style* (2005) by Andrew Gilligan, and the book *Ghost Plane: The Untold Story of the CIA’s Secret Rendition Programme* by Stephen Grey (2006).

## Chapter 2: Missing Numbers

<sup>1</sup> Humvee: High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (ranging from 3 to 5½ tons).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Detainees’ were initially referred to as ‘packages’.  
Clive Stafford-Smith (2007) *Bad Men: Guantánamo Bay and the Secret Prisons*, p.10.

<sup>3</sup> The CIA and MI6 ‘Operation Cyclone’ trained some 100,000 Taliban and other Islamic fundamentalists ‘in bomb making and the other black arts’ of terrorism. Some of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden’s fundamentalists were trained by the CIA within sight of the Twin Towers.  
John Pilger (2006) *Freedom Next Time*, p.368.

The foreign troops were still pouring in more than a year after the Russians had left.  
Jason Burke (2004) *Al-Qaeda: the Story of Radical Islam*, p.84.

<sup>4</sup> Re CIA/Afghan–Pakistan border training camps:  
Jason Burke (2004) *Al-Qaeda: The Story of Radical Islam*, pp.59, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Re hundreds of US overseas bases, in 2003: there were 702 in 130 countries, excluding new bases in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Israel, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar and Uzbekistan, and they’re also building 17 permanent bases in Iraq. [Total of 138 countries.]  
Avery F. Gordon, in *Race & Class*, Vol. 48, No. 1, (2006) p.43.

Gordon’s estimate of 1,000, includes UK RAF bases. So, 750 is a conservative figure.

<sup>6</sup> Re even when having a crap, only one of their hands is released to wipe their arse; and they are always handcuffed, shackled, chained up etc, while outside the cell blocks.  
David Rose, (2004) *Guantánamo: America’s War on Human Rights*, p.52.

<sup>7</sup> Re ‘always handcuffed, shackled, chained up etc, while outside the cell blocks.’ See number [7] above.

<sup>8</sup> There were 75,000 US landmines on the US–Cuban border before removal in 2000. This was the second most heavily mined area in the world after Korea.  
Clive Stafford-Smith (2007) *Bad Men: Guantánamo Bay and the Secret Prisons*, p.292.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Honor bound’ camp motto.  
Erik Saar and Viveca Novak (2005) *Inside the Wire*, p.126.

## Chapter 17: Havana Takes Control

<sup>1</sup> Erfing – refers to the: Extreme Reaction Force of specialist guards noted for their violence and brute force.

<sup>2</sup> ‘ERFing’. US soldier Sean Baker’s experiences cited by Rose.

‘They grabbed my arms, my legs, twisted me up and unfortunately one of the individuals got up on my back from behind and put pressure down on me while I was face down. Then he – the same individual – reached around and began to choke me and press my head down against the steel floor. After several seconds – twenty to thirty seconds – it seemed like an eternity because I couldn’t breathe – I began to panic and gave the code word I was supposed to give to stop the exercise, which was “Red” ... That individual slammed my head against the floor and continued to choke me. Somehow I got enough air. I muttered out, “I’m a US soldier. I’m a US soldier.”’  
David Rose (2004) *Guantánamo: America’s War on Human Rights*, pp.72–73.

<sup>3</sup> Re five remaining Cuban workers at US Guantánamo naval base [four actually in April 2004]. Following 1962 missile crisis and various subsequent issues, US–Cuba relations further deteriorated, and in 1964 almost all employment of the ‘several thousand’ Cuban workers on the US naval base ceased. However the agreement had a ‘grandfather clause,’ allowing a few to continue up to pension age. [Just two remained in



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2006.]

Clive Stafford-Smith (2007) *Bad Men: Guantánamo Bay and the Secret Prisons*, pp.292–3.

## Chapter 29: Uncle's Story

- 1 Saklatvala and black people's history in the labour movement.  
Peter Fryer (1984) *Staying Power*, pp.351–353.
- 2 'Paki-bashing became a national sport.'  
*Southall – The Birth of a Black Community*, pamphlet published by the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, CARF/Southall (1981), p.49.
- 3 African-Caribbean youth disproportionate stops under 'Sus' 1924 Vagrancy Act.  
Ron Ramdin (1987) *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain*, p.472.
- 4 Imperial Typewriters, white trade unionists' collaboration with employers.  
Ramdin (1987) Op. cit. pp.271–2.
- 5 Asian-Muslims' industrial struggles: Rockware Glass to Grunwick.  
Ambalavaner Sivanandan. (1982) *A Different Hunger*, pp.129–30
- 6 On 11 July 1977, some 20,000 people led by the National Union of Mineworkers came to support the nearly two-year-old Grunwick strike led mainly by Asian women.  
Jack Dromey and Graham Taylor (1978) *Grunwick – The Workers' Story*, p.144.  
Sivanandan. (1982) Op. cit. pp.22, 35–6.
- 7 The Bradford 12 were part of the United Black Youth League, who marched on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1981 in Bradford to defend their community against (National Front) fascist attacks. Subsequently, when a crate of milk bottles, some filled with petrol was found, they were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and endanger life – terrorism, and faced lengthy prison sentences. Following a concerted political campaign leading up to the trial, they were acquitted by the jury – who accepted their right to defend their community.  
IRR (Institute of Race Relations) News Team. July 28, 2011 (30<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Bradford 12: lessons for organising.  
<<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/bradford-12-lessons-for-organising/>>
- 8 'Right to self-defence.'  
Paul Gordon (1986) *Racial Violence and Harassment* (pamphlet) p.29.
- 9 Police's Special Patrol Group (SPG) made 14,000 stops and 400 arrests in Brixton in 1975, leading up to the riots.  
Sivanandan (1982) Op. cit. p.34.
- 10 "Institutional racism" does not exist in Britain: but racial disadvantage and its nasty associate, racial discrimination, have not yet been eliminated.' – In other words, discrimination due not to skin colours but to unmet ethnic and cultural needs.  
Lord Scarman (1981) *The Scarman Report*, p.209.
- 11 At the time of CRE's creation of 'community leaders', some 63 per cent of black people were British born and bred.  
S. Saggat (1985) *New Community* (CRE Journal) Vol. 12, No. 3, p.421.
- 12 Growth of Section 11 funding from £33 million in 1979 to £348 million by 1984.  
Ben-Tovim et al (1986) *Local Politics of Race*, p.136.
- 13 Elevation of ethnicity above all else.  
Paul Gilroy (July 1987) *Problems in Anti-Racist Strategy* (pamphlet published by the Runnymede Trust), p.12.
- 14 No longer black people, but Muslims above all else.  
Ambalavaner Sivanandan (1985) 'RAT and the Degradation of the Black Struggle', *Race & Class* (1985) Vol. 26, No. 4, p.15.
- 15 'We fear the steps to establish religious schools will lead to the acceptance of the concept of segregation.'  
(statement from document below)  
Asian Youth Movement statement, Bradford, February 1983.  
*Policy Statement on Religious/Separate Schools*. Saathi Centre, Hallfield Rd, Bradford.
- 16 Saudi funding of fundamentalist preachers and Islamic events.  
Iqbal Wahhab (Sept. 1989) *Muslims in Britain* (pamphlet published by the Runnymede Trust) p.14.  
Re the ongoing influence of Saudi Arabian funding of fundamentalist Islam.  
Documentary, 'Undercover Mosque', *Dispatches*, Channel 4 (2008).
- 17 Re Salman Rushdie, *New Empire Within Britain*.  
This article and a BBC Radio recital were used by many Muslim race relations workers.  
*New Society* (19 Dec.1982) pp.21–5.

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<sup>18</sup> Re ‘Armed with the multiculturalist agenda, Muslim leaders found local councils to be “a pushover”.’ But their ‘real problem was always how to defeat the dissenters and the awkward within their own communities, on a strictly Muslim agenda.’  
Southall Black Sister (1990) *Against the Grain*, pp.24, 28, 42.

#### Chapter 41: A Polemic Of Our Time

<sup>1</sup> Special EC exemptions imposed on British workers. This refers to the EC’s Working Time Directive of a maximum 48-hour working week. On 16 Dec. 2008, the EC Parliament revoked this opt-out.  
Ian Traynor, ‘Defeat for Brown as MEPs Vote to End Opt-out on Working Hours’, *The Guardian* (18 Dec. 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Re: ‘Britain now heads the world arms export league’, (2008) see Chapter 40 [17](b).

Re: The ‘arms trade’ is now the UK’s largest manufacturing industry employer refers to 09 Sept. 2003, with annual sales of about £17 billion, (£13bn to UK government).

The defence industry claims to directly employ 350,000, with as many as 1.2 million indirectly relying on it for a living. However, the Campaign Against Arms Trade disputes these figures, arguing it only employs around 120,000. In any case, it’s certainly the single largest manufacturing employer in the UK today. Brian Wheeler, Online business reporter, BBC News, ‘How big is the UK arms trade?’ <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/3084718.stm>>. [21 April 2012]

<sup>3</sup> ‘In 2000 a typical chief executive was paid 39 times the national average. Today [2008] it is over 100 times more.’  
Stewart Lansley (2008) *Do the Super-Rich Matter?* Touchstone pamphlet (Trades Union Congress, Congress House, London) p.25.

In 1980, the CEOs of major US corporations earned 42 times more than their average workers, but by 2007 this had shot up to *344 times* more.

Michael Sandel, ‘Bankers on Bail’, *New Statesman* (10 Sept. 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation report: ‘The highest levels of inequality for 40 years’ with the ‘poor becoming more and more segregated and marginalized from society.’  
John Pilger, ‘Blair’s Legacy: From Liberalism to Murdochcracy’, *The Guardian* (18 Dec. 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Re contraband labelling of films etc, which show smokers enjoying their depravity.  
John Carvel, ‘Health: Doctors Urge Film Censors to Give ‘Pro-Smoking’ Films an 18 Certificate’, *The Guardian* (7 July 2008).

<sup>6</sup> The ‘Private Finance Initiative’ was used by New Labour to build hospitals, prisons, schools, roads etc. Except for those making huge profits from PFIs, they have largely proved to be disastrous for British taxpayers.  
‘PFIs have made 50 per cent profit on the secondary sales market.’ Construction companies have made more profits from subsequent PFI sales than from the actual constructions.

For example: Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, opened in 2009:

- It has to pay £44 million a year for the next 30 years.
- Since opening, it’s shed 700 jobs, with another 100 scheduled to go, and cut 100 beds.
- Carillion plc’s original capital was £12.1 million. It sold its 50 per cent stake last year for £31 million.
- On average, construction companies’ profits are around 3 per cent; however, average profits from PFI are 51 per cent, while those from hospital PFIs are 67 per cent!

‘PFI Profits’ *File on 4*, BBC Radio 4 (20 June 2011) [21 April 2012]  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011vf2f>>

Over 60 hospitals can’t afford the rising costs of PFI schemes and are on the ‘brink of financial collapse’, according to Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley.

PA. (Press Agency) ‘Hospitals Face Collapse over PFIs’, *The Guardian* (22 Sept. 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Re the Black Report.

This report produced by Sir Douglas Black in 1980 showed there continued to be a strong correlation between people’s health and their social class.

<sup>8</sup> Re British children are most neglected and *unhappiest* in the rich world. (Unicef report).  
John Pilger, ‘Blair’s legacy: from liberalism to Murdochcracy.’ *The Guardian* 18 Dec. 2007.

<sup>9</sup> The World Health Organization’s August 2008 report findings: a ‘toxic combination’ of bad policies, economics and politics is killing people on a ‘grand scale’. WHO’s Commission on the Social Detriments of Health, based on a three-year study.  
James Macintyre, ‘Politicians Blamed for Health Inequalities that Kill the Poor’, *The Independent* (29 Aug.2008).

<sup>10</sup> ‘When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.’  
Quote from *Spiral of Violence* (1971) by Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara (1909–99), Roman Catholic Archbishop of Brazil, who dedicated his life and work to the poor.

- 11 Re UK's GPs earning £100,000 and more in August 2005.  
 'Accountants believe average GP pay will burst through the £100,000 barrier this financial year for the first time.'  
 Nick Trigg, BBC News health reporter, 'Are GPs worth £100,000?' (29 March 2005).  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4373519.stm>. [04 March 2007]
- So, by August 2007 most, if not all, GPs would have been on £100,000 p.a. and more.  
 Re a police constable's salary after five years: with effect from 1 Sept. 2008: £29,493, plus London Weighting allowance of £2,160 = £31,653.  
 Police Information. Co. UK [05 March 2009]  
<http://www.police-information.co.uk/policepay.htm>.
- 12 'There is strong evidence that the level of social mobility falls as inequality rises and that a growing concentration of wealth inhibits the life-chances of the poor, affecting access to education, health and housing.'  
 Stewart Lansley (2008) *Do the Super-Rich Matter?* Touchstone pamphlet (Trades Union Congress, Congress House, London) p.29.
- 13 The US's \$700 billion to buy up toxic securities from the balance sheets of US banks and \$125 billion cash injection. The UK's \$600 billion and \$55 billion cash injection.  
 Nicholas Watt and Jill Treanor, 'You only get one shot at this. When you fire, the bullet has to hit its target', *The Guardian* (11 Oct. 2008).
- Seumas Milne, 'Not the death of capitalism, but the birth of a new order', *The Guardian* (23 Oct. 2008).
- 14 My own (admittedly shaky) calculations based on (29 Oct. 2008) internet data of world economies, the USA being £6.60 trillion and the UK £1.17 trillion. Therefore the USA's economy is 5.65 times larger than that of the UK. Or the UK has 17.7 per cent of the USA's total economy. (USA: \$13,201,819 million; UK: \$02,345,015 million)
- 15 'This is the moment to seize. The kaleidoscope has been shaken, the pieces are in flux, soon they will resettle again. Before they do, let us reorder this world around us.' Tony Blair.  
 'Blair In Power', Part 1 of a three-part examination of *The Blair Years* (2007). The former PM was interviewed by the BBC and David Aaronovitch of *The Times* for the BBC.

#### Chapter 44: Habana and E=mc<sup>2</sup>

- 1 US tourists to Cuba still face a \$50,000 fine and 10 years imprisonment.  
 See Chapter 14, [4].
- 2 Particle physicist researchers at Opera (Oscillation Project with Emulsion-tRacking Apparatus), claimed in September 2011 to have *detected* (sub-atomic) *neutrinos travelling faster than the speed of light*. Thereby defying the theory, that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light.  
 Ian Sample, 'Faster Than Light Particles Found, Claim Scientists', *The Guardian* (22 Sept. 2011)
- However, there was considerable dispute as to the accuracy of these measurements and by August 2012, the same Opera laboratory itself reported that the subatomic neutrino particles: 'respect the cosmic speed of light.' The Swiss CERN physics lab reported these findings on 08 June 2012.  
 Clara Moskowitz, 'Neutrino Subatomic Particles Don't Travel Faster than Light-Einstein Was Right, Physicists say', HUFF POST SCIENCE  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/09/neutrinos-subatomic-particles-light-physicists\\_n\\_1582666.html?view=print&comm\\_ref=false](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/09/neutrinos-subatomic-particles-light-physicists_n_1582666.html?view=print&comm_ref=false)
- Also see: Alok Jha, 'Neutrino Researchers admit Einstein Was Right', *The Guardian* (08 June 2012).
- 3 Speed of light = 300 million metres per second (mps). 300 million squared is 300 million × 300 million = 90 quadrillion mps.  
 In one year there are 31.5 billion milliseconds (ms). So we go: 90 quadrillion ÷ 31.5 billion = 2,857,000. So if the richest man in the world accumulates \$31.5 billion in one year, this works out at \$1,000 a second. But if you could use the power of E=mc<sup>2</sup> and bet \$1, you would win back \$31.5 billion multiplied by 2,857,000!
- 4 Of course 10 metres x 10 metres = 100, not 90! This anomaly arises due to the car's stopping distance being a combination of thinking time and stopping time. The proportions of the two vary over distance.
- 5 Re time.  
 Speed is simply the measure of distance in a given unit of time. Therefore, if the speed of light in a vacuum never changes then other things must. Which means *time* as well! Though it seems simple, the difficult bit is getting your head round it: because *time* is instinctively believed to be an absolute concept, we have to make a complete paradigm shift.  
 We also now know that electromagnetism (electricity) in its visible form is *light* itself, and they both travel at the speed of light, as does gravity.
- 6 'And the world was never the same again.' Quote used by David Bodanis in:  
*Einstein's Equation of Life and Death*, Horizon, BBC 2 (2005).

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7 'Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?' Albert Einstein.  
'Einstein's Equation of Life and Death, *Horizon*, BBC 2 (2005).

8 PCs in two years' time will have double the computing power of all previous PCs. If car engines had improved similarly, a family car today would be able to go 200 times round the world on one litre of petrol! 'Breaking the Speed Limit' by Professor Chris Bishop, Lecture 1 of 5 of *The Royal Society Christmas Lectures* (2008).  
Most of the other information on  $E=mc^2$  is based on: David Bodanis (2001) *E=mc<sup>2</sup> – A Biography of the World's Most Famous Equation*.

## Chapter 47: Banksters

1 'Currently this (electronic) 'commercial bank money' accounts for approximately 97% of the total amount of money in circulation, with cash issues by the Bank of England making up the remaining 3%.'  
Andrew Jackson and Ben Dyson (2014) *Modernising Money*, p.48.

Re: Cash only constitutes 1% of all financial transactions today.

Doc-Video – *Positive Money: How money is made / created* 2014. – Ben Dyson explains the debt crisis. Part One.

<<http://www.positivemoney.org/videos/presentations-by-ben-dyson-others-from-positive-money/the-consequences-of-debt-based-money-video/>>

2 In 2012 the total cash in the UK economy was around £57 billion, while bank created electronic money was a staggering £2,200 billion.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

3 The average priced UK house in 2012 was £188,000. £57 billion was the value of 351,000 such houses and £2,200 billion the equivalent of 13.5 million. Or more than half of the total 22 million homes in the UK.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

4 Sir Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England (2003-2013): 'When banks extend loans to their customers, they create money by crediting their customers' accounts.'  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.22.

5 Re the Bank of England only responsible for creating 3% of the money in the UK economy, see [1] above.

6 My own shaky calculations based on £2,200 billion divided by £57 billion. (Not 40 times actually, but 38.6).

7 Contrary to what most people believe, when you deposit physical cash into a bank it becomes the property (asset) of the bank, and you lose your legal ownership over it.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.54.

8 'Of the many ways of organising banking, the worst is the one we have today.' Mervyn King's speech, *Banking – from Bagehot to Basel, and back again.*  
Robert Peston, 'Mervyn King says banking must be reinvented,' (25 Oct. 2010).

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/2010/10/26>>.

9 By far the greatest proportion of bank lending is to the property market: In March 2010, loans secured on property, constituted 46.3%, with an additional 13.2% to commercial real estate companies. A further 22.8% was for financial intermediation, 6.3% unsecured personal debt, 1% to insurance companies and pension funds and 2.8% was to 'public and other services.' Whereas value of loans to 'the productive part of the economy (i.e. those sectors which contribute to GDP) accounted for just 7.6% of total lending.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.113.

10 Lord Adair Turner, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, made a searing critique of the industry. He described much of the City's activities as 'socially useless' and questioned whether it has grown too large.  
Phillip Inman, 'Financial Services Authority chairman backs tax on 'socially useless' banks. *The Guardian*, (27 Aug. 2009).

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<sup>11</sup> Most business loans are in the range of £30,000 to £100,000 and require detailed risk assessment, whereas the mortgages loans system is virtually automated today.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

Additionally, banks need to hold less capital against loans for house purchases (35% risk weighting), as opposed to business loans (75% risk weighting), which again favours property over business.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.153.

<sup>12</sup> Re Tony Blair's £2.5 million annual salary from banks see chapter 46, [8], second paragraph.

<sup>13</sup> Re UK became world's greatest arms dealer under Tony Blair's government, see chapter 40, [17] (c).

<sup>14</sup> UK's five major banks: HSBC, Barclays, RBS, Lloyds/HBOS, control 80% of the money supply and they have just 78 board members. (September 2011). But not all are real decision makers.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.168

Including the other 17% of bank created money supply, only some 30 to 40 people are the real decision makers. As they're required to maximise profits over the short term (to maximise shareholder value), the banks prefer to lend to the unproductive sector: it's easier, cheaper, and safer than lending to real businesses.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.153.

<sup>15</sup> The average priced house in 1952 cost £1,800 and was £188,000 in 2012.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Re some 92% of all bank lending today is for non-productive purposes and only 8% for productive businesses and industry, see [9] above.

<sup>17</sup> In the wake of a series of bank failures and crises from 1825 to 1838, (including the railway shares crash), led to the 1844 Bank Charter Act. But this act did not refer to other substitutes for money and the banks retained their abilities to create money by other means.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. pp.40-41

<sup>18</sup> Re Some 50% of the Conservative Party's funding coming from the bankers, see chapter 46, [22].

<sup>19</sup> The European Union's proposed (now moved to Jan. 2016), Financial Transaction Tax, is a very modest financial transaction tax of 0.1% re exchange of shares and bonds, and 0.01% across derivative contracts. It's an attempt to make the bankers carry some of the costs of their banking crash. However, it's been bitterly opposed by Cameron and the Conservative party: 'Chancellor says he would mount fresh legal challenge if the final design of the tax has implications for the UK.'  
Angela Monaghan, 'George Osborne bristles as EU moves closer to financial transaction tax.' *The Guardian*, (06 May 2014).

<sup>20</sup> On average there's been a banking crisis in the UK every 15 years since 1945.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.21.

<sup>21</sup> The national debt in 1997 was £8,900 for every person in the UK, rising to £20,577 by 2012, and is forecast to be around £35,000 in the next few years.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> The 2012 national debt of £2,492 billion, was costing £120 million a day in interest and every UK person was paying the banks the equivalent of £81 a month.  
Doc-Video: Positive Money (2014). Part One, Op. cit.

Additionally, in 2011, the interest payments for the banks' created 97% of the money (around £2 trillion) amounted to £109 billion. This is a low figure, because of historically low interest rates, whereas in 2008, it was £213 billion of interest going from the UK people to the banks. – As they say, they're laughing all the way to the bank.  
Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.155.

<sup>23</sup> In the five years up to the financial crisis, the banks' gross lending to households and individuals (excluding lending to businesses) amounted to £2.9 trillion. Whereas total government spending was £2.1 trillion.

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Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.167.

- 24 There's been large increases in lending to the financial sector in the last 20 years (largely around property), which has fuelled asset price inflation. This has disproportionately benefitted the financial sector, investment banks etc. The current monetary system also tends to redistribute wealth geographically, transferring wealth towards London.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.157.

Similarly, the housing bubble is a massive transfer of wealth from those without property (i.e. the poor and the young), towards the wealthy and the old, as well as to speculators and the banks.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.145.

- 25 Total money in the UK economy in 2012 was £2,186 billion, while the national debt was £2,492 billion. Even if all the debt was repaid, it would still leave a deficit of £306 billion.

Positive Money – Fix the Money System and the Economy (2014). – Ben Dyson. Part Two.

<<http://www.positivemoney.org/videos/presentations-by-ben-dyson-others-from-positive-money/video-how-to-fix-the-banking-system-and-make-it-less-socially-harmful/>>

- 26 From the 3% of UK notes in circulation between 2002 and 2009, the government treasury received £18 billion. [Roughly £2 billion a year on 3%, therefore, 100% would realise £67 billion annually. – My calculations].

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.160.

- 27 If the national minimum wage had kept pace with FTSE 100 CEO salaries since 1999, it would now be £18-89 per hour instead of £6-50 (from 01 Oct. 2014).

Danny Dorling, 'How the super rich got richer: 10 shocking facts about inequality.' In the: *The Guardian*, (15 Sept. 2014).

- 28 Under the reformed system, money will predominantly be spent into the economy and be *debt free*, instead of 92% of it going to the financial sector.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.260.

- 29 Positive Money propose two distinct types of bank accounts. Transaction Accounts (like deposit accounts), will hold risk-free money which can not be used by the bank to fund its own lending. The actual accounts would be held in the Bank of England. So the money is fully protected and can not be lost.

Whereas Investment Accounts (like savings accounts) would be held with the bank to be invested for a profit. The investor would have to agree to lose access for a period of time and also bear some risk, but gain greater control over where their money is invested. This will not create new money but transfer existing funds from one person to another.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.177.

Banks that fail can be declared bankrupt – just like any other business – but the Transaction Accounts money will be perfectly safe (in the Banks of England), and can simply be transferred to another bank.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. pp.178 and 198.

Therefore, all subsidies to banks can be removed, saving the taxpayers anything from £20 billion to £350 billion annually, as well as saving another £45 billion a year in interest currently paid to them for creating 97% of the UK money supply.

- 30 The UK government today provides up to £85,000 deposit insurance (via the Financial Services Compensation Scheme), to most bank accounts. Theoretically it's covered by bank levies, but because of the bank failures of 2008/09, it cost taxpayers £19.86 billion, of which less than 1% (£171 million) was recouped through the bank levies.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.90.

Bank of England calculated depositor insurance and other indirect subsidies, 'in some years to be in excess of £300 billion. In these years, 'it is difficult to see how the banks would have been profitable without it.'

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.152.

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<sup>31</sup> In 2009/10, UK government's total tax revenue was £490.6 billion. £2.1 billion (less than half of one per cent) came from banks' corporation tax payments, while £15.2 billion (3%) came from bank staff's income tax and national insurance contributions. The other £473 billion (97%) came from the non-banking sector of the economy.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.171.

<sup>32</sup> From 2009 the Bank of England has created some £375 billion of new money (Quantitative Easing), nearly £6,000 for every UK man, woman and child. This money was pumped into the City of London and raised share prices by 20%, benefitting the top 5% of people to the tune of £128,000 per household. Making the rich even richer. Then in 2010 the government cut 715 school repairs programme, and 1,000 flood defence projects, arguing that it didn't have any money!

Positive Money – How to waste £375 billion? The Failure of Quantitative Easing. (2014).

<<http://www.positivemoney.org/2014/06/waste-375-billion-failure-quantitative-easing-video/>>

<sup>33</sup> The richest 1% increased their share of income in 24 out of 26 countries for which there is available data between 1980 and 2012.

In the US, the wealthiest 1% captured 95% of post financial crisis growth since 2009, while the bottom 90% became poorer.

Oxfam: *Working for the few: political capture and economic inequality*. 178 Oxfam briefing paper – Summary. (20 Jan. 2014).

<<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/working-for-the-few-political-capture-and-economic-inequality-311312>>

<sup>34</sup> Danny Dorling: The cost of the UK's 1% is equivalent to running 1,100 royal families.

Dorling (15 Sept. 2014) Op. cit.

Cost of one royal family is estimated to be £100 million a year.

[http://www.dannydorling.org/books/onepercent/Material\\_files/iatopc\\_chapter1.pdf](http://www.dannydorling.org/books/onepercent/Material_files/iatopc_chapter1.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> In 1998, FTSE CEOs earnings were 47 times their average employee salaries, and in 2014 it is 143 times more. A three fold increase since 1998. – High Pay Commission.

Ben Chu, 'Top bosses' rewards now 143 times workers' pay.' *The Independent*, (18 Aug. 2014).

Per head of population, there are more super rich in London – around 4,200 – than anywhere else in the world, including at least 2,000 Russian millionaires. This largely reflects UK's very lax tax laws, in terms of the super rich.

Dorling (15 Sept. 2014) Op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> In spring of 2014 Oxfam revealed that some 85 of the world's richest people had nearly as much wealth (\$110tn), as the poorest half of humanity (3.5 billion people).

Dorling (15 Sept. 2014) Op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> As the US Supreme Court Justice Louise Brandeis has said: 'We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but we cannot have both.'

Oxfam (20 Jan. 2014) Op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> The Trussell Trust ... 'people receiving three days or more worth of emergency food from their food banks has increased from 26,000 in 2009 to over 900,000 in 2014.' The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Dec. 2013 report shows that 'most households classified as living in poverty are also in work.'

Deborah Hargreaves, 'Why we need to tackle income inequality in the UK.' *Huffington Post*, (13 May 2014 BST Updated: 13 July 2014). Deborah Hargreaves is the Director of High Pay Centre.

<[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/deborah-hargreaves/income-inequality\\_b\\_5314852.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/deborah-hargreaves/income-inequality_b_5314852.html)>

<sup>39</sup> The average salary dropped by more than £2,600 in 2010 alone, falling from £28,207 to £25,543 – Since when it has recovered a little.

See chapter 46, [5] last two paragraphs re Daily Mail Reporter: 'Workers Pay the Penalty for Recession as Average Annual Salary Drops £2,600 in Just Six Months.'

High Pay Centre calculated, FTSE 100 chiefs on £4.3 million, while Britain's average salary was £26,500 in January 2014.

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Kevin Maguire, 'Where do you rank in the official earnings list? Figures reveal huge pay gap between rich and poor.' *The Mirror*, (09 Jan. 2014)  
<<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/uk-average-salary-26500-figures-3002995>>

<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile the FTSE 100 richest people had seen their earnings grow by 60%, from £2.6 million in 2008 to £4.3 million by 2013.

Re top bosses' average of £4.3 million, see [39] above, second paragraph.

<sup>41</sup> Banks pay no VAT at all – an exemption that the Institute for Fiscal Studies has said, is neither necessary nor logical.

Jackson and Dyson (2014) Op. cit. p.171.

<sup>42</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has produced statistics showing that George Osborne's plans will cut the proportion of GDP going to the state to the lowest level in western Europe by 2015, and for the first time below that in the US.

Dorling (15 Sept. 2014) Op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> 'Britain's longest depression since serious record-keeping began is now officially over.'

The service economy is now just under 3% bigger than it was at the peak, manufacturing is still more than 7% smaller, and the production industries as a whole have been diminished by 11%. ... there has been no rebalancing of the economy back towards the makers.

Robert Peston, 'Farewell to the mother of all depressions.' (25 July 2014).

BBC News – Business. Robert Peston, Economics Editor,

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-28480145>>

### **Chapter 53: Bombs and Bullets or Medical Diplomacy?**

<sup>1</sup> Re For 17 years, the United States deliberately cultivated an extremism against which it could later proclaim a war on terror. Based on, Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's book (2005): *The War on Truth: 9/11, Disinformation and the Anatomy of Terrorism*. – cited in below:

John Pilger (2006) *Freedom Next Time*. p. 366-369

Also see chapter 1, number [1], (e) and (f).

<sup>2</sup> The US and Saudi Arabia deliberately cultivated and spread Islamic extremism, in order to destroy secular Arabism, as it challenged Islamic-based monarchies and US Middle East energy interests.

Nafeez Masaddeq Ahmed (2005) *The War on Truth: 9/11, Disinformation and the Anatomy of Terrorism*. – As above.

Also see Chapter 1, numbers: [3](c), [3](e) and [3](g).

<sup>3</sup> Re the CIA, MI6 and the Pakistani ISI effectively created the Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, see chapter 1, number [1] (e) and (f)

<sup>4</sup> These Islamic fundamentalists are the product of US' thirteen years occupation of Iraq and its regime change policies in Libya and especially Syria.

See chapter 49, numbers [19] and [20]

<sup>5</sup> 'There is something hysterical and exaggerated about Saudi fear of Shia expansionism ... of 57 Muslim countries, just four have a Shia majority.'

Patrick Cockburn, 'Is Saudi Arabia regretting its support for terrorism?' *Counterpunch*, (19 March 2014).

<<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/03/19/is-saudi-arabia-regretting-its-support-for-terrorism/>>

<sup>6</sup> '19 beheaded in 17 days.' Saudi Arabia has executed at least 19 people since August 4, 2014 (up to August 20). Eight for nonviolent offences, seven for drug smuggling and one for sorcery.'

Human Rights Watch, 'Saudi Arabia: Surge in Executions.' (21 Aug. 2014)

<<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/08/21/saudi-arabia-surge-executions>>

<sup>7</sup> ISIS is abbreviation for Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Levant, that used to be al-Qaeda in Iraq. It is influenced by the Saudi Wahhabi movement and split from al-Qaeda in February 2014. Since then its been variously referred to as ISIS, IS (Islamic State), and ISL.



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Very simply: An Islamic caliphate is led by a supreme religious and political leader, who governs by Islamic laws and jurisprudence, sharia laws etc

Re US, ISIS were nurtured, armed and funded in Syria, Libya and Iraq, by the US, Saudi Arabia etc, see chapter 48, number [31] and chapter 49, number [1].

<sup>8</sup> Seymour Hersh revealed in his article for the London Review of books: ‘The Red Line and the Rat Line: Obama, Erdogan and the Syrian rebels.’ The rat line is the CIA ‘supply chain for the Syrian rebels overseen by the US in covert cooperation with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.’ Cited in below: Patrick Cockburn, ‘MI6, the CIA and Turkey’s rogue game in Syria.’ *The Independent*, (13 April 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Initially there were ‘fewer than 5,000 poorly armed and trained guerrillas’ of Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge, but following the US saturation bombing, the ‘equivalent of five Hiroshimas on rural Cambodia during 1969-73, killing some 600,000 (according to a Finnish Government enquiry), they grew to a formidable army of 200,000.’ John Pilger, ‘From Pol Pot to ISIS: “Anything that flies on everything that moves.”’ (08 Oct. 2014). <<http://johnpilger.com/articles/from-pol-pot-to-isis-anything-that-flies-on-everything-that-moves>>

<sup>10</sup> ‘I’m afraid it’s the same old US policy: confronting the greatest crisis in the Middle East since the last greatest crisis in the Middle East.’ Robert Fisk, ‘Bingo! Here’s another force of evil to be vanquished.’ *The Independent*, (11 Sept. 2014).

For more than a year, the Obama administration, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan and Turkey, all variously supported, armed and financed the so called Free Syrian Army that turned into ISIS – in order to destroy the secular government in Syria. John Pilger, ‘Breaking the last taboo – Gaza and the threat of world war.’ (11 Sept. 2014). <<http://johnpilger.com/articles/breaking-the-last-taboo-gaza-and-the-threat-of-world-war>>

<sup>11</sup> Re so called moderate rebels now being trained in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, see chapter 49, number [1] and [19].

<sup>12</sup> Ebola outbreak in west Africa has claimed more than 3,300 lives. World Health Organisation (WHO): ‘Cuban medical team heading for Sierra Leone.’ (Sept. 2014). <<http://www.afro.who.int/pt/centro-media/comunicados-de-imprensa/item/6962-cuban-medical-team-heading-for-sierra-leone/6962-cuban-medical-team-heading-for-sierra-leone.html>>

<sup>13</sup> By 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2014, in the three main West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, there were 13,540 cases of Ebola fever; (7,720 laboratory-confirmed); and 4,941 deaths. CDC – Centre for Disease Control and Prevention: ‘2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa – case counts.’ <<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/case-counts.html>>

<sup>14</sup> On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 165 health professionals arrived from Cuba in Sierra Leone – largest medical team of any nation, according to WHO. A further 296 Cuban doctors and nurses will go to Liberia and Guinea, after training for this specific mission. WHO: Cuban medical team heading for Sierra Leone, (Sept. 2014) Op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Regan, Secretary of Cuba Solidarity Campaign, interviewed by George Galloway MP, on his Sputnik programme on Russia Today. Episode 046, (03 Oct. 2014): US sent 3,000 soldiers and 63 clinicians. Following the 2010 earthquake in Pakistani part of Kashmir, Cuba sent 2,500 medics, treated some 70% of the million-plus victims, and left behind 32 field hospitals, as well as establishing doctors and nurses training in Cuba. They even train some poor medical students from the US – absolutely free. Bernard Regan, on Sputnik (03 Oct. 2014). <<http://rt.com/shows/sputnik/192860-ebola-army-doctors-uk/>>

<sup>16</sup> Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO: ‘Cuba is world famous for its ability to train outstanding doctors and nurses and for its generosity in helping fellow countries.’ World Health Organisation – Media Centre: ‘Who welcomes Cuban doctors for Ebola response in west Africa. (12 Sept. 2014). <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/cuban-ebola-doctors/en/>>

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Science, the leading medical journal stated: ‘This is the largest human health contribution sent to date to control the epidemic.’

Salim Lamrani, ‘World Health Organisation: Cuba sets the example in the fight against Ebola virus. (25 Sept. 2014)

<<http://cubainsidetheworld.wordpress.com/2014/09/25/world-health-organization-cuba-sets-the-example-in-the-fight-against-ebola-virus-cuba-usa-un-europe-africa-angola-south-africa/>>

- 17 Currently there are more than 50,000 Cuban-trained health workers in 66 countries.  
WHO: Cuban medical team heading for Sierra Leone, (Sept. 2014) Op. cit.
- 18 From 1963 onwards Cuba has made nearly 600,000 medical missions in 158 countries, with the participation of 326,000 health professionals.  
Despite the difficulties, Cuba sent six tons of medical aid to Gaza, in response to the latest 2014 Israeli Operation Protective Edge, massacre of Palestinian people.  
Salim Lamrani, (25 Sept. 2014) Op. cit.
- 19 After the revolution, half of Cuba’s 6,000 doctors fled to the US. Yet by 2008, Cuba was training 20,000 foreign doctors a year for free.  
WHO: Cuban medical team heading for Sierra Leone, (Sept. 2014) Op. cit.
- 20 Cuba has contributed to eradicating illiteracy in Venezuela and Bolivia and initiated reading programmes that have been used in the West, like Spain and New Zealand. Cuba’s people stand amongst the world’s highest educated nations, according to UN data.  
Russia Today, Episode 046, (03 Oct. 2014) Op. cit.
- 21 Cuba’s minister for foreign affairs, said: ‘The resulting economic damages accumulated after half a century amounted to more than \$1.1 trillion, based on the price of gold.’  
United Nations Press Release GA/11574. 28 October, 2014.  
‘As General Assembly demands end to Cuba blockade for twenty-third consecutive year, Country’s foreign minister cites losses exceeding \$1 trillion.’  
<<http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ga11574.doc.htm>>
- 22 ‘BNP Paribas to pay \$9 to settle sanctions violations.’  
Largest previous fine levied by US regulators for sanctions violations was \$1.9 billion, against the British HSBC bank, and \$674 million on UK-based Standard Chartered in 2012.  
BBC News – Business. ‘BNP Paribas to pay \$9bn to settle sanctions violations.’ (01 July 2014).  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-28099694>>
- 23 The General Assembly in its twenty-third consecutive resolution called for an end to the United States’ commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. 188 votes in favour, 2 against (United States and Israel) and 3 abstentions (Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau).  
UN Press Release GA/11574. 28 October, 2014. Op. cit.
- 24 These agreements were not completely out of the blue, but the result of 18 months of secret US-Cuba negotiations facilitated by the Canadian government and Pope Francis of the Vatican.  
Peter Baker, ‘US to restore full relations with Cuba, erasing a last trace of Cold War hostility.’ New York Times, (17 Dec. 2014).  
<[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/us-cuba-relations.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/us-cuba-relations.html?_r=0)>
- 25 Re Immediate release (after 16 years) of the remaining three of the Cuban Five: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero. Fernando González and René González were released earlier in 2011 and February 2014, having served their full sentences.  
Alongside the release of some 53 US-defined political prisoners and Alan Gross – a convicted spy, on humanitarian grounds.  
Jeff Mackler, ‘Obama’s Cuban policy shift.’ Counterpunch, 23 Dec. 2014.  
<<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/12/23/obamas-cuban-policy-shift/>>
- 26 Re removal of US objection to Cuba’s attendance of the Organisation of American States (OAS), after 53 years, (and due to the mounting pressure on the US from these states).

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Easing of travel restrictions for family visits, public performances, professional, educational and religious activities – and enabling them to be able to use US credit and debit cards in Cuba, though ordinary tourism will still be banned.

Baker (17 Dec. 2014) Op. cit.

- <sup>27</sup> Raul Castro said: ‘An important step has been taken, but the essential thing remains – the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, which has grown in recent years particularly in terms of financial transactions.’
- <sup>28</sup> Re Obama: ‘We will end an outdated approach that for decades has failed to advance our interests.’  
Baker (17 Dec. 2014) Op. cit.
- <sup>29</sup> Re New York Times rationale for ending the embargo against Cuba is paraphrased from Jeff Mackler’s (above) article.
- <sup>30</sup> 27 October 2015, the 193-member United States General Assembly adopted a resolution to end the economic blockade imposed by the US against Cuba, while acknowledging the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, after nearly 50 years. The vote: 191 in favour to two against (Israel and the United States). ‘UN General Assembly renews long-standing call for end to US embargo against Cuba.’ UN News Centre. (27 Oct. 2015).  
<<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52391#>>

## Chapter 65: End Game – Part Two

- <sup>1</sup> Sources for the data here have been cited earlier, but on the issue of drone strikes specifically:  
See Chapter 48, Nos. 9, 11-24 and 26: ‘only about 2%’ of those killed by drones in Pakistan ... ‘militant leaders.’
- <sup>2</sup> Comments from the platform of mass public demonstration in Pakistan:  
‘The drones are violating the people of Pakistan, as well as their human rights. We want to send a message to America: the more strikes you conduct, the more people will resent you.  
See Chapter 48, No 14 and (a).
- <sup>3</sup> Re full spectrum dominance policies, as explained by F William Engdahl, see Chapter 50, Nos. 3-5.
- <sup>4</sup> This ‘war on terror’ is the smokescreen and pretext, the justification and cover, for the multinational corporations and bankers’ conquest and empire abroad, and for a war on democracy and freedom, globally and at home.’  
J. Todd Ring, ‘The Paris attacks in context.’ Wordpress, (18 Feb. 2016).  
<<https://jtoddring.wordpress.com/?s=Paris+attacks+in+context>>
- <sup>5</sup> In January 2016, an UN expert panel accused Saudi Arabia of ‘widespread and systematic’ attacks on civilian targets. And in August 2016 it released a new report in which it again accused Saudi forces of ‘violating international humanitarian law.’  
Andrew Smith, ‘Debunking the myths that underpin Britain’s arms export to Saudi Arabia.’ Stop The War Coalition. 09 Feb. 2017.  
<<http://www.stopwar.org.uk/index.php/news-comment/2412-debunking-the-myths-that-underpin-britain-s-arms-exports-to-saudi-arabia>>
- Also see: Ewen MacAskill, ‘UN Report into Saudi-led strikes in Yemen raise questions over UK role.’ *The Guardian*, 27 Jan. 2016.  
AFP, ‘Saudi coalition, Huthis violate rights in Yemen: UN Report.’ Business Standard, 05 Aug. 2016.  
<[http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/saudi-coalition-huthis-violate-rights-in-yemen-un-report-116080500128\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/saudi-coalition-huthis-violate-rights-in-yemen-un-report-116080500128_1.html)>
- <sup>6</sup> UN’s Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs official, Jamie McGoldrick said the death toll in the two year Yemen conflict ‘has reached 10,000 with 40,000 others wounded.’  
Ahmed Al-Haj, ‘Top UN official: 10,000 civilians killed in Yemen conflict.’ Associated Press, 16 Jan. 2017.

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<<https://apnews.com/43471432a8e949a7af6fc56928284d78/top-un-official-10000-civilians-killed-yemen-conflict>>

- <sup>7</sup> ‘An estimated 18.8 million people in Yemen rely on humanitarian assistance and are desperate need of food, water, fuel and shelter.’ ... ‘The UN has warned that malnutrition is so severe that the country is on the brink of famine.’  
‘Yemen: Multibillion-dollar arms sales by USA and UK shameful contradiction with aid efforts.’ Amnesty International, 23 March 2017.  
<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/yemen-multibillion-dollar-arms-sales-by-usa-and-uk-reveal-shameful-contradiction-with-aid-efforts/>>
- <sup>8</sup> Yemen faces ‘a famine of Biblical proportions,’ warned Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, in exacerbation of the worsening situation.  
UN data shows, from March 2015 to March 2017, 16,200 people have been killed in Yemen, including 10,000 civilians.’  
Khaled Abdullah, ‘Veteran aid expert Egeland warns of ‘Biblical’ famine in Yemen. Reuters, 03 May, 2017.  
<<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-aid-idUSKBN17Z1GG>>
- <sup>9</sup> Since March 2015, the ‘US and UK have together transferred more than US\$5 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia. ... more than 10 times the estimated US\$450 million ... in aid to Yemen over the past two years’  
Amnesty International 23 March, 2017. Op. cit.
- <sup>10</sup> ‘President Trump approved \$300 million of precision-guided missile technology for Saudi Arabia and a \$3bn F-16 deal for Bahrain – deals blocked by the Obama administration over concerns such weapons could be used in violation of human rights.  
Jamie Doward, ‘Does UK’s lucrative arms trade come at the cost of political repression?’ *The Guardian*, 12 Feb. 2017.
- <sup>11</sup> Trump ‘has just completed largest single arms deal in US history, negotiating a package totalling more than \$109.7 billion.’ Plus as part of a package including restocking and future commitments over the next ten years, the deal could amount to ‘\$350 billion worth of arms, over a third of a trillion dollars.’  
Tyler Durden, ‘Trump Signs “Single Largest Arms Deal in US History” with Saudi Arabia Worth \$350 Billion.’ Global Research, 22 May, 2017.  
<<http://www.globalresearch.ca/trump-signs-single-largest-arms-deal-in-us-history-with-saudi-arabia-worth-350-billion/5591313>>
- <sup>12</sup> Re Status of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia see Chapter 59, No. 7.
- <sup>13</sup> US Supreme Court Justice Louise Brandeis: ‘We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but we cannot have both.’  
See Chapter 47, No 33.
- <sup>14</sup> Peter Tatchell’s alternative economic strategy derived from: ‘The Alternative to the Cuts: How to Raise a £100+ Billion and Save Our Public Services’.  
See Chapter 46, No. 24.
- <sup>15</sup> The FTT (financial transactions tax), which aims to raise public funds and discourage speculative trading, will be adopted by 11 EU states – but not by the UK.  
‘Financial transactions tax: UK launches legal challenge.’ BBC News, Business. 20 April 2013.  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22227019?print=true>>
- <sup>16</sup> Around £70 billion is lost through tax evasion every year, according to Chartered Accountants Richard Murphy, while welfare fraud is estimated to cost about £1 billion. Plus £16bn of benefits are unclaimed annually.  
See Chapter 39, No. 24.
- <sup>17</sup> Naomi Klein (2007) *The Shock Doctrine*: the rise of disaster capitalism.

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<sup>18</sup> In his 2008 election campaign Barak Obama promised to address racial injustices that disproportionately effected black people, like the 100 to 1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine, introduced in 1986 – in the so called, war on drugs. (Crack cocaine is largely used by black Americans and poor whites, while powder cocaine is mainly used by wealthy white Americans).

In July 2010, he signed a bill that still maintained this disparity but reduced it to 18 to 1, and considered to be a success! (This is the same logic as US prisoners sentenced to 5,000-plus years, being reduced to 3,000 years on appeal).

Jim Abrams, 'Congress passes bill to reduce disparity in crack, powder cocaine sentencing.' *The Washington Post*, (29 July 2010).

In July 2015, with a backdrop of 2.26 million prisoners, Obama announced the US has 5% of the world's population and 25% of prisoners.

Alan Yuhas, 'Obama's prison reform pitch to highlight soaring costs of incarceration.' *The Guardian*, (14 July 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Re *13, 9/11s* daily death toll of 40,000 due to poverty and preventable diseases, see Chapter 39, No. 10, and (a), (b) and (c).

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