

# socialist standard

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## GLOBAL MILITARISM



THE CONTINUAL THREAT OF  
INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST BARBARISM

*also: Dialectic of Power  
Corruption in Africa  
'Philanthrocapitalism'*



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## Introducing the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up



capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join the Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

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## Editorial

### Here we go again?

This month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the May 1968 events in France. It all began on 22 March 1968 when, following the arrest of anti-Vietnam War protesters, students at Nanterre University staged a sit-in. Further conflict led the University authorities to close the University on 2 May. Students then occupied the Sorbonne University. The students were unhappy with recent educational reforms that geared French education towards the needs of industrial capitalism and the centralised nature of the Universities' governance and were opposed to the Vietnam War. Police repression and heavy handed action by the University authorities swelled the number of protesters. The French workers joined the students and called a general strike, which resulted in factory occupations. For the more radical workers, their grievances went beyond the issues of better wages and working conditions, and included demands for more workers' control in their workplaces. The unions, the government and the employers negotiated wage increases and more trade union rights in a bid to end the conflict. In the National Assembly elections of June 1968, an increased number of Gaullist MPs were

returned. Soon thereafter, the protests and strikes died down. However, this is just not to revisit these events, for France is witnessing another revolt by students and workers. On 22 March this year, timed to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary, the unions called a nationwide strike to oppose Emmanuel Macron's labour and welfare reforms. At the forefront of these struggles are the railway workers, who are resisting government attempts to scrap job security, automatic job promotions and early retirement at 52 for new workers, and have responded by arranging two-day strikes for each week for three months. Airline pilots are also striking over pay and public sector workers are taking industrial action in opposition to Government plans to cut 120,000 public sector jobs over five years. Care workers and pensioners are also in revolt. Students are protesting about the proposed introduction of selective University entry requirements, which they say will discriminate against students from poorer backgrounds. The left hope that they can achieve the same unity between the workers' and students' struggles as in May 1968.

Macron is trying to shift the balance

of power from the working class to the capitalist class, so as to make French capitalism more competitive. In this respect, he is no different from other French political leaders. Both Jacques Chirac and Nicholas Sarkozy tried to introduce similar reforms, but were defeated by concerted strike action. François Hollande also faced resistance when he attempted to introduce legislation to make it easier for employers to make workers redundant. Although the circumstances in May 1968 may be different from those at present, the underlying dynamic is the same. This is the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class over the material resources of society. We have solidarity with the workers and students with their struggles, but we would urge them to take the next step to organise with workers in other countries to take political power so that they can convert private and state property into the common heritage of all human beings.

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**Killer Apps**

PEOPLE IN capitalism have funny notions of ethics. Take the recent US retaliatory bombing of Syrian sites following Assad's alleged use of chemical bombs in Douma. The Syrian government has been bombing, strafing and massacring its own population for the past seven years with scarcely a raised eyebrow from Western powers. But let him once resort to an 'illegal' weapon of war and the civilised world goes into a moral hissy fit. In a similar vein, a group of scientists have announced they are boycotting work at a South Korean university which they say will lead to autonomous battlefield robots able to identify and kill people without any human oversight (BBC Online, 5 April). The university denies it of course, but even so there's a strange logic to all this. Rich states already have weaponised drones that can destroy at long distance, controlled by drone 'pilots' operating thousands of miles from the scene and able to see just grainy lo-res satellite images of what they're aiming at. Do they make mistakes, and blow up residential blocks inside of missile silos, or wedding parties instead of terrorist cells? Yes, of course they do. As technology has steadily increased the distance between warring sides, to the point where the no-man's-land in between is the size of a continent, the ability of the remote operators to make the right tactical decision based on good, on-the-ground information has suffered accordingly. The logical next step is to take humans out of the equation altogether and let artificial intelligence make the decisions. After all it's not going to make much difference to you whether you're blown up by some red-eyed half-asleep drone operator in Nevada or by a bright shiny AI program on someone's iPhone. Either way it's nothing personal. If capitalism is determined to kill you, it will at least try to do it efficiently. For socialists, there are no 'moral' ways of killing, and to take sides in some bogus ethical debate about legitimate and illegitimate weapons is simply to collude in the social acceptance of the truly monstrous. Either you're against all capitalist war, or you're not. Trying to take a middle position in no-man's-land is just artificial unintelligence.

**Faceclock and the Binopticon**

Recently it was reported that Chinese face-recognition AI software had successfully scanned 60,000 people at a pop concert and picked out one individual who was

wanted by the authorities. Nobody was more amazed by this technological feat than the fugitive himself, who protested that 'if I'd known, I wouldn't have come (to the concert)!' Chinese police are now also trialling face recog sunglasses, and the long eyeball of the law is even being used to identify jaywalkers and toilet roll thieves (*Hong Kong Free Press*, 19 June 2017). Ali Baba, the Asian Amazon, are heavily investing in face recog while Facebook plans to roll it out across Europe despite CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently being carpeted by the US Congress for selling user data. No doubt they will call it Faceclock.

We are living in an era where surveillance is more sophisticated than ever, and it is coming at us from two warring directions, state, and from the private sector via retail and social media.

Jeremy Bentham in the 18<sup>th</sup> century imagined a kind of transparent glass prison, the Panopticon, where all inmates could be watched, without their knowing it, by just one guard. What we are dealing with now is the Binopticon, and we are increasingly pinned securely in its stereo vision without the possibility of manoeuvre or escape. Many people are not worried by this and indeed appreciate the benefits of surveillance by the state (less chance of being mugged in the street, more terrorists watched) and by retail and media (conveniently filtering out products and ideas you don't want to see). Capitalist media pundits make hay over the 'threat' to democracy, but this misses a larger point. The Binopticon is presently out of focus as the two 'lenses' fight for data supremacy. What happens when state and private sector inevitably overcome their spat and learn to operate 'in phase'? Then the question arises: who needs democracy at all? The whole idea of 'government by consent' breaks down if individual workers can be watched, tracked, brainwashed and micromanaged 24 hours a day. People tend to make the unwarranted assumption that history is progressive and that democratic forms are built into the DNA of liberal capitalism. But that could be a foolish delusion. Capitalism could function perfectly well without any democracy at all, once



surveillance technology is perfected. If you don't want to spend the rest of your life in a glass prison, better start throwing some stones while there's still time.

**Slow boats and fast bucks**

The news that the global shipping industry has agreed for the first time to cut its carbon emissions will come as a surprise to anyone who didn't realise that shipping, like aviation, has never been part of any climate agreement and thus not discussed at Kyoto, Rio or the Paris accord. Capitalism is a global profit system but when it comes to picking up the environmental tab for those profits the transnational distribution system has so far escaped responsibility, despite shipping being, in carbon footprint terms, the world's sixth largest country (BBC Online, 13 April). Now the International Maritime Organisation has agreed to a 50 percent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 relative to 2008 levels, despite opposition from the US, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. The deal may spur new marine technology, or even see a partial return to the days of sail.

Container shipping has revolutionised world markets and is responsible for 80 percent of the world's trade by volume and 70 percent by value (2016 Safety & Shipping Review at [tinyurl.com/yce4oqtm](http://tinyurl.com/yce4oqtm)). Though worker fatalities have fallen in recent years, to around 1,000 a year, shipping remains one of the world's most dangerous activities. Given this, you might assume that firms don't ship goods unnecessarily, however it is a fairly common experience to buy an item online, on the assumption that it was available locally or at least nationally, only to find weeks later that it has been shipped all the way from China or Korea. Many online marketplaces don't bother to give you this information, probably because many people would choose not to buy long-distance in this way. In socialism the aim of production and distribution would be to localise as much as possible, to reduce complexity, resource and energy costs, and of course human exposure to risk. In capitalism none of this matters next to the overriding question of what will make the most money.

PJS



**Ethnicity: Sticky Wicket or Slippery Slope?**

Ethnicity has been a very sensitive topic since the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic. The causes of this sensitivity have their roots in the endemic oppression and persecution of non-Muslims via taxation and pogroms which intensified with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the occupation of large parts of eastern Turkey by Russia following the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) when Christian Armenians were widely perceived as collaborators. Then further with the ethnic cleansing of Muslims from the Balkans and Caucasus following the Balkan Wars, when as many as 850,000 of these usually destitute refugees were settled as a matter of policy in Armenian-populated areas leading to resentment and violence.

With the foundation of the new republic there was an obvious need to try and weld a cohesive whole, a 'Turkishness', that could patch over the divisions together with a need to bury the persecutions and oppression of the recent past. The latter not least because of the probable involvement of some members of the new republican authorities in those actions.

A Turk of the new republic and 'Turkishness' was defined as 'anyone who is attached to the Turkish state as a citizen.' This is enshrined in the constitution.

With the foundation of this fragile new republic came a blanket of secrecy about the turbulent and violent times leading up to it. Certain subjects were made taboo and remain so to this day. A close second after talk about 'Armenian Genocide' is the subject of ethnicity.

During the periods of greatest internal conflict, war, mass deportations and killings countless numbers of Armenians, Greeks, Jews and Syrians converted to Islam to avoid the consequences of 'being different'. Children were displaced, lost and orphaned in their thousands and were 'adopted' by Turks and Kurds to be raised as Muslims.

So much of this might well have stayed in the dusty cupboards of a murky period in modern Turkey's history apart from one action by the present government – it has made available, online, the genealogical database of the ethnicity of all citizens dating back to Ottoman times.

A few short years ago, during a period of rapprochement with the Kurds, this might have made less of an impact. Today, when the AK Party government is involved in conflict with its own Kurdish population, war in Syria, internal repression and in need of a pact with the fascist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in order to bolster its weakening support, it has caused a mighty stir. Such has been the interest that when the site went 'live' on 8 February it quickly crashed only to be back up again on 14 February.

In a country equally divided between nationalism and

tolerance Turks who thought they were 'Turks' have discovered that they are not as 'pure' as they believed, that they have a different ethnicity or religion. After so many years you might wonder if it really matters. Social media is helping to answer that question. 'Crypto-Armenians, Jews and Greeks in the country will now be exposed' or 'traitors will finally learn their lineage' are commonplace comments.

Just imagine, a man who had served as the director of religious affairs (1972-76) of this country by the name of Lütüfi Doğan had a brother who was the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul Sinozk Kalustyan (1963-90). When, a few years ago, the Armenian language newspaper *Agos* revealed that Sabiha Gökçen the adopted daughter of Atatürk and Turkey's first female military pilot was of Armenian parentage it convulsed the country. Hrant Dink, the author of this, was placed under investigation. He was then gunned down on the street in 2007.

Yusuf Halacioğlu, the director of the Historical Society of Turkey in 2007, who had bluntly threatened, 'Don't make me angry. I have a list of converts I can reveal down to their streets and homes', went on to become a Nationalist Action Party (MHP) MP.

In 2013, *Agos* newspaper reported that the government was secretly coding minorities in population registers: Greeks were 1, Armenians were 2 and Jews were 3. The covert classification of religious/ethnic minorities was met with widespread outrage.

To answer the question 'does it matter?' If you suddenly discover that you are a Crypto-Armenian/Greek/Jew/et al consider this also: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is on record (YouTube) saying, 'We are accused of being Jews, Armenians or Greeks.' To his followers, nationalists, the AK Party trolls on social media and the fanatical nationalist gunmen it matters. To the non-Turkish Turk who is denied a job in public service it matters. To the young man who gets conscripted it matters. At best they are treated with suspicion and at worst as terrorists.

Learning of their ancestral roots in other counties, particularly European ones, has led to a spike in Turks enquiring about citizenship and/or dual nationality. Those who found that their ancestry traces back to EU-member countries such as Bulgaria, Greece and Romania have been particularly keen to look into possible double citizenship opportunities. Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are also said to be receiving citizenship applications from Turkish citizens, with many submitting legal enquiries to the justice, foreign and interior ministries of the countries, as well as their consulates and embassies in Turkey.

National registers of ethnicity are divisive and dangerous – and lethal in the wrong hands.

A.N.

## NEW PAMPHLET: The Road to Socialism

Our Companion Party in India has just published a new pamphlet, *History of Universal Suffrage: The case for turning universal suffrage into human emancipation*.

These days it would be difficult to find any intelligent person in the developed world opposed to universal suffrage. However in nineteenth century Britain, universal suffrage (the right for all adults to vote in elections) did not exist. Extending the franchise (those allowed to vote) was opposed by notable Tory politicians including both Prime Ministers William Pitt the Younger and the Duke of Wellington (who quelled the Chartist rebellion), Edmund Burke, but also erstwhile Liberal Lord Palmerston.

This pamphlet is a wide-ranging overview of both the history of this and a socialist polemic making the case in favour of universal suffrage. There is a focus on Britain, but there are also chapters on universal suffrage in America and India and reference to suffrage in other countries around the world. Marx and Engels' writings on the subject are excerpted too. In 1831, out of a population in Britain of 24 million, only 478,000 were allowed to vote. Mainly these were landowners with property worth at least forty shillings rent a year, a law dating back four hundred years. Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester had no MPs, and electoral corruption was rife. Women could not vote on the same terms as men until 1928.

What prompted the franchise to be extended was not a benevolent change of heart, but rather the legacy of the French Revolution, events such as the Peterloo massacre and the popularity of the Chartist movement for electoral reform.

It is fair to say movement towards universal suffrage was welcomed by Friedrich Engels. Engels called it 'one of the most powerful weapons, particularly in the sphere of organization and propaganda. Universal suffrage provides us with an excellent means of struggle'.

Engels however was careful to add a cautionary caveat 'universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state; but that is sufficient. On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand.'

Karl Marx regarded participation in parliamentary elections as imperative for socialist parties. He helped draft the programme adopted by the predecessor of, and retained by, the French Workers Party which included the statement: 'such organization must be pursued by all the means which the proletariat has at its disposal, including universal suffrage, thus transformed from the instrument of trickery which it has been up till now into an instrument of emancipation.'

It is also worth mentioning that in the US women did not achieve equal suffrage until 1920 and the experience of discrimination faced by African-Americans in relation to voting until 1965. In what is now the world's biggest democracy, India, new property restrictions to voting were introduced in 1935 and universal suffrage achieved only in 1948. The pamphlet correctly observes that 'our ruling class did not gift universal suffrage to us.'

The pamphlet is broad in scope and liberally peppered with useful quotes and references. Suffragettes were lightly covered and one *Socialist Standard* article that was not quoted was 'Suffragette Humbug' (June 1908, also appearing in *Socialism or Your Money Back*). It contained the excellent quote 'The Socialist is in no quandary as to why the many are poor ... Democracy is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; and for us that end is Socialism. And were the workers to understand rightly their position and their policy, the political freedom they now possess would enable them to achieve their emancipation irrespective of sex.' (To order, see p. 22)



### Pleasing business leaders

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell may well still want the Labour Party's old Clause IV to be implemented and all industries to become state-owned, but they are well aware that, if Labour comes into office, it will have to govern in the context of virtually all industry being in the hands of profit-seeking private enterprises. In other words, that they will be presiding over the operation of a classic capitalist economy.

The representatives of business realise this too and that they would have to work with a future Labour government. Hence, the CBI's invitation, on behalf of big business, to Corbyn to address their annual conference last November and the British Chambers of Commerce's invitation, on behalf of smaller businesses, to McDonnell to address theirs in March. The *Times* (9 March) reported the latter under the headline 'McDonnell wins applause from business leaders'.

So what did McDonnell say to win

applause from a gathering of capitalists? The *Times* quoted him as promising:

'A Labour government will champion business by ensuring small companies get the long-term investment and start-up risk capital they need.'

'Good businesses don't require no government, good businesses require good government ... It means a government that pays a little less time to the rentiers and speculators and more time for those who work in and run our businesses. It means making finance the servant and not the master of the real economy.'

And, in the passage at which the applause was perhaps the loudest:

'Mr McDonnell said that Labour would create "an environment where people feel if they invest they will get a secure return".'

McDonnell is being realistic. He knows that a future Labour government will be governing in the context of capitalism and that, as capitalism runs on profits, it will have to let profits be made; not just that, but must encourage them to be made and create an environment in which they can be made. This what being a 'good government' for business will involve.

Whether in fact a Corbyn/McDonnell Labour government will be able to redirect money from speculation in the City to small businesses remains to be seen. The attempt to do this might well lead to a run on sterling and force a U-turn with recriminations about 'a bankers' ramp' and 'gnomes of Zurich'. The current Labour leadership is apparently aware of this as, according to a front-page headline in the *Times* (27 September), 'Labour preparing for a run on the pound, admits Corbyn'. As a profit-making system capitalism can only run in the interest of the profit-takers. It cannot be run in the interest of the majority class of wage and salary workers. Profits must come before wages. Any government which takes on responsibility for presiding over the operation of capitalism is sooner or later forced to recognise this, as the experience of every single previous Labour government has shown. On the basis of this experience, as well as an understanding of how the capitalism economic system works, we can safely predict that a Corbyn Labour government will be no different. It, too, will fall flat on its face.

## Shadow Boxing with the ghost of Lenin

The centenary of the Russian revolution of 1917 turned out to be a singularly uneventful year in the social calendar of the Left in Europe and elsewhere. In many ways this was only to be expected: our images of the Russian revolution have been so saturated by the vision of the horrors of political repression, civil war and labour camps that it has become difficult for the supporters of the Russian adventure to put forward a more positive thematic just as it has been difficult for the more sceptical to form a clear picture of what actually went on. Many opt for a studied indifference to what was an attempt to foster a haphazard form of social reform in the unforgiving environment of a backward society stuck on the losing end of a brutal war. However, the continued existence of Leninist parties makes it somewhat incumbent upon socialists to reiterate the important points at issue between the mainstream Marxist approach to the movement for socialism and what Lenin and his acolytes considered – against all the evidence – to be the *one best road* to socialism.

This task, however, is accomplished by Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval in *L'ombre d'Octobre* ('The Shadow of October') (Lux, Montreal). The authors demolish the myth that the Bolshevik movement established an economic system rooted in the autonomous activity of the working population as a whole, the supposed object of the whole enterprise. From the outset this outcome was unlikely as many of the leading students of Marx of the period had already pointed out. The Russian empire contained a small but growing industrial working class and a huge mass of peasants living on the edge of subsistence. Illiteracy was the lot of the vast majority. Revolutionary parties tended to be miniscule and divided on many issues although many expressed a growing fascination with the somewhat scholastic Marxism of the day. Nonetheless, there were many signs that the working population in the period preceding the Bolshevik takeover were taking the political situation very much into their own hands by establishing independent trade unions, strike committees, peasant groupings, tenant organisations, village councils, military committees and Soviets (workers' councils). The hierarchical vanguard party led and inspired by Lenin enthusiastically tapped into this activity, fanning the flames of discontent whilst insinuating themselves into a mutinous army. The party was structured in such a way that its military wing could have made a successful bid for state power at any time in the dying months of 1917.

The important point made by the authors is that the peculiarly zig-zag itinerary traced by the Bolsheviks in their relationship to these popular movements laid the foundations for the subordination that the working population would subsequently experience at the hands of the state following the coup d'état in October. The Bolsheviks' explicit support for the Soviets – which went from lip-service to highly vocal and back again – ultimately operated as a convenient smoke-screen behind which Lenin and his acolytes created sufficient room for manoeuvre in their bid for the monopoly of state power. It allowed him to neutralise his opponents – other anti-Tsarist revolutionaries like the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries – in the Soviets whilst using the threat of a renewal of the war effort to overthrow the Provisional Government under Kerensky. The actual takeover of power concerned, at most, a few hundred armed militants in Petrograd, a febrile and short-

lived insurgency in the streets, and many more arms crossed among a bemused and impatient civilian population. Whilst we can credit the Bolshevik takeover with a large degree of passive support, subsequent support for the emerging Leninist state was increasingly brow-beaten out of the coerced masses. A government lacking a state – that of Kerensky – had been replaced by a fully-armed state with a government lacking democratic legitimacy. Pretty soon there would be no room for dissenting voices.

Against this consider that the various Soviets represented a plurality of political orientations and a potential for an active and growing democracy. Prior to the takeover, there was even something of a movement towards a government centred on them. The fact that this considerably complicated the task for the hardliners in the leadership of what became the Communist Party largely explains Lenin's ambivalent attitude toward the Soviets. Indeed, their popularity was the reason why militants and the population at large were encouraged to believe that the Bolshevik takeover was an attempt to *defend* them. However, many of the more active elements in the population – and even some Bolshevik leaders – had misgivings about the Leninist cornering of state power by military means. That this was the principal goal of Lenin explains the inconvenient fact that he was more concerned

that the takeover should take place *prior* to the Pan-Russian Congress of Soviets on 25 October than he was about fostering their autonomy. On this day he issued his famous proclamation taking power *in the name* of the Soviets. But he was also far-sighted enough to remove from the draft of the text any mention of the constitution of power *based on* the Soviets (as the authors point out on pages 56-7). Indeed, the 'Soviet

government' (Soviet of Commissars of the People) issuing from the *coup* was appointed *prior* to the Congress of Soviets. It emerged in the absence of any consultation with the Soviets themselves and resulted from a back of an envelope list drawn up by a small group within the Central Committee of the Communist Party; henceforth the unique source of all power in Russia.

In the subsequent period, the train of events rolled along the rails laid down by a miniscule party leadership. Delegates to the Soviets were vetted by would-be civil servants, electoral rolls were modified to suit the government and the complexion of what was left of autonomous political tendencies within them came to reflect the economic priorities identified by the state. The Constituent Assembly – the object of the widest election in Russian history – became irrelevant and was closed down. The press was muzzled despite laws guaranteeing freedom of the press, a secret police was set up and a haphazard and arbitrary policy of terror paralysed what was left of political life. Bolshevik leaders moaned about the increasingly *bureaucratic* nature of the state they were creating; bureaucracy being the code-word for a political set-up which strangled all autonomous political activity at birth. Oceans of ink would be wasted on whether this state was a *degenerated* workers' state, a state which had capitalist leftovers, an incomplete workers' state, the first incomplete stage of communism, or whatever. For the workers, Taylorist production methods were recommended; a detailed subdivision of tasks, the division of management from the shop-floor and even military-style industrial discipline. State capitalism in short.

M.M.



**UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS**

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**North London branch.** Meets 3rd Thurs. 8pm at Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Ave, NW5 2RX. Contact: Chris Duffon 020 7609 0983 nlb.spgb@gmail.com  
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**Brighton Discussion Group**  
 Meets fourth Sunday, 7pm, The Victory Pub (upstairs), 6 Duke Street, Brighton, BN1 1AH, Contact: Anton Pruden, [anton@pruden.me](mailto:anton@pruden.me).  
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SOCIALISTS HAVE decried the erection of fences and the building of walls to keep out refugees and migrant workers who politicians accuse of undermining their identity and culture. Across the world, nations are tightening up their visa regulations to exclude those either seeking sanctuary or economic security.

Nevertheless, many nations have embarked upon a policy of what is called 'citizenship by investment programmes' (CIPs). Such schemes offer rich individuals who invest in a country's economy easier access to either citizenship or residency. Thousands of wealthy people acquire passports of other countries via CIPs every year. In 2014, the global rich spent an estimated \$2 billion acquiring nationalities.

The wealthy already diversify their business assets for protection. Now they want to ensure their residency is diversified as well with a portfolio of passports. A second passport is more than a hedge against political uncertainty, it enhances the mobility of the rich. Passports from Iran or Pakistan, for example, will get you into fewer than 40 countries visa-free, but a passport from St. Kitts and Nevis will get you into 131. By selling passports, St. Kitts and Nevis slashed its debt from 164 percent of GDP in 2010 to 104 percent of GDP at the end of 2013. By 2014, passports were the country's biggest export, and income associated with the passport business accounted for at least 25 percent of GDP.

The Dominican Republic offers dual citizenship at a budget price of \$100,000 with no residency requirements and it comes with other useful perks such as no tax regulations on foreign-based income, wealth, and capital earnings. While being a British colony it retains certain privileges such as freedom to start a business in other British Commonwealth countries.

The government of Cyprus perk offers



access to the European Community and its 'golden visa scheme' is a lucrative source of revenue, generating £4.3bn (£4.8bn). Cyprus made it even easier for rich foreigners to gain citizenship in 2016. An earlier requirement for investors to have at least €5m in domestic assets was reduced to €2m.

Malta started selling citizenship for a fee of €650,000 with no residency requirements. In the first six months, more than 200 investors signed up, earning the government \$200 million. Because Malta is a European Union member, citizenship also gives holders the ability to travel and settle within the European Union.

Not all countries sell citizenship outright. Some, including the United States and the United Kingdom, offer residency with a path to citizenship to wealthy investors. Both countries expect investors to spend roughly half the year in residence for several years before applying for citizenship. In the US aspiring citizens who invest US\$500,000 and create 10 jobs can apply for an EB-5 visa. An investor who can show that a project creates or preserves at least 10 jobs can get a green card and eventual citizenship.

The UK requires an investment of at least £2 million. Applicants are eligible for 'indefinite leave to remain' after five years. But the government recently added fast-track programmes for people who invest £5 million (requiring a wait of only three years) and £10 million (a wait of two

years). Australia announced its Premium Investor visa, nicknamed the platinum visa. That nation already has a golden visa, called the Significant Investor visa, which offers permanent residency after four years in exchange for an investment of A\$5 million. More than 436 visas have been granted under the programme, bringing in more than A\$2 billion dollars in investments. The new programme will give faster residency (in just 12 months) in return for A\$15 million in investments.

Portugal started a 'Golden Visa' programme in 2012, under which the purchase of a property worth at least €500,000 will get you a residence permit. Spain implemented an almost identical programme. Greece hands out residence permits for the purchase of a property worth €250,000. In Hungary, you can buy residency by investing €250,000 euros in a five-year state fund. The Netherlands has jumped on the bandwagon: an investment of €1.25 million in the Dutch economy will entitle you to live in the country.

Some critics suggest countries offering citizenship or residency for cash are aiding and abetting fraudsters and criminals. As countries around the world compete to attract global millionaires and billionaires who are the real economic migrants, those who really do require a safe haven, fleeing from war, hunger and economic hardships, do not receive a warm welcome. The xenophobes who denounce immigration because it supposedly changes their nation ignore that parts of their country are unaffordable to locals due to the increase in house prices.

Inside world socialism, there will be no countries and no national borders. Everyone on Earth will be free to roam the whole world without passports or visas, free to settle wherever they desire or for as long as they wish.

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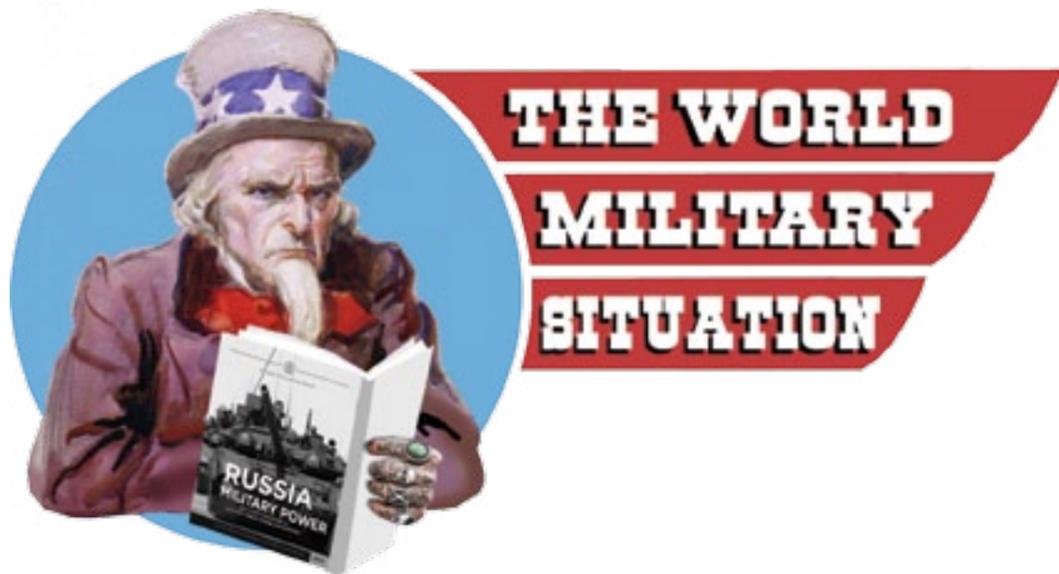
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*The military situation in the world is as threatening today as it was during the Cold War between the West and the old Soviet bloc.*

The armed forces of nuclear powers are in direct confrontation in a whole series of regions.

In the new Cold War between Russia and the West, American and Russian warships and aircraft have repeatedly come close to colliding in the Black Sea, offshore from the proxy hot war in eastern Ukraine, as well as in the Baltic Sea and adjacent airspace. Following the defeat of the Islamic State, Russian, American, and now Turkish forces are more clearly engaged on opposite sides of the civil war in Syria.

Intermittent fighting between India and Pakistan continues in Kashmir. A nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan would suffice to generate a 'nuclear winter' that would destroy agriculture throughout much – perhaps all – of the world.

In the Far East the confrontation between the US and North Korea may soon resume. There is also a potential for clashes between US and Chinese forces in the contested waters of the South China Sea and in or around Taiwan. According to analysts, China plans to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2020 (Ian Easton, *The Chinese Invasion Threat*, 2017).

### Good luck

All these standoffs provide plenty of scope for accidents, mistakes, misunderstandings or unauthorised – or, indeed, authorised – actions that might spark nuclear war. Many such past incidents are now coming to light as archives are opened to researchers.

During the Cuban missile crisis, to draw an example from Daniel Ellsberg's new book *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner* (2017), the US navy used depth charges to try to force a Soviet submarine to surface. Two of the three officers on the submarine who jointly controlled its nuclear weapon, unable to establish radio contact with higher authority and believing that war had already begun, wanted to fire. The third man refused to cooperate, thereby saving the world.

It is only thanks to a remarkably long run of good luck that the world has escaped Armageddon so far. But how much longer can our good luck hold?

### Other confrontations

Then there are the many other actual and potential

confrontations in which some or all of the sides do not possess nuclear weapons. The 'mobile phone war' over access to precious metal ores like coltan drags on in Congo. Fighting continues in Libya, Somalia and Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia, aided by the US, is waging a genocidal war in Yemen. Iran is back in the American 'crosshairs'.

The 'scramble for the Arctic' still looms ahead, pitting not only the Western powers

against Russia but also the US against Canada.

### Neocons in the ascendant

Many conflicts, though far from all, stem to one degree or another from US foreign policy. Under Trump the neocons are again in the ascendant after a partial 'reset' under Obama, as reflected in his nuclear deal with Iran. The aim of the neocons continues to be 'regime change' wherever governments are insufficiently susceptible to US influence, using any means including military force (when judged necessary and feasible). Targets have included 'leftist' regimes like Cuba and Venezuela, Ba'athist and other Arab nationalist regimes (now toppled except in Syria), Iran, North Korea, Russia-oriented regimes in the former Soviet Union (Ukraine, Belarus) and ultimately Russia and China.

A specific source of conflict – in Ukraine, the Caucasus and the South China Sea, for instance – is a difference of opinion between the US and other great powers concerning spheres of influence. Russia, China and India claim special rights to intervene in areas adjacent to their borders. The US, however, recognises no such rights (except for itself).

Any conflict in which the US is involved can easily escalate to the nuclear level, especially as the US has never renounced the right to use nuclear weapons first. (Russia does renounce the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states; in the period 1982-1993 it renounced all nuclear first use.) Moreover, the US has recently expanded the range of events to which it asserts the right to respond with nuclear weapons to include 'non-military attacks' like the hacking of key computer systems, even though it is very difficult to determine who is responsible for such acts.

A new nuclear arms race is now underway. It seems unlikely that the US and Russia will agree to extend the 'New Start' arms control treaty, which is due to expire in February 2021. In his speech to the nation on 1 March, Putin announced that Russia has tested new types of delivery vehicle, including hypersonic missiles and underwater drones, that can evade missile defence systems and maintain Russia's ability to deter a US first strike.

### Terrorism a secondary concern

The Trump administration has made it clear that action against 'adversary' states will henceforth have priority over the fight against terrorism. This issue poses a dilemma to the neocons because the Sunni Islamists who attacked the Twin Towers on 9/11 and have perpetrated more recent acts of terror in Western Europe are backed mainly by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, which are considered not adversaries but allies.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 it must have seemed necessary to assure the American public that the fight against terrorism would take priority over everything else. At no time was this ever really the case, but actions in pursuit of the neocon agenda, such as the invasion of Iraq, were fraudulently justified in terms of anti-terrorism. The passage of time without further acts of Islamist terrorism in the US has evidently emboldened policy makers to state frankly that terrorism is a secondary concern.

### An irrational strategy

Objectively the global pattern of power continues to shift towards multipolarity. No state now has the power resources to dominate the world. In reality all states are now local or regional powers. The pursuit of global hegemony to which the US has reverted is doomed to fail, but is all the more dangerous for that reason. It is a deeply irrational strategy, fuelled by the trend towards the privatisation of armed forces and military industry. It reflects not the interests of the American capitalist class as a whole but the special interests of the military-industrial complex – the 'war business'.

But what can ordinary people do about all this? The extreme gravity of the situation makes it easy to fall prey to despair. The forces at work seem much too powerful for us to challenge, let alone abolish.

However, this is a false impression deliberately maintained by our masters. They do not like to admit that they care about popular opposition. In fact, we are not as helpless as we think. Thus Ellsberg reports archival evidence that public protests against the war in Vietnam really did constrain the options of US policy makers -- in particular, helping to prevent the combat use of nuclear weapons.

The story is not over until it is over.

STEFAN



### In response to the Syrian air attacks

So the self-appointed guardians of democracy, America, Britain, and France have launched their much-anticipated air attacks upon Syria to punish that state in pursuit of their conviction that it had used chemical weapons.

The Socialist Party sympathises with all our fellow workers who are the victims of this brutal war and many others. When this war ends the final death toll among civilians will be hard to establish, as it will be to attribute the cause of the killings. The devastation is a testament to the dangers and horrors of modern warfare. The Syrian dictatorship is one of many equally savage regimes in the region: Saudi Arabia, for example, is engaged in a prolonged war with rebels in Yemen that is seeing misery piled upon misery. Israel has snipers shooting down unarmed protestors in Gaza.

The reality is that the horrors of modern war are not to be laid on the shoulders of a religion nor an ideology, nor even on specific individuals. The justification for armed conflict can always be found when military, political and economic needs demand it. The Western capitalist bloc stirred up a civil war in Syria and now they are reaping the whirlwind. It is a continuation of the same battle for control of the Middle East and its oil resources that has gone on ever since the end of the Second World War, with crisis after crisis and war after war.

When hostility breaks into open warfare, each side's ruling class does even more terrible things to the other side, destroying its towns and slaughtering its people. This gives the belligerent countries even more propaganda points to make. Each side claims that it only started fighting in the first place because (in some miraculous way) it could see what barbarous actions its enemies were guilty of in the war. In other words, the propaganda of each hostile country claims that it only went to war because of the atrocities committed during the war on the other side. The truth, however, is exactly the opposite. It is not the atrocities which lead to war; it is the war which leads to the atrocities. What happens, over and over again, is that a government, reacting to the pressures inseparable from private-property societies, treats some of its citizens very badly. Then the government gets into a war against other states; only to realize that its previous ill-treatment of this or that minority has simply provided a ready-made fifth column for the enemy.

When the nuclear-equipped superpowers come up against each other directly, we have every reason to be fearful for the future of humanity. War is competition for profits (either via trade routes, mineral wealth, resources or areas of influence) writ large and, to safeguard future profits and control of the world's resources, the biggest military powers are accumulating an unimaginable array of weaponry.

The Syrian regime may win in the short term through sheer mediaeval brutality, but you can't run a modern state without a sophisticated infrastructure and a working-class trained to run it. And that inevitably gives capitalism its Achilles heel, and workers their ultimate weapon against war itself. If you want to have done with brutal dictatorships like Syria's, it's a waste of time to go to war: others will spring up everywhere. Get rid of capitalism, the fertile soil which produces endless numbers of dictators and atrocities.

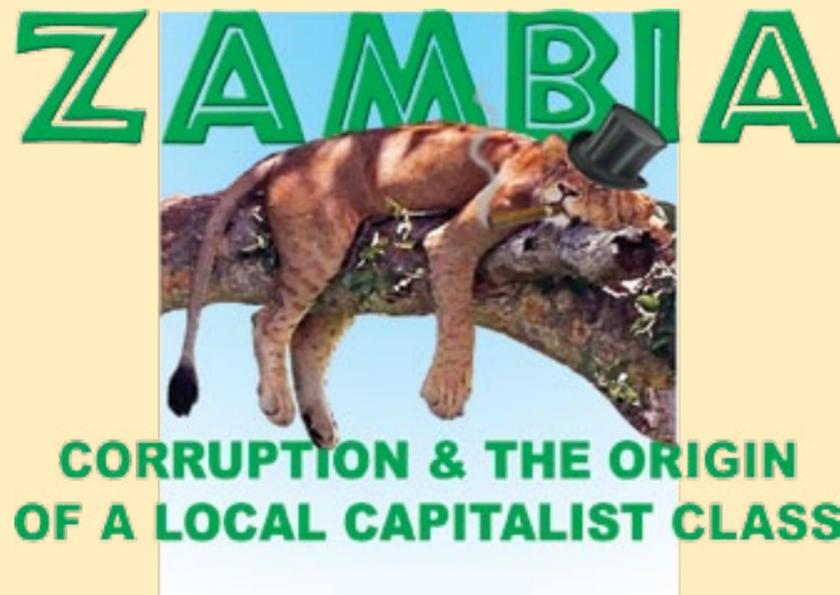
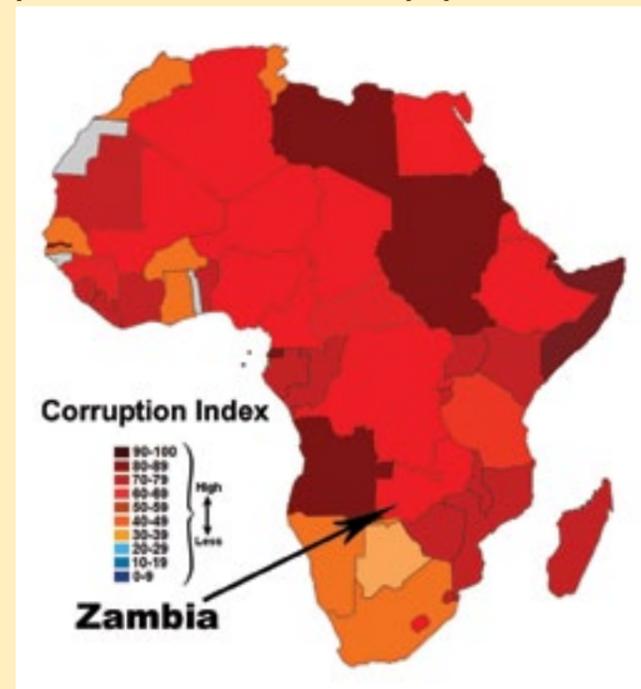
Corruption defined as the pilfering and shameful mismanagement of state resources first appeared to rear its ugly head after the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) came to power in Zambia in 1991. During the authoritarian one-party state under Kenneth Kaunda members of the United National Independence Party central committee had been forbidden from amassing private wealth of any kind.

When the MMD came to power under President Chiluba it pursued a rigorous policy of economic liberalisation defined as privatisation. State-owned companies were auctioned off at prices below their book value. Corruption as a political vice first came to public attention when the third republican president Levy Mwanawasa made corruption allegations against former MMD president Fredrick Chiluba in 2002. It was alleged that Chiluba had swindled the government of millions of dollars through Access Financed Services and the Zamtrop state security account operated in the UK. The MMD government under Dr. Chiluba was afterwards blamed for having instituted a culture of graft and impunity that stalled Zambian economic development.

### Creating a capitalist class

The main task the MMD government set itself when it came to power was the social and economic empowerment of indigenous Zambians. The MMD went on to create what was a private-sector capitalist class dominated by economically empowered Zambian entrepreneurs. To quote from the late Dr Chiluba's speech when defining the new capitalist society:

'Ours is a capitalist society. It is therefore inevitable that in part and I repeat in part we must address the goal of privatisation within the context of the people's relations



characteristic of a capitalist economy. As part of the realisation of our aim to eradicate poverty in our country we must strive to create and strengthen a Zambian capitalist class – the new culture. Because we come from the disadvantaged many of us feel embarrassed to state their goal as nakedly as we should. All this frightens and embarrasses all of us who are Zambians and might be part of the rich. Accordingly we walk as far and faster as we come from the nation, that the struggle against poverty in our country must include the objective of creating a new Zambian bourgeois. As part of our continuing struggle to wipe out this legacy of poverty we must work to ensure that there emerges a Zambian bourgeoisie whose presence within our economy and society will be part of the process of privatisation of the economy and society.'

The task of privatising sections of the economy proved to be a nefarious and blatantly corrupt affair which had a triple effect upon the poor and marginalised working class. Unemployment trebled due to the abrupt liquidation of state-owned companies and the once economically vibrant copper-belt mining towns of Kitwe, Chingola, Mufulira, Ndola and Chililabombwe became ghost towns. In most cases workers made redundant from parastatal companies have until today not received their redundancy packages. President Chiluba went on to surrender council houses to sitting tenants in a move designed to socially empower the Zambian citizens, a move that had dire social economic consequences upon local authorities. Privatisation dubbed 'economic empowerment' helped give rise to social squalor and urban poverty of a severe kind.

The idea that public property belongs to no one in particular is an entrenched feeling among ordinary Zambians, especially those who work in the civil service. It makes them solicit money from people seeking to obtain things like a visa, a passport or a driving licence. The police appear to be the most corrupt civil servants in the sense that they set free criminals upon receiving money. It is very rare for a magistrate to convict a rich person in Zambia today. The vice of corruption has spread into the Ministry of Education where examination leaks appear to be the order of the day. Under the new private enterprise culture 'social and economic empowerment' is a political slogan that legalised street vending, prostitution and crime. The privatisation of ZCCM led to the emergence of self-styled copper dealers called 'jerabos' who steal copper cathodes and concentrates from the private owned copper mines where security became lax after the dissolution of the ZCCM mine police unit.

Thus corruption in Zambia has been a matter of accumulating wealth and social status as most of the Zambian capitalist class derived its wealth through outright corruption.

When Levy Mwanawasa passed away in 2008 he was succeeded by his Vice-President, Rupiah Banda, as acting President. In 2010 Banda had to quash the pending corruption allegations against Chiluba because he was cognisant of the fact that corruption was a means to economic

empowerment under the MMD government. Corruption was at its highest peak during the time Banda was head of state. It was President Banda, acting with his son Andrew, who was alleged to have milked millions of dollars from the Zambian government under a dubious contract to purchase oil from Nigeria in 2009. The taskforce created by President Mwanawasa proved toothless when it came to arresting and convicting politicians alleged to be corrupt.

### 'Anti-corruption' campaigns

'Anti-corruption' is used as a weapon of political victimisation against political opponents and as such is not transparent. In his inaugural address when he was sworn in as president of Zambia in 2016 President Lungu promised the people of Zambia that he was going to continue the legacy of the late President Sata through creating more jobs and fighting corruption. President Lungu is not a domineering and abrasive leader when compared to the late Michael Sata – without rigidity or defined ideological convictions. Ascending to the leadership of the Patriotic Front (PF) without a flamboyant political background Lungu has come to rely on the political goodwill of the masses and his closest stooges.

After the initial political blizzard of 2014 the PF government under Lungu has presided over the recovery of the Zambian economy. Favourable copper prices from demand in South East Asia (mostly China and Malaysia) boosted investor confidence in the mining sector. The release of the United Party for National Development (UNPD) leader Hicilema helped to cast a positive image of political tolerance and the rule of law. In Africa and overseas Lungu seems to have won a lot of political and economic accolades. The European Bank, World Bank and Amnesty International have expressed satisfaction with his style of leadership.

But from within the apparently stable political and economic outlook looms the ugly revelations day in and day out of corruption taking place in the high echelons of the PF government, fuelled by allegations from former Minister Chishimba Kambwili who was himself dismissed for corruption. The report of the Auditor-General on the estimates of capital expenditure reveal gross irregularities in the procurement and implementation of government programmes. Yet the erring ministries or public officers are not prosecuted.

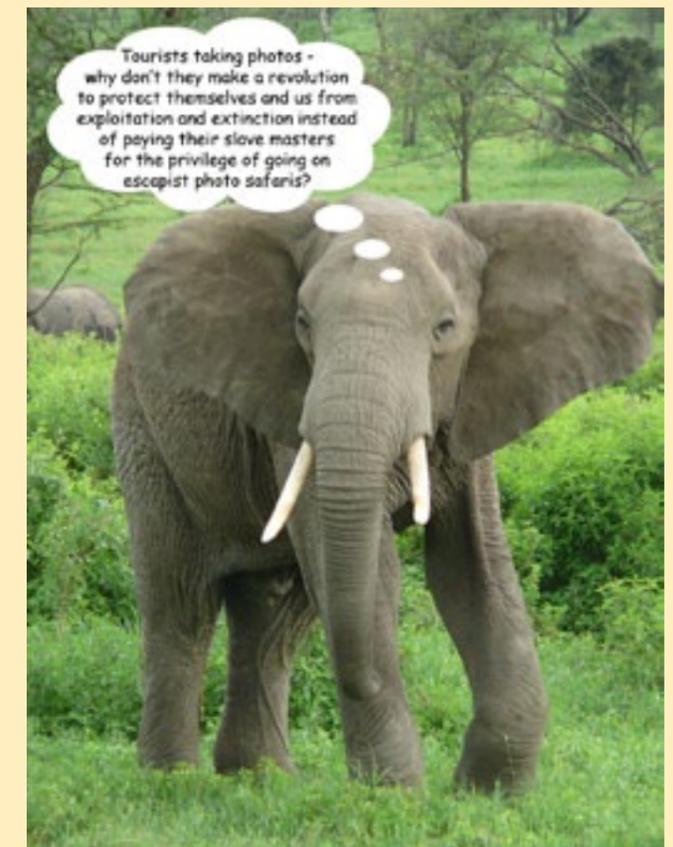
Policing corruption, as with the recent forced resignation of President Zuma in South Africa, will not resolve the dilemma

of social poverty and corruption. Corruption is just another face of capitalist society that is endemic to the system. It is just another problem that cannot be resolved unless money, government and leaders are dispensed with.

A one-party state is a feature of state corruption in which a handful of individuals exploit the majority of workers. Parliamentary democracy on the other hand is made up of wealthy and ambitious politicians trying to reform capitalism. They hoodwink the working class into voting for them by promising them a heaven on Earth. But once the politicians win elections and become leaders the workers remain mere spectators of any political and economic changes taking place in society.

Socialist ideas need a revolutionary class behind them to become practical. The problems facing capitalism require conscious political action by socialists and the democratic capture of political power. Everything else is reformism and leads to total disappointment.

KEPHAS MULENGA



We have seen it all before but once again heads of state have been indulging in verbal international belligerence. Whether it is a matter of trade, borders or resources such leaders feel it is both their role and duty to be seen to protect the 'national interest'. Most commentators for the media and their readers take it for granted that this represents, to various degrees, the exercise of the leader's power. But can a single individual possess political power and if they can what is its nature and origin?

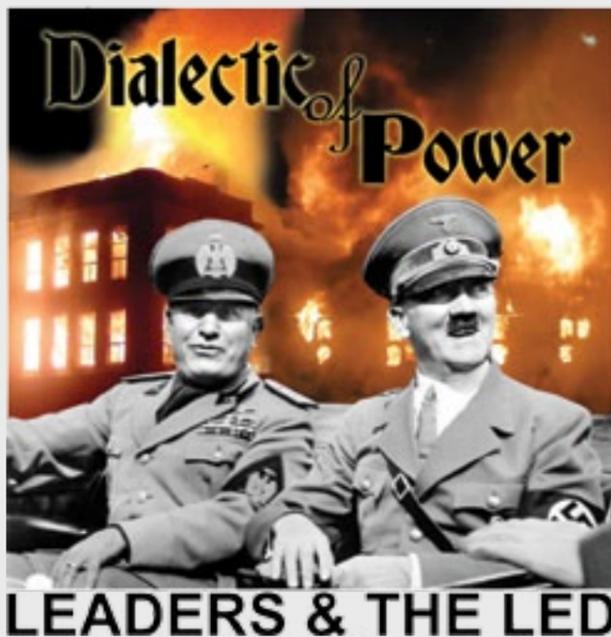
The myth of the 'strong man' and the invincible leader is an essential component of bourgeois ideology since any authoritarian system must have a summit to its pyramid of power. But like every other component of reactionary political theory this too might turn out to be just another myth. Could it be that this illusion of power is testament to the power of illusion?

Political power itself is no illusion. The state is the incarnation of social power and exists in part to restrict access to the fruits of production by the producers (the working class of wage and salary earners). The tiny parasitical minority knows that it is only through violence and the threat of violence that they can maintain ownership of the means of production. And here we have the origin of all social power: the relationship of an individual and his class to the production of the means of life. No individual or group can force anyone to do anything without the threat of the removal of access to the means of living (sometimes absolute or, more often, various degrees of imposed poverty). Authority is given to those who have undertaken to protect the wealth and power of the minority ruling class. Those who are seen to be successful in doing this acquire access to a higher rank which can potentially lead to the 'presidency' itself.

Of course those with 'connections' have a head start on all of the others but even these privileged individuals will get nowhere if they are not seen to do their job with the ruthlessness, duplicity and immorality needed to justify oppression, exploitation and greed. Given the nature of such success and the character and skill set it requires it is not surprising that it is the insecure, sociopathic and narcissistic who are most likely to succeed. Paradoxically it is quite possible, within this cultural context, for the weakest (in terms of moral integrity and intellectual insight) to access the highest office. The weak are attracted to power and power seeks out the weak. Given this perspective can we say that those thought of as having the most power are, in fact, among the weakest within the community?

### Not so great men

Biographers spend their time seeking out the 'essence' of a personality – what is it that sets the famous (or infamous) apart from the rest of us? Biographies of leaders focus on this element within the subject's character and come up with titles like: *The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler* or *God's*



*Englishman* (Oliver Cromwell) etc. Many of these individuals are driven personalities who seem to be desperate to prove something about themselves to others. Ironically one definition of strength is the relative absence of this egotistical obsession. But before we get too taken up with the popular hobby of pseudo-psychology what is usually overlooked in such biographies is that when a society believes in the myth of leadership it creates leaders. It is the office and not the individual (who emerges, invariably, as a great disappointment in terms of character analysis) that needs to be analysed if we seek the origin of perceived power.

The myth of a dominion that flows downwards from some ultimate authority is still very prevalent. In fact it is quite the opposite: ruling classes rule through the illusion of individual leadership which is ultimately dependent on the political manipulation of the masses. This is made possible by the stability, or otherwise, of political institutions. When such historical stability is absent a ruling class may lose control of the individuals it has promoted to look after its interests. Such an occasion was the weakness of the Weimar Republic in Germany in the 1930s that allowed the rise of the Nazis and Hitler. Capitalism's failures had led to the political disillusion of millions at that time in Europe and many supported leaders who made promises to radically change things; and the true litmus of any attribution of power is this ability to bring about change. With the whole power of the state concentrated in his hands did Hitler bring about any profound and lasting change?

For those who lived and died through the Second World War Hitler's decisions obviously had a great impact but the 'Thousand Year Reich' was quickly seen as the delusory mirage of a madman. Fascism is the most unstable form of government and depends on continued military success. Hitler's power was dependent on the maintenance of an illusion and illusions cannot survive the realities of the momentum of history. Millions believed in him but he was still just a troubled insecure little man who understood nothing of historical reality and believed in the myths of racism and German legend. Change happens as a result of a confluence of elements: development of productive technology, failure of old relations of production and the subsequent ideological doubt and theoretical innovation. Cromwell, Napoleon, Lenin and Hitler rode on the coat-tails of change and were not instigators of it. Without the ability to instigate change individual power is seen for what it really is – merely a licence to bully; and that is always an indicator of weakness and never of strength.

### Myth of political competence

If we turn to the reasons why the majority still believe in this myth of individual political power we, as ever, have to look deeply into our own motivations, needs and paradigms. Quite often when discussing socialism someone will accept our case but will then confidently declare that most everyone else would not have the intelligence or education to believe in it. This 'projection' onto others of political ignorance is usually an

indication of the intellectual insecurity of the speaker. We live in a world of 'specialisms' where the division of intellectual labour is exclusive and rarely inclusive.

As children we turned to our parents to explain the world and in later life we turn to our doctor, accountant, priest, therapist, lawyer, mechanic or IT expert. The different talents of individuals and our social interdependence make this a rational procedure but, in the end, it is you who have to make the decisions and in the full knowledge that experts can be, and often are, mistaken. The great problem with representative (bourgeois) democracy is that your right to make decisions concerning your life is given to another for five years and, as we've seen, those decisions are made not in your interest but in the interest of the ruling class. We are told that somehow these representatives are more knowledgeable or somehow more talented at knowing what's good for you than you are. In effect they are claiming to be your parents and in this way the system infantilises the electorate. Another myth lurks here: that of 'privileged' information.

Many believe that once the 'corridors of power' have been accessed then, depending on the individual's level of security, the secrets exposed provide a privileged insight into 'what's really happening in the world'. This is at the heart of the reason for the proliferation of conspiracy theories. It is somehow more comforting to believe that a Machiavellian conspiracy is responsible for the anarchy, suffering and immorality of capitalism rather than the impersonal and innate amoral character of the system itself. Although the secrecy of any political establishment has something to do with disguising corruption and lies it has everything to do with preserving the myth of political competence. The reality of stupidity and ignorance would immediately reveal the almost complete absence of the ability to change or direct

capitalism in any major respect; the 'corridors of power' would be seen as all 'smoke and mirrors'. Parliaments the world over are merely the façades of the illusion of control; they provide a political diversion masquerading as democratic power while the ruling class and their functionaries get on with their real business of exploiting everyone and everything for profit.

Again and again we see the dangers of attributing power to individuals, both in the hubris of those who think they have it and in the impotent illusion of those who think it is politically legitimate for 'exceptional' individuals to wield it.

Wez



*A Grotesque Nemesis for the Hubris of Mussolini and some of his followers in 1945*

Capitalism is a society of inequalities, in how both wealth and power are distributed. These inequalities have often affected women more adversely than men, and campaigns for women's rights have been ongoing for over a century. But the debate around gender equality is no longer just about differences in wages or opportunities. Allegations of sexual harassment and abuse in Parliament and the entertainment industry especially have highlighted how some men have exercised their power. Also, the debate has broadened due to increased awareness of issues affecting transgender people, many of whom have felt marginalised.

How should socialists respond to the new prominence given to gender politics? What does gender inequality tell us about capitalist society, especially how it shapes gender roles? And how does the issue impact upon revolutionary politics? The Socialist Party argues that sexism and misogyny are expressions of how capitalism is inherently divisive and unequal. So, the



solution is to address these problems at their source, by uniting to replace capitalism with a society based on equality and freedom.

Our weekend of talks and discussion will examine how gender issues relate to wider society and to revolutionary politics. Full residential cost (including accommodation and

meals Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) is £100. The concessionary rate is £50. Day visitors are welcome, but please book in advance.

E-mail enquiries should be sent to [spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk). To book a place online, go to [spgb.net/summerschool2018](http://spgb.net/summerschool2018), or send a cheque (payable to the Socialist Party of Great Britain) with your contact details to Summer School, The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN.

## We begin a four-part series on the 'philanthrocapitalism' of billionaires such as Bill Gates

What do you do if you are billionaire and run out of ideas about what to spend your money on? Increasingly, it would seem, the answer is to indulge in philanthropy. 'Philanthrocapitalism' has today become big business.

In the blurb to Matthew Bishop and Michael Green's book, *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich can Save the World*, this comment appears:

*'For philanthropists of the past, charity was often a matter of simply giving money away. For the philanthrocapitalists – the new generation of billionaires who are reshaping the way they give – it's like business. Largely trained in the corporate world, these "social investors" are using big-business-style strategies and expecting results and accountability to match. Bill Gates, the world's richest man, is leading the way: he has promised his entire fortune to finding a cure for the diseases that kill millions of children in the poorest countries in the world.'*

That book was published way back in 2008; on 1 January 2018 – that is, approximately ten years later – Bill Gates was listed on the Forbes list of the richest people of the planet, as having a 'real time net worth' of \$91 billion, playing leapfrog with Amazon's Jeff Bezos to become the richest person on the planet. Seemingly, if we are waiting for Mr Gates to put his money where his mouth is, we will be waiting forever.

On the Forbes website, incidentally, there also appears a quote attributed to Gates as follows: *'Money has no utility to me beyond a certain point. Its utility is entirely in building an organization and getting the resources out to the poorest in the world'*. What that 'certain point' might be he fails to disclose but, presumably, there is still some way to go before he reaches it.

So what exactly is going on here? Why this alleged concern for the fate of the poor by the super-rich and paradoxically in an era that has witnessed a veritable explosion of extreme wealth? According to an OXFAM press release (16 January 2017) a mere eight individuals, almost unbelievably, now *'own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity'*. You would think, on the face of it, that global inequality must by now be set on a trajectory of steep decline with all this loose talk of billionaires, stricken by some unaccountable sense of moral angst, giving away their fortunes. But then you would be sorely mistaken.

The truth of the matter is that philanthrocapitalism is not at all what it seems and the disgustingly elitist suggestion that the 'rich can save the world' is as condescending as it is patently absurd. 'Saving the world', at the very least, implies some kind of fundamental structural transformation permitting a radical change of direction. Why would 'the rich' want to restructure the world in a way that would prevent this minuscule minority from continuing to enrich themselves at the expense of the vast majority? For it is precisely this class monopoly on the means of producing and distributing wealth that the world needs saving from. That, in essence, is what underlies the multiple problems that afflict it and prevents their effective resolution.

Philanthrocapitalism is predicated on the denial that this is how capitalism operates. Denying it helps to ensure the system's continuation. In sociological jargon, it deflects attention away from 'structure' – the particular pattern of class relationships linking individuals that defines the social system we live under – to 'agency', meaning the individuals

themselves, their personality profiles and the inner motives that drive them. The difference between these approaches was rather neatly summed up by the Brazilian Archbishop and 'liberation theologian', Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara: *'when I give food to the poor, they call me a Saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.'*

Thus does philanthrocapitalism fail to see the wood for the trees. 'Saving the world' from its ideological standpoint, boils down to a handful of individuals being sufficiently motivated and economically empowered to undertake such a project. The focus shifts from those who are 'given to' to those who 'give'. The latter's empowerment is predicated upon the former's disempowerment and their dehumanisation in becoming the mere objects of charitable display.

We should not be surprised by this. It's the same kind of top-down arrogant thinking that permeates and informs mainstream politics. Career politicians market and preen themselves on the pretext that they possess certain key qualities that their rivals lack and that electing them will somehow make a difference to the lives of the electors themselves. We all know what becomes of such wishful thinking. The widespread apathy and corrosive cynicism that pervades contemporary society is the direct outcome of the folly of putting your faith in political leaders to lead.

Like the political establishment, philanthrocapitalism is driven by a kind of saviour complex. To that end, it bathes itself in an aura of moralistic self-righteousness and smug do-goodery. That is its defence mechanism, its own way of disarming criticism. How can you possibly criticise your Zuckerbergs and your Bonos when they so obviously mean good? Shame on you.

### Why Philanthrocapitalism?

The interesting question is why are the likes of Zuckerberg, Bono and others now so intent on thrusting themselves into our collective consciousness and piously promoting their pet causes? Is there really such a big difference between the philanthropy of the past and modern philanthrocapitalism as Bishop and Green's book suggests and, if so, how come? According to the philanthrocapitalism.net website:

*'Part of the explanation is the surge in entrepreneurial wealth in the last thirty years. Self-made billionaires tend to be more willing to give their money away than those who inherit their fortunes. Entrepreneurs are also, by nature, problem-solvers and relish the challenge of taking on tough issues: for Bill Gates, it is malaria and other infectious diseases, for George Soros it is political change. There's also a growing recognition that big global problems cannot be left to government alone. Philanthrocapitalists can do the risky, innovative things that government cannot, to find new solutions to problems'* (<http://philanthrocapitalism.net/about/faq/>)

Let's take this last point first. The assumption here seems to be that the reason why those 'big global problems' persist basically has to do with the particular mix of agents involved in tackling them. Only create a larger space in which our enterprising philanthrocapitalists can bring to bear their own particular brand of 'innovative' problem-solving and you are likely to see a good deal more progress being made. What is conveniently overlooked is that the 'problem' these entrepreneurs are supposedly skilled in solving is how to make money and augment a corporation's profits.

It is no concern of theirs that, for instance, the workers made redundant in the pursuit of these profits are now confronted with the problem of how to pay the mortgage and avoid

being made homeless. Corporations are obliged to take a narrow self-interested point of view in a competitive market environment – as indeed, to an extent, are charities too in their scramble for funding – but this provides a very poor grounding from which to set out to 'save the world'. That, one would have thought, minimally implies the joined-up thinking of a holistic approach to 'problem solving' that fully takes into account the wider external costs (externalities) of one's decisions and this demonstrably is not something that the application of 'big-business-style strategies' lends itself to.

### Criticism

There are other grounds on

which these strategies have been criticised.

Firstly, while charities are increasingly forced to compete for funding there is a problem in that you cannot really apply to charities the same criteria as you might in choosing between, say, two different brands of soap powder on the basis of comparative price and quality. Charitable causes are not so easily substitutable. Is combating HIV/Aids more important than building a school or sinking a well in some remote rural village? Who is to say? The application of business strategies to charitable causes tends to override this qualitative issue by subjecting the performance of charities to the same pseudo-quantitative metric that businesses apply to themselves, permitting them to make a choice on the basis of what offers the greatest return on their money. But people remain loyal to their particular pet charities for reasons that don't necessarily apply when choosing between soap powders.

Secondly, philanthrocapitalist business-style strategies tend to focus on technical fixes, ignoring the socio-economic roots of the problems they seek to ameliorate. Addressing the latter is a much more costly, complex, and time-consuming process and costs are precisely what businesses are intent on cutting. This 'technicist' bias is sometimes linked with promoting certain technologies in which the philanthrocapitalist concerned might have a vested commercial interest. In fact, a lot of what is called 'foreign aid' is provided on this basis – to induce a sense of commercial dependency in the recipient

country upon the donor country with an eye on future market growth in the former.

Thirdly, there tends to be a marked preference for big organisations in the world of charity, (reflecting the dominance of the large corporation in the business world and their preoccupation with increased market share) in the belief that this makes for economies of scale. As a result many small charities operating on a shoe string get overlooked and starved of funds.

Finally, the provision of financial incentives to volunteers, turning charitable work into paid employment, ironically tends to exert a corrupting or debilitating influence on volunteering. There is also a tendency for philanthrocapitalism to weaken and undermine civil society itself. Grass roots citizen organisations highly dependent on external funding can find themselves subject to a process of 'co-optation' and disempowerment. Like the saying goes: 'beggars can't be choosers'. Rather, the function of the beggar from this standpoint is simply to passively consume and to exude gratitude for the privilege of being able to do so. The utter inappropriateness of applying business strategies to social transformation when these different things are each driven by a qualitatively different kind of dynamic was revealingly borne out by Peter Buffett, the second son of billionaire investor, Warren Buffett. Buffet expressed concern that the state of philanthropy in America *'just keeps the existing structure of inequality in place.'* At meetings of charitable foundations, he averred, *'you witness heads of state meeting with investment managers and corporate leaders. All are searching for answers with their right hand to problems that others in the room have created with their left'* (*New York Times*, 26 July, 2013).

But let us be clear on one point. Criticising philanthrocapitalism does not mean the state is any more capable of solving these problems and, in any event, that is not what socialists are advocating. We argue instead that the problems themselves arise from the very nature of capitalism itself and will persist irrespective of the agents involved in tackling them. Piecemeal welfare reforms enacted by the state will never be enough but nor will private charity. What's more, there does appear to be an inverse, or zero sum, relationship between these two things. One tends to expand at the expense of the other.

Philanthrocapitalism has often been characterised as a peculiarly American phenomenon. There is some truth in this but we should not imagine that, as a phenomenon, it is confined to the United States. There is a saying that, when the latter sneezes, others catch a cold. America's cultural hegemony on the world stage may now be on the wane but it is still insidiously powerful and pervasive. This, along with global developments in recent decades – in particular the emergence of neoliberalism since the 1970s and its austere policy prescriptions for pruning back on state spending – have opened up more opportunities for the philanthrocapitalists to muscle in, acting on their own initiative or in concert with their government host.

### Free market lobby

According to Mike Konczal, there is in America a powerful free-market lobby that favours private charity not just as a means of filling the obvious gaps in the threadbare safety net provided by state welfare but as part of a wider programme entailing the denationalisation of welfare provision (*'The Voluntarism Fantasy'*, *Democracy Journal*, Spring 2014). We can see how this might serve as a pretext for slashing Federal budgets and by extension, the tax burden on American

capitalists. However, the argument, suggests Konczal, is grossly misinformed. It appeals to a rose-tinted vision of America's past but there never was some golden age of voluntarism, which free market libertarians wish now to reinstate, where society functioned perfectly well without state intervention.

In this context, 'voluntarism' denotes not just the charitable act of freely offering time and money to assist others but also the capacity of individuals to take responsibility for their own welfare by exercising choice in the market. This is an extension of the dogma that since we are free to choose whether or not to enter into a particular market transaction, the market itself must, by definition, be a non-coercive or voluntary institution. Workers freely choose to sell their working abilities to their capitalist employer and consequently cannot be considered 'exploited'. Their labour is voluntary and thus not coerced.

This is yet another example of the failure of a 'methodological individualist' approach to see the wood for the trees. Society is seen as simply the sum total of its parts and nothing more. This same approach which vests in a tiny handful of super-rich individuals the power to 'save the world' neglects to consider the individual worker as a member of an economic class. For it is the class to which they belong – the working class – that has, as a class, no choice but to sell its working abilities to the tiny minority who own the means of living. That is why the system of wage labour is fundamentally coercive and non-voluntary – not because individual workers do not have the option of choosing which particular capitalist enterprise should exploit them.

The 'Voluntarism Fantasy' of the American free-market lobby hinges on what Konczal calls the 'myth of a stateless

nineteenth century'. On the contrary, he argues, the footprint of the state was everywhere in evidence. Not only has the state always been an active player in providing social security but had to expand its role in the face of the clear failure of private initiatives to do the job. This was particularly true in the case of the 1930s Great Depression and also more recently in the case of the 2008 recession and its aftermath when 'overall giving' in the US fell away quite significantly – by 7 percent in 2008, with another 6.2 percent drop in 2009 – precisely at a time when it was most needed. In spite of itself and its fundamentally competitive nature, capitalism needs a state to do what is functionally required in order for the system to operate relatively smoothly on its own terms.

**ROBIN COX**

(Next month: *The Myth of the 'Self-made Man'*).



*Rocker Bono schmoozing with the enemy*



**Yes, read Marx**

In an interview with the online magazine *Truthout* (24 March) the historian Immanuel Wallerstein urged young people to 'Read Karl Marx!' He is one of the leading advocates of the theory that capitalism is a single 'world-system'. His books describe the history of capitalism, as in effect the world market, from its origins in the sixteenth century to today. This theory has an important implication: that capitalism is not a collection of separate, national capitalist economies but a single world system and that there is therefore no national way out of it.

'The capitalist system is composed of owners who sell for profit. The fact that an owner is a group of individuals rather than a single person makes no essential difference. This has long been recognized for joint-stock companies. It must now be recognized for sovereign states. A state which collectively owns all the means of production is merely a collective capitalist firm as long as it remains—as all such states are, in fact, presently compelled to remain—a participant in the market of the

capitalist world-economy' (*The Capitalist World-Economy*, pages 68-69).

Good point. When, however, it comes to explaining basic Marxian economics Wallerstein is not so sound. In an interview with the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* in 1998 (20 March) he argued:

'You easily imagine that if one respected the presuppositions of economic textbooks -- an infinity of sellers and an infinity of buyers, all perfectly informed -- capitalists would be incapable of making the least profit: consumers would immediately find the lowest price which would not be a centime above the cost of production!'

The main feature of the textbooks' 'perfect competition' is that, because there are so many of each, buyers and sellers cannot influence the price at which goods sell. This is fixed by the market. But at what level?

Adam Smith called the price that the market would establish in the long run a good's 'natural price'. This would be the cost of producing it in terms of the labour expended on it from start to finish. He accepted that this would include an element of profit. Marx developed this theory and explained profit as 'unpaid labour', i.e., the labour expended by workers above what they received as their wages.

Wallerstein's statement implies that

profit could only arise if there is not 'perfect competition,' if capitalist firms are in a position to influence the price of what they sell due to having a partial monopoly. In other words, profit would be a form of rent. True, some firms are in this position and so do command a higher than normal profit. But this explains only the extra, monopoly profit, not normal profit. It fails as a theory of profit because it does not, and cannot, explain why firms not in this position still make a profit, as under capitalism they must, otherwise nobody would invest in them.

The impasse Wallerstein's statement leads to shows that the origin of profit cannot be explained as arising from the circulation (the buying and selling) of goods. It has to be sought elsewhere. Marx set out to explain it on the basis of goods selling at the price established under competitive conditions and showed that profits originated in the process of production where workers produced goods worth more than what they were paid as wages.

So, to understand profits, read Karl Marx, especially the section of his 1865 talk to English trade unionists, *Value, Price and Profit*, entitled 'Profit is made by Selling a Commodity at its Value'.



**A Tale Of Two Cities**

YOU'D BE forgiven for thinking the world was turning into some kind of dystopia, like the old Cold War again but with creepier people in charge. Dystopias have come back into fashion on the telly as well, following the popularity of the adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (see July 2017's *Socialist Standard*). Less striking, but still worth a watch is BBC2's recent *The City And The City*, a mash-up of a police procedural and dystopian thriller, based on the 2009 novel by China Mieville. The main criterion of a dystopia is that it's set in a fictional society somehow worse to live in than our own. *The City And The City* gives us two joyless settings for the price of one. The cities of Beszel and Ul Qoma share the same space, but are divided. They're not separated by Berlin Wall-style fences and soldiers, but by the citizens of each city being trained to 'unsee' the other. Blurry shapes can be made out across the other side of the street, but otherwise the cities could be miles apart. Campaigns to unify the cities are illegal, while most people have just learnt to accept the strange situation. Both Ul Qoma and Beszel have fascist regimes, which have created drab, rule-driven societies. When people cross legally between cities, they must attend a two-week induction course to orientate themselves. Crossing over to the other city without authorisation, and even recognising it, is a grave crime called 'breaching', which involves a citizens' arrest, a nasty interrogation and an unknown penalty.

Although the TV version doesn't dwell on any meaning behind the populace being blind to what's around them, it reminds us of what we unsee in the real world. As Andrew McKie wrote in his review of the novel in the *Spectator* (20 June 2009), 'all city-dwellers collude in ignoring real aspects of the cities in which they live – the homeless, political structures, the commercial world or the stuff that's "for the tourists"'. Like the characters in the drama, we can get used to shutting out what we don't want to confront.

The stylish, imaginative design work almost distracts from how the drama reuses lots of familiar tropes. The police procedural aspect of the story starts with the murder of a young woman, which is investigated by a gruff, troubled cop with a personal connection to the case. The dystopian setting borrows imagery from Cold War-era Eastern Europe, from the styles of architecture



down to the propaganda posters. The dystopian plot has echoes of Orwell's *1984*, with its paranoia, the character who flirts with a resistance movement, and harsh punishments for breaking the rules. What's more original in *The City And The City* is the weird set-up of the two separated communities, and the truth behind the subversive rumours of a third city, supposedly a utopia.

*The City And The City* and *The Handmaid's Tale* are not the only recent dystopian dramas on television. Last year's *SS-GB* was set in an alternative 1941 where Britain was occupied by German Nazis, and several episodes of the anthology series *Black Mirror* have imagined different hellholes caused by society becoming too reliant on technology. On the big screen, dystopias have been the settings for popular films like *Ready Player One*, *Blade Runner 2049* and *The Hunger*

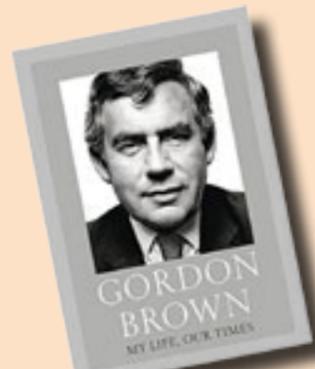
*Games* series. These have all followed the usual pattern: the writer takes a particular trend in the real world – such as fascism, surveillance technology or alienation – and extrapolates it until it dominates their invented future. Left-wing principles are criticised in dystopias as much as right-wing ones, as in *1984*'s regime as well as in the surprisingly large sub-genre of dystopias aimed at teenagers. Ewan Morrison, writing in *The Guardian* (1 September 2014), was suspicious of blockbuster young adult dystopias like *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent* and *The Giver*, which he says are 'whether intentionally or not, substantial attacks on many of the foundational projects and aims of the left: big government, the welfare state, progress, social planning and equality'. He was concerned that modern dystopias surreptitiously instil right-wing libertarian ideals, especially by having individualistic lead characters. A more balanced view, though, is that dystopias should challenge all aspects of capitalist society, left and right. They are warnings of what could happen to society and ourselves if we

become complacent to troubling aspects of the world, especially divisions between people. Although with the depressing direction which global politics is taking, dystopias will have trouble keeping up with reality.

**MIKE FOSTER**



**Brownian Motion**



My Life, Our Times.  
By Gordon Brown.  
Bodley Head.  
2017. £25.

The former Prime Minister's memoirs are not quite the mammoth exercise in self-justification most commentators expected. They are arguably more moving at times than would have been thought – Brown writes well about his personal battles, including about the serious eyesight problems that dogged his career. And in some ways he is more genuinely reflective about his political actions and legacy than his predecessor.

Brown undoubtedly has both intellect and a certain, relentless focus – and at times this has served his well politically. He seems critically aware of some of the major dynamics and features of our times too. Writing of the major financial crisis that marked his Premiership, he says:

'Bankers and boardrooms had awarded themselves bonuses they did not need for work they had not done and for risks they had taken at the expense of those who went without'. (p. 423).

He is not wrong – but then this is also the man who had, against all the evidence of history, pledged to abolish boom and bust and even now fails to understand that the financial crisis was not caused by a failure of global governance but by the 'animal spirits' that are integral to the capitalist economy and its inherent cycles of creative destruction.

As always, Brown appears focused and intense – but only as a micro-reformist with a moral purpose. His response to a problem in government was invariably to introduce a tax allowance there, or provide a subsidy there, tinkering to give the impression of dynamic action when there is really little substantive movement or none.

Throughout these pages Brown uses phrases such as 'we needed to get the job done immediately' and 'I set about

the task straightway' and similar, just to reinforce the impression of an Action Man at work. But even at a political level, this approach only appears convincing (if at all) when the waters are relatively calm, not when there is an uncontrollable storm brewing, let alone a gale force wind howling. And it was the headwinds of the financial crisis that blew Brown's economic record – first as Chancellor and then as Prime Minister – to pieces, with a severe recession propelling unemployment higher when he left office than when he entered, and with income inequality little changed despite the decade and more of relentless tax system tinkering. Not forgetting an electorate so embittered that, within a short time it had voted to leave the European Union and almost created a separate Scottish state too (both to Brown's mounting concern and near horror).

Despite the differences that emerged between Brown and Blair over time, this book illustrates that one thing still unites them at least – a continuing failure to understand that the type of micro-reformism they espoused within the overall movement towards globalised capital is what has in large part led to the type of knee-jerk populism that now befuddles them. If Mrs Thatcher famously said that her most enduring legacy was Tony Blair, then the enduring legacy of Blair and Brown are the comedy book-ends of Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn, and yet they still don't appear to understand why.

DAP

**After Tsarism**



The Experiment: Georgia's  
Forgotten Revolution 1918-1921  
By Eric Lee.  
Zed Books, 2017.

Georgia is a country located south of the Caucasus mountains and between Russia and Turkey. A hundred years ago this May, Georgia declared itself independent as did a number of other former Russian

territories. Eric Lee's book, looks at the short-lived 'democratic socialist' republic and its wider context, including its smaller scale predecessor the 'Gurian Republic'.

Lee writes: 'Between the Communist Manifesto in 1848 and the Russian Revolution in 1917, there were only two examples of socialists seizing political power and attempting to realise their vision of a new society. One was the Paris Commune of 1871 ... the other was the Gurian Republic of 1902-6, widely known at the time but largely forgotten today.'

Georgia was a remote outpost of the Russian empire, and the vast majority of its inhabitants lived in poor rural communities. Guria was a desperately poor district in Western Georgia. What happened in Guria foreshadowed the later triumph of 'democratic socialists' throughout Georgia.

'The Gurian Republic, led by an orthodox Marxist party, instead of a few weeks, lasted for several years.' 'The Gurians helped to solve the land problem by redistributing land directly to the peasants, and curtailed the power of the tsarist state and the church. They instituted a kind of direct democracy in their villages. These were no small accomplishments – most happened, before 1905, when Tsarism was strong.'

Perhaps this was why Georgia returned Mensheviks by a landslide in 1905 elections to the Russian Duma. Although 'Social Democrats' in Russia had split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks – from then on 'Social Democrats' in Georgia meant Menshevism and the author uses the two terms interchangeably. Heads of the Social Democratic faction in the Duma, Noe Zhordania followed by Irakli Tsereteli, were both from Georgia. The Social Democrats were the only mass party in Georgia. When Soviets were formed across Russia in 1917, Social Democrats dominated the Soviets in Georgia too, so the Bolshevik slogan 'All power to the Soviets!' made no sense. The Georgian Bolsheviks remained a tiny and ineffectual force.

Lee explains that no party claiming to be Marxist had yet come to power anywhere in the world, but by the summer of 1914, it seemed like that day was not far off. The Social Democrats were the largest party in the German parliament, and the second largest party in France, even in the United States, so they seemed on the cusp of making a breakthrough.

When Tsarism collapsed, Georgian Social Democrats had no intention of seceding from Russia; independence was not on the agenda. It was only after the 'October revolution' (the Bolshevik coup) in Russia, that Georgia took matters into its own hands. Georgian military forces raided the arsenal in the capital Tiflis, Russian soldiers stationed there surrendered and Lenin was reportedly extremely displeased.

In the Russian Constituent Assembly elections in November 1917, Georgia again returned representatives who were overwhelmingly Mensheviks. This did not translate into a Menshevik majority in the Russian Constituent Assembly where the 'Socialist-Revolutionary' party won a comfortable majority over the second-placed Bolsheviks with Mensheviks a distant fourth. It was this result that prompted the Bolsheviks to dissolve the assembly by force

On May 26 1918, Georgia proclaimed its independence. Elections in 1919 (where suffrage was universal, equal and secret), returned even bigger landslides for Social Democrats, even under proportional representation. Trotsky railed, falsely portraying a powerful Georgian Bolshevik party ready at any moment. Kautsky countered this, and the archives bear out Kautsky. Trotsky and other Bolshevik propagandists then tried portraying Georgia as colluding with Anton Denikin's White Army. Again, this is contradicted – this time by British dismay that the Georgians were repelling Denikin, contrary to British orders.

Lee writes that the most important action was their agrarian reform, selling state land to peasants. In this they were following Plekhanov's municipalisation of land model and rejecting Lenin's nationalisation of land which was thought to lead back to 'a semi-Asiatic order'.

Georgia was developing a strong civil society with trade unions at its core, it enshrined the right for trade unions to strike long before most countries even legalised the right to join a trade union.

In Chapter 9 on co-operatives Lee describes the French Social Democrat leader Jules Guesde's politics as purist and fanatical ultra-leftism. He writes that Guesde gave an example of his Marxist fundamentalism in July 1910, it is impossible to attach any socialist value to co-operation in itself. Anyone who suggested otherwise, he considered utopian. This is unfair to Guesde who wasn't arguing that cooperatives were useless, only that on their own ('in itself') there was nothing socialist about them, as their subsequent history has shown. His views can be found here: [www.marxists.org/archive/guesde/1910/dec/cooperatives.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/guesde/1910/dec/cooperatives.htm)

In 1920, three participants from the Second International, Kautsky and two Belgian Social Democrats, Vandervelde and Huysmans, visited what they saw as 'the most perfect Socialism in Europe' – not Russia under Lenin, but the provincial backwater known as the Georgian Social Democratic Republic.

The British Labour Party delegation drew just as stark comparisons between the countries; Ethel Snowden's criticisms of Bolshevik Russia were later published in a book Through Bolshevik Russia (to

the annoyance of the Left in Britain), and Labour Party leader Ramsay Macdonald claimed the Georgian republic shared the aims of the Independent Labour Party.

Georgia was undoubtedly, as Lee says, 'a vision of a new society radically different from the one Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin were creating'. It was a pluralist, multi-party democracy of free elections, where the constitution guaranteed universal suffrage, a free press, separation of church and state and abolished the death penalty.

The Mensheviks correctly observed that impoverished, backward societies cannot skip historical stages and proceed to create socialism. Bolsheviks wrongly claimed they had done otherwise in Russia.

Russian Bolsheviks (re)conquered Georgia in 1921 despite fierce resistance and rebellions (the biggest of which was suppressed and whitewashed by German Communist leader Clara Zetkin). Heartening though was the reception Stalin's return to Georgia got, on addressing a crowd of 5,000 workers. He congratulated them on 'overthrowing the Menshevik yoke', whereupon audience members heckled 'Lies! There was no Menshevik yoke here! There was no Communist [Bolshevik] revolution in Georgia! Your troops have removed our freedom!'

DJW

**Far From Wealth**



Phil A. Neel: Hinterland:  
America's New Landscape of  
Class and Conflict.  
Reaktion Books. £14.95.

The hinterland is the area of the US outside the wealthy cities, 'the growing desert beyond the palace walls'. It can be divided into the 'near' parts, the mainly suburban areas outside the central parts of cities, and the 'far' parts, primarily the rural areas but also including urban wastelands where much housing has been demolished. Even the far hinterland, however, has

a great deal of industrial space, from factory farms to logistics complexes and mines, and is dominated by the informal economy of the black market and production of illegal drugs.

Neel records here some of his travels around this hinterland, beginning in northern Nevada, where the far right have begun a resurgence. They are less tied to the militia than used to be the case, and often reject white nationalist ideas. Some adopt so-called Third Positionist politics, claiming to be neither left nor right, while Patriot groups emphasise self-reliance rather than use of declining government services. Small capitalists, who often work in their mines or mills themselves, are the backbone of the Patriot movement. The election of Trump is likely to have a dampening effect, especially on the extremes of the far right.

On the California–Oregon border, wildland firefighters do extremely dangerous work. They usually earn less than \$1,000 a week, and work for only a few months of the year. Neel refers to one firefighter in Idaho who was working to pay for chemo for his six-year-old daughter, who had leukaemia. As many as forty percent of firefighters are prisoners paid a pittance.

The near hinterland, Neel suggests, will be 'the central theater in the coming class war', as so many who have become surplus to the economy live there. Unfortunately, there is very little here on how the classes in this war are to be characterised, what it will involve or what the outcome might be. The book as a whole contains some useful material but rather little by way of concrete suggestions or conclusions.

PB



# 50 Years Ago

## Martin Luther King

EVEN BEFORE the killing of Martin Luther King, this summer promised to be a bad one for race troubles in America. Many city authorities, fearing an intensifying of the riots, had armed themselves with some formidable weapons.

The Negroes were also preparing and waiting, with no lack of black nationalists to advise them on how to use arms, petrol bombs and the like. This menacing situation was ignited by the assassination of Martin Luther King and the death of the advocate of passive resistance was, ironically, marked by a flare-up of the very violence he denounced.

King had, in fact, been losing some ground to the groups like Black Power and this in itself is symptomatic of the change which America has undergone during the last twenty years. The suppression which the Negroes have suffered for so long was bound one day to erupt. For too long have they been denied the vote, subjected to a host of indignities and

restraints. For too long has colour discrimination been a part of the American way of life. For too long has a coloured life been cheap so that, in some states, the murder of a Negro counts for little more than the killing of an insect—and the body silently disappears into some southern swamp.

The predictable result of this has been the Negro protest, the riots and the rise of the Black Power theorists. Kill Whitey and Burn, Baby, Burn are sterile remedies for the Negroes' frustrations—but who, or what, must bear the blame for them?

Martin Luther King, for all his courage, had little more to offer the American Negroes than a place beside the country's white workers. For most coloured workers, this is their highest aim—the right of access to the same sort of employment, the same sort of working class homes, the same sort of terms from the hire purchase company, as others.

## Obituary

### Pat Kilgallon

We have to report the death of Pat Kilgallon at the age of 91 after a long and debilitating illness. Pat came from a family of political activists and trades unionists, her grandfather was the agent for the first ILP candidate in the North East who also refused to fight in the First World War. Pat joined the Newcastle Branch of the Socialist Party in April 1994, having left the Labour Party earlier in that year.

Pat came into contact with the Party in the early 1980s at a time when she was a Labour councillor on North Tyneside Council and when she was also active in arranging food collections and other types of support for the families of striking miners. She was also part of the group of councillors that refused to set a budget in 1985. It was the failure of this and similar actions that began her realisation that capitalism could not be reformed and led to her journey towards joining the Socialist Party.

Her activity in the Party, especially in later years was hampered by her age and ill-health, however she never missed an opportunity to put forward the socialist case to any that would listen and she had recently been involved in distributing union application forms to the un-unionised home carers who supported her to live in her own home.

T.K.

Order new pamphlet from: Socialist Party, 52 Clapham Hig St, London SW4 7UN. £4 including postage. Cheque made out to "The Socialist Party of Great Britain". Paypal to spgb@worldsocialism.org.

## What is freedom?

You haven't any meaningful freedom except to sell your labour power. You sell your labour power to your employer for a wage/salary in order to live, because you are not the owner of the means of production, as the employer is. So, your wage slavery is your social existence. The employer does not get a wage or salary, they get a surplus value, profit. They have the freedom to buy living human energy, labour power. You have no real freedom of choice, such as to work according to your ability and to consume according to your needs.

Everywhere and in everything you are bounded in property relations. All the consumable wealth is produced socially, but what is produced is owned individually under the laws of the private property system. These individuals own and control the property relations backed by the fear of the political state, which will become defunct with the abolition of the private property system. The lawmakers and judges, whose role is to act on behalf of the ruling capitalist class, have no freedom except within

the exploitation and the private property system.

The cause of all this is wage slavery which has to be abolished. You have no freedom to cross national borders without permission of the owners of the means of production. But capital has a freedom – the freedom of exploitation, to exploit human labour power across the world, irrespective of borders.



Freedom is not an individual choice, it is a social matter, to be achieved through the class struggle to eliminate the class society of capitalism. G.P.

## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our Meetup site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

### MAY 2018

**NEWCASTLE**  
Saturday, 5 May, 2.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

May Day Rally  
Venue: The Oak Room, Miners' Institute, Neville Hall, Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SE

“Q. Does {Momentum} + {Force} = {Power}?”

“Losing Momentum: must the left fail again?”

“Capitalism, Post-Capitalism and Socialism”

Speakers: Brian Gardner and Cliff Slapper

### BURNLEY

Monday 7 May from 1.00 p.m.  
North East Lancashire TUC May Day Festival

## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation

**Venue: Towneley Park, Burnley, BB11 3RQ**  
The Socialist Party will have a stall at this event.

### LEEDS

Saturday 19 May, 1.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

“Happy Birthday, Karl Marx”  
Venue: The Victoria Hotel, 28 Great George St, Leeds LS1 3DL  
Speakers: Tim Kilgallon and Cliff Slapper

### LONDON

**HAMMERSMITH**  
Saturday 26 May, 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

“The Media and Capitalism”  
Venue: Quaker Meeting House, 20 Nigel Playfair Avenue, London W6 9JY  
Speaker: Stephen Harper

**MANCHESTER**  
Saturday 26 May, 2.00 p.m.  
“Populism vs the Real Class Struggle”

Venue: Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS

### BRIGHTON

Sunday 27 May, 7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.  
“Where do we go from here?” Open discussion

Venue: The Victory Pub (upstairs), 6 Duke St, Brighton BN1 1AH



Further supplies of T-shirts bearing the official Party logo are now on sale from Head Office, price £10 plus £2 P&P for inland addresses. They are available in red, black or purple with the logo and short web address in white in sizes M, L, XL and XXL. When ordering please leave a phone number. Email Head Office (spgb@worldsocialism.org) with any questions and put 'T-Shirt question' in the subject line.

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## Poor People's (ongoing) Campaign

The 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr's assassination was covered widely in mainstream media last month. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for combatting racial equality through nonviolent resistance. For the last five years of his life, King was subject to scrutiny by the FBI. J Edgar Hoover was concerned about 'communist' infiltration of civil rights groups and unions but proof proved elusive. Baptist minister King had apparently read some of Marx's writings and did not like his materialism, but such influences can be seen here: 'the profit motive, when it is the sole basis of an economic system, encourages a cutthroat competition and selfish ambition that inspires men to be making a living than making a life.' He even stated 'the fact is that capitalism was built on the exploitation and suffering of black slaves and continues to thrive on the exploitation of the poor - both black and white, both here and abroad,' yet rather than seeking to replace capitalism with socialism he campaigned for reforms to restructure it - e.g. he strived for a universal basic income as well as end to 'overpopulation'. Days after his death Congress passed the Fair Housing Act, which prohibited discrimination in housing on the basis of race, religion, or national origin. Decades later, Obama's 'change' meant business as usual. Today, racism is waxing not waning, 40 million Americans live in poverty, the top 1 percent has more wealth than the bottom 90 percent, and 'just 1 in 10 black Americans believe the civil rights movement's goals have been achieved in the 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr was killed' (theindependent.co.uk, 31 March). And this, from Taylor Branch, the Pulitzer-winning historian,

says it all (probably unwittingly) : 'all the issues that he raised toward the end of his life are as contemporary now as they were then' (nytimes.com, 4 April). Dr. King focused famously on the 'Triple Evils' of poverty, racism and militarism, i.e., symptoms rather than the underlying disease.

## Poverty without end

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela died the same week as the anniversary of King's death. Media reaction was, unlike to that of Dr. King, very mixed. 'Winnie was working as a hospital social worker when she realized the abject poverty

was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, the South African state punished Winnie too. She was beaten, tortured and held in solitary confinement. Andrew Malone writes as if she deserved such treatment, describing her as 'an odious, toxic individual who continued to preach hatred rather than reconciliation right up to the end of her life' (dailymail.co.uk, 3 April). Yet for a woman accused of murder, fraud, kidnapping and theft, comments from the South African Human Rights Commission in an article titled *A tribute to Madikizela-Mandela: 'A true revolutionary is guided by great love'* (thetimeslive.co.za, 3 April) seem equally over the top.

No, the most apposite remarks were made earlier by another anti-apartheid activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu: 'They stopped the gravy train just long enough to get on themselves.' He went on to say that Zuma's administration is 'worse than the apartheid government' and that he would 'pray for the downfall of the ANC.' 'More than two decades after South Africa ousted a racist apartheid system that trapped the vast majority of South Africans in poverty, more than half the country still lives below the national poverty line and most of the nation's wealth remains in the hands of a small elite' (npr.org, 2 April).



under which most people were forced to live in, created by the inequalities of the system. It is from this point that she strived to bring change and equality' (standardmedia.co.ke, 3 April). She married Nelson Mandela several years prior to the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 (289 murdered). Established in 1912, the African National Congress had employed largely non-violent means in its campaign to secure voting rights for non-white Africans, but this changed in 1961 with the formation of an armed wing. When Nelson

## One world, one people

Nothing should be allowed to obscure working class unity nor to hamper its struggle to set up the new social order. We know enough of racism, and of what it does to human beings, to reject it as a destructive, anti-social force. There is a better way; we have a world to win and little time to lose' (Racist myths, *Socialist Standard*, June 1988).

