

Reply

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Letters and emails

Peers' progress on the health and social care bill

Executive pay and the selfish right wing

On Tuesday I sat through eight hours of debate on the health and social care bill. There were, as usual, only one or two journalists on the Lords' press benches. So a report like yours (Lib Dem peers end war with Tories over reform of NHS, 26 October) cannot go unchallenged.

We voted against Labour's preamble, on which we had not been consulted, because it did not add to the secretary of state's legal position already established in the revised bill. But we did not oppose the interesting idea that it should be brought back at reports stage to be examined further at the end, not the beginning, of the committee proceedings.

I then moved, on behalf of Baroness Jay, Baroness Thornton, and Lord Patel (a crossbencher), an amendment to put the wording of the 2006 NHS Act on the role of the secretary of state back in the bill. Lord Mackay of Clashfern, former Conservative lord chancellor, moved his own amendment to clearly state the secretary of state's responsibilities. Your report doesn't help those of us seeking to change the bill, nor the thousands of NHS staff fighting for it to be improved.

Shirley Williams
Liberal Democrat, House of Lords

Your headline is at odds with the facts. On Tuesday Lib Dem peers led by Shirley Williams won the day by persuading the secretary of state to retain responsibility for the NHS. This first crucial "battle" certainly did not end the war over the future of the NHS and the Lib Dems are determined not to sign any armistice until issues of education, training, research, the use of private income, patient protection, new commissioning groups etc are agreed. In fact the war will not end until we

are convinced we have a better NHS than the Labour party left us!

Phil Willis
Liberal Democrat, House of Lords

Liberal Democrat peers are right that patients and staff want certainty about the future of the NHS. But certainty is the last thing the health and social care bill will deliver.

Unions and royal colleges representing staff across the NHS have long spoken out against the market zeal of the bill, which heralds an NHS based on competition instead of collaboration.

The bill, despite the efforts some have made, will fragment the NHS, depriving people of certainty. In a market-based system staff will find their employers changing frequently and their training, terms and conditions at risk. Patients will experience the toxic combination of cuts and fragmentation through rationing of care and a postcode lottery.

The bill still threatens to remove the cap on the income hospitals can make from private patients, meaning a two-tier NHS where patients are pushed to the back of growing queues in favour of those who can pay for care.

We urge all members of the House of Lords to heed these concerns.

Brendan Barber TUC, Dave Prentis Unison, Len McCluskey Unite, Rebana Azam GMB, Jon Skewes Royal College of Midwives, Lesley Mercer Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Warren Town Society of Radiographers, Lesley-Anne Baxter British Orthoptic Society Trade Union

During this past year, Labour has become used to Lib Dem peers saying one thing prior to a crucial debate and then voting differently. There have been honourable exceptions, including the

few Lib Dems who have voted with us so far on the health bill.

We know that many Lib Dem peers share our deep fears about the health bill and were surprised that 32 of them criticised our opposition to it (Letters, 26 October). Their criticism is offensive to the patients and NHS staff who are worried about the impact being felt by local health services due to the pre-legislative implementation of the plans. It is ridiculous for them to suggest that amendments to the secretary of state's responsibilities take away all the other concerns voiced earlier this year at the Lib Dem spring conference in Sheffield.

Lib Dem peers know that health is becoming as difficult an issue for them as it is for their Tory colleagues, yet they seem set on helping push through what is to all intents and purposes a Tory blueprint for our NHS. But it doesn't have to be like that. They could use their votes to secure real changes to the bill.

This Wednesday, when the Lords meets again to debate the health bill, nothing less than Baroness Williams's



The health bill is unamendable ... It's a complete dog's dinner and the Lib Dem peers know it

Dr Jane Roberts



amendment - which Labour supports - will do. If however, the Lib Dems decide to compromise with the Tories and accept the weaker Mackay amendment, they will be selling the NHS short and paving the way for a massive diminution of democratic accountability.

Ian Royall, Glenns Thornton, Philip Hunt, Jeremy Beaman, Margaret Wheeler, Ray Collins
Labour, House of Lords

It's good to know that Lib Dem peers feel that the time for declaratory statements has passed, having just mobilised the highest turnout in the Lords ever to support the health and social care bill. But as a clinician, and one who has worked both in medical management and commissioning, as well as having been a councillor, allow me to howl.

The bill is unamendable. Its basic tenets splinter the NHS into tiny pieces and undermine the significant advances that had been made to improve quality and to integrate care across different health providers and between health and social care. The stroke network in London, for example, is using resources far more efficiently and has saved hundreds of lives. How will those networks be facilitated with fragmented commissioning groups responsible for patients quite possibly in very different localities?

It's a complete dog's dinner and the Lib Dem peers know it. Their colleagues in the Commons should hang their heads in shame for voting for the bill 18 months ago - then they really could have made a difference.

Dr Jane Roberts
Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, London

More on the NHS at gu.com/letters

News that directors of the top 100 FTSE companies have taken eye-watering pay increases of nearly 50% in the past financial year (The rich keep grasping while the young poor face freefall, 29 October) will be greeted with real anger by all those whose pay is frozen, those who have to pay more for their pensions and those whose utility bills are rising sharply. Do they have no sense of proportion? Where are the British equivalents of the European and American billionaires who have openly conceded that they should pay more tax - rightly described as the subscription to a civilised society?

The selfish mentality of what can be dubbed the British Tea Party tendency was also on ugly display in the Commons earlier this week when some Tory backwoodsmen bayed about the alleged tens of millions that helps sustain lay trade union representatives in our workplaces. They talked as if they were Bolshevik agitators, but ignored the fact that such representatives play a vital role in negotiating pay and conditions, preventing disputes, avoiding strikes and upholding health and safety rules, which benefit not just those at work but members of the public using their buildings and facilities. The next time someone on the government benches dares to utter the phrase "We are all in this together", I promise I will scream!

Ian Mearns MP
Labour, Gateshead

Gamete consultation

Rachel Pepa (Letters, 27 October) hit the nail on the head when she wrote that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has "set the UK back on the road to the commercialisation of gamete donation". This decision came on the back of a public consultation orchestrated by the HFEA in which the majority of respondents specifically rejected the model the HFEA now plans to introduce. Instead, most respondents advocated the removal of the HFEA's existing cap on expenses and loss of earnings and replacing this with reimbursement of both expenses actually incurred and earnings actually lost by donors.

This decision provides little support for claims by the HFEA chair, Professor Lisa Jardine, that: "We have consulted widely and listened carefully to what we were told by the large number of patients, donors, donor-conceived people and clinics who responded to our consultation."

In the light of this outcome serious questions need to be asked about both the HFEA's decision-making processes and its use of public resources.

Eric Blyth
Professor of social work, University of Huddersfield

Ways of seeing pixels

In his review of *The Adventures of Tintin* (Thundering typhoons, Review, 29 October), Tom McCarthy writes: "When all you're looking at is pixels being shunted around a screen by some need in post-production, none of it counts." Leaving aside the ill-conceived notion that computer-generated animation is an isolated afterthought for such a film, I'd like to address his sweeping dismissal of a medium that has the potential to create great art. I've not seen the film, but know that it is not "execrable" simply because it is computer-generated. All painters do is shunt some mineral and vegetable deposits around a piece of canvas - should we dismiss Rembrandt and Picasso?

Leo Craze
MA student, National Centre for Computer Animation, Bournemouth University

The M25 might well have been 25 years old on Saturday (M25 comes full circle, 29 October), but it does not completely encircle London. The section of about three miles either side of the Dartford crossing is the A282. Long may such anomalies continue.

Robert Holder
Lowestoft, Suffolk

Love for our new parody "Philip Cole" (Comment is free: The people's panel, 28 October). After claiming "family sizes decline as household income rises" he goes on to write "we could afford a larger family - and so we got on with it".
George Czermuszka
Manchester

So, when Cumbria county council's cost-cutting finally ensures the closure of the small mental health charity I manage, I could perhaps try to continue my work voluntarily and, instead of taking home a modest salary, aspire to a British Empire Medal (Report, 29 October).
Jane Sharpe
Grange over Sands, Cumbria

I'm afraid Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond are guilty of plagiarism (Report, 29 October). The ArcelorMittal Orbit design is clearly the work of Francis Crick and Barnes Wallis after a night on the beer.
Chris Bagust
Bristol

Down yere in dear ol' Deb'n, the shop assistants all say "Can'yelp!" (Letters, 28 October).
Ishvara d'Angelo
Totnes, Devon

St Paul was no lackey, and nor should today's churchmen be

Marina Hyde (So what would St Paul do? Call in health and safety, 29 October), is wrong on two counts. (1) In understanding of the Bible: St Paul makes it abundantly clear that Christians are no longer bound by every one of the more than 600 commandments of the Law of Moses. The other Apostles agreed with him. (2) In the ill-informed attack on George Carey: I was on the crown appointments commission from the beginning to the end of consideration and nomination of him as Archbishop of Canterbury. Her story is wrong. He was our first choice.
Canon Dr Colin Craston
Bolton

How sad that Marina Hyde spurns the opportunity of the St Paul's debacle to address the real issues. Instead she resorts to mindless insult. She does not linger long enough with Paul to note that,

in sending back the slave Onesimus to his master Philemon, Paul urges Philemon in effect to set Onesimus free. And such a cock-eyed view of Paul and authority!
Prof James DG Dunn
Chichester

So, St Paul was a lackey of established authority, was he? That will explain the beatings, persecution, imprisonment and execution at the hands of the established authorities then. Hang on, that doesn't sound right, does it?
Gregory Woods
Sheffield

We are appalled that the City of London and St Paul's Cathedral will be serving notices to quit on the Occupy LSX camp outside the church (Report, 29 October). They need to take note of JF Kennedy's statement that: "Those who make peace-

ful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable." We support the entirely peaceful protests at St Paul's, at Finsbury Circus and those taking place in towns and cities across the world.
Iain Banks, Moazzam Begg, Roger Lloyd Pack, Andrew Burgin, Brian Eno, Lindsey German, Ben Griffin, Kate Hudson, John Pilger, Michael Rosen, David Wilson

As a lawyer and an Anglican I have no patience with churchmen trying to hide behind their lawyers' advice. Lawyers should use imagination to help clients solve their problems - not simply err on the side of caution. And clients should press their lawyers to be creative, and take the risks that faith demands. Faith, as Martin Luther said, is a lively reckless confidence in the grace of God.
Imogen Clout
Sheffield

Open door



Chris Elliott

The readers' editor on... publishing photographs of Muammar Gaddafi's corpse

Bloody images of Muammar Gaddafi's corpse on the front of both the Guardian website and the newspaper brought forth many complaints from readers, and some from staff. Nearly 60 readers

wrote to the readers' editor or the letters page to condemn use of the images as gratuitous, exploitative or triumphalist; many others posted comments online.

Several wondered, as one put it, "about the relative frequency with which pictures of white and non-white corpses are published; to me the latter seem

disproportionate". A strong theme was a sense of moral repugnance at the use of the photos and video - that somehow the Guardian was complicit in the act and that to view the images was demeaning.

One reader wrote: "I have your newspaper as my homepage on my computer. I am a faithful reader who enjoys your angle on the news. However, today I am shocked and disgusted by the horrific images of a mangled corpse and people gloating over it that confront me ... if you must air these images, at least bury them with a warning as to their gruesome nature so I needn't have my soul polluted by this horror-porn should I not wish it." Commentator Mark Lawson, in a piece published on the Guardian website within 24 hours of Gaddafi's death - and later in the paper - argued that the images should have been kept off front pages, saying: "Even presidents, Bill Clinton once pleaded, deserve a private life. Even tyrants, I would argue, deserve a private death." He also suggested there is an obligation "imposed on editors (by such organisations as the PCC and Ofcom) not to cause unnecessary or unheralded offence to sensitive consumers". Whatever Ofcom's duties, that obligation does not, in fact, feature in the 16 articles of the Press Complaints Commission's codes addressing the use of violent images.

Similarly, there is nothing in the Guardian's editorial code to guide editors

deciding what images to use and in which circumstances. It is an editorial judgment on the day. This is not a new dilemma, although the digital age has exacerbated the potential for distress. When photos of the corpse of Benito Mussolini hanging upside down were widely distributed at the end of the second world war, they were not accompanied by assorted videos taken with mobile phones.

When the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was shot with his wife Elena on Christmas Day 1989, their corpses were seen by television audiences all over the world. Five years ago, when the Guardian published photographs of Saddam Hussein after he was hanged, more than 200 complaints were received.

In the case of Muammar Gaddafi, the first images went up on the Guardian website around lunchtime on Thursday 20 October. Complaints arrived within the hour. Senior newsroom staff discussed use of the images. The consensus was that these were crucial news pictures that showed the manner of the Libyan leader's death - a brutal act which read-

The scale of the photo on the front page took us too close to appearing to level in the killing rather than reporting it

ers would recognise as something that could not be put in soft focus. Other news organisations came to a similar decision on the day, although by Friday morning more of a split was evident within the media over the use of the photos.

Ian Katz, the Guardian's deputy editor in charge of news, believes it was "emphatically right" to use the pictures. For editors, he said, it was a case where the importance of the photo in news terms outweighed the repugnance factor. In addition, "these images [were] absolutely everywhere, and in particular on all rolling TV news and bulletins", so the idea of shielding people was unrealistic. "If I have one reservation," Katz said, "it is that the original image may have been too large, which perhaps added to the feeling some had that it was gratuitous."

At the time I agreed with the Guardian's decision to publish. On reflection - and having read the complaints - I feel less convinced about the way we used these photographs, although I still feel strongly that they are an important part of this story and should have been used. The scale of the photo on the newspaper front page of 21 October and prominent picture use on the website took us too close to appearing to revel in the killing rather than reporting it. And that is something that should feature in our deliberations the next time - and there will be a next time - such a situation arises.

the guardian

The readers' editor on... publishing photographs of Muammar Gaddafi's corpse

Was the Guardian right to use such graphic pictures of the dead Libyan leader?



Chris Elliott

guardian.co.uk, Sunday 30 October 2011 19:00 GMT

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Several wondered, as one put it, "about the relative frequency with which pictures of white and non-white corpses are published; to me the latter seem disproportionate". A strong theme was a sense of moral repugnance at the use of the photos and video – that somehow the Guardian was complicit in the act and that to view the images was demeaning.

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Comments in chronological order (Total 93

Comments)

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 Staff

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DCarter

30 October 2011 7:04PM

Of course you were right. It happened didn't it? It happened, and the perpetrators were people that our leaders had backed. It highlights their moral bankruptcy and ours, that we are complicit in such brutality.

Recommend? (51)

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Letters and emails

Government pledges needed on Rio+20

This time a year from now leaders from around the world will convene for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil. Rio+20 in June 2012 will take place 20 years after the groundbreaking 1992 Rio Earth summit - an event that marked a watershed in international collaboration on social and environmental issues.

The British government has an international reputation for championing development aid and playing a critical role on climate change. With just a year to go before Rio+20, there is a real opportunity and need for the UK to show similar leadership for sustainable development, and for the prime minister to publicly demonstrate his commitment to ensuring a successful summit.

We ask the government to demonstrate leadership towards Rio+20 by, first, pledging that the prime minister will attend. Second, it should appoint an ambassador or envoy on Rio+20 to promote Rio+20 across the government, involve the public and engage in dialogue with other countries. And, finally, it must host a high-level dialogue with leaders from around the world to forge a consensus on increasingly urgent issues, such as the green economy, the food system, and building a low-carbon future.

British civil society is ready to play its own role in contributing to these endeavours. We look forward to hearing the government's plans for ambitious action on the Rio+20 agenda between now and June 2012.

Barbara Stocking *Oxford GB*, **Andy Atkins** *Friends of the Earth*, **Christine Allen** *Progressio*, **Brendan Barber** *Trades Union Congress (TUC)*, **David Norman** *WWF-UK*, **Paul Valentin** *Christian Aid*, **Chris Bain** *Cafod*, **Matthew Frost** *Tearfund* and 12 others.
For a full list, see gu.com/letters.

What future for the House of Lords?

Martin Kettle is right to dismiss Nick Clegg's hotchpotch of proposals for reforming the House of Lords (Nick Clegg's House of Lords reform is folly. Abolition would be a better option, 3 June), but surprisingly omits to consider another option besides abolition: a second chamber on the pattern of senates, such as those in the US and Australia, with equal representation for each of the UK's four nations.

With devolution, we have become a semi-federation, but we still lack most of the safeguards offered by a fully fledged federal system. A UK senate with, say, 20 members elected by proportional representation in each of the four nations would give Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland much-needed protection against the constant threat of being outvoted by the English members, just as the smaller Australian states such as Tasmania are protected by equal representation in the federal senate against domination by New South Wales and Victoria.

The UK senate could have much the same limited functions as the present House of Lords and since it would not produce the government, nor include ministers, it could never threaten the primacy of the House of Commons. If the United States can manage with 100 senators, two from each state, we could surely get by with 80, instead of the 831 members of the present House of Lords.

Brian Barber
London

Martin Kettle asks why we need a second chamber in parliament. He might be interested to look at the history of government in Queensland, Australia, the sole example of a unicameral system, which throughout the 1970s and 1980s was riddled with levels of corruption

deemed unacceptable. All Australian states have struggled to adapt an upper house legislature with the growth in power of a lower house one. Some have solved it by making upper house elections collegiate voting extensions of the lower houses (based on diverse periods of tenure). This system has usually been an interim one in which, eventually, the state upper houses are elected directly by popular vote.

Michael Rolfe
Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire

What is wrong with simply having MPs legislating without a second chamber is that vast tracts of legislation would then never be scrutinised in parliament. The general adoption of timetable motions in the House of Commons (something that never happens in the Lords) means that large parts of many bills are never even debated by MPs. What is wrong with simply appointing



peers in future was described by Winston Churchill when he said, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Chris Rennard
House of Lords

In a democracy the principle of a wholly popular mandate ought to be sacrosanct. So it is surely right that, if we have a second chamber (which I think we should), all members are elected. And why restrict its role to scrutinising and amending legislation? Why not let it have an originating function? There is nothing wrong in a degree of competition between the chambers if both are elected; plurality can be a positive. The key, as Helena Kennedy has argued, is a written constitution defining and delimiting powers and purposes. But David Steel has a point about practicality. To benefit from accumulated expertise all legislation ought to be scrutinised and commented on by a rolling commission of public appointees drawn from a wide range of people with a variety of skills, knowledge and experience nominated by the public. Let's not be snobbish about it - bus drivers can be as creative as business persons, hairdressers as haematologists. And a way should be found to ensure that there is always input from the wider public, again a matter to be clarified by the constitution.

Oh, and let us say good riddance to the anti-democratic practice of appointed life peers, only marginally less objectionable than the hereditary specimens.

Benedict Birnberg
London

For more letters on Lords reform, see gu.com/letters

Towards building a village consensus

Simon Jenkins identifies protection from market forces as the unanimous cry from Cumbria regarding the wish list from the government's localism agenda (in village politics, as elsewhere, what matters is not agreement but conflict, 3 June). In Scotland we do not have a localism bill but communities here would share that view.

He also mentions the difficulty of reaching decisions on issues where the inputs cannot be quantified in terms of monetary value. These may well be those issues which are of great concern to communities, such as the long-term health and vitality of a town centre.

Having participated in many planning appeal inquiries over the past 20 years I have been struck by the degree to which decisions so often rest on the factors such as turnover, access and expenditure. Developers' teams of lawyers, planners, traffic consultants and retail specialists grind out the statistics. Communities, even if they can make up their collective mind, do not have the security of such clearly stated positions and may be regarded as standing in the way of progress in expressing a contrary view.

The consequence of limiting the discussion in this way can be to elevate short-term gratification through a new supermarket above the longer-term considerations which communities hold dear. Market forces prevail.

Andrew Robinson
Director, Robinson Associates

"Sometimes I find a philosopher," says Simon Jenkins. I am a philosopher, so here goes. Jenkins writes about village politics and the difficulties of resolving clashing aims and values. My suggestion: we need a new conception of rationality which recognises that when we have problematic or disputed aims, ideals or values we need to represent them in the form of a hierarchy, so that they get less and less specific and substantial, and so less and less problematic and likely to be disputed, as we go up the hierarchy.

In this way we can create a framework of relatively unproblematic, undisputed aims, ideals or values (and associated methods), high up in the hierarchy, within which much specific, substantial, problematic and contested aims or values (and associated methods) can be assessed, debated, and perhaps improved in the light, in part, of experience. Such a hierarchical conception of rationality, designed to help us improve problematic aims and values as we live, ought to be built into village, national and international politics, into industry, agriculture, finance, media, law, education and even science.

Nicholas Maxwell
Emeritus reader, philosophy of science, University College London

Write behaviour

Can I nominate as my personal best Guardian inconsistency so far for 2011 the juxtaposition of Jon Henley losing weight on the Dukan diet protein diet (Why the Dukan diet worked for me, 6 June), with the editorial (Food: A hungry world, 6 June), which showed that rich people's protein-rich diet leads to poor people going to bed hungry. Personally I've found that eating double rations of mussels, with something reasonably nutritious for lunch, is a quick and easy way to lose weight without the harmful side effects.

Carolyn Hayman
London

I was interested to read Helena Smith's report from Greece (Cuts leave cultural treasures locked out of sight, 4 June). Visiting the National Archaeological Museum in Athens on 24 May, gallery closures meant I could not see the famed Antikythera Mechanism, and an attendant told me she and other staff had not been paid since November. No doubt this explains staff shortages.

Pippa Richardson
Swansea

So "we're busy plundering the past" (Total recall, G2, 2 June)? Does that include the large percentage of the population who are over 60? We are the past and personally I have no desire to "plunder" it. Just another example where the elderly and their experience are not considered worth a mention.

Jean Corker
Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

I was sorry to see that James Derounian may not have heard of Gustav Holst (Letters, 4 June), one of the most notable of all the sons of Cheltenham. Surely he merits as high a rating as Edward Wilson.

Ronald Traggett
Malvern, Worcestershire

Funny, really, my attempts to establish a National Write-to-the-Guardian Day without result for 10 years suddenly appears to have developed into a Write-to-the-Guardian Week (Letters, passim).

Tom McMaster
Wrightington, Lancashire

Police use Twitter (Police 'bomb' tweets backfire, 3 June)? What next, pldocasts?

Kevin Holland
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

Why Britain has a bad attitude towards bicycles

Your review of research about attitudes to cycling is very disappointing and a contrast to my recent visit to Amsterdam, where the visitor finds well-marked cycle pathways everywhere, cycle parks the size of a multi-storey car park and hire prices as little as £7 per day (On your bike: cycling is for children, study finds, 4 June). As petrol prices rise, cycling should also rise, but living close to Birmingham city centre, it is a very daunting prospect to try and cross the city on a bike and the second city is clearly not alone with its terrible disregard and disincentive to cyclists - young or old.

Robert Penn observed in his excellent book, it's All About the Bike, that the status of the cyclist dipped from the mid-'70s and that many imagine you've lost your driving licence or are simply too poor to drive. And to think Peugeot

and Rover began as cycle manufacturers, and in the 1950s there were around 12 million regular cyclists.

Adrian Johnson
Birmingham

What a pity that the researchers didn't come to Doncaster, to see the unbounded enthusiasm for cycling in this town. Here, scores of adults use their bikes every day for all sorts of reasons, but one common thing unites them: they aren't out on the roads, they are on the pavements.

Some of them are so safety conscious that they wear their helmets, just in case a pedestrian protests at the invasion of their rightful space and gives them a playful shove on to the paving slabs. Doncaster's cyclists are also determined to complete their journeys in double-quick time, and to

that end they are frequently seen riding the wrong way up one-way streets as a shortcut. And they have a sense of humour, too, for only earlier this week one of them rang his bell as he approached me from the rear, giving me ample time to stumble out of his way. Here, the cyclists easily avoid harassment by motorists. They simply terrorise those of us on foot, and ignore the Highway Code.

Phil Penfold
Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Of course 25% of people in the Netherlands cycle. The Netherlands is flat. I live in Sheffield - a city built on seven hills. I'd love to cycle, but if the hills and car/van/bus/lorry drivers don't kill me, the potholes in the roads will.

Gill Fuller
Sheffield

Open door



Chris Elliott

The readers' editor on... sensitivity in discussing images of child abuse

If a newspaper publishes a style guide to ensure the accurate and consistent use of words and terms, the equal and opposite reaction that naturally follows is a series of requests for changes in those rules.

It is healthy that the guidelines are tested, and editors should respond to changing public attitudes. It is not always right or necessary to chase demotic style, but few would regret the changes in public attitudes that have followed the development of a different kind of language used to describe mental ill health or physical disabilities.

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One such request came after a columnist writing about superjunctions - a word that is often misused to mean all injunctions, including, very occasionally, in the Guardian - produced the following sentence: "Child porn on the net is censored, and its users prosecuted."

The reader had very strong objections to the phrase "child porn". He said: "Please can you not call it this in future articles of this nature - 'child porn' is both a very offensive and trivialising term to use, especially (but not exclusively) to people who have been abused and filmed." They have suffered an everlasting offence, he argues, being abused and exploited as children, and then knowing that this is online somewhere for ever. "These images or films are of children being sexually abused or exploited (quite literally crime-scene photos or films). Porn they could only be described as if the media is aiming their stories at paedophiles. 'Indecent images' is a far more accurate and acceptable term." The more such images are described as porn, the more it suggests an element of consenting

adults: "The more this legitimises this language in the eyes of the offenders, and also (my own view), the more it 'normalises' it in society," he writes.

Currently, there is no entry in the Guardian's style guide that covers this area. The New Oxford Dictionary of English defines pornography as "printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings".

I don't think it's the case that all adult pornography is legal, but much is, and for the present discussion we will put aside a further argument about the demeaning and corrosive effect it may have on individuals who view it. But the reader makes a strong point that he then reinforces by describing the attitude of child welfare organisations to the term.

For instance, the Internet Watch Foundation, which fights child abuse on the web, states: "The IWF uses the term child sexual abuse content to accurately reflect the gravity of the images we deal

with. Please note that child pornography, child porn and kiddie porn are not acceptable terms. The use of such language acts to legitimise images which are not pornography, rather, they are permanent records of children being sexually exploited and as such should be referred to as child sexual abuse images. If you see such content online please report it to the IWF."

The NSPCC only uses the term "child abuse images". The reader adds: "This is what the NSPCC have previously said to me: 'The NSPCC would agree with you that the expression 'child porn' gives a misleading and potentially trivialising impression of what is a very serious crime. The NSPCC typically uses the term 'child abuse images' as we consider this offers a more accurate indication of what these images portray'."

David Marsh, the editor of the Guardian's style guide, agrees, as do I, that this is a sensible change to the way the Guardian refers to images of child abuse. He intends to create a new entry in the guide and inform all staff of the new style. Of course, a new style guide entry doesn't stop the terrible abuse of children, but when we describe such images it will separate a despicable crime from a broader area of human sexual activity that washes back and forth across moral and legal boundaries that are harder to define.

'Child porn is both a very offensive and trivialising term to use, especially to people who have been abused and filmed'

guardian

Open door: Why the term 'child porn' should not be used

The readers' editor on... sensitivity in discussing images of child abuse



Chris Elliott
The Guardian, Monday 6 June 2011

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Comments in chronological order (Total 158 comments)

E Staff

C Contributor



Secretary

6 June 2011 8:18AM

Normally, I'd be one of the 'PC gone mad' brigade. But in this case, I agree with you. Child Abuse images retains the horror that this kind of thing should have. Child porn does not.

Recommend (107)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



MalleusSacerdotum

6 June 2011 8:18AM

Next up:

'child abuse' to be replaced by 'child rape and associated abuse'.

'Tax evader' to be replaced by 'tax bandit'.

Everyone has a list, I'm sure.

Recommend (20)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



CarefulReader

6 June 2011 8:22AM

How about drawings? One could argue that they depict child abuse, but calling them "child abuse images" when no child has been abused in their production might be a stretch.

Reply

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telephone number. If you do not want your email address published, please say so. We may edit letters.

Letters and emails

Formula feeding - an uncontrolled trial?

Why does the Guardian feel it necessary to add a piece by Zoe Williams (Emotive issue needs restraint, 30 September) to "balance" its reporting of a study that shows a link between adult obesity and babies bottle-fed artificial formula?

Infant feeding is an emotive issue and many mothers feel guilty about many things - in particular about how they choose to feed their babies. However, it is surely a fact that a human baby is meant to be fed the milk its mother produces and not the milk produced by a cow.

If you wrote an article presenting a study about a new health risk from smoking tobacco, would you then feel you had to add a piece written by a sympathetic non-smoker to try to alleviate the guilt of your smoking readers?

Also, what agenda or fashion could there be at play in discussions about infant feeding (apart from the agenda of the formula-producing companies)? Throughout history babies have been fed on substances other than human milk, but the mass introduction of artificial formula happened without any studies of the potential effect of feeding human newborns another species' milk. Maureen Minchin called this "A mass, uncontrolled trial in perinatal care" (Birth, March 1987).

Sally Randle

Bristol

Zoe Williams believes research that might show breastfeeding in a bad light would never be undertaken because "medics" have set their collective face against it. In such a case, I would expect the baby milk manufacturers to step into the breach. If this has not happened, perhaps they do not feel hopeful of a useful (ie profitable to them) outcome.

Pauline Asher

Birmingham

Co-ops, cuts and the coalition

Francis Maude may wish to heap praise on co-operatives as a means to support public services (We will prove that we care, 2 October) but he needs to be clearer about the safeguards in place to protect them. At the recent Labour conference, I attended a fringe meeting about co-ops and the opportunities to protect services in the face of the cuts. One member from a Tory heartland piped up about the local Tories' enthusiastic adoption of co-op principles in her area for local council and community services, only to see them exploit loopholes and demutualise them into private shareholdings.

If this promotion of co-ops by the Tories is simply privatisation by the back door, we should feel very afraid. There is nothing to stop the Tories making wholesale changes to the law for easier and simpler demutualisation in the future.

Jack Davenport

Preston, Lancashire

If all our problems stem from Labour's "fiscal fecklessness", why did the Tories leave it until December 2008 to abandon their pledge to match Labour's spending?

Jeremy Beecham

Labour, House of Lords

Only time will tell if Martin Kettle's prediction that public spending cuts will be gradualist in their impact is borne out (Comment, 1 October). But one concern must be for those services that form part of the essential fabric of British life yet are usually highly vulnerable when the "big beasts" get going.

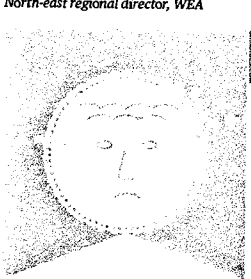
We've already heard talk about libraries being regarded as simply a lifestyle choice and therefore irrelevant as a public service. A similar area of vulnerability is adult education, where there is always a danger of decisions being made to

reduce funding by people whose social advantages have never caused them to need adult learning. And generally adult education is a quiet, persevering activity that does not lend itself to raising its voice, so it always risks being overlooked.

The Workers' Educational Association and other long-established and successful providers of adult learning, who collectively reach many of those who've had to face barriers to their education, have launched the Save Adult Education campaign. In the space of a week, almost 3,000 people have signed an online petition drawing attention to the value of publicly funded adult learning. Many have placed moving personal testimonies on the petition ("I went into dead-end jobs but, thanks to the WEA, I didn't have a dead-end life"). The petition and testimonies are at www.petitiononline.com/adulted/petition.html.

Nigel Todd

North-east regional director, WEA



The UK's leading artists are right to highlight the folly of slashing investment in the arts (Letters, 2 October). It will not only damage Britain's culture, but our thriving creative industries that depend on it to provide the jobs and wealth of the future.

Just 0.3% of government spending goes on culture and as the economy gets back at least two pounds for every one invested, it makes no sense in terms of deficit reduction to slash the arts either. This is why every Labour culture secretary since 1997 argued for and won better than average settlements for the arts.

Ben Bradshaw MP

Shadow secretary of state for culture

The arts world seems to think it's a special case and should be exempt from the impending cuts. In these times of restraint, all that matters to ordinary people is that: 1) we are able to feed ourselves; 2) we have a roof over our head; 3) we have adequate healthcare; and, 4) we have affordable heating. We cannot provide the above by subsidising the arts - eating a painting will not keep us alive. I suggest that the artists withdraw to their garrets and suffer with the rest of us.

Archie Hill

Newmarket, Suffolk

Polly Toynbee makes productive use of a sailing metaphor (Comment, 2 October): "plain sailing", "sail through", "captain and his mate", "force 10 hurricane" etc. I can't help adding that the coalition could be considered a kind of "catamaran", a craft valued more for its speed than for its durability in heavy weather, when, I believe, a single-hulled craft is more reliable and reassuring.

Dr Paul O'Kane

London

The real facts about the Leeds bin strike

I did not see Michael Meadowcroft (Letters, 29 September) at any of the negotiations over the Leeds bin strike. Whoever informed him has got their facts spectacularly wrong. The implementation process was a result of national negotiations and has been agreed since 1998 but not implemented fully in Leeds until 2009. The initial proposals meant cuts of up to £6,000 per year for an already low-paid group of workers. In an attempt to salvage the situation a deeply flawed efficiency scheme was proposed which still left refuse staff £50 per week worse off.

The unions did not call for a strike - the workforce demanded that they be balloted for it. The strike remained rock solid in the face of the employment of scab contractors costing hundreds of thousands of pounds and the threat by the then Lib Dem leader of the council that the service would be privatised. The eventual formula for resolving the strike offered the opportunity for the workforce to maintain pay levels. In return, the council now has a more efficient service with lower sickness rates producing potential savings of up to £2m per year.

A key aspect of the strike was the support of the overwhelming majority of the people of Leeds for the strikers. This is in stark contrast to Michael Meadowcroft's cronies in the Leeds Lib Dems, who were dumped by the voters in the May elections. Also, the strike lasted just over 11 weeks, not 17, and as the strikers got strike pay their losses were nowhere near the £4,000 quoted by Mr Meadowcroft.

Alan Hughes

Head of negotiations, Yorkshire and Humberside, Unison

Rivers at risk

Your story on the health of the world's rivers highlights a pressing issue which gets little coverage (World's declining rivers put 5 billion people at risk, 30 September). The global threat to water quality and aquatic species should serve as a wake-up call to governments around the world, not just our own. Rivers that support native wildlife in the UK are being threatened by runoff pollution, over-abstraction and invasive species - but little is being done to address this.

Conservationists and anglers have become so frustrated at the inaction of government on this issue that the RSPB, WWF-UK, the Angling Trust and the Salmon and Trout Association have formed the Our Rivers campaign.

Action is needed to protect the habitats of eels, white-clawed crayfish, water voles and many other threatened river species. Anyone who cares about these species can get involved in the campaign by visiting www.ourrivers.org.uk.

Mark Avery

Director of conservation, RSPB

Tarantino's timeline

In his letter (2 October) about Ryan Gilbert's obituary of Sally Menke, the editor of Pulp Fiction, Charles Harris writes: "My understanding is that Tarantino shot the movie's three story strands ... chronologically ... Menke ... reconstructed the footage." As one of the myriad of people who read Quentin Tarantino and Roger Avary's early script when it went out to studios, I can assure you that it was always written in a non-chronological order. In fact, all of us Hollywood development types under 30 argued passionately in favour of the script with our over-30 bosses. It seems hard to believe now, but they just couldn't get their heads around the fact that a character who dies in an early part of the movie is back in a later episode. Sally Menke was a great editor, but the timeline of the movie was Tarantino and Avary's.

Kathleen Walsh

Bristol

So Nick Clegg has a Dutch mother and a banker father (Who's who, 2 October). Can anyone tell me where "Banker" is? Mind you, Marion Kozak fares no better: she is a refugee from Poland. Shame on you - and in the same edition that runs a two-page spread on the Equal Pay Act.

Deborah Noble

London

Now that teachers are to be allowed to restrain pupils (Gove promises to end "no touch" rules for teachers, 2 October) does anyone have any advice on how to restrain Gove? It would be a great help.

Dennis Charman

London

Two film-star hairstyles which pre-date the Tony Curtis (Letters, 2 October) were the Louise Brooks bob and Veronica Lake's "peek-a-boo" in the 40s.

Marlene McAndrew

London

"The Purdery" (Joanna Lumley, New Avengers), "The Lady D" and "The Rachel" (Jennifer Aniston, Friends) all had many followers in their time. I personally boast "the Bobby Charlton".

Andrew Hadden

Martock, Somerset

Thank you for the photos (Eyewit-nessed, 2 October). Now I know why I've never seen Princess Anne and Kim Jong-il in the same place at the same time.

Alan Gavurin

London

Asylum seekers and Britons facing hardship

The Guardian's constant trumpeting of the "mistreatment" of asylum seekers confuses two points. The latest example (Millions paid to asylum seekers traumatised by detention in the UK, 27 September) looks at the case of a Ugandan who had been horrifically tortured in Uganda. In the UK, what essentially happened was that his medical records were lost and some officials were rude. Wake up! Bureaucracy is something everyone battles with. My friend's husband abandoned her and their two children 10 years ago. He worked "cash in hand" to avoid child support, while she struggled as a classroom assistant on £15,000 a year. She has battled with council tax officials for three years over the status of her son in training; she has ongoing bureaucratic battles with banks and a whole host of officials who are in charge of her money and her life. While her children did get

education maintenance allowance, she always earned just too much to get any other benefit. Her house has no working bathroom, her window sills are rotted out, and by the end of the month she exists on basics noodles. Do you wonder why she might feel aggrieved about your last example of a west African woman awarded £57,000 for being detained for one month? While this in no way exonerates maladministration to people seeking asylum, there must be some consideration that ordinary citizens face the same sort of treatment every day with no hope of compensation at all. The Guardian will - and the left already has - lost its support by abandoning its indigenous people who are also facing hardships and who, being struggling citizens and taxpayers, might hope they receive some sort of priority from the limited pot.

Name and address supplied

Benefits of marriage

Does Ed Miliband's unmarried status matter (Unwed Ed, 2 October)? Most of your interviewees think morally not, and rightly so. Financially though? If Ed were to die, Justine might be surprised to find - as I was - that help available to widows and widowed parents would be closed to her. This despite unassailable evidence of a committed relationship spanning years, their financial interdependence and the fact that they would have been treated as married by the government when it suited. Were Ed to die during a pregnancy of Justine's, she would find - as I did - that her baby's father would not be recognised on official documents and that she would have to go through the courts to have his name on the birth certificate. This despite all the talk by Labour of the validity of different family setups.

Judith Katz

Oxfordshire

Open door



Chris Elliott

The readers' editor on... how a small distance can make a big difference

Few places in the world are more difficult to report from than the Middle East. It is not just the physical danger that can face journalists. The unresolved religious and territorial conflicts that characterise the area are bitter, and have origins that reach through the centuries and spread out around the globe today. Passion, conviction and absolute belief confront the reporter on every side.

One of the problems at the heart of the region's troubles is the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and among the most contested

issues of that conflict is the future of East Jerusalem. In its south-east corner lies the Old City and the Temple Mount (as Jews and Christians know it) or al-Haram al-Sharif (as Muslims know it). This platform of land is a holy site of great importance for the world's Jews and Muslims.

The first and second temples built here by the Jews were destroyed by the Babylonians and the Romans respectively. On the site now are the al-Aqsa mosque and the Islamic shrine on the pinnacle, the Dome of the Rock. It is a constant source of tension for Israeli-Palestinian relations. On 27 May this area was the setting for a feature the Guardian ran in G2, examining the lives of the Palestinian residents in Silwan, a community that lies along the southern flank of the Old City, and the effect on them and their homes of a series of archaeological digs that are being undertaken to look for the remains of Ir David, the City of David. The Israelis believe that it lies beneath the Wadi Helweh neighbourhood in Silwan.

The article reported on the actions of Elad, a Jewish group that has dug a number of tunnels in the area to look for the remains of the City of David. Its work is supported by the Israeli government and is in conflict with many of the residents, who say their houses are sinking into the earth because of the excavations.

The Palestinians fear that the tunnels - originating in Silwan - either go under

the al-Aqsa mosque or are intended to, undermining the mosque's foundations. In the 2,500-word feature was a sentence that examined Elad's intentions: "Elad set up a two-pronged strategy: to strengthen Israel's 'connection to Jerusalem' they started to dig - under Silwan and into the land under the al-Aqsa mosque - for the biblical City of David and to create the Ir David tourist site."

We have received only one complaint about the feature, contending that the sentence above is inaccurate: that the tunnels don't go under the mosque. Initially I felt that the sentence referred to the tunnels entering the land under the platform on which the mosque stands. The complainant objected to that interpretation and I agreed to look at it again. As part of that review I consulted former Jerusalem correspondents, two non-profit organisations that work with both communities, Emek Shaveh and Ir Amim, and Professor Israel Finkelstein, a leading archaeologist from Tel Aviv University. All believe the diggings are near the Temple Mount, but not under it.

The Palestinians fear the tunnels - originating in Silwan - either go under

Daniel Seidemann is a founder of Ir Amim, the goal of which is a "more sustainable and equitable city". Ir Amim produced a 47-page report last year - Shady Dealings in Silwan - looking at the issues in that part of Jerusalem. Seidemann said: "There is massive tunnelling under Silwan leading towards the Temple Mount, there is massive tunnelling under Palestinian housing adjacent to the Mount, but there is no indication that it is under the Temple Mount, although public scrutiny is difficult."

Finkelstein said: "There is no excavation under the Temple Mount as far as I know. There are now five archaeological projects in the City of David: one is far from the Temple Mount at the southern tip of the City of David ridge; three are located about 250 metres or so away from the southern wall of the Temple platform. One is closer, about 75 metres or so, but has reached bedrock so there is no way to dig under the Temple Mount."

I think there is ambiguity in the disputed sentence in the feature - the author agrees - and today a clarification has been published in the Corrections and clarification column. It took a long time - too long - to reach that conclusion, which I regret. And the decision will not settle any wider argument. Some may wonder why a few metres either way matters, or requires so much attention. Those who live in Silwan know why.

guardian

Open door

The readers' editor on... how a small distance can make a big difference



Chris Elliott
The Guardian, Monday 4 October 2010

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Comments in chronological order (Total 38 comments)

 Staff

- Contributor



[WeAreTheWorld](#)

4 October 2010 12:46AM

Millions of us as Westerners live thousands of miles a way from this situation and it's proving not to be distance enough.

I look forward to a time when this region's endless bickering will be irrelevant to us.

Both sides are fighting tooth and nail to drag us into this.

What's in it for us?

Recommend (11)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

[Link](#)



[Shekky](#)

4 October 2010 2:29AM

Believe it or not, WeAreTheWorld, but some of those millions of Westerners you

mention actually have motivations that extend beyond mere self-interest. Like wanting to see a region historically mired in bitter conflict become peaceful. I think harmony in the area would be a big enough "it" for many people. Try to think in slightly more unselfish terms next time.

Recommend (4)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



[RogerINtheUSA](#)

4 October 2010 4:18AM

Some may wonder why a few metres either way matters, or requires so much attention.

1. Facts are optional
2. Since the few metres determine whether the excavations undermine the mosque. If the issue of digging under the mosque were not relevant why did The Guardian bring it up in the first place?

Recommend (18)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



[singleissue](#)

4 October 2010 4:35AM

WeAreTheWorld.....Very true the distance is not enough,it will never be enough.

"I Look forward to a time when this region's endless bickering will be irrelevant to us"

It is irrelevant to you at the moment,the bickering can be put squarely on the UK/EU sticking their noses where it doesn't .

"Both sides are fighting tooth and nail to drag us drag us into this"

Who are these US? ,No one is dragging anyone into this except for the Palestinians.

If both sides were left alone this 'situation" would be solved overnight.

"What's in it for us".....Nothing,so butt out.....

Recommend (17)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



[singleissue](#)

4 October 2010 4:41AM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).



[singleissue](#)

4 October 2010 4:44AM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).



[ELPax](#)

4 October 2010 5:11AM

"The first and second temples built here by the Jews were destroyed by the

Babylonians and the Romans"?

I'm sorry, I didn't realize they had found a single piece of archaeological evidence (that hasn't later been revealed as a fake) that either of these Temples ever actually existed. Perhaps you can point us all to the relevant academic material confirming that they did?

Or maybe this Article is no more than a statement of your personal beliefs masquerading as journalism?

Recommend (13)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

[Link](#)



[ElPax](#)

4 October 2010 5:15AM

"In its south-east corner [of East Jerusalem] lies the Old City"?

If you check a map, you might note that the Old City lies on the western flank of East Jerusalem, just on the Eastern (international; not Palestinian) side of the Green Line...

Maybe, just maybe you are confusing the fact that the Temple Mount lies in the south-east corner of the Old City???

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[TheVoiceOfIsrael](#)

4 October 2010 6:58AM

It seems as though Chris Elliott's piece is just revealing a petty journalistic indiscretion while ignoring a much graver journalistic offense: the betrayal of ones principles.

The moral principles of The Guardian were established by CP Scott, who was considered by many to be one of one of journalism's greatest editors. Here's what Scott wrote in an 1921 essay, viewed at the time as the ground rules for The Guardian (or for The Manchester Guardian, as it was then):

It [a newspaper] plays on the minds and consciences of men. It may educate, stimulate, assist, or it may do the opposite. It has, therefore, a moral as well as a material existence, and its character and influence are in the main determined by the balance of these two forces.

Fundamentally it [a newspaper's character] implies honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness, a sense of duty to the reader and the community.

A newspaper is of necessity something of a monopoly, and its first duty is to shun the temptations of monopoly. Its primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong. Comment is free, but facts are sacred. "Propaganda", so called, by this means is hateful. The voice of opponents no less than that of friends has a right to be heard. Comment also is justly subject to a self-imposed restraint. It is well to be frank; it is even better to be fair.

In its [Bad News Israel pages](#), does the Guardian "educate, stimulate, assist" or does it "do the opposite" by "playing on the minds and consciences" of its readers?

Does it "balance its moral and material existence"?

Does the paper's character imply "honest, cleanliness, courage, and fairness"?

Does it shun the temptation of monopoly, and does it put its soul at peril by delivering tainted news? Does it's mode of presentation truly represent an "unclouded face of

truth"? Has The Guardian been guilty of promoting "propaganda" with "hateful" results? Does The Guardian impose "self-restraint" on its biased commentary on Israel?

And most of all do the opponents of The Guardian's editorial positions have a voice other than an rare and token appearance on the paper's pages, carefully selected so as not to present too much of a challenge to the paper's editors and their opinions?

Let us see.

On today's Bad News Israel main page we have in it's central column a review of Avi Shlaim's book vilifying Israel, a condemnation of Israel following the Palestinians second intifada, an anti-Israeli Jewish actor who visits the West Bank, A report on how Israel is undermining the Israel-Palestinian negotiations by refusing to renew it's West bank building moratorium, a letter about how Israel has abandoned the Jewish tradition of defending victims of injustice, a demand to include Hamas (a terror organization as defined by the European Union) in the peace negotiations, and an opinion peace about South Africa's boycott of Israel. And the rest of the page looks pretty much the same. Oh, I almost forgot, there is also a somewhat positive article about the passing of a giant in international maritime law, Shabtai Rosenne, who was a member of Israel's commission of inquiry into the Gaza flotilla incident.

So you be the judge. Is CP Scott turning over in his grave?

This is what Chris Elliott should be tackling.

(Of course, if you happen to be a Palestinian supporter then you are probably delighted and everything will seem fine.)

Recommend (51)

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FF18

4 October 2010 7:14AM

The Palestinians fear that the tunnels – originating in Silwan – either go under the al-Aqsa mosque or are intended to, undermining the mosque's foundations.

Another case of a mosque that should never have been built. It was built on the remains of the Jewish Temple.

It should not be there. It should be demolished stone by stone and set to Mecca to join other mosques there.

Recommend (18)

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FergusQuadro

4 October 2010 7:25AM

ElPax

4 October 2010 5:11AM

"The first and second temples built here by the Jews were destroyed by the Babylonians and the Romans"?

I'm sorry, I didn't realize they had found a single piece of archaeological evidence (that hasn't later been revealed as a fake) that either of these Temples ever actually existed.

Perhaps you can point us all to the relevant academic material confirming that they did?

All you had to do was to look at the excavations under the Temple Mount to enlarge Solomon's Stables where the wakf threw away soil containing priceless artifacts

because it was not in their interests to admit that the holy place is that where the Temples stood.

I can find no evidence that the Guardian or the Palestinians objected to these excavations "which are thought to have been responsible for creating a large, visible bulge in the Southern Wall that threatened the structural integrity of the Temple Mount, necessitating major repairs.[2] The repairs have been called "unsightly", an "eyesore", and a "terrible job" because they appear as a large, bright, white patch of smooth stones in a golden tan wall of rusticated ashlar.[2] (wiki)"

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[BristolBoy](#)

4 October 2010 7:56AM

A pox on all "holy places".

Recommend (5)

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[LookAroundYoU](#)

4 October 2010 8:12AM

This article frustrates me, as reader, for its factual vaguenesses. The tunnelling seems not something that can be defined or described precisely, nor concretely -- but in fact any tunnelling for archeological (or other, nefarious - ? - purposes) must be controlled by survey, and its direction and location measured, defined, quite definitely.

Why then have we not news of where these tunnels actually reach? And if they do, or they will, extend under the mosque platform, what would be better to calm nerves on all sides than saying so publicly and verifiably.

Finally, where is the engineering responsibility, to carry out such excavations under or near surface structures in such a way as to insure such structures suffer no damage (mosques included) or, if they do, receive just compensation, or restoration?

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[FF18](#)

4 October 2010 8:21AM

BristolBoy

A pox on all "holy places".

Amen.

Recommend (4)

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[benderBR](#)

4 October 2010 8:35AM

I love it how every possible excuse is good enough to justify Palestinians riots assault of

innocent people in Jerusalem burying cars and throwing rocks at people praying in the Western Wall.

Palestinians can just come up with what ever they want and European papers will take their side and justify these attempts to start a new Intifada. Jewish settlers provoke Palestinians by eating on Ramadan in East Jerusalem, Palestinian protestors wounded as they protest this attempt to destroy Al Aqsa.

Recommend (28)

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[LukeRijnhurt](#)

4 October 2010 9:37AM

Its the new Jerusalem tube .

Recommend (0)

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[maxsceptic1](#)

4 October 2010 9:49AM

ElPax 4 October 2010 5:11AM

I'm sorry, I didn't realize they had found a single piece of archaeological evidence (that hasn't later been revealed as a fake) that either of these Temples ever actually existed. Perhaps you can point us all to the relevant academic material confirming that they did?

I am sure that Muslim's everywhere would be delighted at the notion of excavating on the site their 7th century mosques on what they call Haram al Sharif to prove that they were built on the site of destroyed temples once built by dispossessed Jews.

Fortunately, excavation is unnecessary as there are numerous reliable, contemporary reports of these temples. One need not even go as far as Jerusalem. Just look at Titus's Arch near the Colosseum where one can see the booty plundered from the second temple depicted on the frieze.

Whether or not one agrees with the idea of a modern Israel, one can only assume that the denial of the existence of the Jewish temples in Jerusalem is politically motivated rather than any pursuit of historical accuracy.

Recommend (16)

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[iamid](#)

4 October 2010 9:51AM

"There is massive tunnelling under Silwan leading towards the Temple Mount, there is massive tunnelling under Palestinian housing adjacent to the Mount, but there is no indication that it is under the Temple Mount, although public scrutiny is difficult."

And therein is a clue to the problem. Why is it that scrutiny is so difficult ? Why is it that trust is undermined ?

Might the answer lie in the Israeli tendency to create "facts on the ground" that cannot then be rolled back or can be used as negotiating chips in peace talks ?

This is hardly the right way to go about setting oneself up as a partner to trust in

negotiations.

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[Continent](#)

4 October 2010 9:53AM

and among the most contested issues of that conflict is the future of East Jerusalem. As Jerusalem is a holy place for Christians, Jews and Muslims, it should be declared an International City and the UN headquarter should be moved there.

Recommend (1)

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[DoronJerusalem](#)

October 2010 9:55AM

Chris, as one of the Directors of Elad, I would like to thank you for the time and for the accuracy in correcting this seemingly small, but very potentially damaging mistake. I hope that in the future, The Guardian will seek to achieve unbiased reporting in the region, and that mistakes such as these will be prevented before reaching print.

Thank you,

Doron Spielman

Director of Development, Elad

Recommend (29)

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[LukeRijnhurt](#)

4 October 2010 9:56AM

@iamid

October 2010 9:51AM

Might the answer lie in the Israeli tendency to create "facts on the ground" that cannot then be rolled back or can be used as negotiating chips in peace talks ?

Maybe you mean Facts UnderGround ?

Continent

4 October 2010 9:53AM

As Jerusalem is a holy place for Christians, Jews and Muslims, it should be declared an International City and the UN headquarter should be moved there.

International city ? no thanks , I think that the Israelis and the Palestinians will be able enough to administer it , and you can put the UN HQ in your country , keep it out of mine please .

Recommend (7)

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**Continent**

4 October 2010 10:07AM

LukeRijnhurt

International city ? no thanks , I think that the Israelis and the Palestinians will be able enough to administer it , and you can put the UN HQ in your country , keep it out of mine please .

It was the UN who splitted Palestine, the then time British Mandat, in an (already established) Israeli and Palestinian state. As both the Palestinians and the Israeli claim Jerusalem to be their city, it would be just wise to give it to neither of them and the UN keeping it.

Recommend (3)

[Report abuse](#)[Clip](#)[Link](#)**iamid**

4 October 2010 10:07AM

theVoiceOfIsrael

My, those are heavy charges you lay against this newspaper.

I note that most of the articles you are complaining about are written by Israelis, although the first is written by a British Jew (nevertheless one who has served in the IDF). If anything, it would seem that Palestinians are under-represented.

Perhaps your complaint says more about you and the state of the State of Israel than it does about the Guardian ?

Recommend (10)

[Report abuse](#)[Clip](#)[Link](#)**LukeRijnhurt**

4 October 2010 10:10AM

@Continent

4 October 2010 10:07AM

It was the UN who splitted Palestine, the then time British Mandat, in an (already established) Israeli and Palestinian state. As both the Palestinians and the Israeli claim Jerusalem to be their city, it would be just wise to give it to neither of them and the UN keeping it.

The UN is a bottomless pit where the Governments of the world throw money into , it serves for nothing .

Both Israelis and Palestinians prefer that it would be a joint administration and not an International city , what is exactly an International city ? are you going to create a new type of entity ? what authority does the UN have to control a piece of land ? if there were Aliens , you can suggest they will control it .

Israel/Palestine is not the worlds test subjects for state building .

Recommend (4)

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[Continent](#)

4 October 2010 10:18AM

[LukeRijnhurt](#)

4 October 2010 10:10AM

what authority does the UN have to control a piece of land ?

Derived from the same authority the UN had when it split Palestine in 1947

Israel/Palestine is not the worlds test subjects for state building

Yes, splitting Palestine was the world test subject for state building, and the UN has not yet finished the job it took over there in 1947.

Recommend (1)

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[FF18](#)

4 October 2010 10:22AM

[maxsceptic1](#)

Whether or not one agrees with the idea of a modern Israel, one can only assume that the denial of the existence of the Jewish temples in Jerusalem is politically motivated rather than any pursuit of historical accuracy.

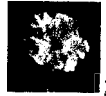
That's heresy. Pure and simple.

Recommend (2)

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[maxsceptic1](#)

4 October 2010 10:37AM

Apologies for the erroneous apostrophe in my above post of 9:49AM.

(Please, please CiF: give us an edit facility)

Recommend (1)

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[Sorcey](#)

4 October 2010 10:53AM

TheVoiceOfIsrael, you are so right. But it's not just Israel - for some reason The Guardian is also portraying Zimbabwe as a horrible place, with no good news coming from there. And Burma and Sudan and North Korea! Terrible, isn't it?

I think what you're actually objecting to is accuracy, rather than bias. Or do you normally jump on the Zimbabwe threads and claim there's no starvation there?

Recommend (10)

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[Sorcey](#)

4 October 2010 10:57AM

One is closer, about 75 metres or so, but has reached bedrock so there is no way to dig under the Temple Mount.

Yeah, they might have to resort to "archaeological blasting" a new technique pioneered by Elad...

Recommend (2)

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[FF18](#)

4 October 2010 11:57AM

Sorcey

I think what you're actually objecting to is accuracy, rather than bias. Or do you normally jump on the Zimbabwe threads and claim there's no starvation there?

Which Zimbabwe threads are those?

Give me two links for the past month.

Recommend (3)

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[SantaMoniker](#)

4 October 2010 12:09PM

Was it really necessary to end this rare retraction by the Guardian of charges leveled against Israel with the snide "Those who live in Silwan know why"?

Your story was incorrect, and in a very dangerous way, as there is nothing that inflames Muslim passions in the ME more than any perceived threat to Al Aksa - something their leaders frequently invent in order to gain popular support. Your apology was in order, and should have been left as it was before the last sentence. The article by Ahdaf Soueif in question is a long one, and I may have missed it, but she appears to make no reference to the tunnel built in biblical times that connected the water source in Silwan to the Old City which provided the defenders with water in time of siege. Generations of tourists have walked through this tunnel, which was a remarkable feat, similar to the one at Megiddo that was the subject of the book "The Source". This tunnel is so well known, since hundreds of thousands who have walked through it in their tours of Jerusalem over the last 43 years, that an omission of a reference to it is certainly deliberate and part of the Muslim attempt to write Jews out of their own history.

The actions of Elad are one matter and you are entitled to report on them as you will, but excavations under Al Aksa are another. In fact, the real threat to Al Aksa is now the excavations that the Waqf has carried out under the Temple Mount in the area known as Solomon's Stables (actually, apparently a Crusader area) which is weakening, if I recall it correctly, the SE area of the Temple Mount just beyond the Al Aksa mosque, and has, deliberately, apparently, resulted in the destruction of artifacts that date back 10,000 years and into the Byzantine period.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/waqf-temple-mountain-excavation-raises-archaeologists-protests-1.225330>

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/first-temple-artifacts-found-in-dirt-removed-from-temple-mountain-1.202839>

<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp483.htm>

Having taken this positive step at retracting an error on this volatile issue, there are

two more retractions owing re:

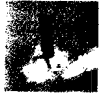
1. The Guardian's role in spreading the totally untrue story of the "Jenin Massacre"
2. The Guardian's role in spreading the Al Durrah calumny, which led to the first intifada

Recommend (28)

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[SantaMoniker](#)

4 October 2010 12:25PM

LookAroundYou

Your comment perfectly illustrates the danger in that article and similar stories about Silwan:

Why then have we not news of where these tunnels actually reach? And if they do, or they will, extend under the mosque platform, what would be better to calm nerves on all sides than saying so publicly and verifiably.

You haven't seen similar stories because whatever may or may not be happening in Silwan there is no tunnel/are no tunnels reaching under the Temple Mount and it/they are a non-story. However, far from calming nerves, it is enough to suggest that they do, or may, or will as you infer, to get the local Arabs population rioting, let alone others across the ME.

Recommend (10)

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[Angol](#)

4 October 2010 12:45PM

You conveniently translate, as Old City and the Temple Mount, the indigenous names used by Jews and Christians. Why then do you not translate, as the Noble Sanctuary, the name used by Arab Muslims?

Recommend (3)

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[g](#)



[chriselliott](#)

4 October 2010 12:55PM

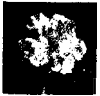
Angol-I took the advice of colleagues who said that Jews and Christians tended to know it by the English name and Arabs by the Arab name.

Recommend (1)

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[maxsceptic1](#)

4 October 2010 2:08PM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community](#)

standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.



GaryWilson

4 October 2010 2:33PM

iamid 4 October 2010 10:07AM, I don't understand the point you are making to TheVoiceOf Israel. How does the fact that the Guardian is running Israel-bashing articles from Jews or Israelis or former Israelis undercut TVOI's arguments? Are you saying that the fact that Israel has some citizens who feel perfectly safe and comfortable undermining their country is somehow bears negatively on israel? I bet you won't find too many Palestinians who would dare write a book questioning the Palestinians right to the West Bank. They'd be gone before the ink was dry. But it is as if the Guardian has talent scouts out looking for suitable Jewish writers to demonize Israel. These are people with legitimate opinions on the fringes of Jewish or Israeli society. How can this conform with CP Scott's legacy.

Sorcey 4 October 2010 10:53AM, while you are at it, why not go the whole nine yards and compare Israel to Iran, Libya, or even Pol Pot's Cambodia. There are bigots who have even tried to compare Israel to nazi Germany. Apparently you do not even realize just how ridiculous your comparisons are.

As TVOI says, the Palestinian supporters eagerly lap this stuff up (though I don't suppose that there are even too many Palestinian supporters who believe that this site is objective. But they are, I am sure, delighted.)

Recommend (9)

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pretzelberg

4 October 2010 9:52PM

In its south-east corner lies the Old City and the Temple Mount (as Jews and Christians know it) or al-Haram al-Sharif (as Muslims know it). Why not translate the Arabic term into English as well? Very strange.

BristolBoy

A pox on all "holy places".

Aye. Surely all of the planet is holy - or none of it.

Recommend (2)

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FF18

5 October 2010 10:14AM

Angol

You conveniently translate, as Old City and the Temple Mount, the indigenous names used by Jews and Christians. Why then do you not translate, as the Noble Sanctuary, the name used by Arab Muslims?

Perhaps because it **is** an old city and it **is** the temple mount and it **aint** a noble sanctuary.

Recommend (1)

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