

X index on censorship

THE VOICE OF FREE EXPRESSION | 45.02 | SUMMER 2016 | £7.99

Can I keep your secret?

STEPHEN GREY

Too dangerous to report
from war zones?

LINDSEY HILSUM

Why reporters are too lazy

JEAN-PAUL MARTHOZ

Out of Africa: a previously
untranslated play

HENNING MANKELL



ISSUE 250

DANGER IN TRUTH: TRUTH IN DANGER
SPECIAL REPORT: JOURNALISTS UNDER FIRE AND UNDER PRESSURE



Dear all,

We are delighted to share this special collection of articles drawn from our milestone 250th issue of Index on Censorship magazine.

The 250th issue was dedicated to exploring the increasing threats to reporters worldwide. This collection -- curated from our special report – Truth in Danger, Danger in Truth: Journalists Under Fire and Under Pressure – is packed with must-read features.

- **Lindsey Hilsum** asks if journalists should still cover war zones.
- **Laura Silvia Battaglia** looks how Iraqi reporters train to safely cover their country's ongoing conflict.
- **Hazza Al-Adnan** explains the extreme dangers faced by Syria's journalists.
- **Martin Rowson's** editorial cartoon includes a fat-cat politician that quashes inconvenient questions.
- Plus, **Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC**, an early Index supporter, reflects on the magazine's 1972 launch.

The entire 250th issue of the magazine is available on Exact Editions for your mobile or tablet device or can be read on Kindle. Visit www.indexoncensorship.org/subscribe for more details.

In the full issue you'll find: the late Swedish crime writer **Henning Mankell** exploring colonialism in Africa in an exclusive play extract; **Irene Caselli** writing about the controversies and censorship of Latin America's soap operas; and Norwegian musician **Moddi** telling how hate mail sparked an album of music that had been previously banned or silenced.

There are also cartoons and illustrations in the full issue by **Ben Jennings**, **Brian John Spencer**, **Sam Darlow** and China's most famous political cartoonist, **Rebel Pepper**, who is a nominee for the 2017 Index on Censorship Freedom of Expression Awards.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rachael Jolley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rachael Jolley, editor

Contents

INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

VOLUME 45 NUMBER 02

SUMMER 2016

Risky business RACHAEL JOLLEY 3
Why journalists around the world face increasing threats

Truth in danger, danger in truth
Journalists under fire and under pressure

Behind the lines
LINDSEY HILSUM..... 8
Should reporters still be heading into warzones?

We are journalists, not terrorists
VALERIA COSTA-KOSTRITSKY 11
How reporters around Europe are being silenced by accusations that their work threatens national security

Code of silence
CRISTINA MARCONI15
Why Italy's press treads carefully between threats from the mafia and defamation laws from fascist times

Facing the front line LAURA SILVIA BATTAGLIA18
Iraqi journalists on safety training for reporting

Giving up on the graft and the grind
JEAN-PAUL MARTHOS 22
Why journalists are failing to cover difficult stories

Risking reputations FRED SEARLE 24
Young UK writers fear "churnalism" will cost their jobs

Inside Syria's war HAZZA AL-ADNAN 28
The extreme dangers faced by local reporters

Living in fear for reporting on terror
ISMAIL EINASHE 31
A Kenyan journalist speaks out after going into hiding

The life of a state journalist in Eritrea
ABRAHAM T. ZERE 34
What it's really like to work at a highly censored government newspaper

Smothering South African reporting
CARIEN DU PLESSIS 36
Are racism accusations and Twitter mobs being used to stop truthful coverage at election time?

Writing with a bodyguard
CATALINA LOBO-GUERRERO 41
Colombia's state protection unit has supported journalists in danger for 16 years, but does it work?

Taliban warning ramps up risk to Kabul's reporters CAROLINE LEES..... 44
A foreign correspondent recalls safer days in Afghanistan and looks at journalists' challenges today

Writers of wrongs STEVEN BOROWIEC 48
Have Japan's press clubs created overly cosy relationships between business leaders and the press?

The Arab Spring snaps back
ROHAN JAYASEKERA 51
The state of the media after the revolution

Shooting the messengers DUNCAN TUCKER 54
Women investigating sex-trafficking in Mexico

Is your secret safe with me? STEPHEN GREY..... 58
Difficulties of protecting sources amid mass surveillance

Stripsearch cartoon MARTIN ROWSON 62
A fat-cat politician quashes questions

Scoops and troops KAYA GENÇ 64
Interviews with Turkey's struggling investigative reporters

In focus

Rebel with a cause JEMIMAH STEINFELD 70
An interview with China's most famous political cartoonist

Soap operas get whitewashed IRENE CASELLI 74
Censorship and controversy in Latin America's telenovelas

Are ad-blockers killing the media? 78
Speigel Online's Matthias Streitz in a head-to-head debate with Privacy International's Richard Tynan

Publishing protest, secrets and stories
LOUIS BLOM-COOPER 82
In the 250th issue of Index on Censorship magazine, an early supporter remembers its launch

Songs that sting MODDI 86
A Norwegian musician on how hate mail about an Israeli concert sparked an album of censored music

Culture

A world away from Wallander
HENNING MANKELL 92
The late Swedish crime writer explores colonialism in Africa in this exclusive play translation

"I'm not prepared to give up my words"
MATEI VISNIEC 100
Norman Manea introduces a surreal Romanian play where rats rule and humans are forced to relinquish language

Posting into the future OLEH SHYNKARENKO.....111
How Facebook updates during the Maidan Square protests in Ukraine were turned into a futuristic novel

Index around the world JOSIE TIMMS119
The What A Liberty! youth project reaches its climax

The lost art of letters VICKY BAKER.....122
Has the power of personal correspondence been diluted by email, and will historical archives ever be the same?

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Risky business

EDITORIAL

45(02): 3/5 | DOI: 10.1177/0306422016657007

by **Rachael Jolley**

THE TRUTH IS in danger. Working with reporters and writers around the world, Index continually hears first-hand stories of the pressures of reporting, and of how journalists are too afraid to write or broadcast because of what might happen next.

In 2016 journalists are high-profile targets. They are no longer the gatekeepers to media coverage, and the consequences have been terrible. Factions such as the Taliban and IS have found their own ways to push out their news, creating and publishing their own “stories” on blogs, YouTube and other social media. They no longer have to speak to journalists to tell their stories to a wider public. This has weakened journalists’ value, and the need to protect them.

Around 2,130 journalists were killed between 1996 and 2014, according to statistics compiled by Cardiff University and the International News Safety Institute. And in 2015, in Colombia, 104 journalists were received some state protection, after receiving threats.

In Yemen, considered by the Committee to Protect Journalists to be one of the deadliest countries to report from, only the extremely brave dare to file a story. And that number is dwindling fast. Our contacts tell us that the pressure on local journalists not to do their job is incredible. Journalists are kidnapped and released at will. Reporters for independent media are monitored. Printed publications have closed down. And most recently 10 journalists were arrested by Houthi militias. In that environment what price the news? The price that many journalists pay is their lives or their freedom. And not just in Yemen.

Syria, Mexico, Colombia, Afghanistan and Iraq, all appear in the top 10 tables for danger to journalists. In just the last few weeks National Public Radio’s photojournalist David Gilkey and colleague Zabihullah Tamanna were killed in Afghanistan as they went about their work in collecting information, and researching stories to tell the public what is happening in that war-blasted nation. One of our writers for this issue was a foreign correspondent in Afghanistan in 1990s and remembers how different it was then. Reporters could walk down the street and meet with the Taliban without fearing for their lives. Those days have gone. Christina Lamb, from London’s Sunday Times, tells Index, that it can even be difficult to be seen in a public place in Afghanistan now. She was recently asked to move on from a coffee shop because the owners were worried she was drawing attention to the premises just by being there.

Physical violence is not the only way the news is being suppressed. In Eritrea, journalists are being silenced by pressure from one of the most secretive governments in the world. Those that work for state media do so with the knowledge that if they take a step wrong, and write a story that the government doesn’t like, they could be arrested or tortured.

In many countries around the world, journalists have lost their status as observers and now come under direct attack. In the not-too-distant past journalists would be on frontlines, able to report on what was happening, without being directly targeted.

So despite what others have dubbed →

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→ “the blizzard” of news media in the world, it is becoming frighteningly difficult to find out what is happening in places where those in power would rather you didn’t know. Governments and armed groups are more sophisticated than ever at manipulating public attitudes, using all the modern conveniences of a connected world. Governments not only try to control journalists, but can do everything to discredit them.

As George Orwell said: “In times of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” Telling the truth is now being viewed by the powerful as a form of protest and rebellion against their strength.

We are living in a historical moment where leaders and their followers see the freedom to report as something that should be smothered, and asphyxiated, held down until it dies.

What we have seen in Syria is a deliberate stifling of news, making conditions impossibly dangerous for international media to cover, making local journalists fear for their lives if they cover stories that make some powerful people uncomfortable. The bravest of the brave carry on against all the odds. But the forces against them are ruthless.

As Simon Cottle, Richard Sambrook and Nick Mosdell write in their upcoming book,

Credit: Khaleel Abdullah/Reuters



LEFT: Journalist films the site of a Saudi-led air strike on a bridge in Yemen's capital Sanaa in March 2016

Reporting Dangerously: Journalist Killings, Intimidation and Security: “The killing of journalists is clearly not only to shock but also to intimidate. As such it has become an effective way for groups and even governments to reduce scrutiny and accountability, and establish the space to pursue non democratic means.”

In Turkey we are seeing the systematic crushing of the press by a government which appears to hate anyone who says anything it disagrees with, or reports on issues that it would rather were ignored. Journalists are under pressure, and so is the truth.

As our Turkey contributing editor Kaya

Genç reports on page 64, many of Turkey’s most respected news outlets are closing or being forced out of business. Secrets are no longer being aired and criticism is out of fashion. While mobs attacking newspaper buildings is not. Genç also see society shifting as the public is being persuaded that they must pick sides, and that somehow media that publish stories they disagree with should not have a future.

That is not a future we would wish upon the world.

Rachael Jolley,
Editor,
Index on Censorship



CREDIT: Abbas Momeni/AFP/Getty Images

SPECIAL REPORT

Truth in danger, danger in truth:
journalists under fire and under pressure

Behind the lines LINDSEY HILSUM 08	Reporting with a bodyguard CATALINA LOBO-GUERRERO 41
We are journalists, not terrorists VALERIA COSTA-KOSTRITSKY 11	Taliban warning ramps up risks to Kabul's reporters CAROLINE LEES 44
Code of silence CRISTINA MARCONI 15	Writers of wrongs STEVEN BOROWIEC 48
Facing the front line LAURA SILVIA BATTAGLIA 18	The Arab Spring snaps back ROHAN JAYASEKERA 51
Giving up on the graft and the grind JEAN-PAUL MARTHOS 22	Shooting the messengers DUNCAN TUCKER 54
Inside Syria's war HAZZA AL ADNAN 28	Is your secret safe with me? STEPHEN GREY 58
Living in fear for reporting on terror ISMAIL EINASHE 31	Stripsearch cartoon MARTIN ROWSON 62
The life of a state journalist in Eritrea ABRAHAM T. ZERE 34	Scoops and troops KAYA GENÇ 64
Smothering South African reporting CARIEN DU PLESSIS 36	

PICTURED: Palestinian journalists run from tear-gas canisters fired by Israeli forces during a demonstration in support of Palestinian reporters, held outside Israeli-run Ofer prison in the occupied West Bank, on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2016



X
45.02

Behind the lines

45(02): 8/10 | DOI: 10.1177/0306422016657008

Marie Colvin's outstanding career as a foreign correspondent ended when she was killed in Homs in 2012. Award-winning journalist **Lindsey Hilsum** asks if reporters should still be heading to warzones

THE SUNDAY TIMES war correspondent Marie Colvin used to say that she felt like the last reporter in the YouTube world.

I understand what she meant: old-fashioned journalists like us put a premium on being there, rather than sitting in a newsroom piecing together bits of footage uploaded by activists and journalists more

daring or foolish than ourselves. Yet we have to acknowledge the power as well as the limitations of this new kind of reporting.

At Channel 4 News we employ a Lebanese journalist who is a specialist in sourcing video. He knows who uploads the pictures of barrel bomb damage, who destroyed hospitals in Aleppo, who to Skype for a reliable

account. Marie might have sniffed, but it's become an integral part of our coverage – in early May the inmates of Hama prison were filming with their mobile phones and sending out pictures even as government forces tear-gassed them.

It was compelling television, yet left many questions unanswered. The Hama prisoners showed the army about to attack, but not the guards they had themselves taken hostage. We knew their demands, but little of the background – and we weren't there to probe further.

As Western media organisations cut costs by slashing foreign bureaux, and succumb to pressure constantly to update online, the temptation is to pull it all together in London or Paris or New York rather than venturing out. Danger forms another part of the calculation. Kidnap and beheading is the most extreme form of censorship. In Syria, US photojournalist James Foley was murdered in 2014, several European journalists were later kidnapped and ransomed and the British photographer John Cantlie is still held by IS.

Yet, whatever the risks, in the end being an eyewitness will always be the most honest form of journalism. It is still essential. In Rwanda, in 1994, I watched as the genocide unfolded around me. I reported what I saw: the drunken red-eyed men with machetes at the roadblocks, the blood running in the gutters. And what I heard: Rwandans calling me up to describe how the murderous gangs were banging on their doors and breaking through their windows. There was no substitute for being there.

More recently, travelling on a Syrian government visa, I was among the first journalists to visit the ancient city of Palmyra after regime forces took it back from IS. Beyond the normal journalistic enthusiasm to get to where the story was happening, I feared being used for propaganda. But in fact we were able to move reasonably freely. I could see – and the cameraman could film – the

destruction that IS had wrought on the ancient city, and the parallel devastation that government and Russian forces had wrought on the adjacent, modern town of Tadmur. We even managed to film government troops looting people's houses. None of this could we have seen or understood if we had reported long-distance.

In a speech at London's St Bride's Church,

Whatever the risks, in the end being an eyewitness will always be the most honest form of journalism

often a hub for journalists, in 2010, Marie said: "We always have to ask ourselves whether the level of risk is worth the story. What is bravery, and what is bravado?"

That is a difficult question. Few mainstream news organisations are willing to let their journalists cross the border from Turkey into Syria these days, because the risk of kidnap is so great. Most editors now understand that they should not buy material from freelancers in places where they would not send their own staff because of the danger.

It's progress – there was a time when broadcasters and newspapers routinely used freelancers without taking any responsibility for their safety. But it means we are left with the information from prisoners in Hama and citizen journalist reports from Aleppo – better than nothing, filmed by brave people, but frequently incomplete, often confusing, biased, not always easy to interpret.

In February 2012, Marie and photographer Paul Conroy crawled through a sewer to get to Homs, as the Syrian regime's bombs turned the buildings of rebel-controlled Baba Amr to burnt-out carcasses and rubble. In her dispatches, Marie described the makeshift beds on which children slept underground to avoid the bombs, the →

OPPOSITE: Men rescue a boy from under the rubble after explosive barrels dropped by forces believed to be loyal to Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad, in the Al-Shaar neighbourhood of Aleppo in 2014

Weighing up reporting risks

Editor Nic Dawes shares the thought process behind sending reporters into conflict zones and how news outlets protect them

What factors must the editor weigh up when considering covering a danger zone?

How important is the story? Are we well placed to do a good job of covering it, or are others already doing it well, and in a way that is relevant to our journalistic mission? How important is the presence of our reporters on the frontline in order to get the story we want to tell? Do the people we intend to send have the skills, experience and equipment they need to safely operate in the area in question? Do we have a clear risk mitigation framework? Do we have resources in place to manage risk? Have we provided adequate insurance cover?

What is the highest responsibility of the paper?

Our responsibility to cover dangerous places is in tension with our responsibility for the safety of our people. The only way we can manage that tension is with the help of a clear set of guidelines governing conflict coverage, backed by adequate resources.

What precautions do you take?

These vary with the story, but include communication with the actors in the conflict (security forces, armed groups) and working with local networks, training, limiting frontline exposure. We have recently ordered bulletproof gear, which we did not previously have.

How important is security training?

Training is critically important, and I am sorry to say, all but absent outside of the rich world, as is good protective gear and first aid kits for reporters.

Have you ever taken a decision not to send out a reporter because you considered the situation too dangerous? Why?

Yes. In cases where I thought the risk of serious injury or death could not be adequately mitigated by training, equipment, or other measures we might be capable of providing, I have elected to change the assignment.

Where do you consider the most difficult place/story to cover right now?

Syria, Yemen, Central African Republic.

Nic Dawes is the chief editorial and content officer at the Hindustan Times in India and the former editor of South Africa's Mail & Guardian

→ operations without anaesthetic, the despair of people who felt they had been abandoned by the world. It was classic, old-fashioned eyewitness reporting.

On 22 February, a government mortar shell killed Marie and the French photographer, Rémi Ochlik. Conroy and the French reporter Edith Bouvier were seriously injured.

Marie felt she had a responsibility to

report; she refused to leave it to YouTube. Yet, on this occasion, the risk was too great. Was she brave, or – in her own words – was it bravado? Either way, we are all the poorer because Marie Colvin is no longer reporting from Syria. ☒

Lindsey Hilsum is international editor for Channel 4 News. She is currently writing a biography of Marie Colvin

Facing the front line

45(02): 18/21 | DOI: 10.1177/0306422016657012

Iraqi journalists are under attack from all sides. Now a series of safety programmes offers training for battlefield reporting, and to combat everyday threats and danger on city streets. Trainer and journalist **Laura Silvia Battaglia** reports

IRAQI JOURNALIST AND television presenter Mahmood al-Hassnawi stands up in the training room: “To be honest with you, it’s the first time I’ve understood the need for security rules for journalists in the field. No one told me before. I was on the battlefield against IS with the Iraqi army several times, but I had just a bulletproof vest and my camera. If I die, no one cares.” Al-Hassnawi is a young and talented Iraqi journalist from Karbala, one of the most important cities in Iraq and the holy city for Iraqi Shia. He used to work as a presenter for the Karbala television channel and in April 2014 he began to think about reporting on the Iraqi army at the frontline against IS. A couple of months later, he covered the battle in Babel, before going to Ramadi.

Al-Hassnawi was on a five-day training course, run by the Independent Media Center Kurdistan and one of a dozen courses run for Iraqi journalists in Erbil, Basra and Karbala. Skills covered included; learning how to scan the environment for danger, identifying weapon types by the sound of ballistics, using body armour, using the dark web for security, and basic hacking.

He also learnt how to administer first

aid on the battlefield. “Now I know how to apply CPR and to stop bleeding in case IS launch a grenade at me and I am injured,” he said. As a battle-ready journalist, his training could save his life. During protests or after a suicide bomb it’s also really important for reporters to act safely, selecting the best angle to take pictures, but also avoiding arrest, teargas or a possible second explosion. “Once I was in the area of a blast [and] I was afraid to run immediately to the car that had just exploded. That instinct was a good one because a second blast happened but no one explained to me before how to position myself properly at the scene of the attack,” said al-Hassnawi.

He was one of 75 Iraqi journalists (15 per group) on the course last October. In Karbala, the 13 men and two women who attended the course expressed a specific need for the training to also cover psychological disorders. And so the course looked at how to minimise stress, post-traumatic stress disorder and vicarious trauma. At the end of the sessions the journalists called for a stronger commitment by international organisations to offer training in Iraq or countries including Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

CREDIT: Bnar Sardar



Safety training is even more vital now, as a new home front with IS has seen unprepared local journalists become embedded with the Iraqi army or with the *peshmerga* in Iraqi Kurdistan. Many of the journalists interviewed said their experiences of embedding have involved being taken to the front line by the Iraqi army without knowing exactly where they are and for how long. They also had never had any safety training, didn't understand the appropriate use of electronic devices in the battlefield, and had never signed any agreement with the army. Most claim to have had only a fairly lightweight bulletproof vest and, sometimes, a helmet issued to them. Few know how to save the life of a comrade in battle. Among journalists there is also an almost total ignorance of

I was on the battlefield against IS with the Iraqi army but I had just a bulletproof vest and my camera. If I die, no one cares

data encryption (see Stephen Grey on page 58), as well as some concern about using them, for fear of being accused of terrorism by the army, the police or militias.

The Women for Peace Organization, which is part of a larger group of local NGOs including the Iraqi women journalists' forum, requested two training courses in Baghdad, one for human-rights journalists and activists under the age of 30; the second for female journalists. Many of those →

ABOVE: Journalists attend a workshop on conflict reporting in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq



ABOVE: Iraqi journalists practise first aid during a safety workshop

→ who attended the sessions have now requested more intensive training.

Hala Almansour, a 40-year-old journalist from Basra, was among the attendees. She was shy about telling her story at first but at the end of the course said: “I was a witness to murders and deaths in Basra at the time of the war. I asked for psychological help and it was successful. Now I’m trying to help other women in the same condition. The problem

I’m tired of all the corruption in society and threats against civilians and journalists. I want to know how to defend myself

is that Iraq is entering into another bad time and I’m tired of all the corruption in society and threats against civilians and journalists. I want to know how to defend myself.”

Almansour, like most of the journalists at the workshop, is employed in the local media. The more experienced, older members of the group had worked as fixers for international media during the US occupation, or served as translators for the US troops or for

the British Army in the first Gulf war. Many were later threatened with being labelled “collaborators”. Most of the time, the threats come from militias.

Tariq Alturfi, 40, was another workshop attendee. An experienced journalist with Alamda Press in Karbala, he is married to a colleague and has a young son. He was on the front line against IS only once: “I’ve been covering breaking news from Iraq and from the area of Karbala for 20 years. I attended this workshop because every day we have to deal with militias. IS is not the main problem for us.” Alturfi is committed to non-partisan reporting in Iraq. “Journalists must stand up for Iraqi people, not for thieves and criminals who sit in the parliament,” he said. Alturfi said he kidnapped by local militias in 2010, because he “wrote an article about a local politician, underlining his irresponsibility in not securing the area of Karbala”. Alturfi was abducted by a group of locals, detained for one night in a secret place, hanged on the roof and tortured. Then he was released, on the promise of “better behaviour”. He is still smiling but traumatised underneath.

There are very few freelance journalists in Iraq. It is hard to make a living as a freelancer without working for pan-Arab or

CREDIT: Bnar Sardar

international networks such as Al Jazeera or Al Arabia, Vice or the BBC. Foreign journalists who work in Iraq are also at risk of threats, and sometimes detention, by police or the Iraqi army. Nadir Dendoune, a French-Australian journalist was arrested and detained for three weeks in 2013 for taking photographs in a restricted area of Baghdad. Reporting on topics such as corruption, pollution by depleted uranium, threats against local journalists or activists, is also strongly discouraged by the government.

Freelance Iraqi journalists are experiencing a situation which is far worse than that of European and North American freelancers, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. As the Rory Peck Trust, which supports freelance journalists, said that locally based journalists were facing by far the largest number of threats and the vast majority of murders, imprisonments and abductions. The organisation is calling on governments, combatants and groups worldwide to respect the neutrality of journalists and immediately end the cycle of impunity.

International organisations surely have a duty to provide safety training to Iraqi journalists and activists in danger zones. The key to encouraging press freedom in one of the most corrupt states in the Middle East, according to Transparency International, is supporting activists and journalists who want to be independent from political parties or sectarian interests.

Iraqi civil society has organised itself into small associations, such as women's groups, trade unions, groups of cyber-activists, who all want to have an active role in the way the country works. They all need protection.

Sometimes as a security trainer, I come across Iraqi journalists who believe they don't need training. A typical answer is: "We do not need it. We are Iraqis." This quote shows the level of resilience of those who remain in Iraq.

But good local journalism is vital if the Iraqi people are to know what is happening

in their country, and to do that journalists need to continue to protect themselves so they can do their jobs. ⊗

Laura Silvia Battaglia reports from Iraq, Italy and Yemen. She has reported from conflict zones since 2007, including Lebanon, Israel and Palestine, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and the Syrian border. She produced six video documentaries, the first of which, Maria Grazia Cutuli Il Prezzo Della Verità won the 2010 Premio Giancarlo Siani

Inside Syria's war

45(02): 28/30 | DOI: 10.1177/0306422016657747

Syrian citizen journalist **Hazza al-Adnan** on the realities of reporting in a country where a pseudonym and bulletproof vest offer little protection from constant danger

“THE PSEUDONYM HELPS me to feel safe,” said Ali, a citizen journalist who works under a false name in Syria’s government-held regions. “I always pretend to be completely loyal to Bashar al-Assad’s regime while at the same time I am documenting the abuses perpetrated by his government against the activists and civilians.” Because of fear, many of the journalists inside Syria work under pseudonyms, especially in the government-held areas and those controlled by IS.

Despite the dangers of working as a journalist in Syria, there are still many who strive to report the truth, while trying to minimise the risks to themselves as much as possible. They receive some support and training from Western institutions, from time to time. But most work with local or Middle Eastern media agencies.

“If your aim is to report the truth, you cannot work in areas under government control, because it doesn’t want the truth to come out. You can work in the opposition-controlled areas, but you have to keep hidden from the government forces’ aircraft, and the Russian aircraft, and the IS organisation’s intelligence apparatus,” said Mounaf Abd Almajeed, 26, who works for Fresh Radio, a radio station in Idlib, northwest Syria.

“The government accuses us of terrorism, and the majority of the armed opposition factions do not look upon us favourably,

because they confuse intelligence work with journalism,” Abd Almajeed added. “We always have to convince these factions that we are journalists, and not agents of the intelligence organisations of the US or Saudi Arabia or Qatar and so on.”

Some armed opposition factions are extreme Islamists, some of them are moderate Islamists and some of them belong to civilian or secular groups, and there is a state of cold – and sometimes hot – war among them. Abd Almajeed thinks that even if a journalist can gain the trust of a particular faction, the battle is not yet won, because he must now convince the other factions that he has not picked a side or become an agent.

Abd Almajeed tries to minimise the risks of the work by wearing a helmet and bulletproof jacket when going to areas where clashes are taking place. He rarely works at night for fear of being kidnapped, and he doesn’t ever go to areas held by IS or the government. He believes these precautions have helped him to avoid many injuries, especially around seven months ago, when he was covering one of the battles between government and opposition forces around Aleppo, in northern Syria. When the trench that he was hiding in was targeted in an air raid, which he believes was conducted by Russian aircraft, four journalists were killed, but Mounaf was only slightly injured.

Abd Almajeed believes that Western media



ABOVE: The aftermath of airstrikes in the rebel-held neighbourhood of Bustan Al Qasr in Aleppo, Syria, April 2016

NGOs could do more to help by offering the required support to journalists inside opposition areas, but rather have confined their support to Syrian press organisations outside the country.

But Ahmed Jalal, 35, editor of the local magazine *Al-Manatarah*, does not agree. He thinks that the diminished support is due to concern for the safety of their employees, and Syrians working with them, after the country became so dangerous for journalists.

As for the burden of responsibility laid on the journalists inside Syria, Jalal said: “In the early stages of the revolution we did not have a great responsibility to convey the truth to the international community because the door was open to journalists from all over the world, and many of them came in and reported the truth to their communities. But after a year or two of the revolution everything changed because Bashar al-Assad succeeded in getting his propaganda message across to the West that he was fighting terrorists and that the alternative to him was chaos and terrorism.”

Jalal believes that IS’s pursuit of journalists, and execution of some of them, forced Western agencies to withdraw their correspondents, and then the opposition factions’ media made repeated mistakes until the world began to view the Syrian conflict as a “sectarian war between the Alawites and the

He rarely works at night for fear of being kidnapped, and he doesn’t ever go to areas held by IS or the government

Shi’a on the one hand and the Sunnis on the other, or as a fundamentalist Islamic revolution that crossed borders, and not a people’s revolution”.

Jalal sighed, took a drag on his cigarette, and continued: “Our responsibility has become great, it is now up to us to convince the international community that we are reporting the truth, which can be expressed →

→ as the aspirations for freedom and justice of a people that a criminal regime is killing – and this is what compels us to risk our lives.”

Working under a pseudonym and wearing bullet-proof jackets is all journalists inside Syria can do to minimise the risks, according to Jalal, because nobody recognises the immunity of journalists, and nobody respects the international laws and conventions governing their work. He said: “We are in a jungle ... all we can do is persevere, coping with the fear and the grief. However much we try to minimise the risks; hardly a week goes by without our losing a friend or colleague, who has died covering some battle or other, or in the bombing of civilians by government forces or their allies, or in an execution by Da’esh [IS].”

The editor said: “Hardly a day goes by without our seeing the dead body of a child torn apart by Bashar al-Assad’s aircraft.” In the opposition-held areas, ordinary citizens do not look upon journalists favourably.

Jalal added: “Every time we go to take a photograph we encounter people who refuse and say ‘You media people take photos and rake in the money and we get bombed by

However much we try to minimise the risks; hardly a week goes by without our losing a friend or colleague

Bashar al-Assad’s planes because of you taking pictures.”

Many journalists inside Syria want their output to reach the international community. “Unfortunately, it rarely gets through because most of the journalists in these areas do not possess English or the skills to communicate with the outside world, so when talking to the world they rely on compassion rather than understanding,” said Jalal.

Jalal wishes the armed opposition factions

|||||

About the author

The writer of this piece, Hazza al-Adnan, was introduced to Index on Censorship by our 2016 Freedom of Expression Award winner Zaina Erhalm.

Erhalm won the journalism award for using her own skills to train other Syrians to be able to tell their stories too.

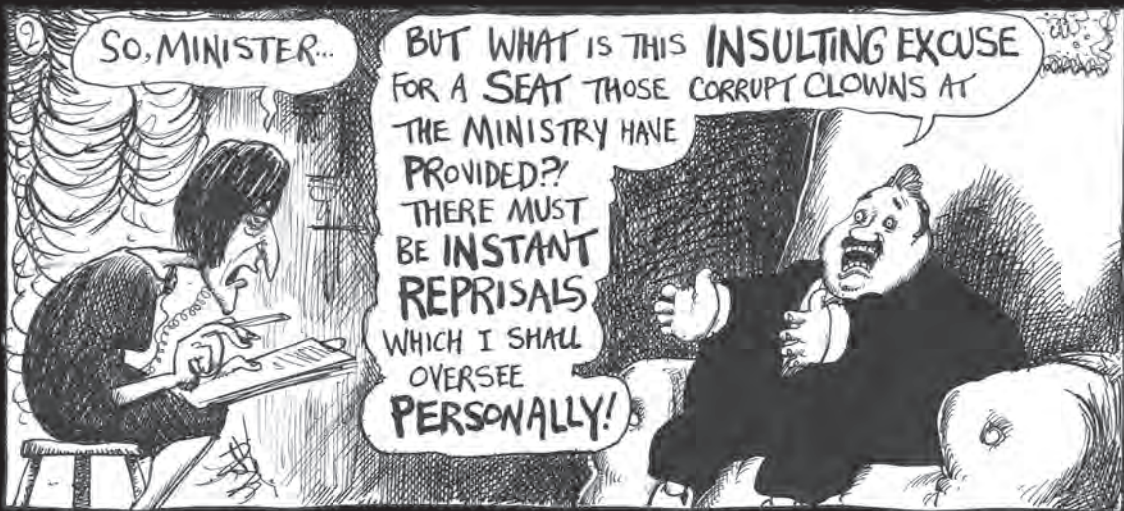
Erhalm told Index: “Hazza attended the first training I did in Idlib suburb. He is a lawyer and had no experience in journalism at all. After the training, he started publishing on our website [the Institute of War and Peace’s Damascus Bureau], and when their local radio station Fresh was established, he started working as an editor with them. He writes for many Syrian websites and has passed the training I gave to him to more than 30 others.”

would invite Western media organisations into their areas and provide them with protection. And if that is impossible, then he asks “powerful news agencies like Reuters, Agence France-Presse and the Associated Press, and powerful networks like the BBC and CNN” to put trust in local journalists or citizen journalists in these areas.

Ahmed said: “We have now got good journalists inside the opposition-held areas who have received training from Western institutions such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting and Reporters Without Borders and the CFI [run by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs], and we now have training centres in these areas; all that we lack is the trust of the powerful Western agencies and the networks in us.”

Translated by Sue Copeland

Hazza al-Adnan is a lawyer and writer based in Idlib, Syria

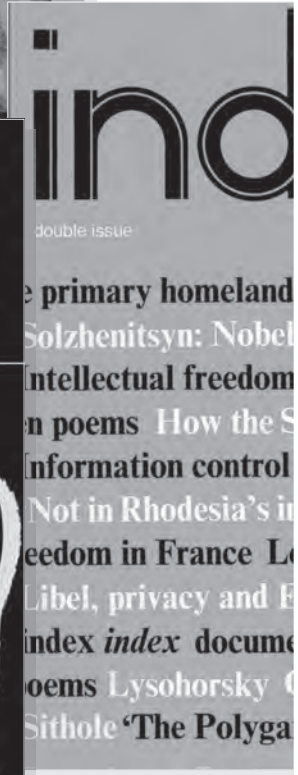
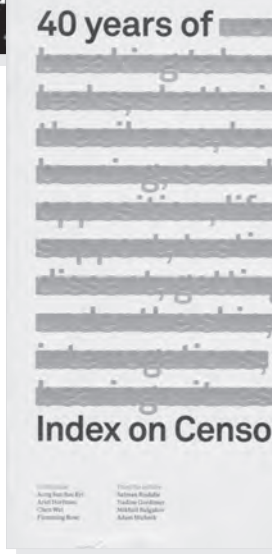
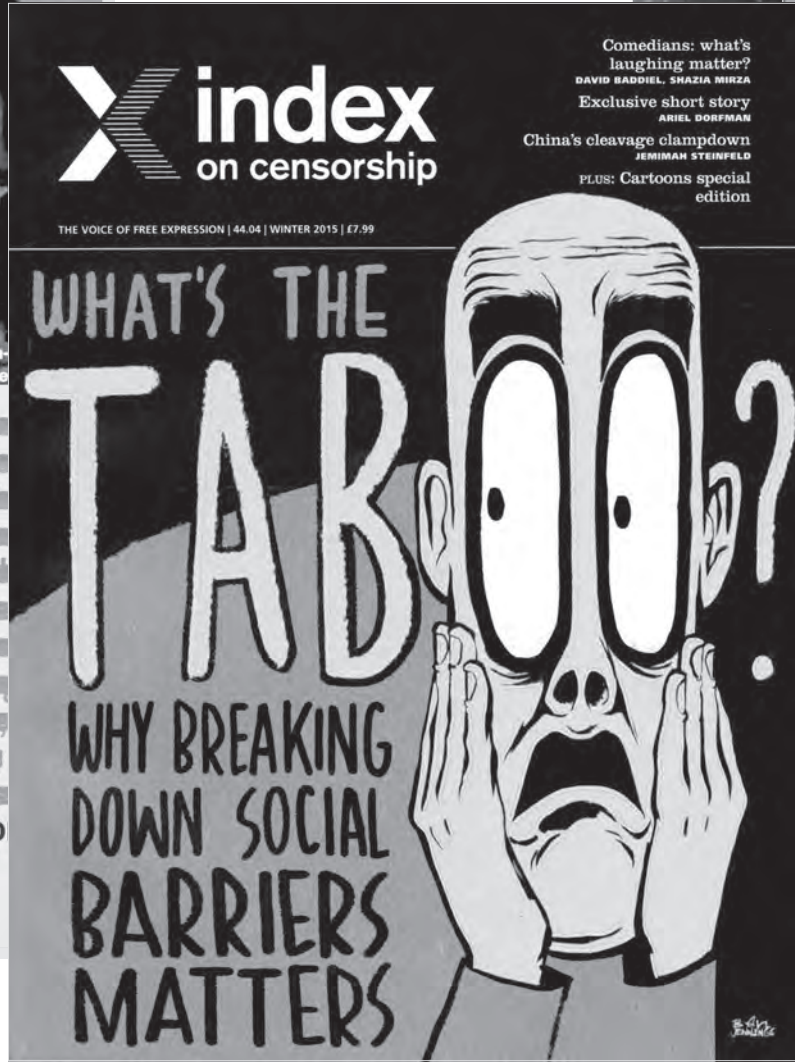


INDEX

ON CENSORSHIP

THE MAGAZINE FOR FREE SPEECH

JULY/AUGUST 1994

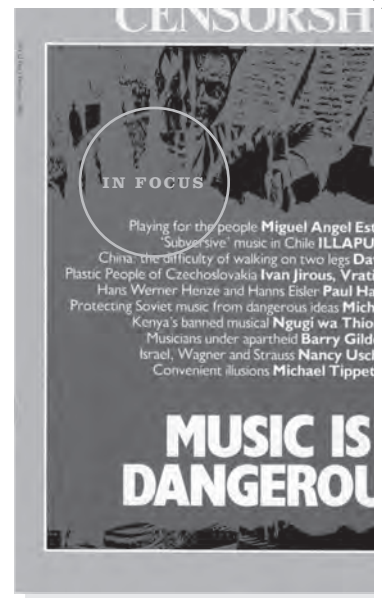


Publishing protest, secrets and stories

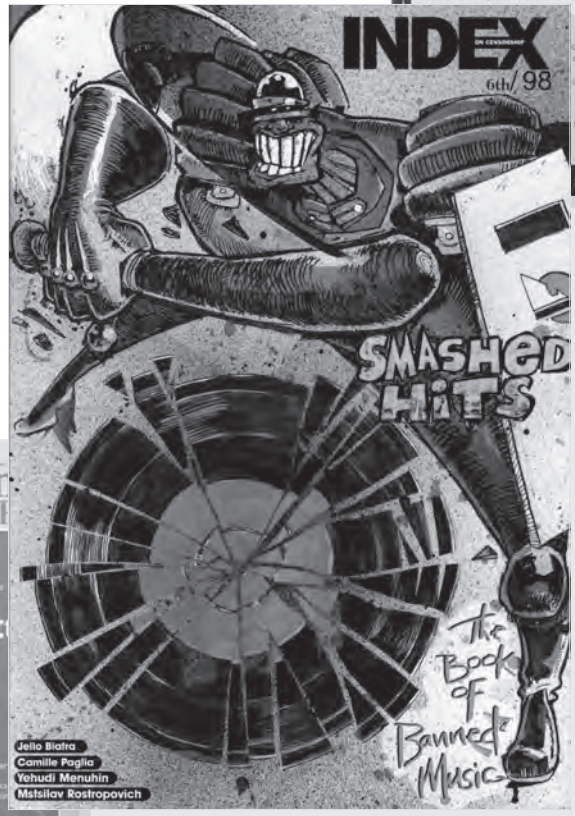
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Louis Blom-Cooper was involved in the very first days of Index on Censorship. Here, for its 250th issue, he talks about why it was created and why it is needed today





on censorship
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IT WAS A real sense of its internationalism that prompted me in 1972 to respond eagerly to the invitation from David Astor, still editing The Observer, to join Writers and Scholars International and its accompanying journal Index on Censorship. There was a close association between David and the poet Stephen Spender, who were neighbours in St John's Wood and who had set up WSI to publicise the fate of writers suffering censorship and prosecution for their outspoken views.

It all began with an open letter in The

Times and Le Monde from the Russian dissident Pavel Litvinov protesting against the trial and imprisonment of the writers Yuri Galanskov and Alexander Ginzburg in Moscow. Stephen Spender sent a telegram of support. Litvinov replied, suggesting that Spender should set up an organisation to publish these developments in pursuance of the right of expression of opinion, a broader concept than censorship, although the call was for free speech.

The membership of the new organisation was self-selecting from among the literati →



→ and prominent academicians of England, at the behest of David Astor personally. The chairmanship was inspirational. Not noted publicly for his interest, Lord Gardiner brought to the institution in its early days a calm solidity in its management that sought financial support, initially from abroad. Gerald Gardiner himself steered the circle of eminent figures through the problems of in-

– notably of Arthur Koestler – gave a flying start to Index, but its birth could not be safely guaranteed. The search for a captive title was uneasy but like some labels it has stuck firmly to its avowed aims. It was the word “index” which troubled the gathered cognoscenti who, instinctively progressive in political thought, disliked the title’s nomenclature to Rome. No doubt the geographical link with the signing of the European Convention on Human Rights saved the day. The additional marker “on Censorship” was the rescuer of a difficult decision.

Throughout five decades of uninterrupted publication, Index has maintained its distinctive voice

Throughout five decades of uninterrupted publication, Index has maintained its distinctive voice, with contributors displaying its reach well beyond these shores. Its characteristic is that it never lost its provocative pleas as a supporter of its authors. Litvinov should be well satisfied with the product of protest. But where next?

ternational membership, recently established in the International Commission of Jurists in 1957 and Amnesty in 1961 (later to become Amnesty International). As the Labour government’s Lord Chancellor from 1964-70, Gardiner had given the political push to both organisations, a push that they needed for recognition. But, more significantly, it was Gardiner who in 1966 had prompted, and indeed promoted, the right of the British citizen to obtain his or her individual petition to the European Commission on Human Rights and its supporting Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg.

If one views the current scene of censorship, whether it be self-censorship or state intervention on individual speech, one is struck by its intrusion elsewhere – in universities and other paragons of human knowledge. There is much to be concerned about. The ambit of freedom of speech, which may be qualified by other public interests, needs close examination and protection from other interests that do not apply as qualifications of the proposed rights. It is a core function of Index to scrutinise the scope of Article 10 of the convention. At a time when the convention is under threat of extinction (as some ministers aver) or modification by a domestic bill of rights (as other ministers might claim) vigilance is called for. The road is clearly marked ahead, without any diversionary influence that smacks of authoritarianism. ☒

Around the time of Litvinov’s plea for an international organisation to publish the words of fellow dissidents, I had immersed myself as a legal practitioner in the declaration of freedom of expression, espoused in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. That article has never been more important than in today’s global world of digitalisation.

While the WSI proclaimed its existence to the widest-possible audience and not just to the English-speaking audience, Index’s first editor was Michael Scammell, a graduate of Slavonic Studies at Nottingham University.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC is a lawyer, author and former chair of the Press Council as well as a member of the first council of Writers & Scholars International, the organisation which set up Index on Censorship magazine

Scammell’s later activities as a biographer



This page was put aside for a story from a local reporter in Yemen. Recent reports show that Houthi rebels have carried out a wave of detentions of their opponents, including journalists, activists, academics and politicians.

Our piece was set to highlight how this danger is destroying the local media as well as driving almost all foreign correspondents out of the country.

The journalists we were speaking to dropped out of contact in recent weeks. This doesn't necessarily mean the worst.

But when the worst-case scenario – that of a physical, life-threatening attack – is a distinct possibility, you realise you are dealing with one of the most difficult places in the world to operate as a journalist. The same can certainly be said for local reporters who are trying to work in Syria.

We are using this page to highlight how hard it is to get news out of certain countries, as a tribute to local reporters in warzones, and to show why Index on Censorship is still so active today.



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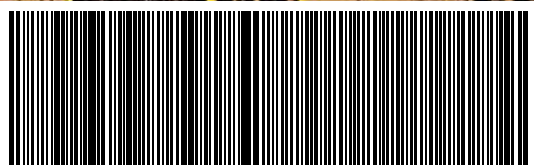
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