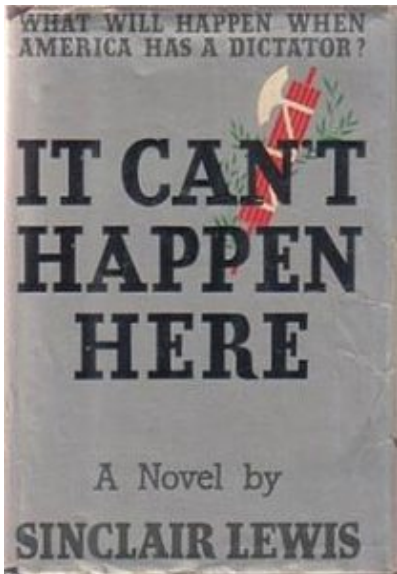


Sinclair Lewis ~ It Can't Happen Here



First edition 1935

It Can't Happen Here is the only one of Sinclair Lewis's later novels to match the power of *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and *Arrowsmith*. A cautionary tale about the fragility of democracy, it is an alarming, eerily timeless look at how fascism could take hold in America.

Written during the Great Depression, when the country was largely oblivious to Hitler's aggression, it juxtaposes sharp political satire with the chillingly realistic rise of a president who becomes a dictator to save the nation from welfare cheats, sex, crime, and a liberal press.

Called "a message to thinking Americans" by the *Springfield Republican* when it was published in 1935, *It Can't Happen Here* is a shockingly prescient novel that remains as fresh and contemporary as today's news.

Chapter I

THE handsome dining room of the Hotel Wessex, with its gilded plaster shields and the mural depicting the Green Mountains, had been reserved for the Ladies' Night Dinner of the Fort Beulah Rotary Club.

Here in Vermont the affair was not so picturesque as it might have been on the Western prairies. Oh, it had its points: there was a skit in which Medary Cole (grist mill & feed store) and Louis Rotenstern (custom tailoring—pressing & cleaning) announced that they were those historic Vermonters, Brigham Young and Joseph Smith, and with their jokes about imaginary plural wives they got in ever so many funny digs at the ladies present. But the occasion was essentially serious. All of America was serious now, after the seven years of depression since 1929. It was just long enough after the Great War of 1914-18 for the young people who had been born in 1917 to be ready to go to college... or to another war, almost any old war that might be handy.

The features of this night among the Rotarians were nothing funny, at least not obviously funny, for they were the patriotic addresses of Brigadier General Herbert Y. Edgeways, U.S.A. (ret.), who dealt angrily with the topic “Peace through Defense—Millions for Arms but Not One Cent for Tribute,” and of Mrs. Adelaide Tarr Gimmitch— she who was no more renowned for her gallant anti-suffrage campaigning way back in 1919 than she was for having, during the Great War, kept the American soldiers entirely out of French cafés by the clever trick of sending them ten thousand sets of dominoes.

Nor could any social-minded patriot sneeze at her recent somewhat unappreciated effort to maintain the purity of the American Home by barring from the motion-picture industry all persons, actors or directors or cameramen, who had: (a) ever been divorced; (b) been born in any foreign country—except Great Britain, since Mrs. Gimmitch thought very highly of Queen Mary, or (c) declined to take an oath to revere the Flag, the Constitution, the Bible, and all other peculiarly American institutions.

The Annual Ladies’ Dinner was a most respectable gathering—the flower of Fort Beulah. Most of the ladies and more than half of the gentlemen wore evening clothes, and it was rumored that before the feast the inner circle had had cocktails, privily served in Room 289 of the hotel. The tables, arranged on three sides of a hollow square, were bright with candles, cut-glass dishes of candy and slightly tough almonds, figurines of Mickey Mouse, brass Rotary wheels, and small silk American flags stuck in gilded hard-boiled eggs. On the wall was a banner lettered “Service Before Self,” and the menu—the celery, cream of tomato soup, broiled haddock, chicken croquettes, peas, and tutti-frutti ice-cream—was up to the highest standards of the Hotel Wessex.

They were all listening, agape. General Edgeways was completing his manly yet mystical rhapsody on nationalism:

“... for these U-nited States, a-lone among the great powers, have no desire for foreign conquest. Our highest ambition is to be darned well let alone! Our only gen-uine relationship to Europe is in our arduous task of having to try and educate the crass and ignorant masses that Europe has wished onto us up to something like a semblance of American culture and good manners. But, as I explained to you, we must be prepared to defend our shores against all the alien gangs of international racketeers that call themselves ‘governments,’ and that with such feverish envy are always eyeing our inexhaustible mines, our towering forests, our titanic and luxurious cities, our fair and far-flung fields.

“For the first time in all history, a great nation must go on arming itself more and more, not for conquest—not for jealousy— not for war—but for *peace*! Pray God it may never be necessary, but if foreign nations don’t sharply heed our warning, there will, as when the proverbial dragon’s teeth were sowed, spring up an armed and fearless warrior upon every square foot of these United States, so arduously cultivated and defended by our pioneer fathers, whose sword-girded images we must be... or we shall perish!”

The applause was cyclonic. “Professor” Emil Staubmeyer, the superintendent of schools, popped up to scream, “Three cheers for the General—hip, hip, hooray!”

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Note:

Title: It Can’t Happen Here

Author: Sinclair Lewis

* A Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook * eBook No.: 0301001h.html Language:

English Date first posted: Jul 2003 Most recent update: Jul 2017

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GoodBooksRadio StrongandCook:

To Be Effective, Socialism Must Adapt To 21st Century Needs



Vijay Prashad

IS socialism making a comeback? If so, what exactly is socialism, why did it lose steam toward the latter part of the 20th century, and how do we distinguish democratic socialism, currently in an upward trend in the U.S., from social democracy, which has all but collapsed? Vijay Prashad, executive director of [Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research](#) and a leading scholar in socialist studies and the politics of the global South, offers answers to these questions.

C.J. Polychroniou: Socialism represented a powerful and viable alternative to capitalism from the mid-1800s all the way up to the third quarter of the 20th century, but entered a period of crisis soon thereafter for reasons that continue to be debated today. In your view, what are some of the main political, economic and ideological factors that help explain socialism's setback in the contemporary era?

Vijay Prashad: The first thing to acknowledge is that “socialism” is not merely a set of ideas or a policy framework or anything like that. Socialism is a political movement, a general way of referring to a situation where the workers gain the upper hand in the class struggle and put in place institutions, policies and social networks that advantage the workers. When the political movement is weak and the workers are on the weaker side of the class struggle, it is impossible to speak confidently of “socialism.” So, we need to study carefully how and why workers — the immense majority of humanity — began to see the reservoirs of their strength get depleted. To my mind, the core issue here is [globalization](#) — a set of structural and subjective developments that weakened worker power. Let’s take the developments in turn.

There were three structural developments that are essential. First, major technological changes in the world of communications, database management and transportation that allowed firms to have a global reach. The global commodity chain of this period enabled firms to disarticulate production — break up factories into their constituent units and place them around the world. Second, the third world debt crisis debilitated the power of national liberation states and states that — even weakly — had tried to create development pathways for their populations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The debt crisis led to [International Monetary Fund] IMF-driven [structural adjustment programs](#) that released hundreds of millions of workers to international capital and for the workforce of the new global commodity chain. Third, the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern bloc, as well as the changes in China provided international capital with [hundreds of millions of more workers](#). What we saw in this period of globalization was the break-up of the factory form, which weakened trade unions; the impossibility of nationalization of firms, which weakened national liberation states; and the use of the concept of arbitrage to force a race to the bottom for workers. These structural developments, from which workers have not recovered, deeply weakened the workers’ movement.

Trade [union](#) density declined, national liberation states surrendered, the reservoirs of working-class power depleted. If you don’t have worker power behind you, the ideas you uphold — socialist ideas — are not seen as credible and are dismissed by the academy and the media. The field opened up for right-wing ideas to be seen as reasonable. The idea of a socialist future was destroyed. [Friedrich] Hayek’s theory that any attempt to improve the world will lead to

serfdom became a general theorem not only of the right, but also of postmodernism. Without the notion of a socialist future, without something beyond the horizon of capitalism, you are left with a politics of tinkering, of reform. This has been catastrophic. Why join a political force and sacrifice your time if the best that you are going to get is a small percentage increase in benefits? The turn to the right comes in this space, since the right suggests a future based on identity and fellowship grounded in [racism and patriarchy](#). But at least it offers a kind of future. Without the idea of a socialist future, the possibility of building socialist movements is negligible.

In the West, the dominant strand of socialism has been that of social democracy, which today, however, has all but collapsed, while democratic socialism appears to be making a comeback, especially in the United States. What are some of the main differences that distinguish democratic socialism from social democracy?

The distinction between “democratic socialism” (which comes from the Michael Harrington/Barbara Ehrenreich tradition) and “social democracy” (which comes from European Marxist movements) is one of context (U.S. versus Europe) and one of politics. The European tradition emerged out of the trade union movement to create political parties with Marxism as the governing ideology. Those parties became key to the Second International, their heyday being in the late 19th century, with the German Social Democratic Party as the most emblematic. The break between social democracy and the left came when the parties of social democracy adopted an evolutionary theory for socialism (associated with Bernstein) and when they later voted in favor of World War I. But, until then, these were the main Marxist parties, defining the left wing of politics in Europe and in Russia. Their antipathy to communism would only arise in the Cold War, when the democratic socialists built their own anti-communist political tradition. Both would share this anti-communist framework during the Cold War. Nowadays, the gap between these traditions and the communist traditions is much more limited. The left is so weak that to rehearse arguments about social democracy, democratic socialism, communism and anarchism seems like the narcissism of petty differences. It is important that the left produce an attitude of openness toward left-wing groupings and left-wing ideas. There is no need for a fundamental unity of all groups, but there has to be an attitude of common work and common struggle. Differences are important and should be held. But they are comradely differences. I fear that the Western left is so divided not only by ideas

but by sectarian arrogance and by even sectarian hatred that it will not be able to create a genuine flank against the hard right.

How do we explain the appeal of democratic socialism today among a growing percentage of young people, especially in the United States, a country where in fact even the use of the term “socialism” was something of a taboo?

Frankly, we should not exaggerate the turn to socialism. There is definitely a turn away from neoliberal policies that have created a desert of society. But this has created all kinds of political possibilities — cynicism is one, evidenced by [low voter turnouts](#) and a general malaise of overwork, and another is political polarization to the far right and toward socialism. There is certainly a turn away from neoliberalism, but this should not be seen as any kind of automatic turn towards socialism. Socialism has to be built. It requires immense amounts of work. A precarious workforce combined with a toxic cultural world does not make it easy to build political parties that require overworked people to come to meetings. Political education is essential to a socialist movement, but this again requires commitment and time. Furthermore, the socialist movement is anachronistic in the sense that socialists try to live with values that are not entirely rooted in our time, where the values are the values of the ruling class. We are under an obligation by our own values to live with a horizontal attitude to each other, obligations that appear bohemian to the mainstream and that take time for us to honor. I say all this merely to remind us that for the past hundred years, socialist organizers have had to do two simultaneous things — be amongst the class of workers and peasants and be outside the prejudices of our times. This requires an attitude of fellowship with everyone and yet sternness about the hierarchies to which we are heirs. Let's not minimize this challenge, which has been with the movement for over a hundred years.

In the past, socialism drew its strength primarily from the working-class people, but this is no longer the case today and, in fact, multiculturalism and identity politics have become focal points for social mobilization for many progressively oriented movements throughout the Western world. Can the universal values traditionally espoused by socialism be reconciled with the pursuit of a political agenda built around multiculturalism?

There can be no socialist movement that ignores the question of class. Taking the issue of the precarious workforce or landless workers and so on is central to the

class struggle. But workers are not merely workers — we have cultural identities and we have to struggle with social hierarchies. So, there is no point starting this conversation by making a binary between class politics and identity politics. All politics is about class and identity. The point is the character of the political platform. I think that there is too much in multiculturalism and identity politics today that reflects a bourgeois orientation. For instance, a multiculturalist politics that is about individual advancement is certainly bourgeois. On the other hand, a politics of socialism that ignores racism and patriarchy, that ignores caste and transphobia does not reflect the actual stresses and desires of the precarious workforce and the landless workers. Identity politics of a class character are necessary. There can be no socialist movement in India, for instance, that is not at the same time against the hierarchy of caste. In the West, the question of race is central. Marx, in *Capital*, which was published in 1867, wrote that “labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin when in the black it is branded.” This has been an axiom in the socialist movement, although not always raised to theory and into praxis. But it must. There is no question, to underline the point, of juxtaposing class and identity or suggesting that class politics are universal. They are simply not. All working-class movements must adopt a politics that is against social hierarchy and then must act on that politics!

Assuming that political leaders who identified themselves with democratic socialism came to power, what aims and goals should they be pursuing that would be conducive to the needs of economies and societies in the 21st century? In other words, what should socialism be all about in our own age and time?

The most immediate matter to take charge of is a kind of salvage. We need to assert the importance of turning the social surplus toward ending hunger and illiteracy and toward addressing fundamental problems of social and economic life — such as the catastrophe of the [climate](#) and of endemic joblessness. There are funds to do all of this, but we have to sharpen the class struggle to get them. The wealthy have been on a [tax and investment strike](#) for the past 50 years. They have refused to pay tax — with tens of trillions of dollars hidden in [tax havens](#). They do not invest for social development, since they rely upon subcontractors on the global commodity chain to do the investment. The world of finance has increasingly become inert, unwilling to build value for investment in the productive sector. That money is used in an endless casino. We need to fight to recover the money from tax shelters and from the casino and put it to immediate

use to end the social atrocity of hunger and illiteracy and to put it toward a pivot away from carbon-based joblessness. There is a lot we can do if we had power, real power, power not only from a surprise election, but power of the precarious workers and the landless workers behind the political forces that win elections. No point running a government if you don't have an organized mass force to drive the social policy from the hall of government to the home of the poorest worker.

C.J. Polychroniou is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. His main research interests are in European economic integration, globalization, the political economy of the United States and the deconstruction of neoliberalism's politico-economic project. He is a regular contributor to *Truthout* as well as a member of *Truthout's* Public Intellectual Project. He has published several books and his articles have appeared in a variety of journals, magazines, newspapers and popular news websites. Many of his publications have been translated into several foreign languages, including Croatian, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. He is the author of [Optimism Over Despair: Noam Chomsky On Capitalism, Empire, and Social Change](#), an anthology of interviews with Chomsky originally published at *Truthout* and collected by Haymarket Books. Previously published: <https://truthout.org/to-be-effective-socialism-must-adapt>

The International Consortium Of Investigative Journalists ~ The ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database



This ICIJ database contains information on more than 785,000 offshore entities that are part of the Panama Papers, the Offshore Leaks, the Bahamas Leaks and the Paradise Papers investigations. The data covers nearly 80 years up to 2016 and links to people and companies in more than 200 countries and territories.

The real value of the database is that it strips away the secrecy that cloaks companies and trusts incorporated in tax havens and exposes the people behind

them. This includes, when available, the names of the real owners of those opaque structures. In all, the interactive application reveals more than 720,000 names of people and companies behind secret offshore structures. They come from leaked records and not a standardized corporate registry, so there may be duplicates. In some cases, companies are listed as shareholders for another company or a trust, an arrangement that often helps obscure the flesh-and-blood people behind offshore entities.

[...]

ICIJ is publishing the information in the public interest. While many of the activities carried out through offshore entities are perfectly legal, extensive reporting by ICIJ and its media partners for more than five years has shown that the anonymity granted by the offshore economy facilitates money laundering, tax evasion, fraud and other crimes. Even when it's legal, transparency advocates [argue](#) that the use of an alternative, parallel economy undermines democracy because it benefits a few at the expense of the majority.

Go to: <https://offshoreleaks.icij.org/>

Alessandro Baricco ~ The Game



Alessandro Baricco. Ills.

Joseph Sassoon Semah

Alessandro Baricco onderzoekt in *The Game*, opvolger van zijn zeer succesvolle boek *De Barbaren'* [zie video onder artikel], de digitale revolutie en de gevolgen daarvan op onze beschaving. Deze revolutie heeft onze manier van denken en leven voorgoed veranderd. Maar lopen we niet het risico onze menselijkheid te verliezen in het digitale tijdperk? Waar en wanneer begon deze transformatie en waarheen leidt die ons?

Als een archeoloog onderzoekt Baricco de mijlpalen van de revolutie - van internet pioniers tot de uitvinding van de iPhone en Netflix, van het computerspel Space Invaders uit 1978 (de nulwervel van de digitale revolutie) tot kunstmatige intelligentie.

De Game is ontstaan uit de drang naar een leven zonder elite, net zoals de eerste technologische hulpmiddelen werden uitgevonden om de macht te vermalen door hem aan iedereen te geven. Nu heeft iedereen toegang tot elke informatie van de wereld, kan iedereen met iedereen communiceren en ook zijn mening geven, wat vroeger was voorbehouden aan de elite. Dankzij *The Game* is het monopolie van de elite niet langer onaantastbaar. In *The Game* zet Alessandro Baricco zich nadrukkelijk af tegen de oude elite die geen zin heeft de nieuwe wereld te begrijpen en zich ver weg houdt van de nieuw realiteit.

Baricco ziet het startpunt van de digitale revolutie in de zeventiger jaren als een digitale opstand tegen de rampzalige beschaving van de twintigste eeuw met zijn twee wereldoorlogen: die tragedie mag nooit worden herhaald. Informatica-ingenieurs, politieke militanten, hippies uit Californië zagen de technologie dan ook vooral als bevrijdingsinstrument, aldus Baricco. De digitale opstand richtte zich op de onbeweeglijkheid en de overmacht van elites door tools te bouwen die de beste bewegingsmarges garandeerden die de elites buiten konden sluiten. Ze braken de macht af en verdeelden die onder mensen.

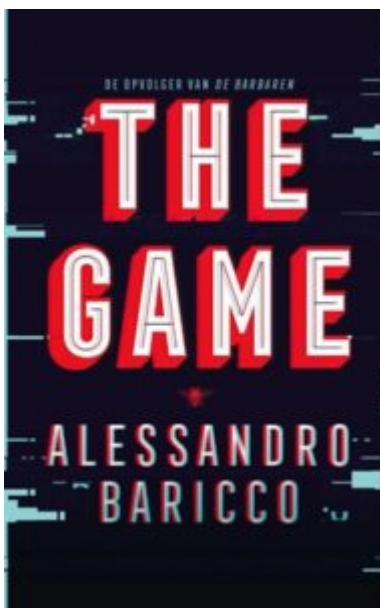
Het logo van de vrijheidsstrijd werd: mens-toetsenbord-scherm, zowel een fysieke als mentale houding met de bereidheid de wereld via apparaten te benaderen. Apparaten werden een soort protheses, een verlengstuk van de mens.

Baricco markeert de presentatie van de iPhone door Steve Jobs, op 9 januari 2007, als het ontstaan van de Game.

'In die telefoon - die geen telefoon meer was- was de logische structuur

van computerspellen leesbaar (oersoep van de opstand), werd de houding van mens-toetsenbord-scherm geperfectioneerd, stierf het twintigste-eeuwse concept van diepgang, werd de oppervlakkigheid bekrachtigd als huisvesting van het zijn, en voorvoelde men de komst van post-ervaring.'

Voor Baricco is de Game de verzekering tegen de nachtmerrie van de twintigste eeuw: de voorwaarden om zoiets nog eens te laten gebeuren zijn ontmanteld. Maar er gingen ook mooie en waardevolle, unieke dingen ten onder, die we weer opnieuw moeten opbouwen met gebruikmaking van de Game en met zijn idee van design.



De Game heeft weliswaar geen grondwet, geen teksten waarmee ze wordt gelegitimeerd maar er zijn wel 'teksten' waarin het genetisch erfgoed wordt bewaard, zoals *Spacewar*, een van de eerste computerspellen (1972), die de volledige genetische code van onze beschaving bevat. In die eerste computerspellen schemerde al de betekenis van computers door, de potenties van het digitale, de voordelen van de houding mens-toetsenbord-scherm, een bepaald idee van mentale architectuur, een idee van snelheid, de zaligverklaring van beweging, en het belang van puntentelling, aldus Baricco.

Maar nu worden ook de tekortkomingen zichtbaar: ten eerste is de Game moeilijk en vereist skills, die niet worden onderwezen. Ten tweede is nu een systeem ontstaan dat heeft geleid tot gigantische machtsconcentraties, die niet minder toegankelijk zijn dan de elites van de twintigste-eeuw. De derde tekortkoming is in het besluit om 'de geraamte van de wereld', de grote bolwerken van de twintigste eeuw, intact te laten: de staat, de scholen, de kerken.

Op dit moment hebben we geen oplossingen: het is nog niemand gelukt voor de Game een eigen model te bedenken van economische ontwikkelingen, sociale rechtvaardigheid en verdeling van rijkdom.

De rijken van de Game zijn nog steeds beperkt en rijk op een traditionele manier.

De grondleggers van de Game waren man, wit, Amerikaans en ingenieur/wetenschapper. De Intelligentie van nu is meer gevarieerd: er is behoefte aan vrouwelijke cultuur, aan humanistische kennis, aan een niet-Amerikaans geheugen, aan hedendaagse talenten en aan intelligentie uit de

marges. Maar vooral het humanisme is belangrijk voor het voortbestaan van de Game. Mensen hebben behoefte zich mens te blijven voelen, nu men door de Game is gedwongen tot een hoog percentage kunstmatig leven. Kunstmatige intelligentie zal ons nog verder van onszelf afvoeren, dus dat betekent dat de komende honderd jaar niets waardevoller zal zijn dan alles waardoor de mensen zich mens voelen, aldus Baricco.

We moeten de identiteit van het soort bewaren en dat kan alleen als het humanisme de achterstand inloopt en toetreedt tot de Game. De Game moet van niet alleen geproduceerd door mensen, maar zich ontwikkelen naar een tool voor mensen.

We moeten komen tot *contemporary humanities* als setting van de Game, dan wordt het weer een verhaal van mensen en is de Game levensvatbaar.

Alessandro Baricco ~ *The Game*. Amsterdam, De Bezige Bij, 2019. ISBN 9789403147802

Linda Bouws - St. Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten

Sarah Repucci ~ Freedom And The Media: A Downward Spiral



Key Findings:

- *Freedom of the media has been deteriorating around the world over the past decade.*
- *In some of the most influential democracies in the world, populist leaders have overseen concerted attempts to throttle the independence of the media sector.*
- *While the threats to global media freedom are real and concerning in their*

own right, their impact on the state of democracy is what makes them truly dangerous.

- Experience has shown, however, that press freedom can rebound from even lengthy stints of repression when given the opportunity. The basic desire for democratic liberties, including access to honest and fact-based journalism, can never be extinguished.

The fundamental right to seek and disseminate information through an independent press is under attack, and part of the assault has come from an unexpected source. Elected leaders in many democracies, who should be press freedom's staunchest defenders, have made explicit attempts to silence critical media voices and strengthen outlets that serve up favorable coverage. The trend is linked to a global decline in democracy itself: The erosion of press freedom is both a symptom of and a contributor to the breakdown of other democratic institutions and principles, a fact that makes it especially alarming.

According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* data, media freedom has been deteriorating around the world over the past decade, with new forms of repression taking hold in open societies and authoritarian states alike. The trend is most acute in Europe, previously a bastion of well-established freedoms, and in Eurasia and the Middle East, where many of the world's worst dictatorships are concentrated. If democratic powers cease to support media independence at home and impose no consequences for its restriction abroad, the free press corps could be in danger of virtual extinction.

Experience has shown, however, that press freedom can rebound from even lengthy stints of repression when given the opportunity. The basic desire for democratic liberties, including access to honest and fact-based journalism, can never be extinguished, and it is never too late to renew the demand that these rights be granted in full.

Read more: <https://freedomhouse.org/freedom-media-2019>

The Embassy Of Good Science



The goal of *The Embassy of Good Science* is to promote research integrity among all those involved in research. The platform is open to anyone willing to learn or support others in fostering understanding and awareness around Good Science.

The Embassy aims to become a unique 'go to' place, a public square where the community of researchers can gather to discuss 'hot topics', share knowledge, and find guidance and support to perform science responsibly and with integrity.

We want to focus on researchers' daily practice. Our ambition is to collaboratively map the laws, policies and guidelines informing good practices and highlight relevant cases, experiences, educational materials and good practice examples. We will also support educators to develop training on research integrity and ethics.

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The Embassy of Good Science

Your platform for research integrity and ethics

Our declaration describes the Embassy's principles in strong, affirmative language. It forms a clear reference for all involved, including you.

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