

UTRIKES PERSPEKTIV

The Student Magazine
on Foreign Affairs

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Roland Paulsen

Chiapas:
Indigenous Rights

INTERVIEW:
Stefan Löfven

TTIP

The Greatest Affair on Earth

Theme:

**JOURNALISM
FOR CHANGE**



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“THE ATTACK HAS NOT STOPPED FERZAT”

On 25 August 2011, the renowned Syrian cartoonist Ali Ferzat, depicted on the cover of this issue, was beaten savagely and assaulted by masked gunmen believed to be part of the security forces and pro-government militia in Damascus. His hands, with which more than 15 000 satirical cartoons have been created, were broken. The attack has not stopped Ferzat's from using his pen as a sword against oppressive regimes and corrupt politicians. He has stated "I was born to be a cartoonist, to oppose, to have differences with governments that do these bad things. This is what I do."

THE THEME OF this issue of *Utrikesperspektiv* is Journalism for Change. Read about Chai Jing, the Chinese journalist and environmental activist whose documentary *Under the Dome* has ignited a debate about air pollution in China, on page 36. Learn more about the situation for journalists in the happiest kingdom in the world on page 22 and read our guest writer and Syrian journalist Qais Fares' article about life as a journalist in Syria on page 32.

THIS IS OUR last issue as editors-in-chief and it is hard to avoid clichés about privilege and gratitude when writing about the past year. We would like to thank our editorial staff and let you know that we will be cheering on from the sidelines as Arttu Närhi and Saahil Waslekar, the next editors-in-chief, take care of business from now on. One last word of advice, as Winston Churchill put it: Never, never, never give up!



Goodbye and Good Luck,
Marcus Bornlid & Linnea Sandell
Editors-in-Chief

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Ali Ferzat as depicted by
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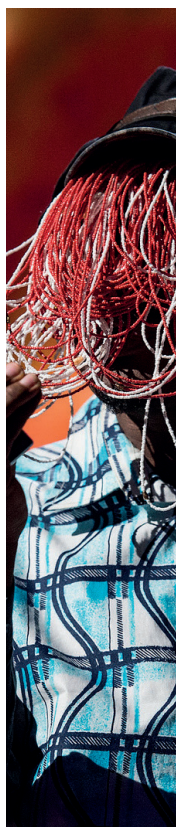
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Utrikesperspektiv is the bilingual member magazine of the Association of Foreign Affairs, published four times per year. The magazine has no affiliations with a political party. Opinions presented are the writers' own.



PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

And so, our term has come to an end. We have had a fantastic year as the president and vice president of this association. During this year the Association of Foreign Affairs has had more lectures than ever before, with eager crowds attending every one. We have traveled to both Istanbul and Kigali, and visited UN City in Copenhagen. The Prep Course and Mentorship Program have once again paired our members together with influential actors on the political scene, and our Pub Nights have been a huge success. All our media platforms have developed as well, with new and fascinating contents and functions in radio, webzine and the printed magazine. We even had time to celebrate our 80-year history with a grand celebration at the AF-building.

WE ARE PLEASED to leave the Association in competent hands. During our Annual Election Meeting, a new and excited board was elected, congratulations to you all. We want to especially congratulate our successors, Anahita Nicoobayan as president and Oscar Waldner as vice president. We look forward to see in what new directions you will take the association.

THIS YEAR HAS been a wonderful experience for the two of us, filled with interesting new people and amazing experiences. We would like to thank our sponsors and benefactors within CMES, LUC-SUS, Folkuniversitet, Folke Bernadotte Akademin and AF for the help and support during our year. Many thanks to all our active members who make out the bulk of our work and without whom this association would not have been anything. Thank you to the board of 2014/15, we have watched in amazement at all your great achievements and are proud to have been your presidents. Finally, thank You who are reading this for being a part of UPF and for letting UPF be a part of you. Have a fantastic summer and see you all back here in September.



On behalf of the board,

Emelie Muñoz & Rikard Brodda
President & Vice President

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May 30th at 2pm
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For more information, go to
upflund.se or to our Facebook
page "Utrikespolitiska
föreningen Lund".

INTERVIEW
STEFAN LÖFVEN



“WE SIMPLY NEED A BETTER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES”

***Utrikesperspektiv* has been granted an audience with the top dog of Swedish politics, the Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. During our conversation, we raised highly debated issues such as the Swedish arms trade and legal refugee routes into Europe, and also – his own take on the social democratic ideology.**

By Marcus Bornlid and Linnea Sandell

You have been pushing hard in international politics since your term started. But at the same time, Sweden is, proportionally speaking, one of the world's biggest exporters of arms. This export has also doubled since 2000. How do you view this trend, and how does that work with your outspoken pursuit to encourage human rights in the rest of the world?

“Since we want a national defense, and want to be able to defend our own borders, and since we have chosen to be outside of any alliance and not join NATO, it is important to possess a certain competence with which to provide for ourselves. Our airplanes are one example of this, or our very good radar system. That is where we really are the best in the world. And that is important if we are to be able to detect danger in time. And if we say that we want this kind of defense for ourselves, should we then deny it for others? We feel

that other countries must be allowed to make that decision. The export of war materials is actually forbidden and is only to be allowed by Swedish defense politics. We can only sell what we have made ourselves.”

How can Sweden put pressure on the other EU-countries to take in a larger amount of refugees than they currently are? Furthermore, do you see a way to create legal routes for refugees into the EU in the coming years?

“We had discussions at the latest summit regarding refugees, and unfortunately, the fact is that no more than half the countries in the EU take in refugees on a quota, which I think should be the first and most natural thing to do. And last week we pushed through decisions to begin doing just that. We think it should be the reasonable and natural thing to do, but at least now we have initiated it. So that's one way to go. I have also

started a discussion on having the Commission bring suggestions as to what could be legal ways to go about it, because we also have to be realistic. And let's be clear that when I bring up something like this, no one is standing up and saying: “Yes, let us do this!” It's actually quite stingy, to be honest. But now the discussion has begun and we shall see what happens. We are also agreed on the fact that we simply need a better distribution of responsibilities between the countries.”

You are currently running for a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. What issues do you want to push if the campaign is a success?

“That depends on what comes up, of course. But what is tragic about the Security Council right now, and many people have expressed this, is that the Syria crisis is still ongoing after all these years, and that people are suffering in ways you can hardly



imagine. But apart from that, it is important to continue with disarmament and to reduce the spread of, for instance, nuclear weapons. These are questions you might think are fairly traditional, but I think it is crucial for human life that we actually decrease the amount of nuclear weapons in the world.”

In *Agenda*, you have stated that you have “issues with the terms left and right”, and that no one can properly define “which is which”. Do you stand by this? If so, on which ideology do you then base your social democratic politics?

“What I mean by that is that when I am focusing on jobs and occupation, I am considered to lean to the right. And that is very strange to me. If there is anything the Social Democrats stand for, it is people’s right to work. To me, that is left-leaning. Social Democracy is, in essence, a liberation movement, and you can only liberate people’s ability to live the lives they want for themselves by making sure that they, women and men, can

provide for themselves. Then we have our system of security and our social welfare to also help us when we are in trouble, and the point is for us to help each other with these kinds of things, to invest together. You don’t invest in security systems at the cost of others, but together with others. So what bothers me with this right- and left label is that I am labelled as being right-leaning when fighting for jobs, because if there is anything I consider to be left, it’s making sure that people have the right to work.”

Even though participation in the last parliament election was the highest in two decades, members of the Swedish parties are leaving, and there is not that much faith in Swedish politicians either. One of the reasons that are given as to why, for instance, young Swedish people stay away from party politics is that they shy away from the established parties’ button-pushing mentalities, so what can be done from your end to turn this trend around (if that is desirable)?

“By being more of a social movement. To not just talk about the idea of a social movement, but to also act accordingly. Firstly, not every party is losing their voters; we have actually been increasing in the last few years. So now we have risen to one hundred thousand members. But I agree, at the same time it is a problem – we could have a lot more young people. They are the future, after all. But I meet many members of SSU, and they are really lively. They keep you alert. But that is also the job of SSU. But you have to be a social movement, and under the social movement we had many conversations by phone and even went door to door, and we have come into contact with over two million people in different ways. And now we need to keep that up, even when there is no political campaign. We need to be there, as people that you recognise, if it’s in downtown Lund or in Örnsköldsvik. We need to be there for the everyday of the people. But that is easier said than done.” ●

“WHERE I COME FROM, REVOLUTION IS THE ONLY CREATION AND THE CREATOR THE ONLY REVOLUTIONARY”

Through spoken word and hip-hop culture, the poet and community activist Biko Mutsaurwa has become an important voice in his native Zimbabwe. His powerful and rhythmic artistic style, which he calls ‘Toyitoyi’, strongly criticizes oppressive systems and vocalises the urgency for peace, justice, and change. Mutsaurwa is internationally recognized and respected, having performed in South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Senegal, Serbia, Switzerland, Denmark, and Germany. In 2013, he was awarded the Human Rights and Democracy Award for his political and cultural work. *Utrikesperspektiv* sat down with him to discuss his activism and the use of music as a potent arbiter of change.



Photo: Toyitoyi Artz Kollektive

You have become a formidable figure in Zimbabwe as an activist and promoter of basic human rights. Could you maybe elaborate on this success and why you chose music and poetry, specifically, as the medium through which to criticize oppressive systems?

“I would take it back to how it is perceived by the Ghanaian writer, Ayi Kwei Armah. He said: ‘Where I come from, revolution is the only creation and the creator the only revolutionary’. There is no stronger connection between Zimbabweans and their spirit than music. I think

to really move the spirit of the Shona people in Zimbabwe, in particular, you have to do it through music.

Toyitoyi is a good example of this. It is a form of mass public protest marked by people stomping their feet and chant-

ing political slogans or songs. The songs and the dance that accompany their movement are meant to express discontent and the resilience of the people using it. The songs themselves are meant to keep the spirit and morale high and the mind focused. It is a threatening expression of discontent and yet, it is a non-violent action in its pure form.”

I think the Zimbabwean government is painfully aware of this. In the last few years, the government has placed severe restrictions on which music can and cannot be played on public television and radio. How have people generally responded to this?

“In Zimbabwe right now, despite music being censored, you can best believe that in the bars and in their homes people are still expressing their frustration through music, through chant,

and through humming. It therefore becomes easy to unplug all this anger and frustration if you offer a platform for them to sing. I think that is why also Shona music -- African music in general -- but Shona music, particularly call and response, is so powerful. The role of the artist on stage is to open up the vowels of everyone, so that this eruption of anger and frustration happens. If you sing alone, you are only exacerbating the frustration within the people. If you allow them to sing with you, then you allow them to express themselves. They will be more satisfied after they have sung, more satisfied after they have danced. I think it continues to be the case and people continue to long for spaces to do this, spaces like the Harare International Festival, where they can freely express themselves.”

Despite these spaces, however, Zimbabweans are continually bombarded with thinly veiled propaganda in the music that the government does allow to be played on the radio. What has been the general reaction to this?

“Where people cannot freely express themselves, Zimbabweans subvert the songs that are being sung. So for every single song that the government commissions to be sung on the radio as propaganda, Zimbabweans, in general, subvert the song. They sing the same song, but they change the lyrics. This phenomenon allows them to withstand the propaganda. Zimbabweans are singing the propaganda songs of the government. The government

thinks that they are endorsing the propaganda, but they are changing the lyrics.”

So the music that the government uses to spread its propaganda is having the exact opposite effect?

“Exactly, they keep the tune but deflect the message.”

Could you maybe elaborate on how the censorship of artists in Zimbabwe has affected you personally? How have you dealt with the restrictive laws in terms of getting your message across?

“In this stage of my musical life, my artistic life, I have produced close to five albums. I am talking about maybe a hundred songs. None of them have ever been played on radio. I once tried to make a musical video and sent it to the station to be aired on public television. It was not aired. I ended up putting it on YouTube but, since then, because of the cost involved in making the videos, I have never done it again. I have continued to do music, but my music now, I post it on the internet. But in Zimbabwe, internet access is still a challenge because internet is very slow and very expensive.

The most successful medium I have found that is very successful, however, is Mix Step Radio. I have collaborated with a lot of artists that are also progressive and political, like me, to produce a program that includes political speeches of, for example, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Nyerere, and even [Zimbabwean] nationalists

Biko Mutsaurwa

- Biko Mutsaurwa is the leader of the Republic of Pungwe, a Movement of Hip-hop Activists in Zimbabwe.

- They promote freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly through hip-hop culture and strongly criticize the oppressive Zimbabwean government.

- Lately, the Zimbabwean authorities have banned all state critical music from public television and radio.

“WE ARE NOT FIGHTING JUST AN INDIVIDUAL, WE ARE FIGHTING A DICTATORIAL RULING PARTY”

when they were still fighting the other regime. I mix this up with our music, our poetry and then just basically distribute these CDs for free.”

How has this method of distributing your art and message generally been received?

“The fact that our music has been banned has the effect of making our music very exclusive. Our music is not as common as the music that people hear every day on the radio. You will not get my music on radio or television. You can only get it from the movement itself. This helps us make an organic link with the community.”

It is so refreshing and inspiring to know that despite the government's draconian laws against the freedom of expression, both art and its consumers are resisting the government's efforts to silence the demand for justice. What do you think the future for Zimbabwe will be?

“I think that to consider the future in Zimbabwe, the first precondition has to be the collapse of the ZANU-PF [Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front] regime. This means that even if Robert Mugabe goes away, we cannot have a dawn if ZANU-PF is still in power. We are not fighting just an individual. We are fighting a dictatorial ruling party, a class of people who suck Zimbabwe dry.

It is the role of social movements and civil society to push political parties, the many oppositional parties, to form a broad collation and not divide the support of the people. That is the only way ZANU-PF is going to fall.

The question of how the country is to move forward must be left to the document that the people authored: our new constitution. It might not be perfect, but it is sufficient enough to move Zimbabwe in the right direction. The broad coalition government can use this document to kick-start a new dawn for Zimbabwe.

Personally, I would also like to see more power in the communities. I am more for direct democracy. For now, the more you decentralise power and put it in the hands of the people the stronger our people will get. Simply put, power to the people!” ●

By Gabriel R. du Plessis

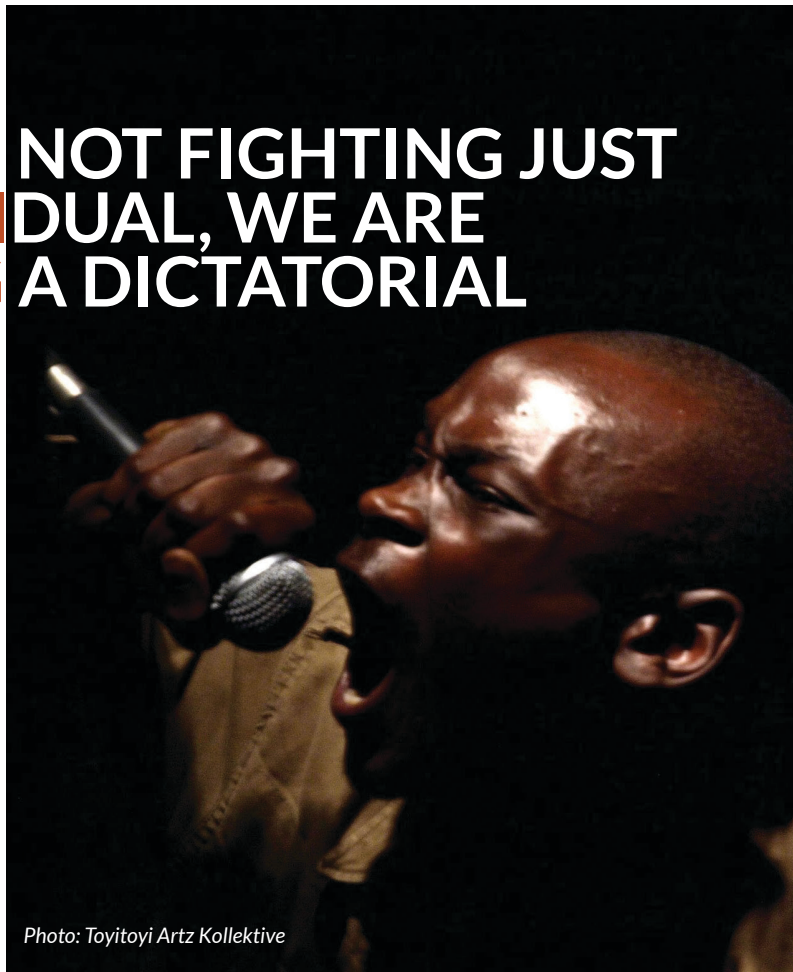


Photo: Toyitoyi Artz Kollektive

“VI HAR NÅGOT AV EN PERFECT STORM HÄR”

Av Marcus Bornlid och Emelie Lindström

Karin Enström är den gamle yrkesofficeren som lämnade det militära för en karriär inom det Moderata samlingspartiet. Mellan 2012-2014 satt hon som försvarsminister, och *Utrikesperspektiv* har träffat henne för ett samtal om några frågor som hon har idel starka åsikter om – Ryssland och svenska Isil-soldater.

Du har talat om att det måste tas krafttag mot Isil-anhängare som åker ned och strider i Syrien och Irak, och från Moderaternas håll har det bland annat talats om att visumen för presumtiva terrorister ska dras in. Men anser du verkligen att det är rätt väg att gå?

“Det är svårt att svara på. Det är lätt att säga att man vill ta krafttag, men man måste ju göra en del avvägningar. Att exempelvis kriminalisera dessa terrorresor tror jag skulle ge en bra signal, men det löser i sig inte problemen. Vi måste fundera över hur vi kan förhindra radikalisering, och här måste staten samarbeta med civilsamhället som finns runtomkring de här unga männen och kvinnorna som befinner sig i riskzonen.”

Så det förebyggande arbetet är viktigare?

“Jag tror att man måste göra båda. Det här berör flera sektioner i och med att det delvis är

en justitiefråga, när det kommer till hur lagstiftningen ska formuleras och vilka straff som ska utfärdas. Och dels en internationell fråga i den meningen att vi måste ha samarbete mellan polis och underrättelsetjänst över de nationella gränserna. Men det hela innebär svåra avvägningar, eftersom vi – om vi vill värna om vårt öppna samhälle – inte heller kan utfärda hur mycket relegeringar och kontrollmekanismer som helst. Men vi måste vara på plats ute i lokalsamhället och prata med socialtjänst, skola, och de religiösa samfund som finns. Imamer och andra.”

Du säger att vi bör agera mot Ryssland med ökade ekonomiska sanktioner, men samtidigt så kan man se Ryssland inte har skurit ned på sina försvarsutgifter utan på exempelvis utbildning och socialstöd till följd av omvärldens repressalier, vilket leder till att det är lokalbefolkningen som drabbas snarare än Putin och hans anhängare. Hur skulle man kunna sätta in sanktioner mot Ryssland utan att civilbefolkningen drabbas?

“EU har ju försökt agera så taktiskt som möjligt för att komma åt personer i Putins närmsta krets och den högsta ledningen. Det som drabbar den ryska ekonomin är inte bara sanktionerna utan också

ryssarnas egna motsanktioner och att det utländska kapitalet drar sig tillbaka. Även det fallande oljepriset. Vi har något av en perfect storm här, eftersom det är så mycket som samverkar som har gjort att man har fått en så försämrad ekonomi så snabbt. Och då är ju risken situationen till slut drabbar den vanlige medborgaren. Men samtidigt är det ju så att man får försöka välja de smartaste verktyg man har för att komma åt beslutsfattarna, och det har man väl till viss del lyckats med. De tycker att det är irriterande att de inte kan skicka sina barn på utbildningar i London och att deras utländska konton är frysta, et cetera.”

Du förespråkar att Sverige ska gå med i NATO, en hållning som för tillfället går stick i stäv med svenska folkopinionen. Men vi antar att du ser ljuset i utvecklingen för det nordiska militärsamarbetet som pågår just nu?

“Det är jättebra med Nordiskt samarbete, men det man ska komma ihåg bara är att det inte är ett alternativ till ett NATO-medlemskap utan ett komplement. Och man har mycket att vinna på att öva och utbilda sig tillsammans, att samordna, att vara rationell, det finns exempel på många olika bra samarbeten. Men för att det ska nå sin fulla potential, och då skulle det vara lättare om

A portrait of Karin Enström, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing a green jacket and a colorful patterned scarf. The background is blurred with a soft pink circle on the left.

INTERVJU KARIN ENSTRÖM

alla länderna var medlemmar i NATO.”

Hur ser du regeringens feministiska utrikespolitik?

“Det beror på innehållet! Alliansregeringen har arbetat hårt med kvinnors rättigheter

och kvinnors delaktighet i allt ifrån ekonomiska möjligheter till att delta i demokratiska processer. Och det är väldigt viktigt. Det är sådana länder som Sverige som måste arbeta för det – både inom EU och inom andra länder. Men om det bara är en fin etikett, då är jag

inte så imponerad av den. Jag tycker att det är upp till bevis för regeringen att visa vad det betyder i praktiken. Vackra ord räcker inte.” ●



VICTIMS OF DISPLACEMENT



Since colonialism, the situation for indigenous people in Mexico has been characterized by discrimination, exclusion and insecurity. In Chiapas, a state torn by an almost 20-year-old land conflict, many communities are suffering from forced displacement and the violence of paramilitaries.

Are there human rights in Sweden? The question is one of the first ones to come up in the conversation I am having with a group of young men and women from Primero de Agosto, an indigenous community consisting of 17 families in the municipality of Las Margaritas, in Chiapas, Mexico. We are sitting under a tarp, looking out on the tent camp in the forest which has now been their home for one and a half months. On the morning of February 23, members of Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos Histórica, a paramilitary farmer's organization, took over their village with violence and stole their belongings. Margarita Méndez Pérez tells me how she was checking on her two-week old son when she heard voices screaming outside, some of them in the Mayan language Tojolabal, some of them in Spanish.

- I WALKED OUTSIDE to see what was happening and saw one of them with a gun. I was so scared. There were 15 masked men with big black firearms, says 19-year-old Elvira Méndez Pérez. She was making tortillas in her kitchen just like any other morning, when she saw the group surround the community. When she came out, she heard one of them ask the others "Should we rape her?"

THE COMMUNITY BELONGS to the indigenous group Tojolabal, which together with tzotzil, tzeltal and ch'ol constitute the Mayan population in Mexico. As of 2013, the Internal Displacement

Monitoring Centre estimated that 25 000 people were victims of forced displacement only in the state of Chiapas, of which many are indigenous farmers. It is one of many tragic consequences of the Chiapas land conflict, usually referred to as the period after the Zapatista uprising in 1994, but that really dates much further back.

INDIGENOUS FARMER'S RIGHT to land was supposed to be guaranteed through the ejido system that was implemented after the Mexican revolution in the 1920's. Each farmer would have the right to a part of an ejido, a communal land, which would put an end to the encomienda system that had been in place since colonial times, where indigenous people often had been kept as landless slaves. However, the redistribution of land never fully occurred in the case of Chiapas, as the political elite and rich landowners, caciques, stopped the implementation. Since then, caciques have repeatedly taken land from indigenous peasants with help of paramilitary groups.

AS THE MEXICAN government facilitated privatization of communal lands in preparation for entering the North American Free Trade Agreement in the beginning of the 1990's, the few possibilities of land rights that existed were further undermined. For many indigenous people, this was nothing but another chapter in a long history of the government's deprivation of their rights. As the trade agreement came into force the 1st of January 1994, the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN), a group of indigenous peasants, took over four towns in Chiapas in a rebellion to demand an end to the discrimination and violence against the indigenous population.

THE ARMED CONFLICT between EZLN and the military lasted for two weeks, before both sides agreed on a ceasefire and the zapatistas declared their demands, including free and democrat-

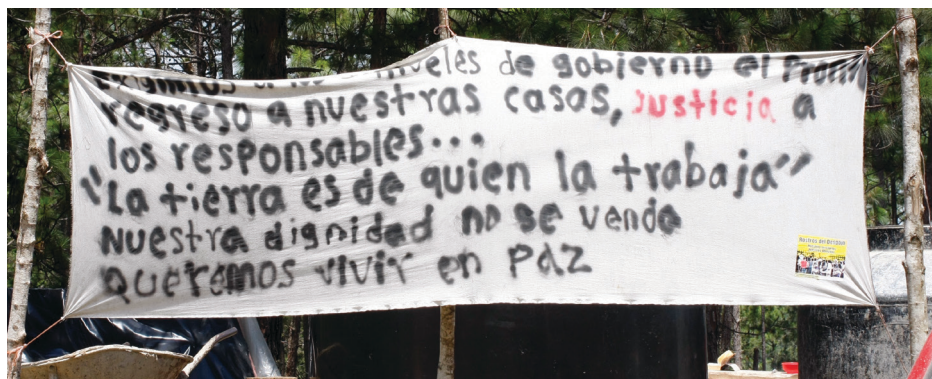
Tojolabales, which belongs to the Mayan group, consists of about 40,000 people concentrated near the city of Las Margaritas.

ic elections, resignation of those who were elected on undemocratic grounds and indigenous autonomy. However, the negotiations were abandoned as the government would not meet all of these. Today the conflict is often described as “low intense”, but the risk of violence from the military, police and paramilitary forces are part of everyday life for many indigenous communities, especially for human right defenders and activists. Discrimination within the legal system is manifested in the large overrepresentation of indigenous people in Chiapas prisons. Amnesty International has documented several cases of torture and imprisonment on unfair grounds. There are countless examples of brutal violence by paramilitary forces. The most famous cases

are the Acteal massacre in 1997 where 45 tzotzil and tzeltal people were murdered and the shooting of the zapatista teacher Jose Luis Solis Lopez, known as Galeano, in 2014.

- THE CHILDREN CAN'T go to school, it's too dangerous. The risk that they might get kidnapped on the way there is too high, says 22-year-old Javier Roman Lopez.

LIKE MANY OF the indigenous communities in Chiapas, the families of Primero de Agosto are used to living under the constant threat of violence. Several aggressions by landowners have been reported long before the actual displacement, including one attack in May last year when one of the young



The words on the banner say, among other things, “... the land belongs to those who work on it” and “Our dignity is not for sale, we want to live in peace.”





men from the community was cut with a machete so severely that he could no longer move his left arm.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF the displacement are devastating both physically and mentally. The lack of clean water in combination with no access to health care has led to infections and disease among the families. As the tents are made of sticks and tarps, there is not enough protection from rain and the families sleep on the soil with only plastic bags as mattresses. For 19-year-old Elvira who is eight months pregnant, the uncertainty of how and where her baby will be born is a nightmare.

- HERE I DON'T have food, I'm hungry. I don't have water to drink, other than that we find in the pools, but they are drying out. I'm drinking dirty water, I'm sleeping under a broken tarp and when it rains, water comes in.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT in

Chiapas is definitely not easy and to some extent, the word "conflict" seems misleading. During the visit to Primero de Agosto it becomes clear that this is not a dispute between two equal parts regarding a certain amount of hectares but essentially a question of century-long oppression of the powerless by the powerful, that increasingly turns vulnerable people against each other. Farmers from indigenous communities are represented on both sides: both as those who displace and are being displaced. They are all part of the group which has been one of the most oppressed in Mexican society throughout history, socially, culturally and economically. Many of them are struggling with the same difficult realities: insecure living conditions, low prices for coffee and corn, making it very hard to live off farming, lack of access to health care and education, as well as racism and social exclusion in a society where violence, corruption, impunity and unkept promises are the norm.

A FEW DAYS after the displacement, the community had a meeting with the General Secretary of the Government of the State of Chiapas where a contract was signed which would guarantee the families of Primero de Agosto half of the 74 hectares that were taken, as well as an examination and repair of the damages caused by it. Two months later, the families are still waiting.

AS THE CONVERSATION under the tarp comes to an end, Genaro Pérez Jimenez tells me:

- HERE IN MEXICO there are two kinds of human rights. One that is promoted by the government, which is just talk. And then there is the other kind, the real kind. But we don't have that one. ●

By Lovisa Prage
Photos by Lovisa Prage

By Arttu Närhi, Marcus Bornlid and Linnea Sandell

1. POPULAR ISLANDS

General Gregorio Catapang, Chief of Staff of the Philippine Armed Forces, has expressed concern over China's activities on disputed islands in the South China Sea. On the eve of a joint military exercise with the USA, the Philippine General showed members of the press satellite photos of Chinese constructions underway on several disputed islands. The construction projects seem to include airports suitable for military use. The islands in question have been fought over ever since the 13th century, and most recently issues regarding oppression of ethnic minorities have brought the territorial claims to the foy, something which garnered the support of China in making a case against Vietnam and the Philippines. According to the BBC, China claims almost the entire South China Sea, infringing on Philippine, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Bruneian and Malaysian sovereignties.



Photo: David Stanley

2. 30 YEARS OF LOUSY ATMOSPHERE

More than 30 years after the Falklands war in 1982, the sovereignty of the islands is still a controversial issue in Argentine-British relations. For instance, Argentina resumed a reclamation stance in 2006, after a dispute regarding fishing licenses in the Falkland waters. The most recent example of the continuing tensions between the countries was when the Argentine Minister of the Malvinas (the Argentinian name for the islands) Daniel Filmus recently announced the opening of a criminal case against three British and two American oil companies for violating Argentinian territorial sovereignty. The British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, however, did not entirely agree with Filmus. He dismissed Filmus's comments as "outrageous bullying", and cited the islanders' right to develop their natural resources in the way they see fit.

3. SPRINGTIME FOR THE DISSIDENTS

Journalist and lawyer Hildebrando Chaviano, and a candidate of an outlawed party, Yuniel Lopez, became the first Cuban dissidents since the Cuban revolution to run and make it to the first round of voting in the communist country's election this April. Both candidates were running for seats in Havana municipal assemblies, and since political campaigning is forbidding, they had to put up their photos and biographies in public spaces in order to attract support. However, they were unable to advance further than to the second round; the two candidates conceded defeat after Hildebrando came in fourth in his district and Yuniel third in his. Moreover, President Raul Castro had promised reforms to the electoral system back in 2010, but he has so far failed to produce results.

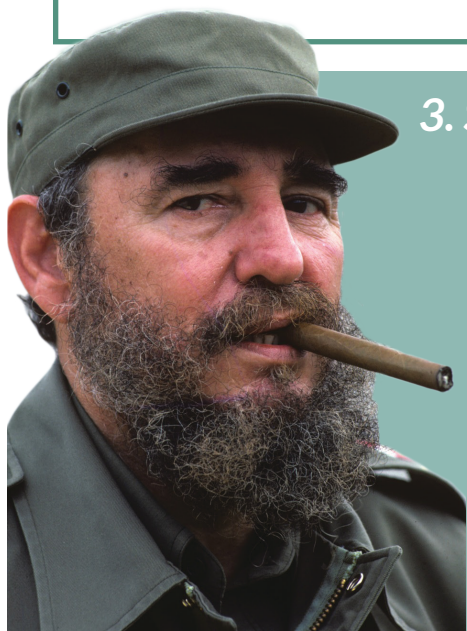
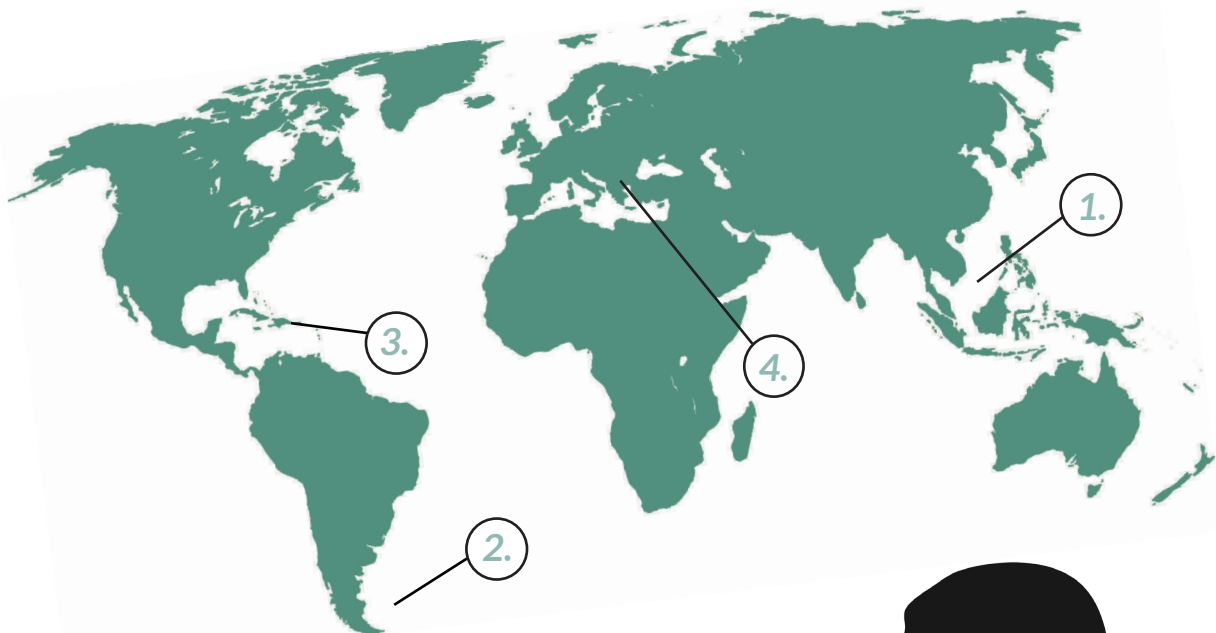


Photo: Ninian Reid



4. DON'T MESS WITH MOLDOVA

Moldova's new Minister of Defense, Viorel Cibotaru, plans to begin a large overhaul of the nation's military. In an interview, he cited the largest reason to be neighboring Ukraine's ongoing civil war and the dire geopolitical situation. While being a neutral nation, Cibotaru expressed wishes for NATO assistance in the modernization project that should be completed by 2018. Moldova has not been directly involved in the Ukraine crisis, but has growing concern of the conflict spreading. In 2014, after the Russian Federation annexed the autonomous region of Crimea, the head of the Transnistrian parliament asked to join the Russian Federation too. Even with high Transnistrian support, Russia is unlikely to comply as they deem the breakaway region's secession referendums to not satisfy conditions for joining the federation.



Photo: Dave Sherpa


There are
at least

220

imprisoned journalists
worldwide according
to Reporters Without
Borders. 2014 was the
second worst year for
journalists since the
organisation was
established.







Theme:

JOURNALISM

A MEAN FOR CHANGE

During the “Umbrella Revolution”, more than 100 000 citizens took to the streets in Hong Kong to demand universal suffrage. During the protests images of the demonstrators were spread across the globe on social media. One could follow every phase of the development in every corner of the world via Twitter, Facebook and Youtube.

But to what degree can journalists actually influence the events which they are covering? And is it possible for reporters to have any impact at all in countries such as Syria, where the government are quick to silence all displeasing individual voices?

In this magazine we have explored a wide range of these issues in countries such as Bhutan, Ghana and Syria.

JOURNALISTS **ARE NOT HAPPY** IN THE HAPPIEST KINGDOM

Bhutan has earned the reputation as the kingdom of happiness in Asia. So why is it, that the Bhutanese journalists do not follow the country's happy suit?

When Lisa Napoli -American journalist and the author behind *Radio Shangri-la*, set her foot in the land of Bhutan for the first time, she described Bhutan as the happiest kingdom on earth. Bhutan was her Shangri-la. And that is easily understood. For the journalist who was overwhelmed by a huge amount of workload and had doubts about the true meaning of journalism, the peaceful-looking country and the enthusiastic young radio jockeys at country's broadcasting stations might have healed her tired mind and body. This provoked a sense of nostalgia for her early passion for journalism, and her goal to give voice to the people and plumb to the depths of the community.

BHUTAN IS WELL-KNOWN for the high scores in the Gross National Happiness (GNH), not the Gross Domestic Product. Likewise, the GNH reflects the intention or attention of the Bhutanese government to prevent the destructive desire for economic growth to triumph over their cultural, traditional values, which are based on Buddhism. It is definitely worthwhile to incorporate the concept of happiness into the national developmental philosophy. How

many countries on earth can seriously be said to prioritise their people's happiness, instead of the wealth of the nation? Bhutan was the first country to put this practise into action, even though the GNH parameters since then have gained recognition all over the world. Many countries have adapted this measurement at policy level, in addition to the more traditional use of GDP. In the happy country of Bhutan, however, journalists do somehow not seem to be that happy.

AT THE FIRST glance, the media landscape in Bhutan is a rich mix of diverse media outlets, thanks to the recent two influential political changes: the liberalisation of their media licensing policy in 2006 and the democratic transition from absolute monarchy to a multi-party democracy, which occurred two years later. Media in Bhutan is, however, still a young, emergent concept in its early stage of development. Bhutan is a small state with only 744,000 inhabitants, nesting between two Asian gigantic powers: China and India. Television and Internet only arrived in 1999 and until the time, there was only one state-owned newspaper. At present time, there are 12 newspapers, six radio stations and two television stations. Despite the increase, however, how this small number of media outlets ensure viability is still disputed.

THE BHUTANESE GOVERNMENT officially supports the media pluralism, with re-

Bhutan was rated the eighth happiest country in the world, and the happiest Asian nation, by the magazine Business Week in 2006.



Photo: Christopher Michel



Photo: Göran Höglund



Photo: Christopher Michel



Photo: Raj Kumar



Photo: Xiao Deng

spect for the freedom of expression in order to encourage people, particularly marginalised communities, to participate in the public sphere and the right to information for promoting real democracy. The typical example of showing this political backup is the establishment of Bhutan Media Foundation under the umbrella of the Bhutanese government. On its official website, it is specified that it is mandated to support the wholesome development of mass media in that it can carry out its roles and responsibilities in the interest of the democracy.

“HOW THIS SMALL NUMBER OF MEDIA OUTLETS ENSURE VIABILITY IS STILL DISPUTED”

HOWEVER, THE PROBLEMATIC questions arise from the real journalism environment explained by Bhutanese journalists at the private sector. In Bhutan, about 90 percent of the revenue of independent journalism depends on government advertising as there is no advertising culture in the private sector. More recently, the ad revenue shrank even more when Bhutan was hit by the global economic crisis. Bhutanese journalists explain that unless they are funded by the government, they might compromise their rights to criticise the government by giving up the role as watchdogs. They claim that unless the private sector is dependent on the government, its probability of survival is inevitably low.

IN FACT, MOST media outlets have cut staff in recent years, and some have even had to suspend or cut back on the publications because of financial unsustainability. The situation is expected to grow worse since the government announced that all election-related advertising would be withdrawn from private media and exclusively published through the state-owned counterpart.

IN BHUTAN, EVEN though there were no reports of threats directed at journalists, there is certainly a high level of self-censorship. Sensitive issues such as critique of the royal family and the expulsion of Nepali-speaking residents in the 1990's are tacitly prohibited in the public sphere and not covered in media at all. Likewise, it seems still unfamiliar for the Bhutanese government to deal with issues which might hamper their reputation as the happiest country. Rather, journalists doubt the feasibility of the GNH in the sector of journalism.

TO SECURE HAPPINESS, Bhutan might need to focus on only the idea of it. Since Bhutan has decided to open its doors to the outside-world and adopted democracy for the recognition of the diverse voice, Bhutan should provide private journalists with opportunities where they are able to express their voice. It might be the time for Bhutan to rethink the concept of the Gross National Happiness corresponding to the changed conditions of this age. ●

By Hyeon-Soo Jeon



LUND UNIVERSITY
Center for Middle Eastern Studies



As flowers begin to blossom in Sweden, revolutions and social movements continue to bloom across the Middle East and North Africa. The uprising will change the region forever but will also impact life and business in Sweden.

*Stay informed by following CMES Reports or by attending our public seminars for comprehensive analysis on the Middle East and North Africa
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Photo: CMES, Finngatan 16, Lund

The Man Behind the Mask



Anas Aremeyaw Anas, undercover journalist, at TED2013. Photo by: James Duncan Davidson, 2013

He is a household name in Ghana, has been publicly praised by President Obama and has been named amongst the 2014 Most Influential Africans - and yet Anas Aremeyaw Anas remains faceless. His anonymity is the key to his power.

By Jess Apel

“HIS STORIES AND DOCUMENTARIES ARE NOT ONLY ABOUT RAISING AWARENESS BUT BRINGING ABOUT ACTUAL CHANGE”

It all began with peanuts. Fresh out of the Ghana Institute of Journalism Anas was offered a position at the respected Ghana Times but turned it down for an internship at a small week-day paper whose editor-in-chief had only just been released from jail for publishing libellous material. Alongside his reporting assignments at The Crusading Guide, Anas began conducting his own research. He began frequenting local roads, mingling with the street hawkers who were selling peanuts to waiting motorists. He noted that despite this being an illegal activity, the police were taking a cut of the hawkers' sales and therefore would only make arrests when VIP motorists came past. When Anas presented this story to the paper's editor-in-chief, Kwaku Baako, he was so impressed by the student's strategic research he invited him to take over the paper's investigative wing. From here Anas became a co-owner and his stories have evolved far beyond peanuts.

SIXTEEN YEARS ON and Anas has perfected his methods of disguise and subterfuge in his fight against corruption. He has posed as prisoners, sheiks and women – to name just a few of the roles he has played in order to expose African criminals. Using hidden cameras, Anas is able to capture irrefutable evidence of the corruption at hand. “I cannot give the government an opportunity to say this or that is a lie. They love to hide and say, ‘Show me the evidence.’ So I show it to them.” However for Anas, his mission does not stop at the story: with a completed law degree he is able to follow the prosecution process through.

PERHAPS THE MOST remarkable thing about Anas is that his stories and documentaries are not only about raising awareness but bringing about real change. His mantra is “naming, shaming and jailing.”

ONE OF ANAS’ first undercover missions was an investigation in 2009 into the inhumane practices of Accra’s Psychiatric Hospital. This was an seven month mission which involved him adopting the disguises of a taxi driver, baker and eventually having himself admitted as a mental patient for three weeks. In order to counteract the effects of the sedatives, he would be administered during his stay, Anas had been advised to take caffeine tablets by a certified doctor. Yet in order to expose an orderly who was selling narcotics to patients, Anas (who does not even drink alcohol) was forced to take cocaine so as to not raise suspicion. The combined effect with the sedatives caused Anas’ body to begin shutting down. Able to get himself discharged under the pretence of attending an ‘out-of-town funeral,’ Anas was whisked away to a safe house and put on an IV drip for three days before returning to the hospital. After completing the investigation he was able to provide evidence of staff stealing food intended for patients, neglect and abuse by staff and their facilitation

of drug dealing within the hospital. Following the release of the story Ghana’s Minister of Health declared his public embarrassment and established a five-member committee to further investigate and resolve the issues raised by the publication.

OVER THE PAST five years Anas has continued to refine his techniques, to ensure that no one uses the words “alleged” when discussing his works. Within his home country of Ghana he has effectively exposed corruption amongst many state-run facilities such as orphanages, Customs Excise Prevention Services (CEPS), Ghana Health Services and Traffic Police. However, his investigations also expose and criminalise out-dated and barbaric rituals of those living in the more remote areas of the continent. Such stories include the murder of babies deemed to be cursed by witch doctors and the trading of Albino limbs for medical purposes in Tanzania. It was Anas’ ability to infiltrate these communities, which alerted INTERPOL to Anas’ usefulness in busting a ring of Chinese sex traffickers. Posing as an American oil rig consultant who was interested in prostitution services, Anas helped to free six Vietnamese women who had been trafficked through to Ghana’s Sekondi-Takoradi. The traffickers were convicted and sentenced to a combined 41 years in prison.

HOWEVER, IT IS the success and effectiveness of Anas’ work, which has lead to his forced anonymity. Unable to expose his face for fear of being recognized whilst undercover and also fear for his life, very few are able to identify Anas’ true facial features. Even in a talk he gave at the 2013 TED Conference, Anas kept his face concealed behind a wire mask. Although Anas is very aware of the imminent risk he places himself in whilst undercover, he believes that he can’t leave his country’s social development up to politicians – but is able to use his skills as a journalist to stimulate change. ●



A Most Dangerous Profession:

JOURNALISM IN SYRIA

Never before has there been a job that requires so much cleverness, deception, and street-smarts just to make it to the next day. For some though, helping people realize what's actually happening in Syria is the most important job ever.

As I sit in my spacious, well-lit room, straining to hear my recorded interview with Qais Fares over the sounds of Lund on a Friday night, I can't help but marvel at how different our lives have been. Qais was a journalist in Syria from 2007-2012, before fleeing the country for not doing his compulsory two year military service. Completely understandable, considering who he would be fighting for. He prefaces our chat by casually remarking, "by the way, for all of what I'm saying now, I would be slaughtered in the jails of Assad." A potent reminder that though western media coverage has dwindled, this four year long war is still very much alive.

LIKE ALL CHILDREN between 12-18, Qais received training in school on how to use a Kalashnikov, pistols, and grenades. Not that he needed it – "for us as a border area, we were used to that, it was just a piece of cake for us." Qais seems to prefer 'the pen is mightier than the sword' approach though,

becoming a journalist with a Syrian English language magazine. Probably due to the owner's connections, this magazine's journalists were able to move around freely, interviewing officials and opposition figures.

DURING ONE SUCH trip, Qais went to the city of Douma with UN observers, saying "later on in the day, when the UN observers went out, there was a massacre in Douma, committed by the Syrian Army. The first day there was a big protest, around 200,000 people. And the next day there was nothing, people were just hiding. Even cats were hiding, man. When I met some guy, and I wanted to talk to him, he said 'please just go because they will come back and kill us.'"

THIS JUST BEGINS to illustrate the massive breakdown of trust present in Syria, especially with journalists. Anything in the media must go through the Ministry of Information's Censorship Department. There, "they define what is right and what is wrong," says Qais.

An additional issue is journalists are affiliated with the intelligence services, or are viewed as being corrupt due to their proximity to important ministers and officials. "I couldn't say to my neighbor I was a journalist," says Qais. When he appeared on Syrian state television asking a question at a press conference, he had to lie to people in his village who saw him and say the government forced him to do it.

MOREOVER, "AS JOURNALISTS", Qais says, "we were always scared to be assassinated by the regime. Foreign journalists were killed." However, "... this pressure on journalists pushed people to have their mobile phones as a means to document what's going on. So without the mobile phone, no one in the world would have heard about what's going on in Syria," elaborates Qais. Unfortunately, "many civilians were shot directly while filming by those they were filming. By the Syrian Army, or the Syrian intelligence forces." However, Qais is optimistic about this new advent in journalism – "technology has allowed Syrians to put their revolution online, and that was for the first time in history. It's not one guy, it's everyone, holding his mobile phone and filming." These get circulated using Facebook and YouTube, and is how most Syrians get news.

OFTEN, VIDEOS ARE the only way they can get news. Raqqa, the de facto capital of ISIS, had a more than 43% illiteracy rate in 2009. Without a highly literate population in many areas, videos on Facebook and YouTube are the only viable option. The Assad regime takes enormous advantage of this, using propaganda to create a personality cult around President Bashar al-Assad, referred to as 'His Excellency'. This has been so effective it is now very difficult for a normal Syrian to distinguish between their president and their homeland – Syria al-Assad.

“WE WERE ALWAYS SCARED TO BE ASSASSINATED”

FURTHERMORE, THE ASSAD regime uses the fact that so few people speak English. Writing for the only magazine in English, Qais was permitted to write about homosexuality, rights of women, poverty, drought, and sectarian issues.

Qais Fares worked as a journalist in Syria for five years, before fleeing to Sweden in 2012.



Photo: Shuaib Zahda



Photo: Beshr Abdulhadi



Photo: Christiaan Triebert

Syrian Civil War

- More than 200,000 Syrian civilians killed so far, over 10,000 of them are children

- More than 100,000 Syrian soldiers killed so far

- More than 11 million forced to leave their homes, with over 4 million fleeing Syria

- 4 in 5 Syrians now living in poverty, 30% in abject poverty

These issues were presented to Western guests as proof of democracy and openness, though he never would have been allowed to write about these issues in Arabic. Additionally, Qais says, “if you look at what Assad says to the BBC, it’s totally different, and maybe opposite to what he says in Arabic to his own people. That’s very cunning and very strategic.”

WHILE IT IS true that foreign journalists are sometimes allowed in Syria, they are only permitted for a short period of time. This means they are unable to build rapport and establish connections with people willing to risk their lives and the lives of their families to speak with them.

IN SPEAKING WITH Qais, many frustrations become apparent. Frustration that his government operates like a mafia “built on a military and business alliance,” and will do literally anything to keep itself going. Annoyance at how the media and military are dominated by the minority Alawite sect, Assad’s branch of Islam. Anger at the international community for doing so incredibly little to put an end to this bloodbath. Qais remembers one instance in particular, when “I went with the UN observers and I saw the Syrian Army killing a child. The army, in front of the UN observers, they shot a child. I couldn’t write that. His name is Nawras al-Ghazzawi, he’s around ten years old, I know his family, I know where he lives, I know lots of things about him, but simply the UN couldn’t do anything. Or didn’t want to do anything.”

QAIS HAD MORE to say on the topic: “the world has forgotten about Assad. The world is thinking about ISIS now. The threat for them is ISIS. Assad has a tie and has a nice shirt and a suit, but ISIS has beards and has swords in their hands. So that’s what the world

sees, and what the world wants to see, frankly. They don’t see that Assad has killed, or has at least been silent for the killing of at least 300,000 of his own people and more than 150,000 of his own soldiers.”

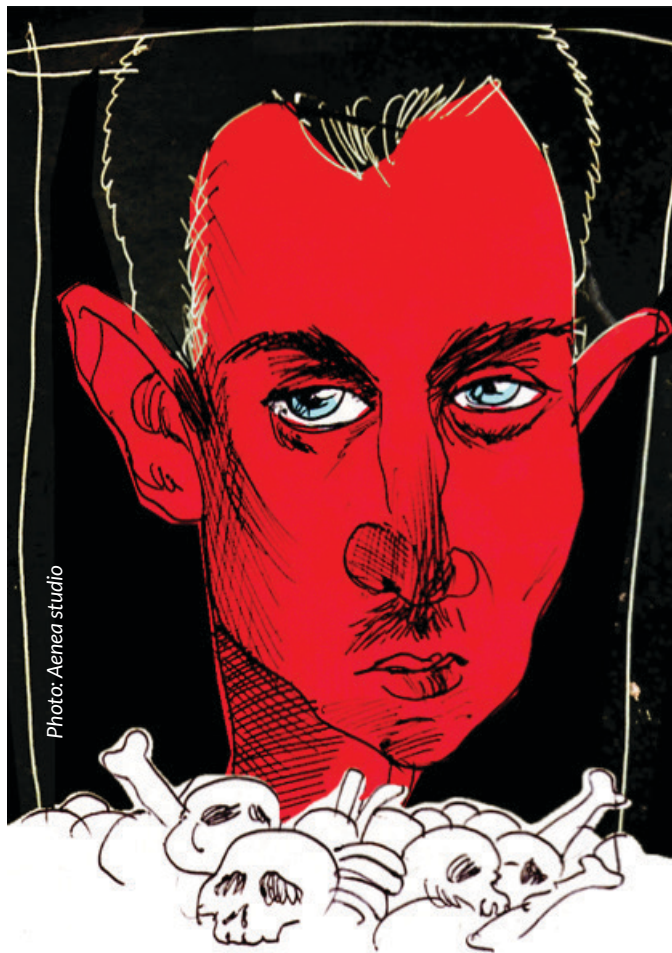
HE HAD MORE insights regarding ISIS as well, saying “I think dictatorship is the root of the problem. To get rid of ISIS you should get rid of those who caused the emergence of ISIS. I believe that the Assad regime, the Assad mafia, and the sectarian regime in Iraq were behind the emergence of ISIS.” Qais was quick to point out that *Der Spiegel* revealed files that show ISIS leaders were receiving assistance from Assad’s air force.

HE ELABORATED, SAYING “the reason behind the popularity of ISIS in certain areas of Syria and Iraq is that in my opinion, it is a very moderate and very simple and very liberal result of the atrocities that were committed against those Syrians and Iraqis.”

THIS INCREDIBLE PERSPECTIVE should highlight in no uncertain terms how malevolent, conniving, and violent the Assad regime is. It should make us think twice about lending even tenuous support to such a brutal dictator. And it should make us take immediate political, economic, and if necessary forceful steps to help the Syrian people put an end to this atrocious chapter of their history. ●

By Nicholas Kaminski

Left: All Syrian children between 12 and 18 receive weapon training in school.



FREEDOM

ACCORDING TO THE DICTATOR

Recently, the notorious Bashar al-Assad elaborated his view on liberty during a conversation with the newspaper *Expressen*. This provoked a strong reaction on the Syrian journalist Qais Fares behalf, who came to Sweden after escaping the violence of the Syrian war. Below, he discusses the dire state of the nation's media, and the government's oppression of the press.

Listening to the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, lecturing about freedom was truly an exasperating experience. When speaking to the Swedish daily *Expressen* on April 17, 2015, Bashar al-Assad said: "freedom is a natural instinct (...) and this is a divine thing for anyone to ask for, so it's going to be illogical and unrealistic and against the nature of the earth and the people to be against freedom." And

also: "We support anyone who works to get more freedom, but in an institutional way, under the constitution of that country, not by violence and terrorism and destroying the country. There's no relation between that and freedom."

OF COURSE, I did not expect Bashar al-Assad to refer to the crimes committed by him and his father, the late President Hafez (1930-2000), against journalists in Syria, and we all know that Assad's support of freedom of speech by shooting at protestors is nothing new. For instance, in the mid of March 2004 around 40 Kurdish civilians were killed in Qamishli, northeast of Syria, after clashes between Kurdish and Arab soccer fans. Hundreds of Kurds were injured and around 2000 were tortured in the regime's jails. And less than a year after Assad took office in 2000, his regime began arresting lead-

ing reformists and subjecting others to intelligence apparatus surveillance and intimidation.

ON MARCH 18, 2011, the intelligence forces opened fire at a peaceful protest in Daraa and killed four civilians. The protests were triggered by the arrest and torture of school-age children from the city who wrote anti-government graffiti on walls. The Assad regime claimed that it is under attack of a “global conspiracy” led by foreign-backed terrorists. But in response to the uprisings, Bashar al-Assad initiated reform including issuing media law.

LOOKING BACK, SYRIA enjoyed a couple of years characterized by a good media environment after the country’s independence in 1946. However, after each of the five military coups Syria wit-

nessed, and during the 1958-61 union with Egypt, media became more and more censored. And the 1963 Baathist coup made it even worse. Although it was neither discussed nor approved by the parliament, Press Law 53, which was implemented after the military coup in 1949, remained the only law governing the Syrian press until 2001, when President Bashar al-Assad instead issued Legislative Decree No. 50 to replace it. The authorities wanted the new press law to appear as liberalization, although it subjected all publications to firm regulation in order to give government total control over media.

THE LAW PERMITTED privately owned newspapers but threatened with punishments ranging from fines to three years’ imprisonment for everyone who failed to obey the imposed restrictions.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, the Syrian government is according to the UN Commission responsible for the majority of the civilian casualties.



Journalism in Syria

- According to Reporters without Borders 44 reporters have been killed and an additional 11 been jailed since the Syrian war broke out in 2011.

- Further, the organization claim that as many as 130 citizen journalists and ne-tizens have been murdered, whilst 17 have been imprisoned.

For instance, the law banned the publication of information regarding state security and the army, and it criminalized the publishing of “falsehoods” and “fabricated reports”. Also, it stipulated that heavy penalties should be applied where “such acts have been committed by reason of ill-will, or caused public unrest, or harm the international relations, offence to state dignity, national unity, the morale of the army and the armed forces, or caused some damage to the national economy and the currency”.

THE PRESS LAW was supported by other legislations. The 1963 Emergency Law justifies the repression of writers and publications if they are believed to be working ‘against the security of the state and public order’, if they are suspected of being ‘against public authority’, or if they are ‘disturbing public confidence’. However, on August 28, 2011, Bashar Al-Assad issued a decree – as a way of bringing the anti-regime protests to an end - on a new media law that should ban journalists from being jailed and give them access to information.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE HAVE been little signs of any changes in reality. The new media law differs from the one issued in 2001 in that it does not mention the word “imprisonment” at all. However, it holds editors-in-chief and journalists accountable for actions that constitute violations of the law and can fine them up to SYP 1m (USD 5,293). Despite the fact that the new law upholds freedom and grants journalists the right to access information “which is concerned with public affairs”, it goes on to say that the media must “respect this freedom of expression” by “practising it with awareness and responsibility.” Moreover, the law dedicates 28 out of 106 articles to punishable acts, including publishing any information that encourages sectarianism, harms national unity or national security, encourages acts of crime, hatred or terrorism, and

offends state symbols or offends religions and religious beliefs. Under the new law, all public and private media will no longer have to get censored before they broadcast or publish news, which was mandatory according to the old law.

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2011, Bashar al-Assad issued Legislative Decree No. 108 to establish the National Media Council (NMC) which prepared the new media law. In addition to planning media policies and being responsible for issuing licenses for media outlets, the NMC also submits an annual report on media progress in general. The council is financially and administratively independent from the state and, as the former head of the NMC has stated, “... the role of the council will be to oversee everything related to the media and follow up on implementing the law. It will act as the monitor of media processes.”

AS MENTIONED, THE new law has hardly made any difference, and fresh reports of arrested or missing journalists continue to emerge. Reporters without Borders has ranked Syria at 177 out of 179 countries in Press Freedom Index in February 2012, and governmental violence directed towards journalists have rapidly increased the last couple of years. Bashar al-Assad’s security forces have for instance stormed the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)’s office in Damascus, and arrested its director Mazen Darwish among with fellow activists. Upon his arrest, Darwish was tortured and his current state of health is troubling. He and two of his colleagues have been on trial before the Anti-Terrorism Court on charges of “publicizing terrorist acts” under Article Eight of the country’s 2012 Anti-Terrorism Law. The charges are based on their peaceful activities that include monitoring and publishing information about human rights abuses in Syria.



NEITHER DISAGREEMENT NOR complaining voices are welcome in Bashar al-Assad's Syria. Louay Hussein, 54, a writer and opposition figure, was arrested in November 2014, because of a media statement in which he has expressed that "... the regime is incapable of protecting national sovereignty. The planes of the American coalition have total freedom to fly wherever they want in the skies of Syria; Ain al-Arab (Kobani) is now outside the map of Syria; it has become a free zone, with American sponsorship."

LAST APRIL, HUSSEIN fled to Spain before the end of his trial as a consequence of his "weakening national sentiment". And government soldiers killed Mosaab Al-Odaallah, a journalist at the state-run Tishreen newspaper, in August 2012 in Damascus. His death was a targeted reprisal for his

supposed support for the opposition, according to a friend quoted by AFP. Furthermore, the cartoonist Ali Ferzat was in August 2011 beaten up and got his fingers and arm broken by Assad's security forces at the Umayyad Square, a two-minute drive away from President Assad's house. One of Ferzat's critical cartoons against Assad's regime was the immediate cause for his assault. The Interior Ministry promised it would "bring the culprits to justice", but that promise have never been fulfilled.

So, to sum it up neatly, one could say that when President Bashar al-Assad lectures about freedom, it is like a human smuggler lecturing at a conference on anti-trafficking measures, or a drug dealer theorizing on reducing narcotic usage. ●

By Qais Fares

"Cartoonist Ali Ferzat was in August 2011 beaten up and got his fingers and arm broken by Assad's security forces"



THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Chai Jing

When you look at the newly released name list of the 100 Most Influential People, you may wonder who Chai Jing is? What has earned this Chinese woman her place among those big names?



Chai Jing, whose name comes along with Barack Obama, Malala Yousafzai, Taylor Swift and other world-renowned names, appears in *Time Magazine's* 2015 list of the 100 Most Influential People, released April 16. In Chinese, Chai means matchsticks; and Jing means calmness. When the two words come together, they spark a household name, Chai Jing.

CHAI IS AN investigative reporter, TV broadcaster, author, blogger and an environmental activist. Since she joined the State media outlet China Central Television (CCTV) in 2001, Chai has become one of the best-known faces in China. Back in 2003 with the outbreak of large-scale severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), this passionate young journalist, as a newcomer in the investigative reporting team at CCTV, risked her life to the forefront of the SARS in Beijing, the hard-hit area, talking face to face with SARS patients in the hospital. Her slender figure wrapped in the white heavy protecting clothing impressed millions

of Chinese viewers. Since then people have remembered the name, Chai Jing. In the following ten years, Chai has covered every heated social issues from 2008's Sichuan earthquake to the gay community in China, and interviewed people from all backgrounds from Avatar director James Cameron to migrant peasant workers. Her in-depth reports built her reputation as an acute investigative journalist. As time goes on, Chai has shifted from a tough reporter known for her in-your-face interview style, to an attentive listener, a storyteller who instead of commenting, tries to explore the story as the way it is, and leave the audience to look at the matter from their own perspective. "In the past, I thought a journalist should express her sense of justice in interviews through a confrontational dialogue," Chai said in an interview, "but now I realize that approach can lead the audience to see only part of the world", "by removing all those bubbles on the surface, I try to uncover what really matters." With this hands-off interview style, Chai stand out from the other journalists and win over a large and loyal group of followers.

Photo: Steve Jurvetson



Photo: Corbis Chai

HOWEVER, IN 2014 when her career was at peak, Chai resigned from her role from state media and her wildly watched interview program *Insight* was also cancelled. It is said Chai left CCTV in order to gain more time to take care of her newborn baby. While Chai's fans were worried that she would never return to the screen again, on 28th February 2015, Chai Jing appeared in her self-financed documentary *Under the Dome*, which was published on the major Chinese video websites free for watching, just few days before China's National People's Congress.



Upper and lower: Air pollution has become a major threat to the Chinese public health.

Middle: Investigative reporter, TV broadcaster, author, blogger and environmental activist Chai Jing.

UNDER THE DOME is a documentary, in which a science lecture is combined with an investigative exposé and her personal memoir. Integrating with various interviews and statistics, Chai delivered a keynote speech to a live audience in a film studio trying to lift the lid on how lax the system is on polluting industries, and how serious pollution is all across China. In the beginning, Chai Jing called the

Photo: Steve Jurvetson

fight against China's air pollution a "personal grudge." She said she had not been afraid of pollution until she became a mother. "I'd never felt afraid of pollution before, and never wore a mask no matter where," Chai says in the video. "But when you carry a life in you, what she breathes, eats and drinks are all your responsibility, and then you feel the fear." "Half of the days in 2014, I had to confine my daughter to my home like a prisoner because the air quality in Beijing was so poor," Chai says. "One morning I saw my daughter banging on the window.... The day will come when she asks me, 'Why do you keep me here? What is going to hurt me when I go outside?'"

SHE WASN'T AFRAID but she did not want to live like this anymore. Chai Jing decided to quit her job and investigate the causes, effects, and remedies for China's massive air pollution problems. Chai used one year and \$160,000 of her own money to make *Under The Dome*. In the film, Chai highlighted the major problems with the burning of coal and oil. Chai challenged and criticized China's two most powerful state-owned oil companies for resisting tougher fuel standards. Chai stated that China is not only burning massive quantities of coal and oil but low-quality, dirty fossil fuel that disproportionally produce pollutants. Existing regulations, Chai added, often aren't enforced. In the end of her speech, Chai says, "One day, I will leave this world. But my child will still live here". All in all, it is still "a personal grudge".

THOUGH THE CHINESE government quickly banned this documentary, *Under the Dome* had attracted huge amount of attention both in and outside China. Before being taken off, the video had received more than 200 million views on websites over a week. Chai's efforts have also received recognition from Chen Jining, the newly appointed minister of environmental

protection, who personally thanked Chai for the research she put into the video, and Chen even compared this film with Rachel Carson's book of 1962, *Silent Spring*, which inspired a public uproar about excessive use of pesticides and gave impetus to the environmental movement in the United States.

“SHE IMPRESSED MILLIONS OF CHINESE VIEWERS”

WESTERN COVERAGE of the Chinese press tends to simplistically present Chinese journalists as either uncritical mouthpiece for the Communist Party, or as idealists quixotically railing against the limits of state censorship. In this documentary, Chai presents us a confident reporter, keen observer, caring mother, who is brilliantly captivating, relentless in her quest for knowledge, and fearless in her questioning from the manager of a construction site to the highest officials of the Chinese government.

IN CHINA, PEOPLE like to link their names with their professions. It is interesting when we link what Chai Jing is doing with her name: a calm matchstick. Let's imagine a picture, in which Chai is striking a match, the burning flame lighting up the darkness, bringing positive energy to the people around her; after a while when the match is burned out, the light is gone, a sensation of calm comes out of the darkness inspiring people to look for the true brightness. ●

By Elaine Zheng

Under the Dome

- Three days after its release, Chai Jing's self-financed documentary *Under the Dome* had garnered more than 150 million views in China.

- Critical voices have accused Jing of being a tool for hostile foreign forces, trying to undermine the Chinese government.

- Shortly after her birth, Jing's daughter had a tumour removed. Jing claims the tumour was caused by air-pollution.



EDITORIAL

ANAHITA NICOOBAYAN

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

Illustrations: Joseph_alban/Pixabay

Photo: superUbO/Flickr



Is it wise to blindly subscribe to and scrutinize every piece of news circulating in the media, or should we be more aware of how news consumption affect our thoughts about life itself?

When I was a child, I remember asking my teacher about a horror film my classmates were gabbing about. Did she enjoy horror films? I asked her, to which she replied that she never watched them. “I only watch films that make me happy”, she added, with a curious look on her face. I was very young then, no more than eight or nine years old, but I can still recall the feeling her words gave me. This woman had endured enough sorrow already, my stomach told me, and there was no need to add anything to her melancholy state. Other than twenty slightly obnoxious pupils, that is.

I WAS RECENTLY reminded of this memory by a conversation with my sister. She, being a highly educated person with a great interest in film, literature and art, is a teacher as well – though to upper secondary school students.

“THERE IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN BLISSFUL IGNORANCE AND SIMPLY BEING IGNORANT, IT MAY WELL BE A LINE WORTH TREADING”

One of them had asked her about a particular murder case in Afghanistan that had been on the news the previous day, to which my sister responded that she knew nothing of the event. The boy had stared at her, and finally asked her if she did not watch the news. “No”, she said, “I don’t”. And she went on to explain to the boy that she had seen enough misery for a lifetime. Still living in Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, she had been present during the bombings – one of which had hit the house of one of her playmates, leaving his flesh and blood splattered on the residual waste. “I follow the news enough to know what’s going on in the world in the larger sense, but I don’t consume the news with the pace in which they are produced today. We used to spend 15 minutes watching the news anchor present the events of the day on television. Today, we are always connected, constantly monitoring the feed of all awful things happening in the world around us”.

THIS WAS SOMETHING that she had explained to me earlier, when I had given her a highly sceptical look in regards to her aversion to all news feeds except *Buzzfeed*. It reminded me of a novel by Simone de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images*, in which a woman named Laurence works hard to shield her daughter from all things outside of their own

bourgeoisie bubble – by not letting her read the newspaper or in any other way be subjected to the despair of the world surrounding their own safe little sphere. This proves to be an impossible task in the book, and it will surely prove to be an impossible task in our own day to day lives.

NEVERTHELESS, WITH A closer look at what it is we actually nurture our brains with through constant news supervising, I can easily understand why Laurence, my sister and my teacher wish to subject themselves and their loved ones to beauty rather than misery whenever the choice is their own. The gloom portrayed in the media, while often real, is increasingly one-dimensional. Media is, after all, not entirely objective in its gaze. The global world is all too often a pessimistic space, with news of creation folding under news of destruction. The media in itself has become a magnifying glass, focusing on gut wrenching, energy draining events, making it a tyrant of its own calibre.

IN ORDER TO live a balanced life, then, you need to surround yourself with joy. Though there is a fine line between blissful ignorance and simply being ignorant, it may very well be a line worth treading in order to survive this world with your sanity intact. ●

CHECHNYA

A REGION WITH AN IDENTITY CRISIS?

The Republic of Chechnya is the region in the Russian Federation with the highest percentage of muslim inhabitants, fighting to gain recognition and rights. It is a region facing a difficult question on what weighs the most - citizenship or religious belonging? How can it be combined? And what happens when citizens turns to radical religious groups such as the Islamic State?

Situated in the northern parts of Caucasus lies the conflict troubled, mineral rich, war striked and Russian governed Chechen Republic. Going through two independence wars, the later ending with Russia gaining back the federal control in 2000, the young generation of Chechnya has been brought up in a battlefield with the idea of independence always present.

ALEXEI MALASHENKO is Co-Chair of the Carnegie Moscow Center's Religion, Society and Security Program. He holds a Doctorate in History and *Utrikesperspektiv* had the opportunity to talk to him about radical Islam in Russia. Alexei Malashenko emphasized the role that the Soviet propaganda played in alienating Islam and Muslim traditions in Russia. It portrayed Muslims as aggressive, dangerous and politicized. According to Malashenko,

because of the alienation of muslims in Russia another issue rises, the issue of identity. The identity as citizens of the Russian Federation alongside the religion.

SINCE THE INDEPENDENCE wars the region has not been troubled with armed conflict, but nonetheless plagued by poverty, unemployment, corruption and rights abuses. It has also become more drawn to the traditional muslim ways of life and values. Having in mind that the region was under strict religious repression under communist control, and after that controlled by extreme leaders and then Russia again it is not so hard to understand that it is a region with an identity crisis. Although Islam came to N.C. only 500 years ago" or "Although only 500 years have passed since islam came to Nort Caucasus, the youths of today's Chechnya is looking to the more traditional values of Islam, seeing it as the cornerstone of their identity.

I ASK ALEXEI Malashenko why this movement towards more traditional religious values are uprising in Chechnya.

- IT IS POLITICS. It is a political and religious form of protest against the federal administration, that didn't do it's best to improve social and economic relations in the muslim territories. That is why they want to turn more to shari'a as a ground of their life and their society.

“THE YOUNG GENERATION OF CHECHNYA HAS BEEN BROUGHT UP IN A BATTLEFIELD”

the main struggle for muslims in today's Russia is to be recognized and not discriminated. He also emphasizes that

CHECHNYA'S LEADER SINCE 2007 Ramzan Kadyrov is doing his best to promote Chechnya as Russia's center for Muslims. In schools there are strict clothing rules according to traditional Islam and in society in general the genders are becoming more separated. Kadyrov, whose good relations with Moscow are clear, is worried about the islamists who still wants Chechen independence. A few months ago he, via his Instagram account, accused the US and the rest of the west of spawning the Islamic State to increase hatred towards Muslims all over the world. He is very determined to do what it takes to stop the Islamic State.

THE UPRISING OF radical islamists is a problem for Chechnya. Since the young Chechen men are used to fighting professional militaries, from being trained through the two wars against Russia, they are attractive recruits for one of today's toughest military groups - the Islamic State. Many of the strong military leaders that were not killed during the two Chechen wars went to fight with the IS as early on as in 2011.

- THEY THINK IT is their duty to go to the Middle East and help their brothers in faith, to create an Islamic State. They think that it could be a final goal. But they are not many, just a few thousand, Alexei Malashenko says.

ONE OF THE FIGHTERS who joined is a Georgian born Chechen named Tarkhan Batirashvili, more commonly known by his nome de guerre Omar al Shishani. Last year he became part of one of the top consultative bodies of the organization and was appointed Senior Military Commander. Ramzan Kadyrov published a photo on his Instagram showing what he claimed was Omar al Shishanis dead body, saying that this will happen to everyone who is threatening Russia.

BUT DESPITE THE fact that the Chechen soldiers fighting for the Islamic State seem to have an over all similar goal and be a united front, some things can cause a rift between the fighters. According to Chechen tradition the family and extended family is your biggest and most important network, to whom you are supposed to show total loyalty. This can cause the different clans to get into conflict with each other, at home or abroad. It can also cause them to not pledge loyalty to the IS, and when Omar al Shishani did just that he faced a lot of critique from his fellow Chechens. ●

By Sofia Ekhem



Photo: Vladimer Shioshvili

NARRATIVES FOR CHANGE

Imagine, you are waking up in the morning. It is still early, too early but you had this strange dream that is stuck in your mind. In your dream, it was 18th century England, the Industrial Revolution was full in swing and your father came home from work at the factory. He told you about how your grandfather, who once owned land to work on and make his living, had to move from his own land to the city. There he started working in a factory as he had no other choice because the mechanised production processes completed work in the fields and clustered working activities in the factories.

You are wondering what this dream meant and decide to go for a walk, it is still early anyways. Once on the street you observe the people that are opening their shops and you are surprised by the amount of cars that are already on the street. You walk into the tobacco shop on the corner and buy *The Guardian*. Your eyes fall on their campaign *Keep it in the ground* and you immediately start to question the world you live in. How did this world that faces an ecological crisis in which we find ourselves nowadays ever evolved like this? What does this have to do with the mechanisation of the production processes of the industrial revolution and the coal dug out of the ground to establish the world of consumption in which we live

in nowadays?

PENSIVE OVER THESE questions while sitting on a bench in the sun you nod off and are drawn into a new dream. Now you find yourself in a city where life appears to you so different, but simultaneously so normal. The norm in this world, you realise soon, is not growth but degrowth. Although it might sound contradictory in first stance, people seem to flourish. There is no financial insecurity as people get a basic income. Working weeks and days are shorter and the streets are not full of cars. Instead of needing one's own car, people are all willing to share their's. They do not only share cars, but also other machines that are offline most of the day. You find yourself walking through this other world having a whole different experience than you had this morning. The more you get into this world, the more you understand it. It is not only the way of acting and dealing with material properties that is different in this

Keep it in the Ground

- The *Keep it in the ground* campaign's aim was to raise awareness regarding the importance of not digging up the remaining reserves of oil, coal, and gas on the planet.

- At least two-thirds of these reserves will have to remain underground if the world is to meet existing internationally agreed targets to avoid the threshold for dangerous climate change.

“JOURNALISM MIGHT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE THE CURRENT NORMS”



Photo: Mike Herbst

Right: Responses on Edward Snowden revealing NSA espionage show well how journalism can awaken public awareness and fuse action.

world, also the mentality of the people seems to be different. People do not desire property anymore and do not get fulfilment of their needs by consuming. The whole narrative of needs, desires and values seems to be different. In what world do you find yourself again, you wonder. On that same moment you got roughly disturbed by a car that is honking and you are back in reality. Back on the bench with the newspaper on your legs and ask yourself if this dream showed you the world of the future? And if so, how can we then ever come to a future like this? Is it even possible?

JOURNALISM MIGHT HAVE an opportunity to challenge the current norms. To sketch new narratives, influence the public opinion and mobilise their readers to take action for change. *The Guardian* started a new campaign about keeping coal in the ground to prevent for an ecological crisis. It was the last dream of Alan Rusbridger before ending his 20 years of editing for *the Guardian*. As he had in his own words: “Very few regrets...except this one: that we had not done justice to

this huge, overshadowing, overwhelming issue of how climate change will probably, within the lifetime of our children, cause untold havoc and stress to our species.” To show the urgency of acting against climate change. To reveal the truth behind the dirty businesses of fossil fuel companies and the consequences it has in regard to social and climate unjust he set up a team of environmental correspondents, editors and external experts to report about environmental issues.

JOURNALISM HAS THE power to point out an issue and influence the public debate on topics. However, one might question if a newspaper as *The Guardian* can just take a standpoint like this? Or, does media even have a responsibility to challenge the norms of everyday life? Can media then be a step towards a world of just and flourishing as described in your dreams? What do you think? ●

By Petra van der Kooij

HOW ALTERNATIVE MEDIA HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE

the complete list



The fact that alternative media has been on the rise as a main news source has lately been discussed in mainstream media. What does this mean for the overall knowledge of current news and will the reader gain something from these types of medias?

If you were to learn about current events in the world - where would you turn? A couple of decades ago you would probably have read about them in your daily newspaper or heard about them on the radio or the evening news on TV. However, in today's technological society there are far quicker ways of finding out what is going on in the world. As good as every well-established newspaper of today has a web version that typically allows access for free. This also brings us to alternative media.

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA COMES in different shapes and sizes. It can be everything from self-published articles on websites, known to be less "serious", to news threads on forums such as flashback and reddit. By now you have probably been exposed to some sort of alternative media more than once or twice even if you haven't adopted it as your main news source. The articles and threads are often shared on social media, usually accompanied by a praise of the content from its sharer, such as "OMG so true!" or something in a similar vein. Thus, the content is read by a large number of people.

AS WITH EVERYTHING, there are of course pros and cons to these types of news feed. On the positive side, they create an opportunity to spread news even though you're not a professional writer as well as receive them. The author is given a chance to share his or her creation without being hired by a newspaper or any sort of media company. One could say alternative media has become the voice of the people.

WHEN IT COMES to different discussion forums they also enable you to address the topic of the discussion directly with the sharer. It's a way to communicate with new people while gaining some insight to the topic.

So, WHAT IS the problem? The main critique that targets alternative media is often whether or not the sources behind the news are reliable. On top of this, there is a pretty big risk that the author behind the article might be biased. This leads to the article, in a more or less obvious way, forces its views and opinions on you. As a result, readers who have yet to develop a critical perspective to things they find on the internet might view these articles as an absolute truth.

RIGHT NOW YOU might be asking yourself what the purpose of this short text is. Well, since alternative media is something which now passes through our minds on a regular basis it deserves a second look upon it. Alternative media has lately been on the rise as a main news source among young people, and it might not be such a bad thing. Everything you see and read on the internet does not have to be based on lies. And even if that would be case - wouldn't today's generation gain from learning to read everything with a critical mind?



By Lisa Svensson
Illustrations by Isabel Ambring

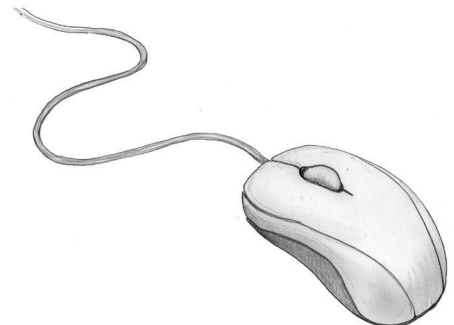




Photo: David Stanley



Photo: Christian Triebert

An artist prepares a patriotic mural by the road between Asmara and Keren. Memories of the long war of independence against Ethiopia are still fresh in Eritrea.

ERITREAN REFUGEES

ALWAYS ALMOST HOME

Eritrea is a young country portrayed to have many problems. One such problem is so grave that Eritreans are willing to risk their lives to share their story. Although, just like a coin, every story has two sides.

These are lies”, stresses the President, Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea in February, 2010, in an interview programme titled Talk to *Al Jazeera*. The President refused claims targeted at the practices of the Government of Eritrea. These included, no freedom of the press, no freedom of speech, 1800 Eritreans crossing over every month into Sudan and the case of Eritrean asylum seekers, among various other claims. Disagreeing with the President, the journalist mentions, “every single question I have put to you, is backed up with a lot research and a lot of facts”. The President demanded evidence behind such claims, which the journalist did not hold at that point in time. Although, media holds evidence to such claims. Specifically to the claim of human trafficking or modern day slavery in Eritrea.

HYPOTHETICALLY, FOR A moment, let us assume that the journalist was producing false claims and that the President was correct in recognising these claims as lies. Such a hypothetical construct can be held true only up until February, 2010. Beyond this period, if the President were to disagree to the publicly available facts, he could either be proven as a highly ignorant or unjust leader.

ISAIAS AFWERKI, DID not come out of nowhere. He is that figure, who has had military training in China in 1966. Such training made him a soldier so capable that probably it is due to this training that he went on to become the leader of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). This political formation transformed Eritrea into one of Africa's youngest countries, through its separation from Ethiopia in 1991. Isaias Afwerki, technically, became a freedom fighter. The 1993 Eritrean independence referendum, observed under the watchful eye of the United Nations Observer Mission for the Eritrean Referendum (UNOVER) and other organisations pronounced the referendum to be “free and fair at every stage”. Isaias Afwerki became President.

THE SEPARATION MARKED the end of a thirty year war. Eritrea's victory changed the historic perception, once created by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, which benefited Britain, an Eritrean colonial power and USA, that Eritrea, by logic, was a part of Ethiopia and that due to the weak state of the Eritrean economy it relied on Ethiopia. For Eritrea, the war was also a struggle towards securing an independent and “separate identity”. The President was so concerned about identity that he blocked all private news and media channels from the country through the 1996 Press Proclamation Law. This eliminated the chances of any foul publicity against Eritrea from within. Media control could not prevent the 1998 Eritrea-Ethiopia war.

IF THERE IS one country worth relying on for numbers on Eritrea, it is the USA, a country who “will support anyone”, “when it suits their interest”, as described by President Afwerki in 2013, over an interview programme titled Double Standards on Press TV. Post-independence in 1991, the strength of the Eritrean army stood at 30,000 troops, which rose to 50,000 in mid-1990s. Eventually in 1998, military spending on war amounted to 32.5% of the G.D.P which included recruiting 300,000 troops, as per a war history study conducted by Harvard University. The recruitment of troops have led to two problems, both of which are visible in current day Eritrea.

THE FIRST PROBLEM relates to the President’s perception. An up rise in the President’s vulnerability towards Eritrea’s political security has reduced the chances of the Eritrean youth to have a future. The second problem, is a socio-economic feature. As the Eritrean youth grows incapable of seeing a future for themselves, greater the creation of Eritrean refugees, nationals fleeing from the country in search of a life beyond survival. Stop Slavery in Eritrea Campaign explains that students across Eritrea in the 12th grade spend this year studying in SAWA Defence Training Center. From here students are directly and indefinitely employed into military service. All men and unmarried women between the ages of 18 and 50 once enlisted, work in hazardous conditions, having their youth taken away from them.

IN RESPONSE, THE only answer to such domination and deprivation is to flee. If international media has not been able to determine conditions prevalent from within the military camp, it has been very effective in documenting the fate of Eritrean refugees once they manage to escape this national ‘service’. From 2004-2010, the US Embassy in Asmara, capital of Eritrea, recorded, what is known as Eri Leaks, an insight into the

real workings of the Eritrean government which also showed the manner in which Eritreans, subdued to conditions of cattle, attempted to escape from the country. The cables are not available online, although several documentaries have managed to show the condition of Eritrean refugees.

IN THE THIRD quarter of 2011, when international media reported of a devastating drought in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea claimed that it had “escaped the crisis”, as reported on BBC. An Eritrean journalist with Caperi, a news service focused on Africa, Eritrea and the Horn of Africa blamed USA for spreading “lies that there is famine in Eritrea”. Only satellites and Geographic Information System (GIS) can ascertain the truth. Though, Sound of Torture, a 2013 documentary film made by Keren Shayo, a filmmaker based in Tel Aviv, highlights the work of Meron Estefanos, an Eritrean human rights activist now based in Stockholm, who helps broken Eritrean families reconnect with each other through Radio Erena, in their attempts to make it safely into Israel. A 2014, Human Rights Watch report titled, *I Wanted to Lie Down and Die* illustrates the route, regimes and injustice encountered by Eritrean refugees.

IT IS TRUE that there is sufficient evidence portraying the plight of Eritrean refugees, although every story must have two sides. On one hand countless anti-Eritrea YouTube videos, Western media and financier backed interest groups have managed to shame Eritrea, simply because these sources are known far and wide. On the contrary, Eritrean media, Horn of Africa stories from African sources and African government led initiatives in general are not known worldwide, as effectively, in comparison to Western media numbers. This lack in mass appeal only musters the need for the Eritrean side of the story to be told in a justified manner.

Upper right: Isaias Afwerki is Eritreas first and hitherto only President, and came into power after the country’s independence in 1993.

Upper left: Meron Estefanos helps Eritrean families reconnect.

Middle: The Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaac was put into jail without a trial for 13 years ago. He is the only Swedish citizen who has been designated a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

Photo: Amnesty Press

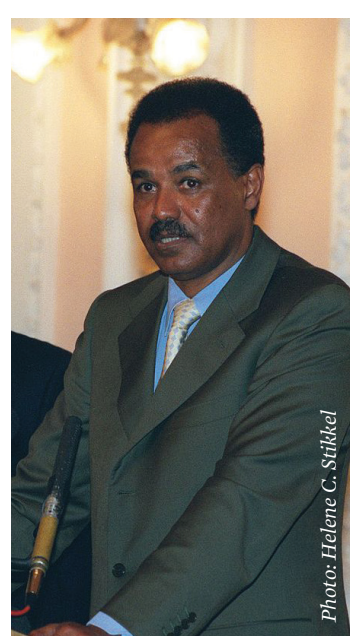


Photo: Helene C. Stikkel



Photo: Amnesty Press



Photo: David Stanley

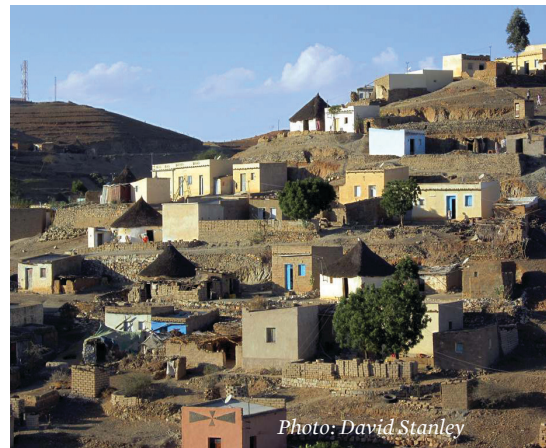


Photo: David Stanley

Eritrea

- Official languages of Eritrea include Tigrigna, Arabic and English.

- Population of Eritrea in 2013 was +6 million.

- The golden wreath on the Eritrean flag has been borrowed from the flag of the United Nations.

- Eritrea has the highest number of jailed journalists in Africa.

TO BEGIN WITH, there is an Eritrean economy, largely agrarian and as highlighted by the Eritrean news daily TesfaNews, a significant mining industry. Eritrea's mining industry has Non-African investors. In April-May, 2015, the European Union being "concerned" about the "human rights situation" in Eritrea aims to further political relations. The two political entities will possibly enter into a 312 million euro aid programme, valid until 2020, known as the European Development Fund (EDF). Reporters Without Borders, similar to the change.org campaign "Stop EU Funding of Eritrea's Repressive Regime – The Root Cause of Refugee Crisis", are against this economic 'partnership' as they demand that "fundamental freedoms, including freedom of information" is respected in Eritrea. This establishes that the state of Eritrea is functional. At the same time, Eritrean nationals are leaving the country. Although if there is a functional economy, why and what is causing Eritreans nationals to flee. International western media can only speculate.

TRAFFICKING TAKES PLACE in the Eritrean diaspora. The above mentioned Human Rights Watch report and a European External Policy Advisors (EEPA), Brussels based centre specialised in EU's external policies, December, 2013, report titled, *The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond* collectively hold Rashaida tribe in Sudan and Bedouins in Egypt's Sinai peninsula, the final destination before refugees enter Israel, responsible for committing human rights violations on Eritreans. The EEPA report also accounts Hidarib tribe in Eritrea responsible. The Sudanese and Egyptian police and military have also committed in supporting human trafficking as documented in the reports. Twice in 2014, *The Economist*, wrote about Eritrea's vulnerability. Once, writing about the 'Torture Houses' of Sinai

and a second time, calling the Eritrean army "miserable and useless". Every Eritrean refugee story begins from the army.

WHAT EXACTLY TAKES place in the Eritrean army? Is European and West-minded media secretly paid by USA to continuously lash out at Eritrea, since USA lost soldiers helping Ethiopia in the Eritrean war of independence? Who eventually manages the ransom gathered by traffickers? How do Eritreans possibly manage to cross over into Israel? There is a physical division guarded by surveillance and manpower. Why does not President Afwerki have political will to settle all confusion? There are many unbiased questions that come to the mind if news sources on both sides of the coin are viewed with equal importance.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL stage of politics, questions of greater relevance arise. First, will the mining boom in Eritrea create a secure and promising economy or will it lead to further human rights exploitation? Second, can "voluntary repatriation" of Eritreans work through a tax, as presented in an article on the i24news website? Lastly, as of April, 2015, A Common European Asylum System was discussed, to address the refugee problem in Europe. Will Frontex, the European agency working to secure external borders of Europe and Europe largely, manage to find a solution, working on the principles of cooperation? These are questions that require attention.

ERITREA HAS AN active 'modern' media network. Work produced across the network is directed towards promoting a nation ready to share its experiences with the world. For sure, this network is not known far and wide. Probably, there is truth in President Afwerki's words, when he says, "external interferences are blocking our progress". ●
By Saahil Waslekar



The Impossible Image

Richard Mosse's current exhibition, *the Enclave*, is an attempt at making visible the unseeable. Captured in an eerie, unearthly, and deeply disquieting new exhibition, an ongoing humanitarian crisis is displayed and documented to render visible a horrific reality that remains ignored, hidden, and unseen.

An outdated military-surveillance film technique drenches a war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo in a strange hue. The now-discontinued special technology used in Richard Mosse's exhibition, *the Enclave*, registers infra-

red light, light which is reflected off the chlorophyll in healthy green plants, and captures it as a bright pink.

THE BEAUTY of the images is luring and, as such, deeply discomforting. Viewers are drawn to the images only to be confronted by the reality that they bear witness to. Audible screams, shelling, and bombings accompany the images, rendering visible a world that, for all intents and purposes, remains beyond the limits of language. The images reveal a world ravaged by civil unrest that, since 1998, has claimed the lives of an estimated 5.4 million people—the deadliest conflict since the Second World War.

Richard Mosse is best known for his photographs of the war in the Eastern Congo.

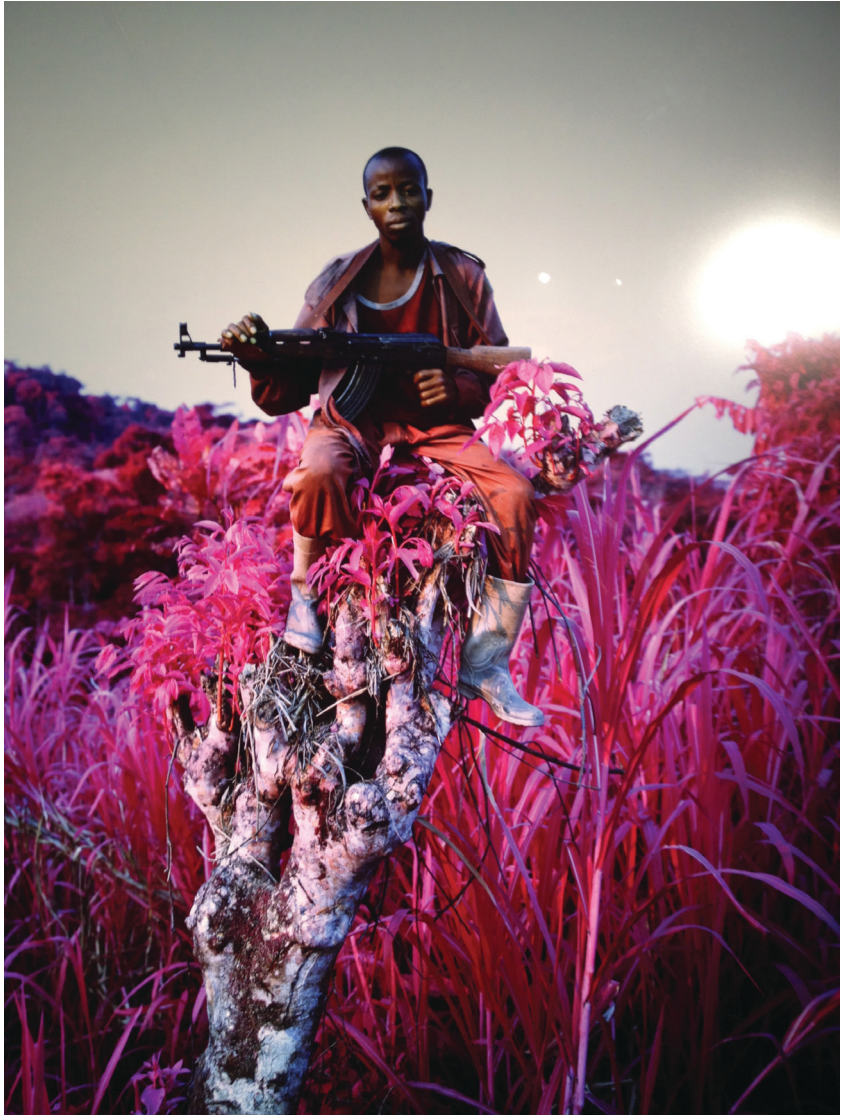


Photo: Richard Mosse

THE COUNTRY is a source of great wealth and natural resources that should, in theory, ensure its wealth and prosperity. Instead, Congo is the site of unending exploitation, a magnet for armed profiteering and fights for control over its resources.

IN THE LATE 19th century, under the auspices of a philanthropic venture, the Belgian King Leopold II became

the main beneficiary of the region. Through the mass exploitation of the resources and people of the region, King Leopold II would become one of the richest men in Europe. Through extreme violence, men and women were coerced into forced labour. As a result, the Congo became the site of one of the greatest acts of mass murder in which an estimated 10 million people lost their lives.

BY 1997, in what is now known as the First Congo War, the inept and corrupt government of Mobutu Sese Seko was overthrown. A coalition government known as the AFDL (Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre) was formed with the rebels who had overthrown the previous regime. When the president of this coalition later fled the country, rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila took his place and the country (then Zaïre) was renamed the name Democratic Republic of Congo. Unfortunately, other than this new regime and the renaming of the country, very little would come to change.

THE ENSUING SECOND Congo War, also referred to as the Great African War, began after the fall of the government of Mobutu Sese Seko. It was marked by most of the previous problems. This time, however, it included the direct involvement of nine African countries. It was, and remains, one of the deadliest wars in the continent's history, leading to an estimated 45 000 people killed every month. Of these deaths, half were those of children.

OFFICIALLY, THE WAR ended in July 2003. However, tensions remained high, especially in the form of the insurgency of the Lord's Resistance Army and the Itury and Kivu conflicts. It is the latter conflict that Mosse attempts to capture in his exhibition. With a focus on the conflict in 2012 and 2013, Mosse seeks to address this humanitarian crisis which remains mostly hidden and unseen in Western media. He registers the invisible through scenes that confront this silence with a disturbingly beautiful set of images and recorded film.

THROUGH HIS PHOTOGRAPHS, Mosse enters deep into isolated pockets of North Kivu and South Kivu, recording remote rebel groups far beyond the infrastructure of the United Nations.

It is an oscillation between vulnerable, yet deeply sinister imagery: a terrible testimony of the unseen.

DESCRIBED AS 'AFRICA'S own world war', the conflict in the Congo region defies any simple definition or history. Mosse's rendering visible of the atrocities is testament to this. The viewer is placed within in a disorientating, kaleidoscopic environment, with imagery and sounds that invites a visceral engagement with the subject matter.

OF COURSE, IT is scarcely possible to communicate the scale and depth of such suffering and, at best Mosse's work is an approximation. Resistance to Mosse's visual vocabulary itself is also understandable. Collective trauma is presented through a style and aesthetic medium that potentially relegates a region's lived experiences to mere entertainment: fleeting exposure to the suffering of others.


YET, THE ENCLAVE manages successfully to bear witness to a far more disturbing fact: on another continent, such conflict could not have continued for as long as it did. Would the deaths of multitudes of Europeans be met with such apathy? On the 7th of January 2015, 2 two gunmen opened fire in the Paris Headquarter of the magazine Charlie Hebdo, killing 12 individuals. Their deaths were met with international outrage, support for the magazine, and a massive rally against the attacks.

YET, A DEAFENING silence reigns over the deaths of an estimated 5.4 million people. Mosse's exhibition addresses this ignored reality. Mosse employs a visual vocabulary that is both visceral and haunting. He captures images drenched in a pink hue that manage to convey our disassociation with the suffering of the region. The images are strange, eerie, and unsettling: they are, similar to how we might perceive the conflict, unworldly. ●

By Gabriel R. du Plessis

ARBETSPOLITISK

ÅTERVÄNDSGRÄND

- 
- Du vill alltså ha jobb?
 - Och lön?
 - Du har för höga krav!

Trots teknologisk utveckling har arbetstiden inte förkortats på flera decennier. I stället tycks arbetsmarknadspolitiken ensidigt kretsa kring behovet av att "skapa jobb", ett självuppfyllande mål som kommit att bli den ensidiga lösningen för att besegra den europeiska massarbetslösheten och växande otryggheten.

Den europeiska arbetsmarknaden har i allt större utsträckning kommit att kännetecknas av permanent otrygghet, vilket tar sig uttryck i form av osäkra anställningsformer och nya osäkra anlitningsformer. I Storbritannien har exempelvis 80 procent av alla nya jobb sedan krisen 2008 varit zero hour contracts, vilket innebär att arbetsgivaren garanterar noll timmars arbete. Möjligheten till sociala klassresor har därigenom kraftigt inskränkts. I Tyskland har var femte löntagare ett minijob, vilket genererar maximalt 450 euro i månaden (ungefär 4140 kronor). Den tyska arbetsmarknaden präglas dessutom av en hastigt ökande polarisering, vilket vi, av erfarenhet vet påverkar samhället

negativt i längden. För att bara nämna några europeiska exempel.

VISSA TEORETIKER, BLAND annat den brittiske sociologen Guy Standing menar att en helt ny klass, sprungen ur globaliseringen håller på att ta form: Prekariatet. Dessa har fått sitt namn på grund av den prekära situation de befinner sig i; det vill säga de lider av en kronisk otrygghet. Trots förändringarna på den europeiska arbetsmarknaden läggs nästintill enbart fokus på arbetslösheten och då primärt ungdomsarbetslösheten. Diskussionen måste utvecklas till att inkludera arbetstagarens situation eftersom denne kommit att förvandlas till mario- nettdocka i flexibilitetens tecken. Vad vi i dag ser är en arbetsmarknad som genomgått en global maktförskjutning där arbetsgivaren tilldelas en kraftigt överordnad position i förhållande till arbetstagare.

HUR KOMMER DET sig att det inte förekommer fler högljudda protester? Hur kunde vi gå med på att förvänta oss så lite av livet? Och varför är det så provocerande att ifrågasätta arbetslinjen. I hopp om att få svar på mina frågor rörande arbetets substans kontaktade jag sociologen Roland Paulsen, som bjöd in *Utrikesperspektiv* för ett frukostsamtal.

EN VANLIG REAKTION när diskussionen kring arbetets substans kommer på tal, exempelvis ifrågasätter 40-timmars arbetsvecka är enligt min erfarenhet ett hastigt och oreflekterat motstånd. Det finns många olika anledningar som kan förklara varför människor reagerar så starkt och oppositionellt som de faktiskt gör när frågan kommer på tal. En möjlig förklaring är den ekonomiska aspekten. Det ekonomiska systemet är konstruerat så att en liten elit vill få majoriteten att jobba så mycket som möjligt till så låga löner som möjligt. Att sänka arbetstiden vore inte önskvärt ur denna aspekt eftersom

det vore att fördyra arbetskraften. Nuvarande system utgår ifrån att produktionen genererar vinst som kan plockas ut av ett fåtal.

DEN EKONOMISKA ASPEKTEN förklarar å andra sidan inte varför allmänheten blir så upprörd av diskussionen kring 40-timmars arbetsvecka. En möjlig förklaring vore en mer ideologiskt förankrad sådan. Människor tar i dag förgivet att det kapitalistiska systemet är det enda som genererar en fungerande välfärd. Dessutom har arbetet kommit att bli så djupt förankrat i vår kultur som ett sätt att "göra rätt för sig" att dra sitt strå till stacken och bidra till gemenskapen. Att ställa sig utanför denna gemenskap blir därmed direkt förknippat med en kraftig sanktionering, man kan bli anklagad för att vara lat och så vidare.

ROLAND PAULSEN PEKAR exempelvis på det faktum att lönearbetet kommit att bli så naturaliserat och att det idag betraktas som människors enda väg att röra sig i samhället, det vill säga att göra så kallade sociala klassresor. Lönearbetet framställs i vår tid som den enda möjliga sättet att fördela rikedom. Därför möts ibland resonemanget om reducerad arbetstid av kritik från feministiskt håll, då de menar att det kan hindra kvinnor ifrån att göra klassresor och att uppnå samma lönebase-rade standard som männen.

DET FINNS IDAG möjlighet att arbeta mindre och jag tycker det är beklämande att det inte förs en mer realpolitisk diskussion i dessa frågor. Roland Paulsen menar dessutom att fler och fler arbete försvinner och ersätts av teknologin vilket är en gemensam tendens i hela Europa. Det är denna utveckling som resulterat i att det råder exameninflation bland universitetsstudenterna. Likväl är hela grejen med arbetskritik relativt nytt i Sverige. På andra håll i Europa har det däremot varit en fråga under längre tid. I Frank-

rike införde man 35 timmars arbetsdag, vilket visserligen inte efterlevdes, och i Tyskland utvecklade Frankfurtskolan en idé om att moderniseringen i slutändan skulle befria oss från det sociala tvånget som finns inbyggt i kapitalismen.

ARBETSKRITIKEN TYCKS NU emellertid vara på frammarsch i Sverige, vilket Roland Paulsen mycket tror beror på att alliansen tidigare förde politik vilken kretsade så pass mycket kring arbetslinjen att det nästintill blev parodisk, likt ett väckelsemöte. Det är dock ett faktum att Sverige, till skillnad från andra europeiska länder klarat sig relativt väl ur den ekonomiska krisen och på så vis undvikit prekarisering med anställningsformer så som Storbritanniens zero hour contract och Tysklands minimumlön. Med detta sagt kan man likväl konstatera att arbetsförhållandena även har förändrats i Sverige, såtillvida att tillsvidareanställningarna minskat sedan 20 år tillbaka, men även att osäkerheten för framtiden har ökat generellt. Hur bör denna förändrade arbetsmarknad bemötas?

EN SAK ÄR SÄKER: Inte genom att enbart diskutera arbetslöshet som det enda problemet i globaliseringen och krisens spår, utan att även se till den ökade prekarisering som faktiskt präglar fler och fler europeiska arbetstagare. Problemet med den maktförskjutning som ägt rum där arbetsgivare tilldelas mer makt än arbetstagare skulle enligt Roland Paulsen kunna lösas genom arbetstidsförkortning. En arbetstidsförkortning skulle nämligen kunna leda till en radikalt omförhandla makten så till vida att arbetskollektivet tilldelades större makt vid förhandlingar med arbetsgivare.

DET BORDE LIGGA i Socialdemokraterna och Landsorganisationens (LO) största intresse att driva frågor som dessa eftersom det skulle innebära att mer makt åt arbetstagarna. LO, med sina

drygt 1 500 000 medlemmar, vilket är en exceptionell siffra om man jämför med andra europeiska länder, har stor makt att påverka och ställa krav på arbetsgivare. Problemet är att de inte har anpassat sig till den faktiska utveckling som ägt rum på arbetsmarknaden. Organisationen agerar som om det fortfarande fanns ett ömsesidigt och jämbördigt förhållande mellan arbetsgivare och arbetstagare. Roland Paulsen menar att LO måste våga visa musklerna och vidta stridsåtgärder. Arbetsgivarna är nämligen idag väl medvetna om den maktförskjutning som ägt rum, vilket ger dem utrymme att ställa mer orimliga krav.

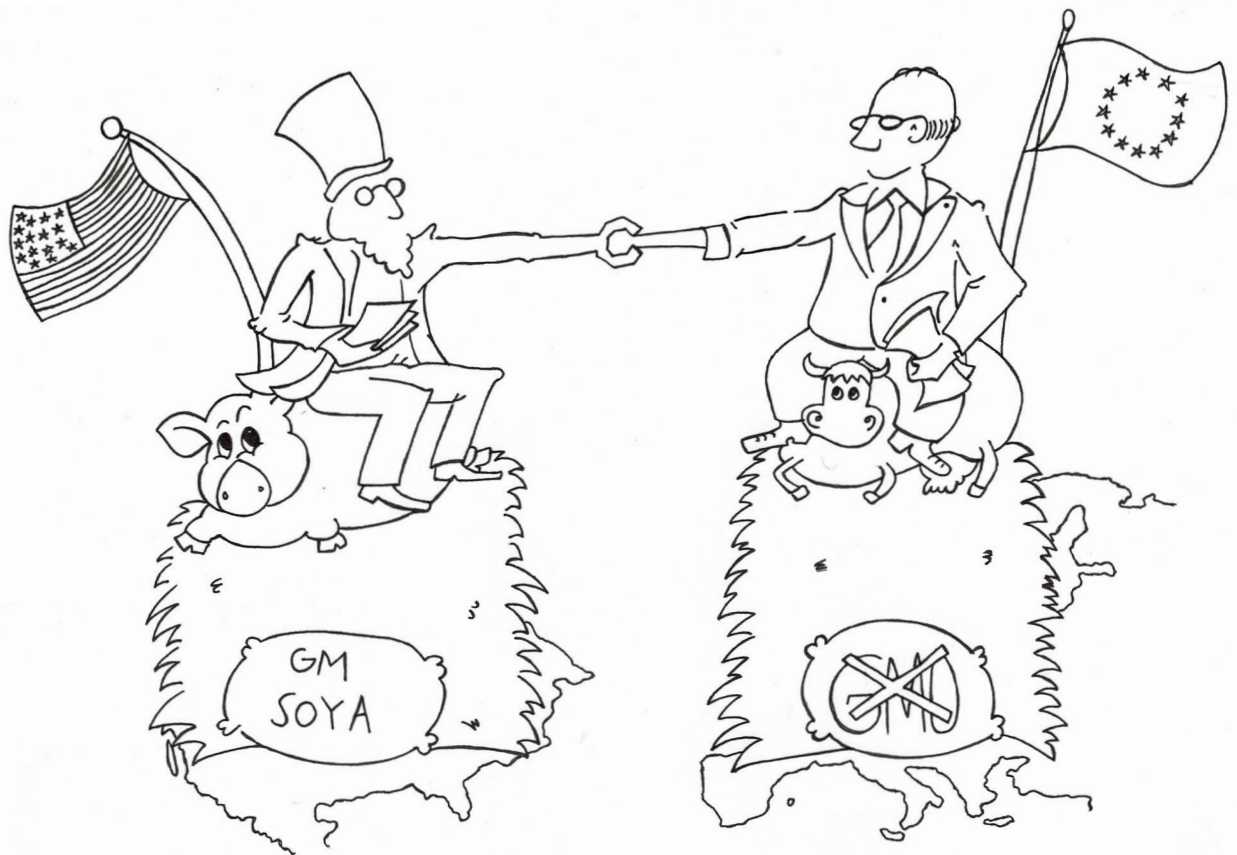
PAULSEN MENAR ATT LO använder sitt misslyckande med att höja lönerna för deras medlemmar som ett argument för att negligera tanken på arbetstidsförkortning eftersom deras medlemmar vill ha högre lön. De menar att statliga riktlinjer för sänkt arbetstid hade påverkat deras möjlighet för att på egen hand förhandla om högre löner. Det är dock ett faktum att löneutrymmet inte utnyttjas fullt ut och att LO misslyckats på denna front, och därmed anser Roland Paulsen att detta utrymme istället borde kunna tas ut i kortare arbetstid.

SA HUR KUNDE vi någonsin gå med på att förvänta oss så lite av livet. Kanske beror det på den prekarisering av arbetstagare som ägt rum. Rädslan inför att det ska blir värre, att lönerna inte ska öka och att arbetslösheten ska stiga, vilket hindrar tanken på att se andra möjligheter och alternativa lösningar. Kanske är det på grund av detta som varje försök att driva en mer progressiv arbetspolitik kommit att framstå som verklighetsfrånvänt. ●

Av Emelie Lindström
Illustration av Tilda Svirins

The Greatest Affair on Earth

Although a subject of intense debate and great importance, knowledge of the trade deal currently being brokered by the EU and the US is astonishingly low. TTIP is a free trade agreement that is supposed to open up trade relations and to attract cross-atlantic business investments, although many finds that it's dangerously prioritizing economic interests over social.



The background of the page features a stylized, overlapping image of the United States flag (stars and stripes) and the European Union flag (a circle of twelve gold stars on a blue field). The US flag is more prominent, with its stars and stripes visible across the entire page. The EU flag is partially visible, particularly on the left side where the stars are shown.

What the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, also known as TTIP, actually contains is a lot of the time lost in ideological discussions marked by one-sided arguments and deaf ears. The previous EU trade commissioner Karel de Gucht has claimed that hundreds of thousands of jobs will be created and that European GDP will rise exponentially. However, other reports show that only a slight increase is the best possible outcome. At the other end of the spectrum, there are intense protests from people who claim the agreement could bring about catastrophic consequences for the environment and that it could indicate the beginning of the end of democracy as we know it. What to make of all this?


FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS have been employed for a long time in order to allow for an easier trading process between countries. Usually this has been done by lowering tariffs and customs. However, when it comes to TTIP, as tariffs between the EU and the US are already relatively forgiving, there are a few other main components. As it is not a free trade agreement in the traditional sense of the words, one should be wary of discussing it as such instead of judging it on its own merits.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, TTIP is aiming to do away with the problem of the EU and the US having different standards and regulations on goods, production and trade. These differences are said to be an obstacle in transatlantic trade, and affect almost all sectors. The food safety standards within the EU are considerably stricter than the US counterpart, as the latter allows for a greater use of GMOs, hormone-treated meat and so on. Furthermore, the use of new chemicals in the EU is structured so that they have to be thoroughly tested before being used in any production, and in the US they are simply allowed for market use until proven unsafe. The other way around, the US have a firm export regulation on shale gas and raw oil, and the EU is seeking to loosen the grip on these. The EU are firmly claiming that they will not allow any compromise to the high standards currently present, and a potential outcome of the agreement is that a combination of the most ambitious standards of both sides get chosen. In many instances, though, one side is claiming that the policies of the other are obstructive to trade. Therefore one cannot really know for sure until the agreement is fully drafted if safety or economic interests will be weighing heavier.

THIS IS THE heart of TTIP, as a harmonization of trade regulations would open many businesses to, literally, a brand new world. The hopes on both sides of the Atlantic are that this will result in a - as the EU commission puts it - kick-start of our economy as it would create increased trade and flows of investment and thus also create jobs and boost GDP. To what degree this will be is heavily argued, as different reports point to all sorts of outcomes.

MARIA PERSSON, ASSOCIATE Professor in Economics at the Lund University School of Economics and Management, believes that an agreement would like-

Photo, left page: Portal Wisconsin, 2009. Photo, right page: Mikhail Tikhonov, 2013



ly lead to more trade and a bigger flow of investments, which is usually seen as beneficial to long term economic development. However, she says that "...since much of what probably will be part of TTIP has been subject to much less research than traditional free-trade agreements one should be careful in putting too much trust in the numbers we get from different economic models. Especially sceptic should one be when it comes to predictions of the effects on the labour market." She also notes that she is "generally speaking positive to TTIP from an economic perspective, but that interestingly the potential problems are mainly non-economic."

THE OTHER MAJOR part of TTIP, and the one subject to the most intense criticism, is that TTIP will include something called Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS). This is being promoted as protection for investors, so as to encourage entry into in unstable and changing markets by reducing the risk of economic loss. What this protection means is essentially that investors, i.e. corporations, are given the right to sue governments, should they feel they have been expropriated or unjustly treated. The ISDS mechanism has been included in various trade agreements since the beginning of the 1990s and has mainly been invoked when reforms that indirectly limit corporate profit have been passed. In 2013, under the NAFTA (North American Free-Trade Agreement), American fracking company Lone Pine sued the Canadian government for 250 million USD after they issued a hold on fracking to allow time for an investigation of the health- and environmental risks associated. The Swedish state-owned energy company Vattenfall has twice sued Germany, most recently for 5 billion USD in 2012 when the German government wanted to phase out their use of nuclear power following the Fukushima crisis.

BOTH THE EU AND THE US have made clear that they will not see TTIP signed without the ISDS component, although that doesn't necessarily mean this will be the case. Many are worried that TTIP, being the largest trade agreement in history, will allow for corporations to gain hegemony over the sovereign states that modern democracy is based upon and that the hunt for profit would be able to trump the need for welfare.

THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE expected to be finalized in the beginning of 2016, and as of now there is no way to know exactly what will be included or what level of compromise will be present. Yet less what the actual consequences will be. It has, however, a great potential to, in both good and bad ways, affect both the economy and everyday life, and so development of TTIP should be closely monitored. ●

By Tobias Adolfsson
Illustrations by Kia Silvennoinen

THE DAWN OF THE GREEK NAZISM



Photo: STR/AFP Getty Images

Right-wing radicalist parties all across Europe are steadily gaining foothold, especially in the austerity-ridden Greece. However, on the radicalised Greek political scene, one party goes further than any other party – marketing themselves as racists and marching in black uniforms.

The right-wing extremist party Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi) recently became the 3rd biggest party in Greece, as it reached a support of 6,3 % in the January 2015 parliament elections. While right-wing radicalist movement are gaining foothold all across Europe, the case of Golden Dawn is an unique occurrence. As with most right-wing radical parties, Golden Dawn advocates a clear nationalist agenda - restricting immigration and deportation of illegal immigrants. The nationalism is also reflected in the party's rhetoric, dividing the population between true Greeks and non-Greeks and blatantly accusing the non-Greeks for causing the insecure economical and societal situation in Greece today. However, the party also blames the foreign influence for causing the Greek demise, especially the EU and Germany who according to the party are trying to undermine "the superior Greek culture" and denigrate "the country's glorious history".

AS WITH MOST Populist parties and movements, Golden Dawn has a strong internal hierarchy where the party leader is highly revered by his followers and enjoys full control over the party. The Golden Dawn leader, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, is also the founder of the party and has since its formation in 1983 been its undisputed leader.

“THE PARTY STANDS FOR RACISM AND NATIONALISM IN A GREEK CONTEXT”

HOWEVER, WHILE GOLDEN DAWN displays many features commonly associated with other radical right-wing populist parties in Europe, the party differs in two very direct and acute aspects: The party's open acknowledgement of National Socialist ideas (1), and the party's open acknowledgement of violence as a political measure (2).

DESPITE THE FACT that Michaloliakos never publicly stated that the party is "National Socialist", he has several times stated that the party stands for Racism and Nationalism in a Greek context. It has however been evident that the party acknowledges concepts such as "sub-humans", using this word to define all social and ethnic groups that are perceived as unwanted in the Greek society. Disturbingly, the party even recognizes scientific racism and uses it to pertain the superiority of "the Greek race". This belief is an unique feature when comparing Golden Dawn to other Neo-Nazi movements across the world, as most of these movements nowadays have dismissed the idea of "Biological human races". The only major Nazi movement that actually advocated this notion before, was the original German Nazi Party (NSDAP). In consistence with the German Nazism of the 1930's, Golden Dawn also advocates Anti-Semitic policies as a measure to handle the economic situation in the country. Jews are targeted as the driving force behind the economic crisis, and Michaloliakos has constantly dismissed the Holocaust as "exaggerations".

FURTHER LIKENESSES WITH the original German Nazi Party can be seen in the use of uniforms and party symbols. Golden Dawn uses the old Hellenic meander pattern as party logo, a pattern confusingly similar to the swastika – a fact that is often pointed out by political opponents, but always defended by the members since it is "a

purely Greek symbol, pre-dating the Nazi swastika”.

BUT WHILE THE political symbols seem frightening by themselves, the party’s supporters have successfully managed to create an even more infamous and feared reputation. By dressing in simple black uniforms adorned with the party symbol at the party’s political rallies, the supporters want to intimidate political opponents by mimicking military units. Often, these rallies result in violence and in a number of cases they have degenerated into assaults and downright beatings of homosexuals and immigrants. This aggression has however not been unanswered as left-wing extremists a number of times have carried out bombings and other acts of terror towards Golden Dawn’s headquarters and officials. This spiral of violence lead to the assassination of the left-wing anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013. During the investigation, the police found evidence of involvement from a number of Golden Dawn officials, including the leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos. All of the suspects were arrested and still await trial for the murder and a number of other prosecutions includ-

ing extortion and assault. The trial has however been complicated by the fact that many witnesses fear reprimands from the party’s supporters.

DESPITE THIS REPUTATION of violence and intimidation, the party has gained a stable foothold as the third biggest party in Greece. Political scientists differ on the reasons why, but most of them agree that the economic crisis in Greece is the causal factor – a hypothesis taken from the lessons learnt from the rise of the German Nazi party in the 1930’s. The similarities between today’s Greece and the German Weimar republic in the 1930’s are strikingly similar, as both countries have strived to regain control over rampaging unemployment and public debts. The resulting austerity measures have caused a national trauma, leading citizens to despair and distrust towards the politicians and the democratic system. Just as the German Weimar Republic, Greece is highly indebted to other European and Western countries – not due to war reparations (as in the case of the Weimar Republic) but due to nearly 40 years of irresponsible economic policies enacted by the established parties. This situation has

Golden Dawn’s party symbol consists of a Greek meander in style and colour which resembles the Nazi swastika.

Photo: Wolfgang Sauber



Nikolaos G. Michaloliakos is the leader of Golden Dawn.

Photo: Yannis Behrakis



caused a general feeling of resentment among the Greeks, not only towards the foreign creditors but also towards the established political parties. The two previously leading parties in Greece, the left-wing Social democrats (PASOK) and the right-wing New Democracy (Nea Demokratia), who up until the 2009 elections together gathered nearly 85% of the votes – are now minor parties in the parliament, with a support of only 4,7 % (PASOK) and 27 % (New Democracy). Both parties have been drained of their support to new radicalist movements to the left and the right, creating a harsh political climate completely lacking the will to compromise.

IN THIS CLIMATE, many voters long for a stability and initiative that only authoritarianism can supply. As people perceive the democratic system increasingly as a failure, they revert from democratic principles and values looking for new solutions to their problematic situation. The psychological effects are surges in prejudices, as people search for scape goats which to prosecute and eliminate in order to solve the situation. Extreme nationalism also surges as people look to find

social stability and identity with their country – a way to defend their national self-esteem towards the foreign creditors that have put them in their current situation.

SO WHEN A political outsider arises, pertaining these ideas and supporting radical and unorthodox measures to solve the situation – she or he will gain strong support. Then, even the use of violence can be justified simply because it is used towards the perceived threats of the nation, thus part of the solution.

IRONICALLY, WHILE MICHALOLIAKOS remains in custody due to his alleged involvement in criminal activities, his support grows stronger as he slowly becomes a martyr for their cause. Thus, being imprisoned by the perceived corrupt state has only helped the party to maintain its outsider status.

HIS PARTY SIMPLY seems to supply many scared Greeks with new self-esteem, promoting the notion that violence, racism and resentment is the answer to Greece's problems. ●

By Adrian Taleny

review:



Photo: Atena Kustannus

THE DARKER SIDE OF THE FOLKHEM

Original title: Kansankodin pimeämpi puoli. (Atena: 2015)

Tamminen is a Finnish cultural anthropologist with a background in development studies and philosophy. He has written books on 3rd world development, nazism, and radical Islam. As of now, the only edition of this most recent work is in Finnish and no translations are on the way.

For those unaware of the history of Swedish social democracy, 'Folkhemmet' (Eng: the people's home) was a term used to describe the Swedish nation "project", when the government began to implement the welfare state in the early 20th century. It comes as a surprise, that two icons of this ideology, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, were also supporters of the eugenics movement that was prolific in Europe at the time.

FINNISH CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST Tapio Tamminen goes as far back as the 1800s to elaborate on the origins of the eugenics movement. He dwells into the origins of national romanticism, which gave birth to the tenets of National Socialism, and neo-nationalistic movements in the late 20th century.

HE NOTES THE traumatic loss of the Finnish territories to Russia, and Sweden's decline as a major regional power as creating need for fresh nationalist pride. A part of this was the "invention" of Nordic mythology and the concept of a homogenous Viking culture. In true national romantic fashion, the origins of these Swedish cultural origins were researched thoroughly with

**“A PATHOLOGICAL
FEAR OF THE OTHER
HAS BEEN RECYCLED
TO SUIT NEW WAVES
OF RACISM AND
XENOPHOBIA”**

The base of the folkhem vision is that the entire society ought to be like a small family where everyone contributes.

Photo: GLady/Pixabay



methods that are no longer scientific by any standard.

TAMMINEN EXPLAINS THE origin of the concept of Aryanism to be founded in the similarities discovered in the Indo-European languages. The national romanticism of the 19th century across Europe involved fantasies of the great ancient cultures being related to one another, originating from Northern India. It was when a German philosopher connected the idea of the old word Aryan (used previously to refer to Persian and Median cultures) with the concept of Indo-European languages and race. This reasoning later led to the race theory that would give birth to the eugenics movement.

EUGENICS WAS PRACTICED widely in Europe all the way up to World War 2. What is even more troubling, is the continuation of forced sterilization practices in Sweden, even when the magnitude of the atrocities of the Nazi regime had been discovered. Semantic games were played when former eugenics institutions became institutions of sociobiology, and the grounds for sterilization were changed from eugenic to just medical. Forced sterilizations were most often aimed at the most vul-

nerable individuals. Among them were Roma people, the mentally ill and the poor. Between certain years the proportion of forcefully sterilized women was over 90% of all procedures.

WHILE THIS LEGACY of the Social Democratic Party might have been reconciled, and the relationship of Sweden and the Third Reich finally recognized, neo-Nazism still persists along with its more benign neo-nationalist cousins. An example of the continuing traditions is shown in the parallels between anti-Semitism and islamophobia. Monolithic views of said religions along with a pathological fear of the Other have been recycled to suit new waves of racism and xenophobia.

TAMMINEN'S ACCOUNT IS truly a unique historical overview of this particular period in history. Along with having a rare Finnish perspective on a former colonial power, the book truly sets many modern phenomena in context and perspective. It also serves as a reminder of the injustices perpetrated by existing powers, and that we must know our history in order to avoid repeating it in the future. ●

By Arttu Närhi

B



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