

The Gordian



The Official UN-aligned Magazine

Issue 1. Vol. 2 | January 2020

Free of Charge

HULA HOOPING WHILE AUSTRALIA BURNS

Liars and climate change deniers
in positions of power continue to
injure the planet

INDIA ON THE BRINK

“To other countries I may go as a
tourist, but to India I come as a
pilgrim.”

INDIA'S CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

Half the truth is often a whole
lie...



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK



contents

The Gordian | volume 2 | issue no.1

03

KANT'S PERPETUAL PEACE

Here are some quotes from Kant's "Philosophical Proposal" on world peace.

05

2020 AND THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES SERIES

In the last series of the UN-aligned Magazine we attempted to direct our readers' attention to some of the most unrepresented and marginalised communities around our globe.

13

HULA HOOPING WHILE AUSTRALIA BURNS

Liars and climate change deniers in positions of power continue to injure the planet, defying the science, even while their own territories are being consumed by the flames of their treachery.

18

INDIA ON THE BRINK

When Martin Luther King Jr. visited India in 1959, he paid the homage to the venerable land with these powerful words: "To other countries I may go as a tourist, but to India I come as a pilgrim."

23

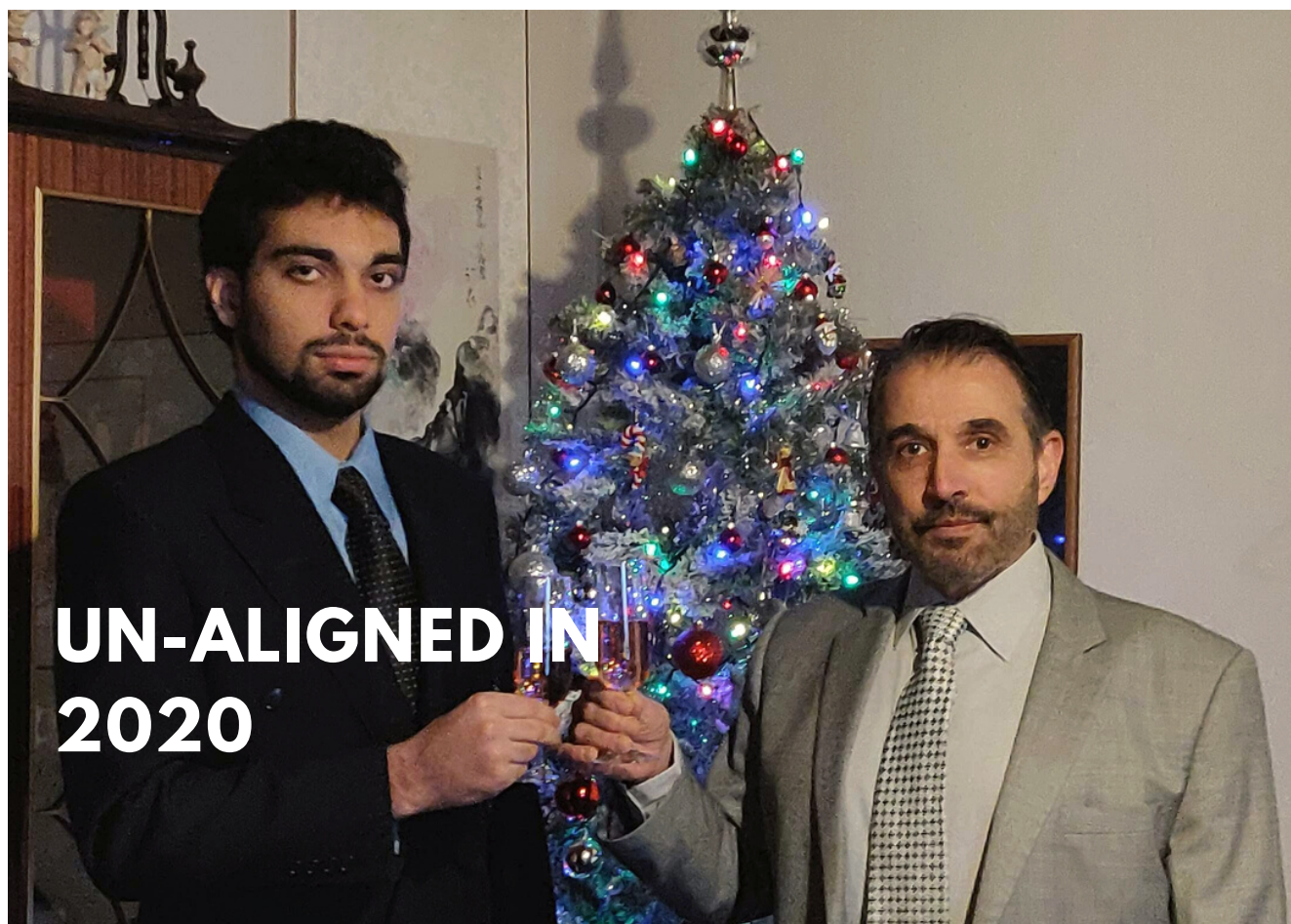
INDIA'S CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

In December 2019 the Government of India, led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seccesfully amended a bill to the Citizenship Act of 1955, offering amnesty to non-Muslim illegal immigrants

25

VARANASI IN PICTURES

The Glorification of Death is perhaps the best tiile that I can give to these pictures from Varanasi.



UN-ALIGNED IN 2020

What we achieved

2019 was a momentous year for UN-aligned! The organisation was launched in May after years of preparation and it only took a few months to attract members from all over the world. The first months were focussed on perfecting and consolidating the website and communication structures, including the magazine and language options. We also worked on the services we provide to our members, such as the free English language courses to promote a lingua franca and the virtual library. Moreover, much energy was invested in the writing of a book that will challenge the structures and mechanisms of the United Nations; this should be ready for publication in Spring 2020.

Whilst all these objectives proved successful, the magazine was perhaps the most significant achievement of all in as much as it spread the ideas of UN-aligned beyond its members, generating interest and discussion around the key issues of the organisation: UN reform, the environment and human rights.

We send a BIG “Thank You!” to all our members and supporters. Unlike many other organisations, UN-aligned is its members. Each one of you can take the standard and run with it for the promotion of a fairer, healthier and more united world, with the backing of the whole organisation behind you.

What's new in 2020?

In 2020 we want our impact to be felt. We are now in a position to extend out focus to active campaigns and we will be reporting these in the magazine, which from now on will be called "The Gordian" in order to highlight our alternative approach in dealing with the messy intricacies of the United Nations.

Please help us keep up the momentum and tell us what you are doing to promote our shared vision and we will publish your stories in the magazine.



Here are some other things we will be working on in 2020:

1. A monthly competition with prizes that will focus on ways of improving UN-aligned
2. A Facebook group that will act as a forum where ideas can be shared by members and non-members alike
3. Inspiring interviews
4. Surveys in order to add further insight into our campaigns and activities
5. Petitions targeted at policy makers and organisations whose decisions impact the wellbeing of the planet

Help us to cut the Gordian knot

Of course, the more our members participate, the more we will be able to achieve, so why not add this to your list of New Year's resolutions? Only together can we cut that Gordian knot and usher in the changes that will make the world a safer, fairer and happier place.



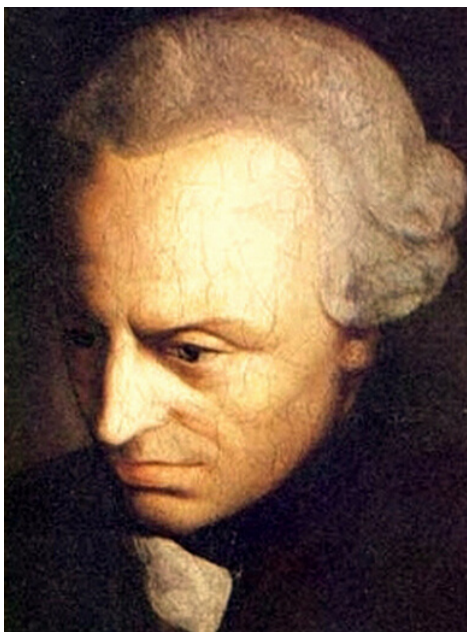
Follow our Unrepresented Nations series to learn more about the voices of unrepresented and marginalised nations and peoples worldwide. You can get free access to older issues of The Gordian by becoming a member at:

un-aligned.org



The Path to World Peace

Here are some quotes from Kant's "Philosophical Proposal" on world peace. The translation, by Helen O'Brien, was published in 1927, but it is clear and perfectly comprehensible, so we have left it as it is. Many of the ideas expressed in the treatise are akin to those of UN-aligned, especially the claim that war cannot be a reliable tool of justice, and that a federation of nations is the most reasonable way forward for humanity. We would like to make this section a regular feature with quotes from other political thinkers such as Francisco de Vitoria, Hobbes and Arendt. Please help us by contributing inspiring quotes to this section.



"Standing armies (*miles perpetuus*) shall in time cease to exist. For they are a perpetual menace of war to other states, through their readiness always to appear armed for it. They incite these others to outbid each other in unlimited numbers of armed forces, and, as peace becomes more costly than a short war on account of the expenditure on armies, these themselves become the cause of wars of aggression undertaken in order to reduce this burden. In addition to this, to be hired to kill or to be killed appears to imply a use of men as machines and tools in the hand of another, which does not accord well with what we consider to be the rights of man when applied to our own persons".



IMMANUEL KANT

“Of the three types of State a democracy is necessarily a despotism in the true sense of the word, because it establishes an executive power in which all may decide about, which in some cases means against, one who does not give his sanction; that is to say all, who yet are not really all, which is contrary to the general will and to the principle of liberty.”

“For otherwise the word justice would never be uttered by States that wish to fight each other unless as a mockery, in the spirit in which that Gallic prince declared: ‘It is the privilege granted by nature to the strong, that the weak must obey him’”

There shall be no war between me and other States —————

When a people says: ‘There shall be no war among us, for we will unite to form a State i.e. set up a supreme legislative, executive and juridical power, which shall settle our disputes peacefully,’ the decision is perfectly comprehensible. But when a State says: ‘There shall be no war between me and other States, although I recognise no supreme legislative Power who secures my right and whose right I secure,’ it is quite incomprehensible on what it imagines that it bases its confidence in securing its rights, unless it is on the expedient of the civic confederation of societies, viz., the free federalism, which reason must necessarily add to the conception of the law of nations, if there is to be any meaning whatsoever in the conception.

The conception of the law of nations as containing the right to war is really meaningless, for this right is supposed to be based on the one-sided principle of deciding what is right by force, not on universally valid, external laws, which limit the freedom of each in the same degree; unless, indeed, we are to understand by it that people who think in this way deserve their fate if they mutually exterminate each other, and so win perpetual peace in the broad grave which covers all the horrors of violence together with their instigators. For States having relations with one another there can reasonably be no other method from escaping from the lawless condition which connotes only wars than by renouncing their uncivilised, lawless freedom, like private individuals, and subjecting themselves to compulsory public laws, thus forming an international State (*civitas gentium*) which would gradually extend and finally include all the peoples of the world.”



2020 AND THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES SERIES

By Ariana Yekrangi

In the last series of the UN-aligned Magazine we attempted to direct our readers' attention to some of the most unrepresented and marginalised communities around our globe. We successfully covered stories from Nigeria, Tibet, Kurdistan, Taiwan, Catalonia and more. Members of UN-aligned can access this volume at anytime on our Virtual Library page.

The fight against climate change

The fight against climate change has never been more important. Unlike our greed, forests and lands are finite, but yet we are destroying and liquidating them faster than ever, often for the short term gains of a few vested interests, at the cost of the rest of the human population. These changes are already having dire consequences on our environment and indeed our lives. According to the Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) just in the past few decades:



1

Rising temperatures have worsened extreme weather events...

**2**

Chunks of ice in the Antarctic have broken apart

**3**

Wildfire seasons are months longer

**4**

Coral reefs have been bleached

**5**

Mosquitoes are expanding their territory thereby increasing their ability to spread disease

The ramifications have caught up with us

While these findings may be stark, they are not surprising. We have been burning fossil fuels and destroying forests and wildlife for centuries. It was only a matter of time before these ramifications caught up with us.

The new Environmental Priorities series, therefore, intends to underline the importance of our actions and encourage, inspire and guide members to act now. Moreover, we will do our best to hold governments responsible through a variety of means including: campaigns, interviews and petitions.

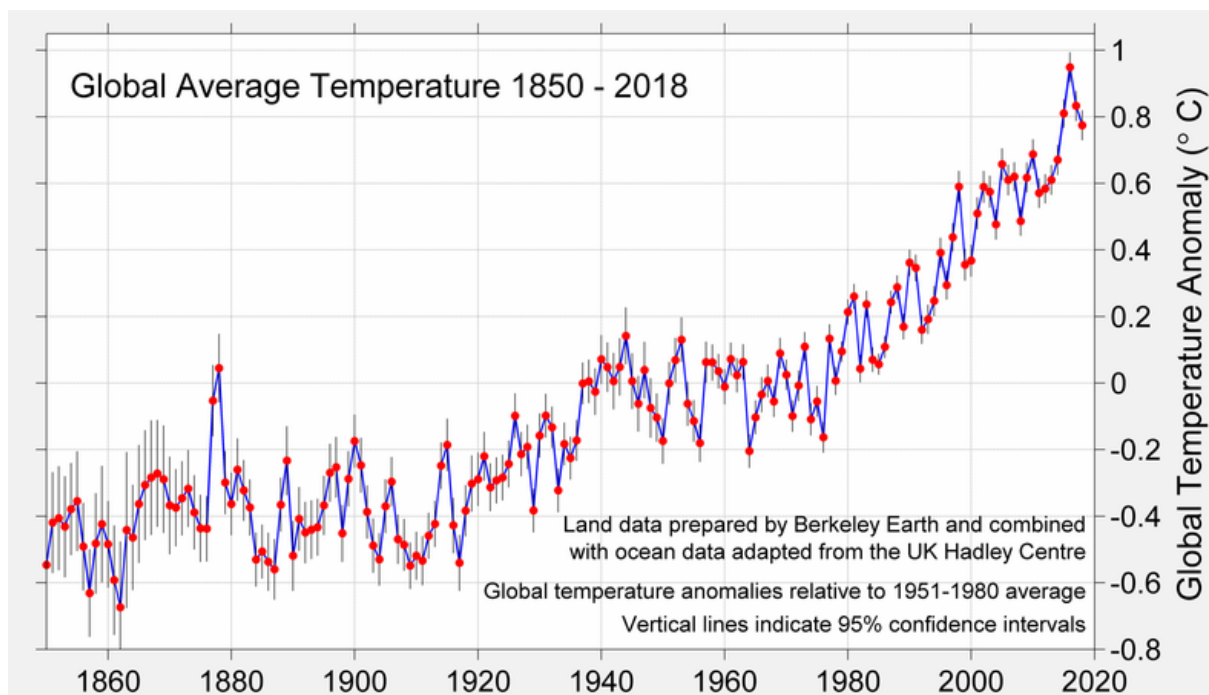


Wildfires and Climate Change, Fact Sheet

- A wildfire (AKA forest or peat fire) is an uncontrolled fire. Wildfires often occur in (duh) wild, unpopulated areas, but they can occur anywhere and harm homes, agriculture, humans, and animals in their path.
- Most wildfires are human related, for example, in the US 90% of all wildfires are started by humans.
- Wildfires can be caused by an accumulation of dead matter (leaves, twigs, and trees) that can create enough heat in some instances to spontaneously combust and ignite the surrounding area.
- Weather conditions can directly contribute to the occurrence of wildfires through lightning strikes or indirectly by an extended dry spell or drought.
- A large wildfire — or conflagration — is capable of modifying the local weather conditions (AKA producing its own weather).

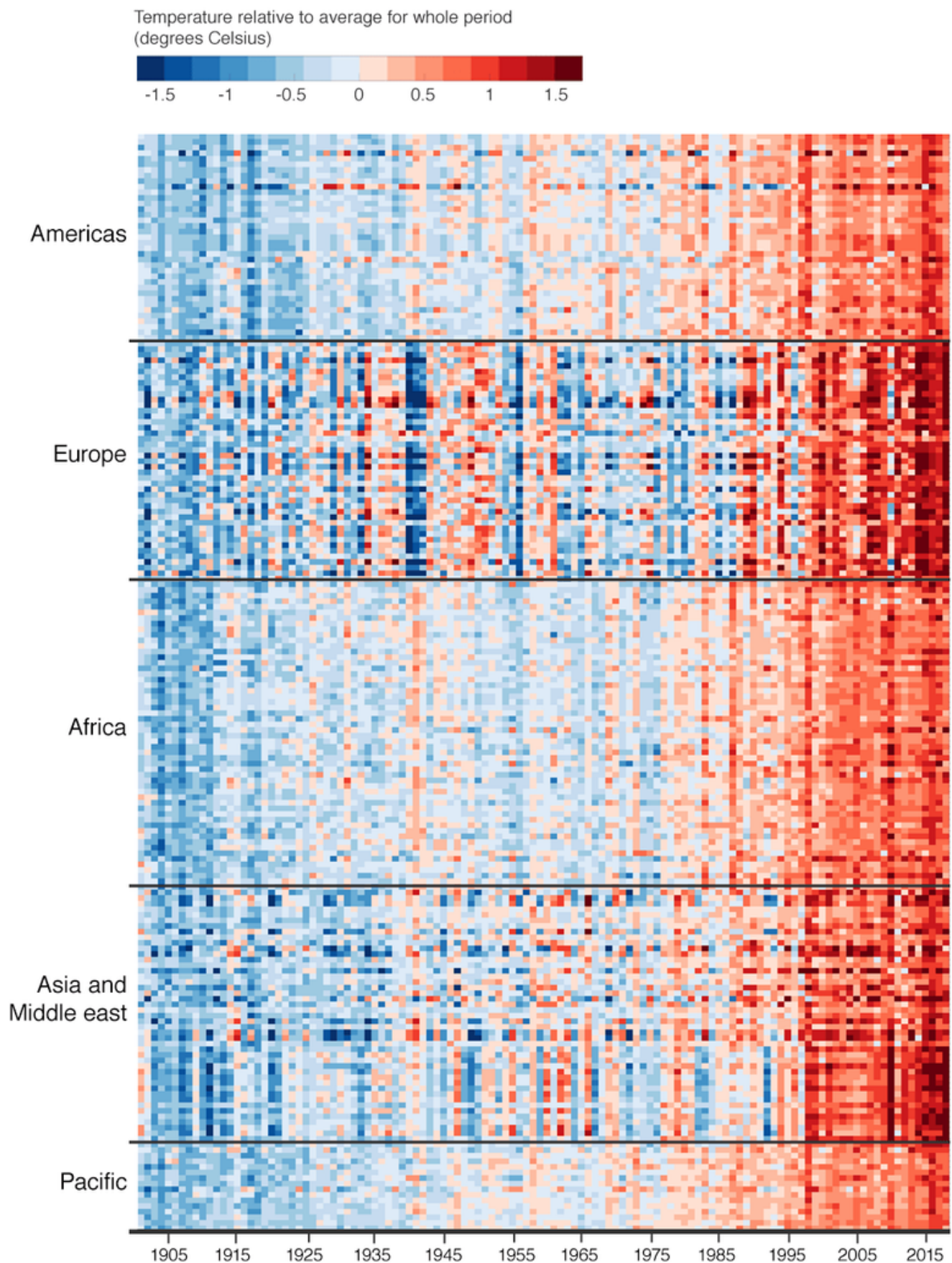
In federally managed forests in the western U.S. today, wildfires larger than 1,000 acres have become nearly five times more frequent and burned areas 10 times as large as in the 1970s.

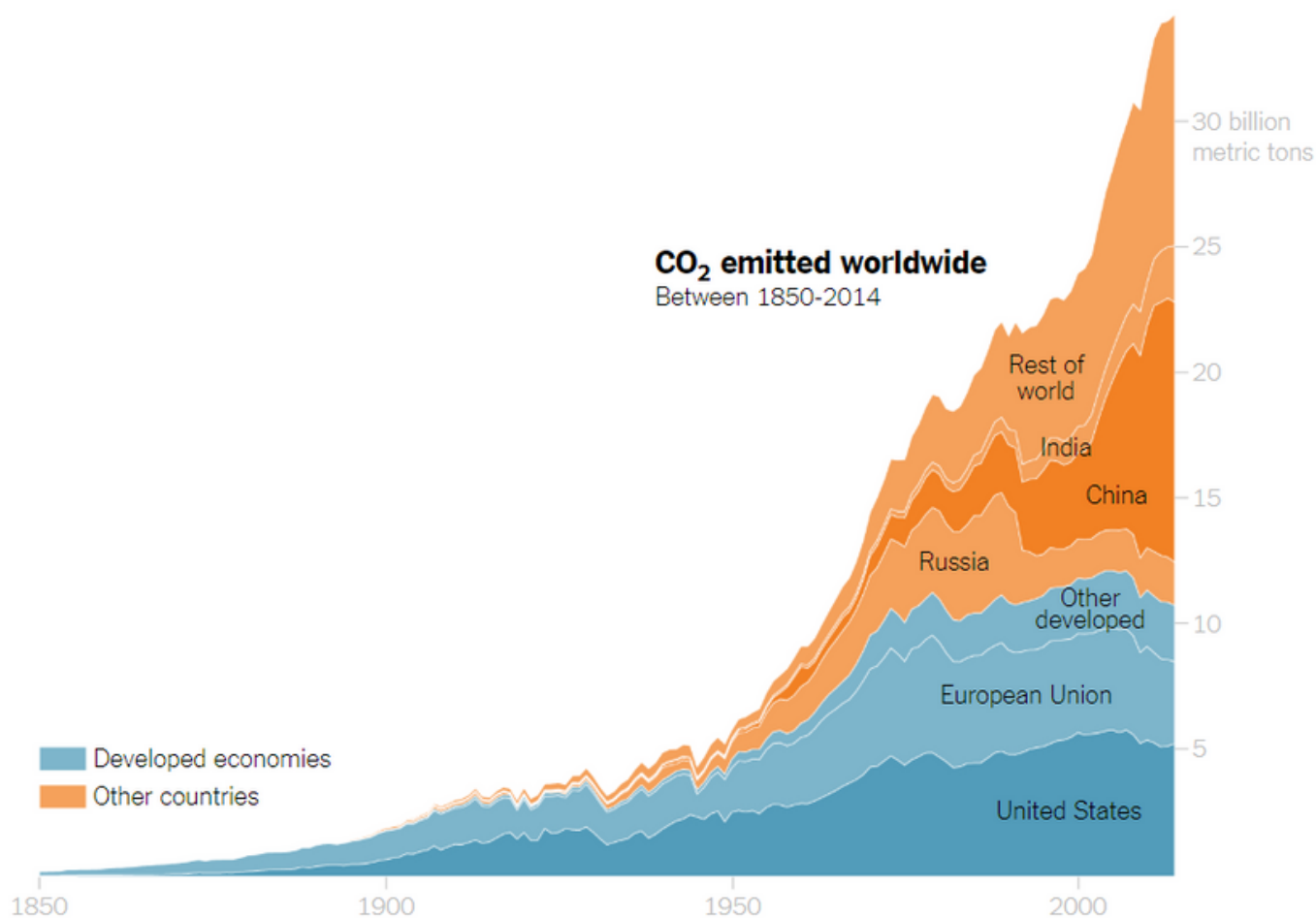




- Climate scientists have correlated the growing incidence and intensity of wildfires with rising global temperatures.
- The rise in average global temperatures has led to higher spring and summer temperatures, and importantly, an earlier onset of spring. This pattern has led to a rapid melting of spring snowpack, causing soils to dry out earlier and remain dry longer.
- After months of drying in the longer periods of higher temperatures, stressed forests have become more susceptible to infestations by bark beetles and other insects that thrive in warmer temperatures. Throughout the western United States and Canada, bark beetles have killed off hundreds of millions of trees and devastated forestlands, turning them into kindling for catastrophic wildfires.
- As wildfires grow in frequency, intensity, and the amount of area burned, they pose serious health risks.
- Smoke from wildfires contains volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides that form ozone and organic particulates and other toxic pollutants – all of which can be dangerous and even deadly for sensitive populations.
- Wildfires also impact climate change because they emit massive amounts of carbon dioxide and other pollutants that can affect regional and even global climate.

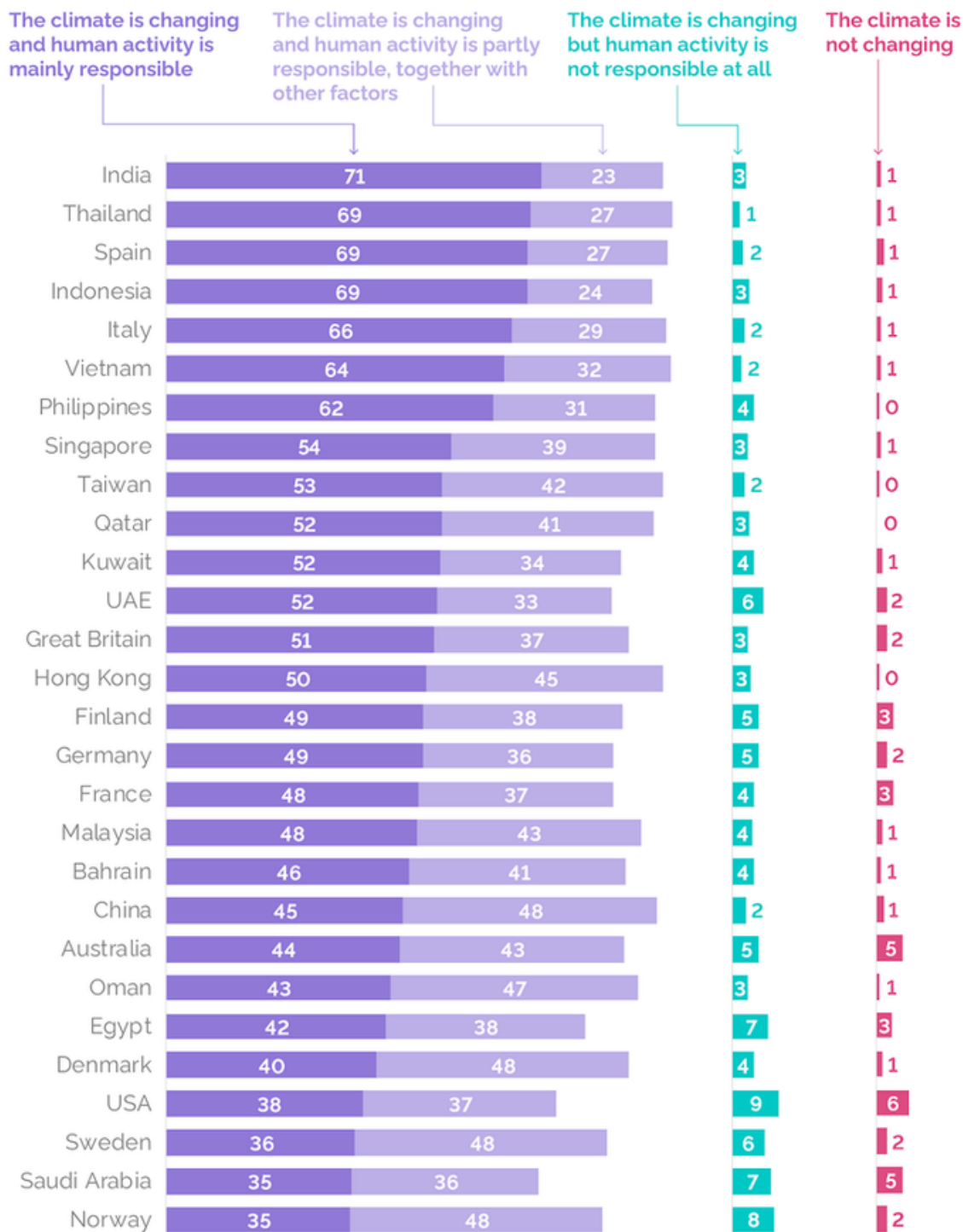
Temperature changes around the world (1901-2018)





That climate change is happening and that humanity is at least partly responsible is a view held by the majority across the world

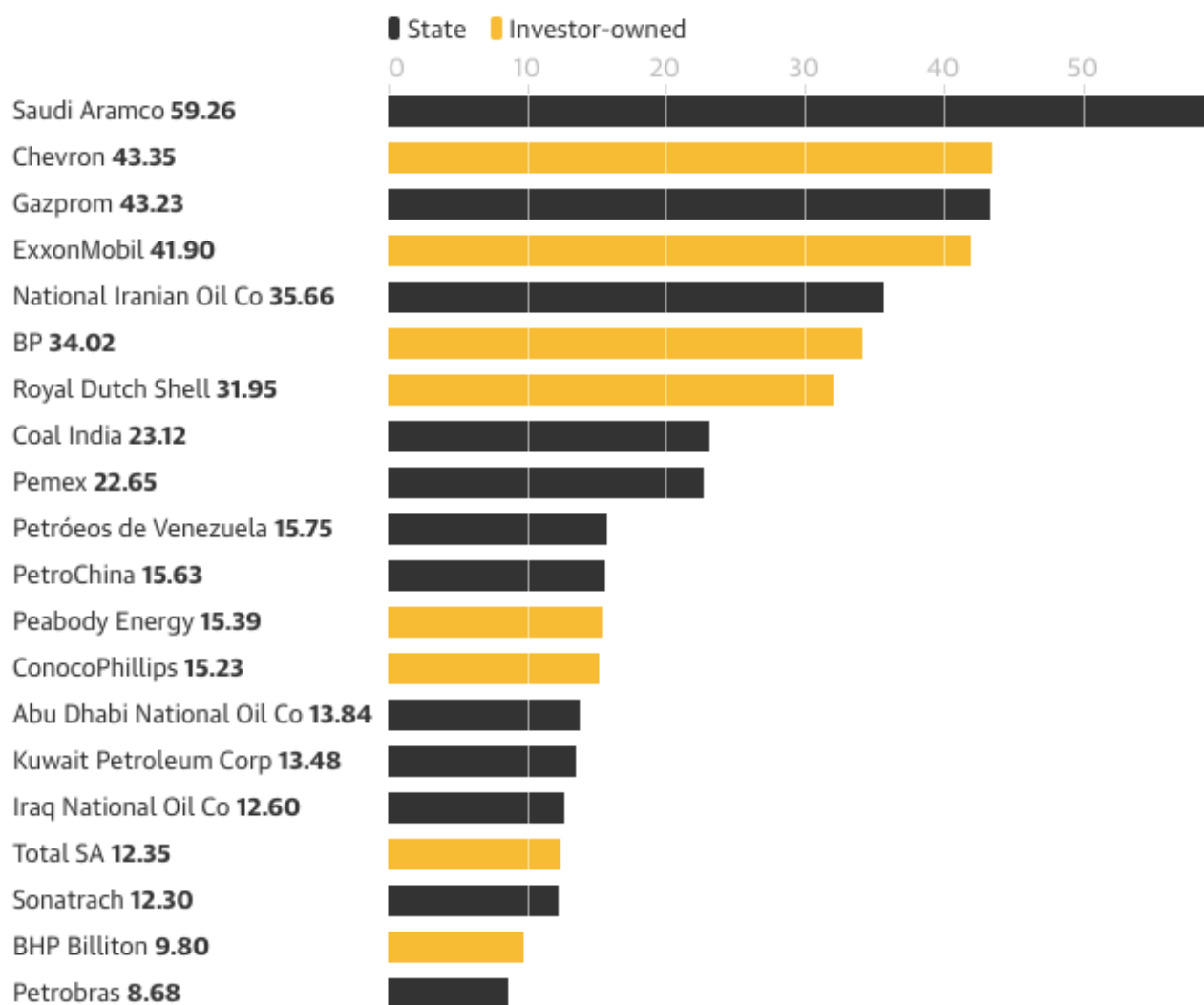
Thinking about the global environment... In general, which of the following statements, if any, best describes your view? (%)



The Guardian investigates the fossil fuel industry, and the structures behind it, which are driving the climate emergency...

The top 20 companies have contributed to 480bn tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent since 1965

Billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent



Guardian graphic | Source: Richard Heede, Climate Accountability Institute. Note: table includes emissions for the period 1965 to 2017 only



“Liar! Liar! Your pants are on fire!”

Liars and climate change deniers in positions of power continue to injure the planet, defying the science, even while their own territories are being consumed by the flames of their treachery. As California, the Amazon and Australia burned in 2019, Trump, Bolsonaro and Scott Morrison behaved like Nero had in 64 A.D when Rome blazed. If they fiddled, their tune would probably have been taken from Shaggy’s song: “It Wasn’t Me”. People can be stupid or self-serving and for many voters around the world honesty and integrity is no longer a priority.

This December every Republican in the House of Representatives voted against Trump's impeachment despite the evidence against him, a deceiving Boris Johnson was elected Prime Minister of the UK and the Likud Party in Israel voted by an overwhelming 72.5% to keep a scandal ridden Netanyahu as their leader. Nevertheless, nature is not so forgiving, particularly when she is the target of human folly.



Scott Morrison faces the music



AUSTRALIAN KIDS WALK OUT OF SCHOOL TO PROTEST CLIMATE INACTION

Karma is certainly catching up with Australia's Scott Morrison who had to cut short his holiday in Hawaii just before Christmas in order to face the backlash of his flippant disregard for climate change and its effects. Even though Morrison proved to be more concerned about justifying why he was galivanting during a national crisis than taking any responsibility for his disastrous environmental policies, the criticism he is facing is no longer as easy to dodge. His love affair with the coal industry is starting to breed infernal progeny and the facts are starting to speak for themselves. In fact, all the predictions of the experts are coming to pass.

The link between climate change and wildfires

The Climate Council, Australia's leading climate change communications organisation, published a report in November highlighting the links between climate change and bushfires. These are their key findings:

1. The catastrophic, unprecedented fire conditions currently affecting NSW and Queensland have been aggravated by climate change. Bushfire risk was exacerbated by record breaking drought, very dry fuels and soils, and record-breaking heat.

2. Bushfire conditions are now more dangerous than in the past. The risks to people and property have increased and fire seasons have lengthened. It is becoming more dangerous to fight fires in Australia.

3. The fire season has lengthened so substantially that it has already reduced opportunities for fuel reduction burning. This means it is harder to prepare for worsening conditions.

4. The costs of fighting fires are increasing. Australia relies on resource sharing arrangements between countries and states and territories within Australia. As seasons overlap and fires become more destructive, governments will be increasingly constrained in their ability to share resources and the costs of tackling fires will increase.

5. The government must develop an urgent plan to (1) prepare Australian communities, health and emergency services for escalating fire danger; and (2) rapidly phase out the burning of coal oil and gas which is driving more dangerous fires (you may access the full report via the UN-aligned virtual library).



Indeed, warnings abound; recently the Lancet medical journal accused the Australian government of negligence with regards to climate change and the detrimental effects which include heat related illnesses, extreme weather conditions, fires and elevated suicide rates. Fire and emergency service leaders from all over Australia have also been publicly pressing Scott Morrison to take urgent action to avert the catastrophic consequences of extreme weather events. However, the warnings go back more than decades. In 1988, Dr. Tom Beer, a meteorologist working for CSIRO, published a briefing highlighting the impact climate change would have on bushfires.

The report, 'Australian Bushfire Danger Under Changing Climate Regimes' was the first of many similar reports that followed, but despite its urgent tone, it was mostly business as usual for successive Australian governments. Speaking to The Guardian, as the current fires raged, Dr Beer lamented:



"But I feel maybe I was not enough of a prophet crying in the wilderness".

The heat is on for Scott Morrison

Despite Scott Morrison trying to deflect from the burning issue plaguing his country, namely the correlation between his environmental policies and the bushfires, his critics are not prepared to let him get away with it. He compared himself to a plumber refusing to take on another job in order to spend time with his family, as if his feasting in Hawaii while lives were being lost were the only concern. The Prime Minister and his party also went on the offensive whenever the connection between his government's policies and climate change were made, accusing detractors of politicising the tragedy. The problem is that the issue is already political because the right wing has made it so by attempting to reduce science to an insignificant opinion.

The bushfires are not an accident. They are a direct consequence of that political arrogance that leads politicians to believe they know more than the experts. Unsurprisingly, the Green Party is the most outspoken, accusing the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of having done "everything in their power to make these kinds of catastrophic bushfires more likely". Senator Jordan Steele-John went as far as calling the major parties "no better than arsonists."

Morrison's stunts mocking the environmentalists, such as when he took a piece of coal into parliament in 2017 announcing: "This is coal. Don't be afraid; don't be scared; it won't hurt you!" make him even more culpable.

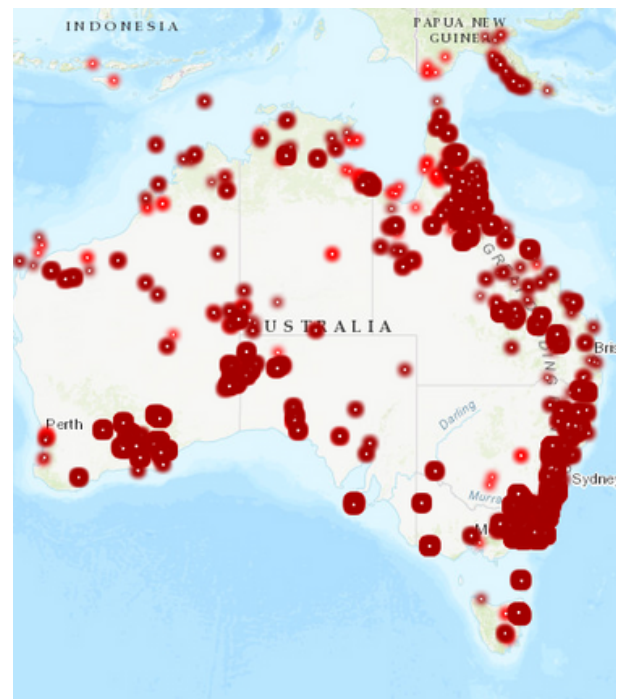
Referring to that incident in *The Diplomat*, journalist Joshua McDonald points out:



“Perhaps now, in the wake of what experts predict could be the worst bushfire season in the history of this country – and that experts believe is linked to climate change, which is a reaction to activities such as mining for coal – Morrison’s words may be coming back to haunt him.”

The way forward

To date, in Australia, the bushfires have taken the lives of at least 22 people, killed millions of animals, scorched about 6,000,000 hectares of land and destroyed more than 2,500 homes. Predicted heat waves are likely to aggravate the situation further. Even major cities such as Sydney are now at risk. Despite this, and the fact that Australia has been ranked as the 36th most vulnerable country to climate change, with an average of 50 climate fatalities a year, it is towards the bottom of the list of countries on track to meet Paris climate targets.



FIRES IN AUSTRALIA

Still, some good may come from all this. The deteriorating situation and the increasing public resentment will make it impossible for the likes of Morrison to carry on with their flippant attitude towards the environment. More importantly, some citizens may finally begin to realise that these corrupt politicians who ignore the expert advice of scientists are doing so at the risk of their lives and livelihoods. Voting them out is the best guarantee against pending disaster.

INDIA ON THE BRINK

By Adrian Liberto



The Enemy Within

When Martin Luther King Jr. visited India in 1959, he paid the homage to the venerable land with these powerful words: “To other countries I may go as a tourist, but to India I come as a pilgrim.”

Would Mr. King think differently of India if he were alive today? Probably not. The narrowminded fanaticism that is trying to drag India down is not a new phenomenon. Even if one cannot ignore it, one can always look beyond it. However, the world is not what it was 60 years ago. It is a much more dangerous place. Our efficiency in depleting the earth’s life and resources is only matched by the relentlessness of nature’s means of revenge, such as climate change or the smog that has recently been choking Delhi. Moreover, if we should end up fighting for whatever is left, we would be able to do so with much more devastating results. Finally, mass media have altered the way in which we communicate. Just as the Internet, for instance, helps the wise become wiser, it often has the opposite effect with fools, who become easy prey to those who would exploit them.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND CORETTA SCOTT KING
TRAVEL TO INDIA

Nationalism is on the rise and if governments accept it, or worse, pander to it, the results will be catastrophic. The lynch mob mentality is no longer dependent on a few rabble-rousing voices. The mob can easily become a nation. The government of Narendra Modi, like so many others around the world, seems happy to rise on the tide of nationalism, rather than to challenge it with the promotion of harmony and respect. This is a dangerous game, with short-term gains for those in power and dismal consequences for generations to come.

On the 25th November, the Dalai Lama, whose official residence is in India, Tweeted:

“There is an urgent need for India’s traditions of non-violence and compassion in today’s world, which is still riven by fighting and killing, sometimes even in the name of religion.”



Ironically, Indian nationalists, fighting for Mother India’s traditions, are doing so at the cost of its most precious ones of “non-violence and compassion”. The last few weeks have continued to highlight the increasing tensions within the world’s largest democracy; tensions often springing for emboldened nationalism and bigotry. Here are a few examples...

A State, a Professor and a Temple

On the 31st October, the predominantly Muslim State of Jammu and Kashmir was officially demoted to a Union Territory. This involved the removal of many of its privileges.

On the 7th November, Feroz Khan, a newly appointed Sanskrit professor at the Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, was targeted by right wing protesters and had to go into hiding. The student protestors objected to a Muslim being allowed to teach Sanskrit, the ancient language of India.

Then, on the 9th November, the High Court of India ruled that the site of a mosque, completed in 1529 and destroyed by Hindu nationalists in 1992, should be used for the construction of a Hindu temple.

The second example is the most sinister because it represents unmitigated prejudice and bigotry. It is even more disgusting because those responsible were young university students who should know better. The university board, in fact, unequivocally condemned their actions and stuck to its decision. The other two examples are more complex because they are muddled by religious rivalry, which is never clear-cut.

The Demotion of a State

The situation in Kashmir has its roots in the 1947 partition of India. At that time, the maharaja of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir was Hari Singh, a Hindu, while the majority of the population was Muslim. Maharaja Singh was therefore reluctant to join either Pakistan or India. As he dithered, however, Pakistan attacked and the Maharaja had no choice but to ask India for help. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did so on the condition that the state should merge with India. The ensuing war, however, left about a third of the state in Pakistani hands. Nehru, therefore, planned for a full-scale war against Pakistan, but was held back by Lord Mountbatten who convinced him to appeal to the UN instead, since the invasion by Pakistan was a clear-cut case of aggression. Nevertheless, the UN did little more than discourage further confrontation, with the result that the situation in Kashmir remains volatile to this day.



Still, the Indian part had been given special privileges, such as a constitution and local laws, which included a discriminatory ban on citizens from other Indian states from purchasing land there. All these privileges were rescinded on August 5, 2019 when Article 370 was abolished and the state was fully placed under the control of central government, with its subsequent demotion to a Union Territory at the end of October. These arbitrary moves resulted in riots, thousands of arrests and the further instability.



PHOTO BY ANAHITA AHMADI

India is a multicultural nation with more than 20% of its billion-plus population not classified as Hindu. Modi's decision will embolden his nationalist supporters, but of course, it will do little to promote harmony amongst his people or win the trust of Kashmiris.

“In the Name of Religion”

The temple ruling is not as outrageous as it seems, since the location in question is indeed one of the holiest sites of Hinduism, in as much it is claimed to be the birthplace of the divine Rama. Muslim invaders had destroyed the original temple and replaced it with the mosque, and though it had been standing for almost 500 years, its presence has always been considered an affront to devout Hindus. Though the disputed area of 2.77 acres was set aside for the construction of a Hindu temple, 5 acres were given to the plaintiffs for the construction of a mosque. Not quite going the extra mile, but an attempt at compensation, at least. Still, considering the sensitivities, a poor and unimaginative attempt, and far from the spirit of compassion the Dalai Lama referred to.



PHOTO BY ANAHITA AHMADI



POLICE AND PROTESTERS CONFRONTING EACH OTHER IN KASHMIR, 2018.

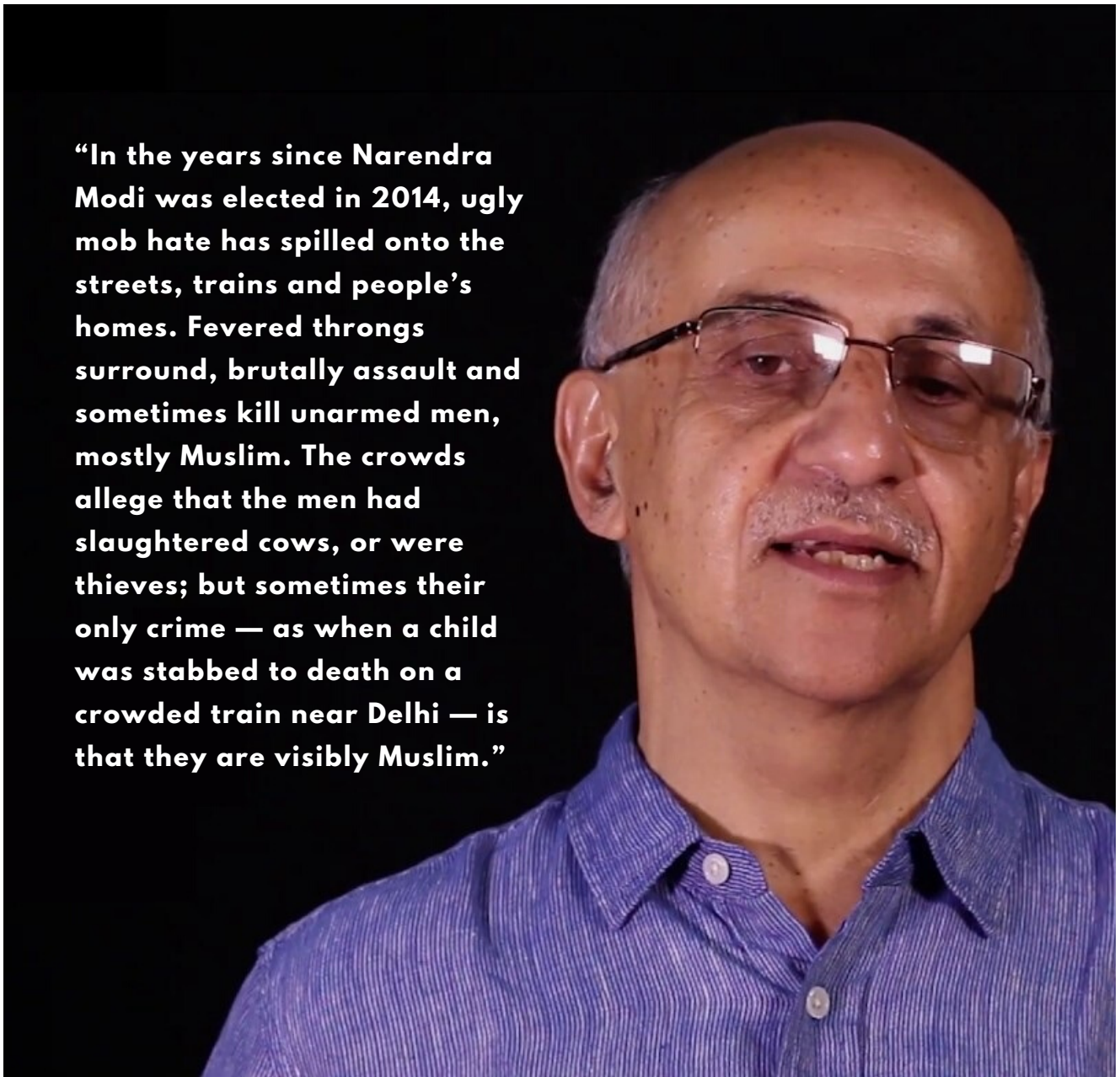
The “one of us” Mentality

India's main problem is this tacit belief, held by many of its citizens, that Hindus are somehow more Indian than the rest. This privileged status is endemic and even in recent times it is not exclusive to Modi's administration. In November 2012, for instance, a 21-year-old named Shaheen Dhanda was arrested for mildly criticising the virtual shut-down of Mumbai for the funeral of the ultra-nationalist Bal Thackeray. Her "crime" was to write on her Facebook page that:

"People like Thackeray are born and die daily and one should not observe a 'bandh' [shutdown] for that." Her 20-year-old friend, Renu Srinivasan was also arrested for liking the comment.

Nevertheless, Modi's rule is making the situation a lot worse. Writing in The Hindu paper this October, author Harsh Mander, wrote:

“In the years since Narendra Modi was elected in 2014, ugly mob hate has spilled onto the streets, trains and people's homes. Fevered throngs surround, brutally assault and sometimes kill unarmed men, mostly Muslim. The crowds allege that the men had slaughtered cows, or were thieves; but sometimes their only crime — as when a child was stabbed to death on a crowded train near Delhi — is that they are visibly Muslim.”



Yes, India is a great nation, but it can only sit on its laurels for so long. Unless it returns to those principles of “non-violence and compassion” its magnificence may only endure in the annals of its history.

INDIA'S CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL: A DEATH KNEEL FOR INDIAN SECULARISM PROBLEM

By Ariana Yekrangi



In December 2019 the Government of India, led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), successfully amended a bill to the Citizenship Act of 1955, offering amnesty to non-Muslim illegal immigrants, who arrived in India prior to 2004. These immigrants must be able to prove that they are citizens of one of the three neighbouring countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan.

Half the truth is often a whole lie...

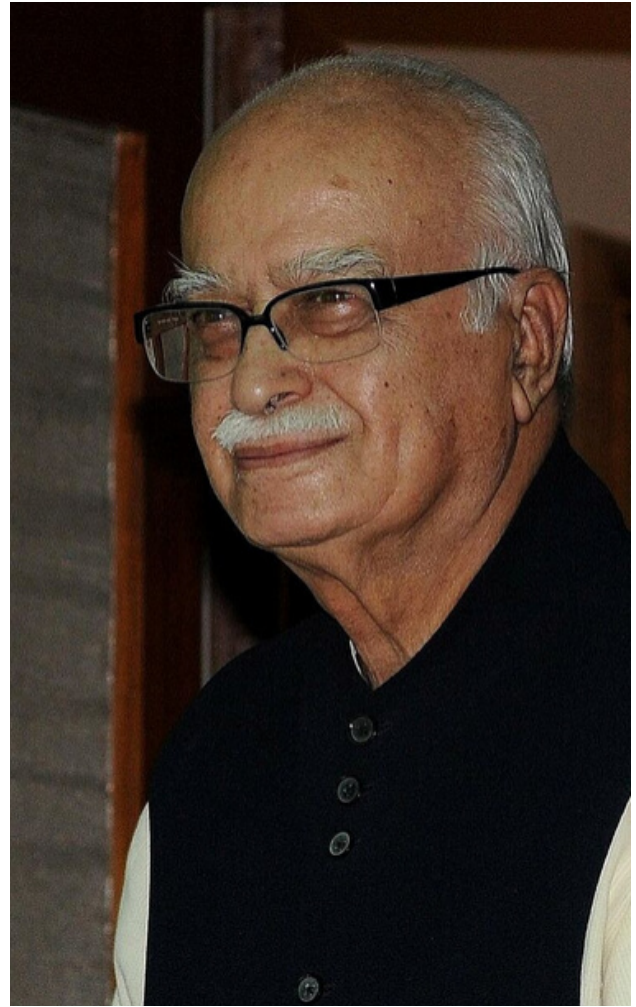
Spokespeople of the Indian Government have repeatedly claimed that the new law intends to give sanctuary to people fleeing religious persecution. While this is certainly the case, the dubious decision to exclude Muslim refugees from Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and China; or in fact, the Hindu Tamils from Sri Lanka, raises questions about the Government's sincerity. The timing of the bill is also not inadvertent; in August, the Assam State, located in the North-East of the country, witnessed two million of its residents left off the Citizen Register; this essentially left thousands of people, suspected of being illegal residents, in temporary camps which are housed in the state's prisons.



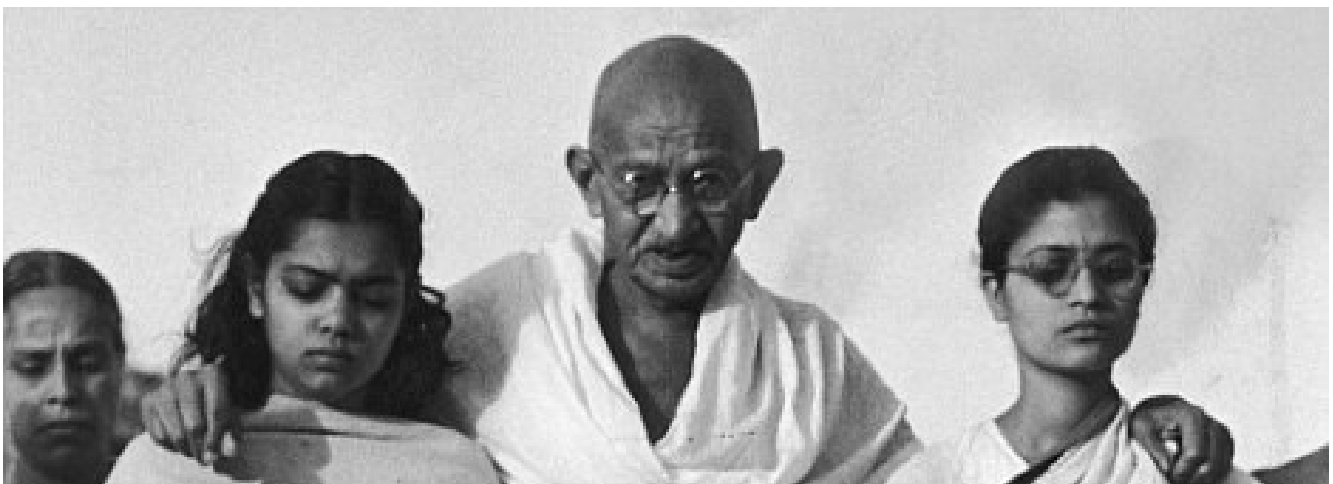
NARENDRA MODI AND AMIT SHAH

Modi and his Home Minister, Amit Shah, the mastermind behind the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), have been eroding and attacking the social identity of the Indian Muslim community from as early as 1992 and the CAB was undoubtedly brought forth with an intent to adversely affect the political identities of this community.

The BJP's records alone are enough to back such claims: In December 1992, a baying mob of Hindu fanatics, led by the then BJP leader, Lal Krishna Advani, tore down the Babri Mosque because they wanted to build a temple on the site. The then Minister of Home affairs, Narendra Modi, and his party came under massive criticism for their reluctance to contain the Hindu mobs. Lal Krishna Advani's political views were certainly anti-secular, but he drastically failed to radicalise the more moderate members within his party. However now, after five years in office, as a majority party governing from 2014 to date, the party has disgracefully hijacked the very idea of India and paved the way for its theocratisation. One almost forgets that it was only in 1947 that Pakistan was created because India refused to discriminate against its citizens on the basis of religion.



LAL KRISHNA ADVANI



Gandhi would turn in his grave

Emboldened by the support for its nationalistic policies the BJP will continue with its divisive politics and Modi is likely to transform India into a majoritarian polity that is against everything that Gandhi stood for.



VARANASI IN PICTURES

By Anahita Ahmadi

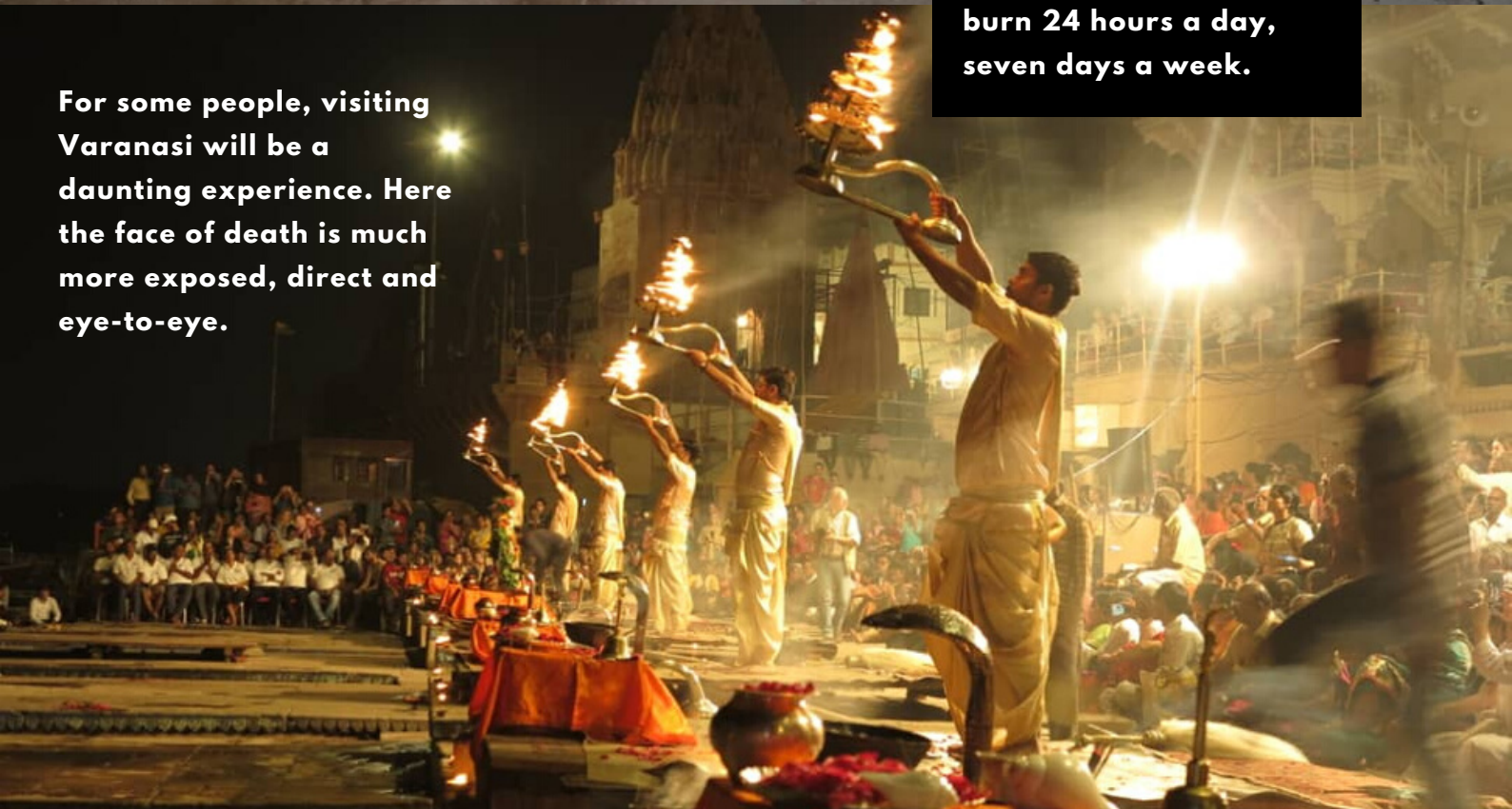


The Glorification of Death is perhaps the best title that I can give to these pictures from Varanasi. Every day hundreds of corpses are burnt in pyres in one of the holiest cities of India. The demand for funerals are so high that many come to Varanasi months before their death hoping for an eternal bliss.



Varanasi is the only city in India where pyres burn 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For some people, visiting Varanasi will be a daunting experience. Here the face of death is much more exposed, direct and eye-to-eye.





Varanasi has been a cultural centre of northern India for several thousand years, and is closely associated with the Ganges. Hindus believe that dying here and getting cremated along the banks of the "holy" Ganges river allows one to break the cycle of rebirth and attain salvation, making it a major centre for pilgrimage. The city is known worldwide for its many ghats, embankments made in steps of stone slabs along the river bank where pilgrims perform ritual ablutions.

FANCY A SHORT QUIZ?

A COPY TO THE ANSWERS OF THIS QUIZ ARE
AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THE MAGAZINE.

*For suggestions and feedback please write to us
at contact@un-aligned.org*

01 Which is the smallest sovereign state in South America? What is the name of its capital?

02 What do these Latin phrases mean and who said them?

- Cogito ergo sum
- Veni, vidi, vici
- Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori

05 The following leaders had great teachers; name them:

- Xenophon
- Alexander the Great
- Nero

03 Philosopher Immanuel Kant, was born in Königsberg, Prussia in 1724. What is the town now called and where would you find it?

04 What was the name of the Cuban dictator overthrown by Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution?

06 What year did each of these countries come into existence:

- Bangladesh
- South Sudan
- Tanzania

07 Which sitting President has recently been convicted and sentenced to 20 years for the 1982 December Murders, which consisted of the premeditated killing of 15 opponents?

08 Which is the first day of Christmas?

09 What is the name of the 19th century Augustinian friar whose work on heredity through the study of peas has led to him being referred to as the father of modern genetics?

10 The following musicians had other taxing professions; what were they?

Vivaldi
Paderewski
Bruce Dickinson (lead singer of Iron Maiden)



The world is changing rapidly; and so will our perception and fabric of life. Idealism is often used as a term of contempt, but creative people understand the power of imagination. We need to visualise and formulate a better world in order to make it a reality. This is the essence of UN-aligned.

UN-aligned was created with the goal of uniting our globe by a federal world order, which is based on the core principles of a shared humanity and a shared planet. It was this aim that united Adrian Liberto and Ariana Yekrangi to create this beacon of change.

Join our global movement today and be the change you want to see. Our membership is completely free of charge.

As a member you can:

- Organise and manage a cell or parish
- Enjoy complete & free access to our premium benefits including: language courses, our virtual library and so much more
- Contribute to our newsletter
- Be part of a like-minded community

Visit:

un-aligned.org/register

for more information



Quiz Answer Sheet

1. A. Which is the smallest sovereign state in South America? B. What is the name of its capital? [A. Suriname; B. Paramaribo]
2. What do these Latin phrases mean and who said them? Cogito ergo sum [I think, therefore I am: Descartes] Veni, vidi, vici [I came, I saw, I conquered: Julius Caesar] Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori [It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country: Horace]
3. Philosopher Immanuel Kant, was born in Königsberg, Prussia in 1724. What is the town now called and where would you find it? [Kaliningrad, Russia]
4. What was the name of the Cuban dictator overthrown by Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution? [Fulgencio Battista (born: Rubén Zaldívar)]
5. The following leaders had great teachers; name them: Xenophon [Socrates] Alexander the Great [Aristotle] Nero [Seneca]
6. What year did each of these countries come into existence: Bangladesh [1971] South Sudan [2011] Tanzania [1964, when Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the United Republic of Tanzania]
7. Which sitting President has recently been convicted and sentenced to 20 years for the 1982 December Murders, which consisted of the premeditated killing of 15 opponents? [Desi Bouterse of Suriname]
8. Which is the first day of Christmas? [December 25th]
9. What is the name of the 19th century Augustinian friar whose work on heredity through the study of peas has led to him being referred to as the father of modern genetics? [Gregor Mendel]
10. The following musicians had other taxing professions; what were they? Vivaldi [Priest] Paderewski [Prime Minister] Bruce Dickinson (lead singer of Iron Maiden) [Airline Pilot]

Credits

Founded by:

Adrian Liberto

Ariana Yekrangi

Publisher:

UN-aligned, The Alternative UN

Editor in chief:

Adrian Liberto

Art Direction/Design:

Canva

Logo:

Amaya Liberto

Exclusive photography for this episode:

Anahita Ahmadi

Exclusive reporting in this issue:

Anahita Ahmadi

Published in Helsinki, Finland

All rights belong to UN-aligned at:

www.un-aligned.org



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK

UN-aligned
Suvelantie 14 A 18
Espoo 02760
Finland

www.un-aligned.org

UN- ALIGNED NED

THE **VIRTUAL & ALTERNATIVE** UN

UN-aligned was created with the goal of uniting our globe by a federal world order, which is based on core principles of a shared humanity and a shared planet. It was this aim that united Adriano Liberto and Ariana Yekrangi to create this beacon of change in 2016.